

QUOTATIONAL MIXING OF USE AND MENTION

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I. USE AND MENTION

It is seldom noticed that the distinction between the use and the mention of linguistic items, that familiar piece of contemporary philosophical lore, admits of at least two significantly distinct formulations. I shall label them 'benign' and 'malignant'. On the benign version, when an expression is being mentioned, it has a special role in the surrounding discourse. To employ a variant on an example due to Quine, in

1. 'Boston' has six characters

the word 'Boston' is being mentioned, its characters counted. Its use, we might say, consists in its being an object of such mentioning. Opinions differ as to whether the word itself makes an appearance in the sentence I employ. Quine says that it does not, Searle that it does. But whichever the case may be, the word obviously has *some* role in my speaking, albeit possibly a non-linguistic one, which is other than the role it plays in speaking of the city.

The distinction between use and mention also admits of a slightly different formulation. It is sometimes assumed, in addition to allotting a special role to mentioned linguistic items, that when an expression is being mentioned it is thereby not being used in the normal way. The difference between the two versions is hardly perceptible at first, but this second, malignant, version of the distinction is actually falsified by our linguistic practices. It is also more common than is often supposed, probably inspired by examples such as that above, where casual employments of (1) and of

2. Boston has six characters

diverge in truth-value, trading also on a certain lexical ambiguity in 'characters'.

To see what makes the second version malignant, we need only borrow a different example from Quine. It is now widely acknowledged that in

3. Giorgione was so-called because of his size

the name ‘Giorgione’ is being used as well as mentioned.¹ This linguistic fact obviously conflicts with the idea that mentioning a linguistic item prevents it from being ordinarily used, in this case to mention Giorgione. It is also now widely recognized that the mixing of use and mention carries over to our quoting practices as well. Thus in an example due to Davidson

4. Quine says that quotation ‘has a certain anomalous feature’

the phrase being quoted is doing double duty in being both used and mentioned, on pain of ungrammaticality – judging by its position within the whole sentence, the quotation in (4) cannot be employed simply as a singular term in the mentioning of Quine’s words.

Yet it is far from universally agreed that the second formulation of the use/mention distinction ought to be rejected. In *Speech Acts* (Cambridge UP, 1969), John Searle opts for the malignant version in claiming (p. 76) that one of the conventions governing the use of quotation marks is that ‘words surrounded by quotation marks are to be taken as talked about (or quoted, etc.) and not as used by the speaker in their normal use’. In contrast, in ‘Reference and Modality’, Quine says (p. 141) that ‘The point about quotation is not that it must destroy referential occurrence, but that it can (and ordinarily does) destroy referential occurrence’, by which he is clearly endorsing the benign version of the distinction.

In this paper I shall be mainly concerned with the phenomenon of quotational mixing of use and mention, typified by example (4) above. There are five theories of quotation currently available in the literature, three of which flatly fail to account for such cases. According to the name theory, the quotation is a name referring to the expression being quoted.² According to the description theory, the quotation is a structural description, given either letter by letter or word by word, of the expression being quoted.³ According to the identity theory, the expression enclosed within quotation marks refers to itself.⁴ None of these alternatives allows for the simultaneous non-quotational use of the quoted expression as required by cases such as (4).

¹ The example is from W.V.O. Quine’s ‘Reference and Modality’, in his *From a Logical Point of View* (Harvard UP, 1980), pp. 139–59.

² See Alfred Tarski, ‘The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages’, in *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics* (Oxford UP, 1933), p. 160.

³ See Quine, *Word and Object* (MIT Press, 1960), pp. 143–4, 189–90.

⁴ See Corey Washington, ‘The Identity Theory of Quotation’, *Journal of Philosophy*, 89 (1992), pp. 582–605.

Accordingly I shall set them aside and devote the rest of this paper to the two remaining theories, theories which do purport to be capable of handling the quotational mixing of use and mention.

In a recent contribution to *Mind* Paul Saka proposes a novel treatment of quotation which, against appearances to the contrary, promotes the malignant version of the use/mention distinction.⁵ In what follows I shall describe his proposal, and argue that his treatment of quotational mixing of use and mention is unsatisfactory. Given the ubiquity of this mixing, I shall also claim that the demonstrative theory of quotation, because of its unmatched ability to accommodate such cases, fares better than Saka's.⁶

II. THE FORMAL DISAMBIGUATION APPROACH

By way of introducing Saka's approach I need to consider first what he understands to be going on within the employment of a lexically simple expression. We are told that exhibiting a token of such an expression, in speech or in writing, evokes a lexeme which includes shape, sound-pattern, syntactic category, intension and other possible determinants. This in turn determines the intension of the expression (which is already included as part of the lexical entry), and that in turn determines the extension. The case of lexically complex expressions is a straightforward extension of this picture. The exhibition of a token of such an expression evokes a shape, a sound-pattern, a syntactically structured compound of the partaking lexical entries, an intension and an extension.

