

COMMENTS AND CRITICISM

PRONOUNS AND DEFINITE DESCRIPTIONS: A CRITIQUE OF WILSON*

In "Reference and Pronominal Descriptions," George Wilson¹ argues that there is a category of pronominal descriptions which is semantically distinct from the category of attributive descriptions. To support this claim, he shows that descriptions may be used in ways that parallel the bound-variable and the unbound anaphoric uses of pronouns. Given that descriptions have these pronominal functions, he suggests that we might expect that descriptions also fulfil the deictic function of pronouns. He then argues that, indeed, referential descriptions are pronominal descriptions in their deictic function and thus differ as a matter of semantics from attributive uses.

Wilson's arguments are interesting and innovative. I argue, however, that the evidence does not support the existence of a category of pronominal descriptions. First, I shall show that, although there may be a bound-variable use of descriptions, the evidence militates against treating such descriptions as pronominal. Second, I argue that supposedly unbound anaphoric descriptions are correctly analyzed as ordinary attributive descriptions and therefore do not constitute evidence for a category of pronominal descriptions. Finally, I show that in the absence of independent evidence for this category, the analysis of referential descriptions as deictics leads to an undesirable multiplication of semantic categories.²

I. THE BOUND-VARIABLE USE OF DEFINITE DESCRIPTIONS

The first piece of evidence that Wilson adduces for the category of pronominal descriptions is the observation that definite descriptions, like pronouns, may function as variables bound by an antecedent quantifier. This is exemplified in (1), taken from Wilson:

- (1) *Every scientist who was fired from the observatory at Sofia was consoled by someone who knew the fired scientist as a youth* (360).³

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¹ This JOURNAL, LXXXVIII, 7 (July 1991): 359-87.

² After presenting the semantic arguments to which this paper is a response, Wilson gives a number of additional arguments that in their referential use, descriptions are true referring expressions. I do not address these arguments here.

³ Here and throughout, intended anaphoric dependence is indicated by italics.

Similarly, he notes, a definite description may be "bound" by an antecedent referential expression. Thus, given the presupposition that Hugo Wexler was a distinguished Bulgarian astronomer, we may have:

- (2) *Hugo Wexler was consoled by someone who knew the distinguished Bulgarian astronomer in his youth* (362).

Wilson acknowledges that descriptions, quite unlike pronouns, are used "sparsely" (368) in this function. In fact, definite descriptions and pronouns differ significantly in their bound-variable uses, indicating that even in this special use, descriptions should not be considered pronominal.

Definite descriptions may occur in only a subset of the contexts in which pronouns may occur as bound variables. This is in part due to the different syntactic constraints that apply to them.⁴ While pronouns may be syntactically bound by an expression in an A-position (argument position), definite descriptions may not.⁵ This accounts for the contrast in acceptability between (3a-b) and (4a-b):

- (3) a. *Every soprano admires her accompanist.*
 b. *Kathleen admires her accompanist.*
 (4) a. ?*Every soprano admires the soprano's accompanist.*⁶
 b. **Kathleen admires the soprano's accompanist.*

These syntactic constraints do not, perhaps, bear on the characterization of the felicitous descriptions in examples like (1) and (2) as bound variables. They do, however, bear on the question of whether these descriptions should be considered pronominal. The category of pronoun is one belonging to syntax as well as to semantics; it must be individuated by both semantic and syntactic properties. The evidence shows that the syntactic properties of bound-variable descriptions and pronouns are very different, and so tells against a treatment of the descriptions as pronominal.

Moreover, there is evidence that the bound-variable use of descriptions is subject to additional, nonsyntactic constraints, which

⁴ See Noam Chomsky, *Lectures on Government and Binding* (New York: de Gruyter, 1993, 7th ed.), pp. 183-222.

⁵ Syntactic binding is defined as follows: an expression α syntactically binds an expression β if and only if α and β are co-indexed and α c-commands β . C-command is a structural relationship defined on expressions in a syntactic tree: an expression α c-commands an expression β if and only if α does not dominate β and the first branching node dominating α also dominates β . A-positions include subject and object position, and contrast with the position occupied by, for example, sentence initial *wh*-expressions.