Saka describes the difference between the use and the mention of an expression by alluding to speakers' intentions to direct attention to different items within the bundle associated with the expression. The *use* of an expression consists of exhibiting a token of it, directly ostending the token itself, deferringly ostending the associated shape, sound-pattern, syntactic structure, intension and extension, while intending to draw attention to the extension. The *mention* of the expression consists of exhibiting a token of it, directly ostending the token itself, deferringly ostending the associated shape, sound-pattern, syntactic structure, intension and extension, while intending to draw attention either to the token or to one of the other items within the associated bundle *except* the extension.

⁵ P. Saka, 'Quotation and the Use/Mention Distinction', *Mind*, 107 (1998), pp. 113–35.

⁶ The demonstrative theory of quotation was originally proposed by Donald Davidson in 'Quotation', in his *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford UP, 1984), pp. 79–92. For a recent elaboration see H. Cappelen and E. LePore, 'Varieties of Quotation', *Mind*, 106 (1997), pp. 429–50.

For Saka, quotation is a device for ruling out the extension of the expression being quoted as the intended interpretation. Thus quoting consists of exhibiting a token of the quotation of an expression, directly ostending the token itself, and deferringly ostending the associated shape of the quotation, its sound-pattern (which may or may not include intonation), its syntactic structure (some noun-phrase structure) and its intension. The latter determines the following bundle as possible extensions for the quotation: tokens, orthographic and phonetic, of the expression being quoted, its shape, its sound-pattern, its syntactic structure and its intension. While all this multiple ostension is going on, attention is being drawn to one or more of the items within the bundle of features associated with the expression being quoted as the quotation's extension. The extension of the quoted expression is not itself included in this bundle.

Unlike its rivals, Saka's theory has the advantage that it avoids an all too common restrictiveness over the intended interpretation of quotations. It is often maintained, for example, that quotations invariably refer to linguistic types. This is at odds with the possibility that such common attributions as

5. Galileo said 'The earth moves'

might be true even if the attributee did not speak the language of the quoted phrase. Saka's theory can avoid this difficulty by saying that in the relevant context in which (5) should be taken as true, the extension of the quotation would be the intension of the quoted phrase. This squares well with our judgement that (5) might be true regardless of the language Galileo spoke.

However, an initial difficulty with Saka's formal disambiguation approach is that with all its generous lenience towards the intended interpretation of quotations – there is a whole array of possible extensions to choose from – it is still too restrictive. A recalcitrant case in point is the employment of quotation in instances such as

6. Marx was the first to say 'Workers of the world, unite'.

It seems (assuming no collaboration with Engels) that for most information-conveying contexts this attribution should be taken as true, even if Marx only pronounced the German '*Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt euch*' and never in his life pronounced the English version of this famous last line of the *Communist Manifesto*, either in speech or in writing. In this, (6) is akin to (5), which immediately rules out tokens (orthographic and phonetic), shape and sound-pattern of the expression quoted in (6) as possible extensions for the quotation in question.

It is also obvious that the syntactically structured compound of the lexical entries comprising the quoted phrase does not provide a suitable extension.

But the attribution in (6) is not completely indifferent to linguistic formulation, as would be the case had the appropriate extension of the quotation been the intension of the phrase being quoted. In this, (6) is unlike (5). The former is about a slogan, i.e., about a particular *wording*. And this is so even if it is not about the words of a particular language. What is attributed to Marx is not merely the saying of something which has the same intension as ‘Workers of the world, unite’. On the other hand, it is not the production of tokens of particular English words. What is attributed to Marx in (6) is a particular way of putting things into words which has recognizable versions in many languages – it is a slogan with universal applicability and universal appeal. This rules out the intension of ‘Workers of the world, unite’ as a possible extension for “‘Workers of the world, unite’” in (6). So we are left with no remaining possibilities for the extension of the quotation.

The concluding line of Saka’s paper (p. 133) reads ‘A fuller understanding of [the theory of quotation as formal disambiguation of multiple ostension] now awaits further research in psychopragmatics’. But it is hard to see which theoretical posit of psychopragmatics could possibly figure within Saka’s bundle of features associated with the expression being quoted in (6) in order to provide an appropriate extension for the quotation in question. This would seem to require crossing over to sociopragmatics. Whatever is required, the adequacy of Saka’s proposal awaits the enrichment of this bundle of features in the appropriate way. Cases like (6), however, are also recalcitrant for most of the theories of quotation currently available.