⁶ A question mark indicates that the example is marginal; an asterisk indicates unacceptability.

do not apply to pronouns. Consider the contrast between (5a-b) and (6a-b):

- (5) a. *Every scientist's mother loves him.*
 b. *Hugo's mother loves him.*
 (6) a. ?*Every scientist's mother loves the scientist.*
 b. **Hugo's mother loves the scientist.*

In these sentences, the syntactic requirements for the occurrence of bound-variable descriptions are met. As the antecedent in each case is embedded within the subject, it does not c-command, and hence does not syntactically bind, the object. Furthermore, the sentences in (5), which are structurally identical to those in (6), show that the structure satisfies the syntactic requirements for semantic binding, as the pronouns in (5) are easily interpreted as bound by their antecedents.⁷ Despite the fact that all the syntactic conditions are met, however, the descriptions in (6) can be given a bound-variable reading only with difficulty, if at all.

We now have evidence that bound-variable descriptions are distinguished by both syntactic and nonsyntactic properties from pronouns in the same use. This argues against assimilating the two kinds of expressions to a single linguistic category.⁸

There are additional grounds on which to dispute Wilson's use of descriptions anaphoric on a referential antecedent as evidence for a category of pronominal descriptions. The argument for this category relies not merely on the fact that descriptions have the anaphoric uses observed, but that these uses cannot be accommodated in any kind of Russellian account. Now, there is no obvious Russellian account of descriptions functioning as bound variables, as in (1). But there is a Russellian account of descriptions with referential antecedents, as in (2). The pragmatically enriched Russellian account that Saul Kripke⁹ offers

⁷ In GB frameworks, it is generally accepted that semantic binding requires syntactic binding at the level of logical form, following raising of the quantifier. For the original formulation of this view, see Robert May, *The Grammar of Quantification* (Ph.D. dissertation, MIT, 1977).

⁸ We should observe here that demonstrative phrases, too, may function as bound variables, as noted by Gareth Evans, "Pronouns, Quantifiers and Relative Clauses (1)," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, VII, 3 (1977): 467-536, here p. 491. In fact, they are often more felicitous than descriptions in this use. (4a) and (6a), in the text, become quite natural when the description is replaced with a demonstrative phrase. Harold Hodas has suggested to me (in personal communication) that the bound-variable use of descriptions might be a derivative of this use of demonstratives, rather than this use of pronouns.

⁹ See "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference," in *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, P. French, T. Uehling, Jr., and H. Weinstein, eds. (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1979), pp. 6-27.

of the referential-attribute distinction—the very account that Wilson argues would be unable to account for these anaphoric uses—serves perfectly well here. The description in (2) can be treated as an ordinary Russellian description that the speaker knows to be satisfied by the very same individual who bears the name 'Hugo Wexler'.¹⁰ The speaker uses the description to pick out an individual, although it literally expresses quantification. Given the availability of this account, there is no need to resort to a new semantic category to explain these cases.

II. CROSS-SENTENTIAL ANAPHORA: UNBOUND ANAPHORIC PRONOUNS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Wilson acknowledges that the bound-variable use of descriptions "may be felt...[to] represent nothing more than odd exceptions to the more basic rules" (362). It is cross-sentential anaphora, he suggests, that provides the most substantial evidence for the category of pronominal descriptions.

Wilson then presents an analysis of unbound anaphoric pronouns and descriptions as logical parameters.¹¹ Under his analysis, it is natural to view these descriptions as functioning in just the same way as the parallel pronouns, and therefore to think of them as pronominal descriptions. I have here a number of objections to the parameter analysis of unbound anaphoric pronouns. In section II.1, I turn to an alternative and, in my view, more adequate, analysis of these pronouns, that of Evans. I show that under this analysis, the relevant descriptions do not provide evidence for a category of pronominal descriptions.

The relevant data are illustrated in (7) and (8):

(7) a. Professor Brown spoke to *every student*. They were flattered by the attention.