But there are additional problems lurking for the formal disambiguation approach to quotation, problems against which the demonstrative theory of quotation seems clearly effective. Saka’s account can indeed accommodate simultaneous use and mention which does not involve quotation. In Quine’s famous example the name ‘Giorgione’ is both used and mentioned, in so far as (3) is best understood as being both about Giorgione and about his name. On Saka’s account this is explained by the fact that exhibiting a token of ‘Giorgione’ in this context directly ostends the very token exhibited while deferringly ostending an associated shape, sound-pattern, syntactic category, intension and extension. While this multiple ostension is going on, attention is being drawn to the extension of ‘Giorgione’, and at the same time to one of the other associated items. This is what simultaneous use and mention comes to on this picture.

But what are we to say about simultaneous use and mention involving quotation? A number of questions arise here. First, we saw that Saka takes a quoted expression to refer to any of the items associated with the expression being quoted except its extension. In this way we may understand

4. Quine says that quotation ‘has a certain anomalous feature’

as involving two mutually compatible intentions: to draw attention to the associated shape (let us say) of the quoted material by way of mentioning the specific words Quine uses in *Mathematical Logic*, and simultaneously to draw attention to the intension of the verb phrase being quoted by using these words as part of the embedded 'that'-clause. (I shall return to the second feature of Saka's analysis shortly.) But here is a variation on (4):

7. Quine says that 'quotation has' some abnormal characteristic.

We may imagine (7) as said in refutation of the false claim that in *Mathematical Logic* Quine takes his own account of quotation to have conclusively demonstrated quotation to be a straightforward affair. The speaker of (7) is then quoting Quine's own words from the book in question by way of refuting this false claim. But how would (7) be understood in the light of Saka's account? As the phrase being quoted has neither syntactic category nor intension to call its own, it is difficult to see how we can avoid the conclusion that the quotation's extension, by default, would be either the associated shape or the associated sound-pattern. But in that case not only is (7) left unaccounted for as a case of simultaneous use and mention, but it is consequently rendered ungrammatical – surely an unwelcome result.

One response to this objection that might suggest itself at this point is to say that the objection turns on a narrow and uncharitable reading of the formal disambiguation approach. Cases like (7) can be handled, it might be argued, if we only keep in mind that there must be *something* at the level of intension to correspond to the words 'quotation has' as they appear in the relevant sentence (i.e., their contribution to the intension of Quine's 'Quotation has a certain anomalous feature'). In that case, all we need to say is that whatever it is which so corresponds has to figure within the bundle of features of the quoted expression in order to provide an extension for the quotation in question, and that it is to this particular item that attention must be drawn if (7) is to avoid ungrammaticality.

Yet even if we set aside for the moment the question whether the extension of the quoted phrase in quotational mixings of use and mention should always be thought of as the intension of the expression being quoted, this kind of response is ultimately ineffective. To take the case of quoting written words first, and in particular the practice of bracketing linguistic items and inserting them into quotations in order to facilitate the smooth embedding of the quoted material, is the bracketed material part of what is being quoted? It seems obvious that cases where whole words or longer phrases are bracketed in this way are ones in which we would not count the bracketed items as part of what is being quoted. But what are we to say about cases where only parts of words are bracketed?

8. Quine says that quotation has '[a]nomalous features'

is an indirect discourse report which relates to the (possible) pronouncement by Quine of

9. Anomalous features abound when it comes to quotation.

We are confronted with the following choice. Either '[a]' counts as part of what is being quoted in (8), or it does not. (Given our bracketing practice with respect to whole words, it seems *ad hoc* to suggest that it does.) Whichever the case may be, neither '[a]nomalous features' nor 'nomalous features' has a syntactic category or an intension. So by Saka's account the quotation would presumably refer, by default, to the associated shape. And that again would rule out (8) as a case of simultaneous use and mention. The upshot of all this is that, as it stands, the suggestion that we should construe the quoted phrase in cases of quotational mixing of use and mention as referring to the intension of the expression being quoted fails to account for the fact that the mixing may involve the enclosing within quotation marks of parts of discourse which are not independently significant.

But is there any reason in the first place to treat quoted expressions in mixed cases of use and mention as invariably referring to the intension of the quoted material? This general issue reveals a marked weakness of Saka's proposal as it compares with the demonstrative theory of quotation. According to Saka's formal disambiguation approach, quotation signals the exclusion of one aspect of the ordinary use of expressions – the extension. Thus on this approach it will not do to say simply that, in cases of simultaneous use and mention involving quotation, the material appearing within the quotation marks is being mentioned while it is being used as it would be used otherwise. Saka's account, according to which the quoted material cannot retain its ordinary extension, makes it difficult to see how quoted words can, strictly speaking, be mentioned and used *simultaneously*. This is so because the whole point of quotation, on this view, is to rule out the ordinary use of the quoted words.