¹⁰ This account faces the problem of incomplete descriptions. (2) does not seem to require for its truth, or even its felicity, that Hugo Wexler be the unique distinguished Bulgarian astronomer. This is precisely the same problem which Russellian accounts of referential descriptions face in explaining examples such as "The table is covered with books", which can be true despite the obvious plurality of tables in the world. In section II of his paper, Wilson presents objections to existing Russellian accounts of incomplete descriptions. I shall not address his objections here, but see Stephen Neale, *Descriptions* (Cambridge: MIT, 1990), pp. 93-102, for discussion. Let me note here only that, as Neale points out, "the problem of incompleteness has nothing to do with the use of definite descriptions *per se*; it is a quite general fact about the use of quantifiers in natural language" (p. 95). Wilson argues that the insufficiency of proposed solutions to incompleteness supports the analysis of referential descriptions as deictics, which sidesteps the incompleteness problem. But the analysis does not solve the problem with respect to quantification generally.

¹¹ What I am here calling *unbound anaphoric pronouns*, or just *unbound pronouns*, are those which are known in the literature, following Evans, as *E-type pronouns*. See Evans, *op. cit.*, and "Pronouns," *Linguistic Inquiry*, XI, 2 (1980): 337-62. I adopt the former term as neutral with respect to the theories of Wilson and Evans, to be discussed below.

- b. Professor Brown spoke to *every student*. *The students* were flattered by the attention.
- (8) a. *Some professor* came to the faculty-student party. *He* got drunk.
 b. *Some professor* came to the faculty-student party. *The professor* got drunk.

Wilson suggests that these pronouns and descriptions are the natural-language counterparts of the individual parameters employed in certain systems of natural deduction.¹² In a deduction, a parameter behaves in some ways like a singular term, but the line in which it occurs expresses a general proposition. Whether the generality is existential or universal depends on the rule used to introduce the parameter. Thus, the interpretation of a formula containing a parameter is determined by the derivational context.

Similarly, Wilson claims, sentences containing an unbound anaphoric pronoun express general propositions, whose content is determined by context. Specifically, context assigns to a parameter pronominal a mode of generality and a domain. The mode of generality is determined by the quantificational force of the antecedent; the domain is fixed by the descriptive content of the antecedent clause.¹³

Let us now see how the parameter analysis works with some specific examples. Consider example (9a), repeated from above:

- (9) a. Professor Brown spoke to *every student*. *They* were flattered by the attention.

According to the parameter analysis, this discourse will be interpreted as:

- (9) b. Professor Brown spoke to every student and every student was flattered by the attention.

Similarly, (10a) will be interpreted as (10b), which is equivalent to (10c):

- (10) a. *Some professor* came to the faculty-student party. *He* got drunk.
 b. Some professor came to the faculty-student party and some professor who came to the faculty-student party got drunk.
 c. Some professor came to the faculty-student party and got drunk.

¹² See, for example, Benson Mates, *Elementary Logic* (New York: Oxford, 1972, 2nd ed.).

¹³ In sentences containing more than one parameter, their relative scope is also determined by context. I shall not be considering such examples here, as they do not bear on the discussion.

The truth conditions of examples like (10a) are a matter of debate in the literature. Evans points out that (10a) is most naturally understood as saying that *only one* professor came to the faculty-student party, and that *that* professor got drunk. Similarly, (11) is understood as saying that *all* the students who stopped me in the hall wanted me to sign a petition.

- (11) Some students stopped me in the hall today. *They* wanted me to sign a petition.

On the basis of this and other observations, Evans claims that the truth conditions of (10a) are not those of (10c), but of (10d) below:¹⁴

- (10) d. Some professor came to the faculty-student party and the unique professor who came to the faculty-student party got drunk.

Wilson¹⁵ takes issue with this claim on the basis of examples like (12) and (13):

- (12) Socrates kicked some dog, and it bit him, and Socrates also kicked another dog, and it did not bite him.
 (13) Some students came to see me today. They wanted me to sign a petition. Several other students came to talk to me about their papers.

Wilson points out that, if the truth conditions of sentences containing unbound pronouns included a universality condition, the discourses in (12) and (13) could not possibly be felicitous; yet clearly, they are. Consequently, Wilson rejects Evans's proposed truth conditions in favor of those predicted by his own analysis.

These examples, however, do not show that the unbound pronouns do not carry a universality condition. Like similar examples in the literature on definite descriptions, they show only that universality holds with respect to a contextually determined domain, and that the domain may change between sentences or even within a single clause.¹⁶

¹⁴ Additional arguments for this position have been given by Nirit Kadmon, *On Unique and Non-Unique Reference and Asymmetric Quantification* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, 1987) and Neale.

¹⁵ "Pronouns and Pronominal Descriptions: A New Semantical Category," *Philosophical Studies*, xlv (1984): 1-30.

¹⁶ For arguments for this position, see Kadmon, and Jason Stanley and Tim Williamson, "Quantifiers and Context Dependence," *Analysis*, lv, 4 (October 1995): 291-95. Wilson, "Pronouns and Pronominal Descriptions," pp. 5-6, discusses and rejects two suggestions made by Evans in response to the kind of objection he poses. One suggestion, similar to that made in the text, is that universality be relativized to times. As Wilson correctly points out, this strategy is inadequate. The other suggestion, involving supplementation of the description, I cannot address here.

The discourse in (12) is most readily understood as describing two different instances of Socrates kicking a dog, where there is a unique dog per instance. Similarly, (13) must describe (at least) two different instances of students coming to see me. It is understood that *all* of the students in the first instance wanted me to sign a petition. Assuming relativization, then, Evans's truth conditions can be defended against Wilson's objection.¹⁷

Thus far, our examples have contained only unbound pronouns dependent on existential or universal quantifiers. Unbound pronouns, however, also exhibit dependencies on quantifiers formed with 'most', 'many', 'few', and so on, as illustrated below:

(14) *Most sopranos* in the choir can sing high C, but *they* have to practice every day.

(15) *Several students* came to the party, and *they* had a good time.

Wilson does not discuss these cases, and it is not entirely clear how the parameter analysis should be extended to them. Three possibilities suggest themselves. The first option is to stipulate that all pronouns dependent on these quantifiers have a universal mode of generality. The second is to stipulate that they have an existential mode of generality. The final alternative is to take to its natural conclusion the contention that the interpretation of a parameter is determined entirely by context, and allow the pronoun to inherit the quantificational force of the antecedent.

Stipulating a universal mode of generality for all these pronouns would assign Evans-type truth conditions to sentences containing them. Wilson, therefore, would presumably not advocate this solution. And although, in my view, this extension of the analysis would produce the correct truth conditions for these cases, the analysis itself, being stipulative, would be unilluminating, providing no explanation for why these pronouns have universal force. The predictions made by stipulating that these pronouns carry existential force would accord with Wilson's views, but the stipulative character of the analysis would remain.

The third option departs from Wilson's suggestion that the mode of generality expressed by unbound pronouns be either existential or universal (366). It is the option most clearly suggested by the work of Jeffrey C. King,¹⁸ who has provided an extension of Wilson's parameter approach. King analyses the parameter-pronominals as con-

text-dependent quantifiers which inherit their force directly from the antecedent quantifier. This analysis, though, brings us back to the problem of the correct interpretation of sentences containing unbound pronouns. Recall example (14):

Most sopranos in the choir can sing top C, but *they* have to practice every day.

Taking the pronoun to inherit the quantificational force of the antecedent, this sentence would have the interpretation in (16):

(16) *Most sopranos* in the choir can sing top C, but most of the sopranos in the choir who can sing top C have to practice every day.

(16), however, is not a possible interpretation of the sentence, which can only mean that *all* of the sopranos in the choir who can sing top C have to practice every day. Consequently, it seems that, if we take seriously the idea that the quantificational force of an unbound pronoun is fixed by the context, as Wilson contends, we are left with an analysis that predicts incorrect interpretations. But if we weaken this assumption in order to predict the right truth conditions, we undermine the basic tenet of the analysis.

Before proceeding, we should note that there are examples in which the predictions of the parameter analysis are borne out. These are cases in which unbound pronouns are interpreted as if bound by a universal or existential quantifier in a preceding sentence. Consider, for instance:

(17) *Every scientist* is given a spare pen. *It* is taped to the mailbox assigned to *him*.

The anaphoric relation exhibited in this example is different from that in the examples of unbound pronouns considered so far. First, the pronouns occur in the singular, despite it being natural to understand that there is a plurality of scientists and of pens in the situation. (Compare with (9a) above, where 'they' cannot be replaced with a singular pronoun.) Moreover, the antecedent must be either an existential or universal quantifier. If 'every' is replaced by 'most', 'many', 'three', and so on, the discourse becomes highly degraded.

Like a bound-variable approach, the parameter analysis would assign correct truth conditions to such examples. Indeed, it would be interesting to consider whether the parameter analysis could explain the apparent exceptional binding of pronouns. The possibility that the parameter analysis could be useful in these cases does not, however, affect the arguments against its general application to unbound

¹⁷ See Neale, pp. 242-47, for an alternative proposal for deriving the universality condition.

¹⁸ See, in particular, "Anaphora and Operators," *Philosophical Perspectives VIII, Logic and Language* (1994): 221-50.

pronouns or to deictics (see below), or the arguments from parsimony in section III.¹⁹

The arguments given so far concern the truth conditions predicted by the parameter account, and are only as strong as the intuitions on which they depend. The ongoing debate in the literature with respect to this question is indicative of how unclear these intuitions are; my remarks here certainly do not contribute anything new to that debate. I turn now to a second objection to the parameter account, namely, that the notion of a parameter does not delineate a unified semantic category.

Wilson suggests that unbound pronouns with referential antecedents, like that in (18), should also be analyzed as parameters.

(18) *Harry* is a tenor. *He* admires Pavarotti.

He proposes that in these cases, "the discourse context...assign [s] to a parameter in a statement—not a mode of generality and domain—but a particular object" (370). He then extends the parameter analysis to deictics, arguing that, if the interpretation of a referential parameter can be fixed by a linguistic expression, then "it is difficult to see why sundry nonlinguistic features of the speech context should not be able to achieve the same result" (370). This, Wilson proposes, is the appropriate analysis of deictic pronouns: referential parameters that depend for their interpretation on elements of the nonlinguistic context.

This extension of the parameter approach introduces serious difficulties for the semantics of parameter pronominals. These expressions now have a dual nature: they can be either quantificational or referential. But this is hardly a trivial issue. Assigning a "dummy" quantifier a quantificational force and a range is an entirely different semantic process from assigning a referential expression its denotation by a process of coreference, or via nonlinguistic contextual information. We would have to state entirely different semantic rules for each of these two cases, suggesting that pronouns in these different uses are expressions of different kinds.

One might argue that in a strictly formal sense, quantifiers and referential expressions are of the same type: in a Montaguean type-

¹⁹ As Gemmaro Chierchia says, "how the anaphoric links in [such examples] are to be treated is pretty much open...the key observation in this connection is that anaphora across [these] domains is highly sensitive to various aspects of the context." Chierchia concludes that such anaphora should be studied independently of other instances of unbound pronouns. See *Dynamics of Meaning: Anaphora, Presupposition and the Theory of Grammar* (Chicago: University Press, 1995), pp. 9-10.

theoretic framework, both can be treated as generalized quantifiers, expressions of type $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$. There are two responses to this. The first is that even within a type-theoretic framework, there is a distinction between referential expressions and quantificational expressions. Referential expressions may be raised to type $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$ for formal purposes, but are basically of type e ; true quantifiers, however, cannot be treated as any type lower than $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$. The second response is that the argument itself is disingenuous. We are not concerned here with a simple type-theoretic characterization of expressions; if we were, the issue of a semantic difference between referential and attributive uses of descriptions would not arise. We are concerned with a notion of semantic type that is less formal and well-defined, but more intuitively contentful. And in this intuitive sense, there is a distinction between quantificational and referential expressions. Consequently, Wilson's concept of a parameter does not appear to demarcate a natural kind.

II.1. Unbound anaphoric descriptions and the category of pronominal descriptions. We need now to remind ourselves how the parameter analysis bears on the question of the existence of a category of pronominal descriptions. Recall, as examples (19) and (20) illustrate, that unbound anaphoric pronouns can quite freely be replaced by a relevant description:

(19) Professor Brown spoke to every student. *The students* were flattered by the attention.

(20) *Some professor* came to the faculty-student party. *The professor who came to the party* got drunk.

Wilson argues that these descriptions should be analyzed in just the same way as the parallel pronouns, as they seem to fulfill the same role. Thus, in his view, they provide further evidence for the existence of a category of pronominal descriptions.

As we have already observed, however, a particular use of a description provides evidence for this category only if it cannot be given a Russellian account. These examples, though, can be given a quite straightforward Russellian account. We can assign the descriptions an ordinary Russellian interpretation, as long as we recognize that the preceding sentence provides the context in which the description is interpreted. As I observed in footnote 10, this phenomenon is familiar from the literature on quantificational expressions, whose interpretation is in many cases relativized to context, linguistic or nonlinguistic. Indeed, (19) illustrates just how parallel the two cases are. It is clear that we interpret the expres-

sion 'every student' in the first sentence as relative to some situation or event; we are not tempted to interpret the quantification unrestrictedly. Why, then, should we not allow precisely the same relativization in the interpretation of the description immediately following?

Precisely the same point can be made with respect to descriptions with referential antecedents, as in (21):

- (21) *Harry admires Pavarotti. The amateur singer hopes to hear his idol in concert some day.*

Wilson takes such descriptions to be parallel to unbound pronouns anaphoric on a referential antecedent, and extends the parameter analysis to them. In section 1, I pointed out that descriptions "bound" by a referential expression can be given a Russellian analysis. Exactly the same account can be given here. So these cases, too, fail to provide evidence for a semantically distinct category of pronominal descriptions.

We can in fact make an even stronger case against treating the descriptions in these examples as pronominal by considering an alternative analysis of the unbound pronouns with which we are comparing them. The analysis to which I turn is that of Evans.

Evans argues that unbound anaphoric pronouns, which he dubs *E-types*, are referential expressions whose denotation is fixed by a Russellian definite description constructed from the content of the clause containing the quantifier antecedent. It is because their reference is determined via a description that E-type pronouns show the uniqueness/universality condition discussed above. Evans's theory has been discussed widely in the literature, and various extensions and emendations have been proposed. Among these is the proposal that E-type pronouns actually go proxy for definite descriptions, that is, are literally replaceable by definite descriptions constructable from their antecedents.²⁰

What is important here is that under any Evans-type treatment of unbound pronouns, it makes no sense at all to think of the descriptions that can replace them as pronominal. Rather, the semantics of the pronouns derives from the semantics of descriptions. Indeed, according to the Davies/Neale emendation mentioned above, unbound pronouns are themselves properly understood as attributive descriptions. I conclude, therefore, that definite descriptions inter-

preted relative to a nonbinding quantifier or referential expression in a preceding clause should not be analyzed as pronominal descriptions.

Wilson argues that "given [the] parallel between pronominal descriptions and third-person pronouns, and given that the pronouns have a ubiquitous *deictic* or *indexical* role, one would expect that pronominal descriptions might also share this role" (368-69). In response to this, I have argued that there is no real parallel between descriptions and pronouns. A careful reconsideration of the data reveals only one case of descriptions used in a pronominal function, namely, the bound-variable descriptions. And these, as we saw in section 1, differ in many respects from pronouns. Thus, the evidence for positing a category of pronominal descriptions is weak, and so too are the grounds for expecting to find a deictic use of descriptions.

III. THE ANALYSIS OF REFERENTIAL DESCRIPTIONS AS DEICTICS

Wilson concludes that referential descriptions, like deictic pronouns, are correctly analyzed as parameters to which context assigns an individual as interpretation. The description in (22) is analyzed as a true referential expression that refers to the individual toward whom the speaker has gestured:

- (22) [with accompanying gesture] The famous tenor is sounding a little off-key tonight.

Wilson's analysis thus brings him to posit a semantic distinction between referential and attributive descriptions. In his view, though, this distinction is simply a special case of the more general distinction between pronominal and attributive descriptions. His version of the semantic ambiguity view is thus proof against Kripke's objection that this approach leads to an unmotivated multiplication of semantic categories of descriptions. According to Wilson's analysis, we are forced to admit two categories of description whether we give a Russellian or a deictic (that is, pronominal) analysis of referential descriptions.

Given the objections I have raised, what becomes of this claim? First, note that the argument for the category of pronominal descriptions depends rather heavily on the parameter analysis, as it was the supposed parameter descriptions which provided the strongest evidence for it. Under an Evans-type analysis, the category disintegrates.²¹ We

²⁰ See Martin Davies, *Meaning, Quantification, Necessity* (New York: Routledge, 1981), p. 173, and Neale, pp. 184 ff.

²¹ Even if we accepted the parameter analysis, it is not clear that there would be a unitary category of pronominal description. Wilson includes in this category both bound-variable uses and parameter uses. But it is not clear that these are semantic entities of the same type. Nor, as argued above, is it obvious that Wilson's notion of parameter is unitary.

simply give a pragmatic Russellian account of all "anaphoric" uses of descriptions other than the bound-variable use.

Suppose, though, that we nonetheless wish to maintain the view that referential descriptions are deictic; there are, after all, independent reasons, such as those given by Wilson himself, to favor such a view. Suppose that we accept Wilson's characterization of bound-variable descriptions as pronominal. Could we not posit a constrained category of pronominal descriptions that exhibit just the bound variable and the deictic uses? We would then have an analysis for the former, and could still use the (now much reduced) notion of pronominal descriptions to motivate the latter.

If we reject the parameter analysis of pronouns in favor of an Evans-type analysis, however, this treatment of referential descriptions will once again fall afoul of Kripke's call for semantic parsimony. For on Evans's account, deictics are semantically distinct from bound-variable pronouns, as they are from E-type pronouns. Thus, if we assimilate referential descriptions to deictic pronouns, we are forced to postulate three distinct categories of descriptions: attributive, bound, and deictic. And the supposed category of deictic descriptions will have no motivation other than referential uses of descriptions. Thus, under Evans's account of pronouns and descriptions, the most parsimonious treatment of referential descriptions is the pragmatic one.

IV. CONCLUSION

Wilson presents a view of the semantics of pronouns and descriptions which motivates an analysis of referential descriptions as semantically distinct from attributives. I have presented here a number of objections to that view, based on a reassessment of Wilson's data. As the uses of descriptions that he observes can almost all be accommodated within a Russellian account, these data, I think, indicate the strength, and not the weakness, of Kripke's pragmatic account of the referential/attributive distinction.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Mental Reality. GALEN STRAWSON. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1994. xiv, 337 p. \$37.50 cloth, \$17.50 paper.*

Galén Strawson's book is an ambitious one. Its stated aim is to overthrow much of the philosophy of mind of the last fifty years or so, and to articulate a new conception of the nature of mental reality. Strawson claims that the only genuinely mental phenomena are those of conscious experience, and that philosophical theories that take mental states and processes to be essentially connected with overt behavior (neobehaviorist theories, as Strawson calls them) are radically mistaken.

For Strawson, the mind-body problem just is the problem of how conscious experience is generated from objective, physical goings-on. On this, Strawson has little to say, except to embrace a general materialism. Experiences, like everything else, are material, but we currently have no idea how objective changes in brains can give rise to the rich phenomenology of experience.

Since the only distinctively mental phenomena, in Strawson's view, are experiential ones, it follows that there is no separate problem of intentionality. Whatever problem arises in understanding intentional states and their place in nature, it is part and parcel of the more general problem of conscious experience.

I think that it is fair to say that Strawson is concerned not so much with the presentation of a detailed sequence of arguments for his position as with the painting of a picture. Strawson believes that philosophical theorizing about the mind has gone badly awry this century and that many basic intuitions have been lost or ignored. So, he tries to redraw the landscape. His discussions are, by and large, admirably clear, and there is much that is worthy of comment in the book. Sleeping dogmas are disturbed throughout; new perspectives are in plentiful supply. In this review, I shall focus on the two central issues: the boundaries of the domain of conscious experience, and the connection between minds and behavior.

One immediate, obvious objection to the charge that the only genuinely mental phenomena are phenomena of experience is that it ignores a whole host of phenomena that deserve to be called "mental" if anything does: for example, thoughts, memories, judgments, the

* Thanks to Ned Block for comments on an earlier version of this review.