Let us examine this feature of the theory more closely. Saka's account would have the quotation in

4. Quine says that quotation 'has a certain anomalous feature'

refer to the intension of the expression being quoted. The fact that the quoted expression does not have its ordinary extension, as this account would have it, may not seem initially to pose a problem for the formal disambiguation approach. This is because of the fact that the examples usually adduced for the quotational mixing of use and mention involve the

embedding of quotations within indirect discourse reports. The customary way of thinking about the extensions of expressions partaking in the ‘that’-clauses of indirect discourse reports is that they are other than their ordinary extensions – famously, they are thought to be their ordinary intensions. Thus it might seem that the extension of the quoted expression in cases of mixed use and mention, by virtue of which it is being used besides being mentioned, must be the intension of the expression being quoted. But this cannot be right.

In the first place, as we saw above, the quotational mixing of use and mention may involve quoting portions of discourse which are not independently significant. But further complications arise with Saka’s suggestion. I might report Senator Kennedy’s admission

10. Bobby was the brightest of us all

by saying

11. The Senator said that ‘Bobby’ Kennedy was the brightest of all the Kennedy siblings.

On Saka’s approach, in order for (11) to count as a mixed case of use and mention, the extension of the embedded quotation must be the intension of the expression being quoted. But it would be bizarre for the intension of ‘Bobby’ as it figures in (10) to provide an extension for the quotation in (11). After all, the standard view would identify the intension of ‘Bobby’ in (10) with the intension of ‘Bobby Kennedy’ in

12. Bobby Kennedy was the brightest of us all

which would be identified, in turn, with the extension of ‘Bobby Kennedy’ in

13. The Senator said that Bobby Kennedy was the brightest of all the Kennedy siblings.

Now whatever else the quoted name “‘Bobby’” might be doing in (11), it also forms a proper part of a name whose extension should be identical with the intension of ‘Bobby Kennedy’ in (12) and with the extension of ‘Bobby Kennedy’ in (13). That is, given that (11) is a mixed case of use and mention, “‘Bobby’ Kennedy’ in (11) must at least have the same extension as that of ‘Bobby Kennedy’ in (13) – this supplies the ‘use’ side of the mixing in question. (The ‘mention’ side is supplied by the employment of “‘Bobby’” to mention Robert Kennedy’s nickname.) But if we now go back and try to account for (11) as a case in point under the formal disambiguation approach, we find that the extension of “‘Bobby’ Kennedy’ in (11) comes to possess the exotic feature of being, non-trivially, a function of itself. This is

so because, under Saka's scheme, the 'use' side of this mixed case is supplied by allowing that "'Bobby'" has the intension of 'Bobby' in (10) – that is, the extension of 'Bobby Kennedy' in (13) – as its own extension. And in so far as "'Bobby" Kennedy' in (11) contains a proper part possessing its own extension, 'Kennedy' in (11) becomes a functor, even though it should behave just like 'Kennedy' in (13).

To put this more formally, letting 'E(...)' abbreviate 'the extension of ...', 'I(...)' abbreviate 'the intension of ...' and '(...(n))' abbreviate 'the expression "...'" in item (n)', we get the following identities:

- E('Bobby'(11)) = I(Bobby(10)) [Saka's proposal]
- I(Bobby(10)) = I(Bobby Kennedy(12)) = E(Bobby Kennedy(13)) [received view]
- E(Bobby Kennedy(13)) = E('Bobby' Kennedy(11)) [(11) is a case of mixed use and mention].

From these we get

$$E('Bobby'(11)) = E('Bobby' Kennedy(11)).$$

III. THE DEMONSTRATIVE APPROACH

Nothing like this sort of complication arises for the demonstrative theory of quotation. According to Davidson's original formulation of the theory, we employ quotation to attribute typographical and phonetic shapes to a speaker via demonstrative reference to samples of those shapes. And according to the complementary paratactic analysis of saying-that locutions, we employ indirect discourse to attribute to a speaker an utterance with some specified semantic content, construed nominalistically as an utterance which same-says with one exhibited by the attributer.⁷

Cases of direct quotation such as (5) below are analysed as (14):

- 5. Galileo said 'The earth moves'
- 14. Galileo said something of which this is a token. The earth moves.

Here the demonstrative 'this' of the first item points to the tokens of the words comprising the second item. Thus attributing words to Galileo by quoting them is achieved by exhibiting samples of those words.

Now Davidson's original version of the demonstrative theory does indeed deem cases like (5) invariably false, which is clearly a disadvantage. This is

⁷ See Davidson's 'On Saying That', *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, pp. 93–108. On the same-saying relation, see Tyler Burge, 'On Davidson's "On Saying That"', in E. LePore (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

because Galileo, not being an English speaker, obviously did not employ something of which the second item of the analysis is a token, either in speech or in writing. But according to the most recent version of the demonstrative theory, due to Cappelen and LePore (p. 441), the proper analysis of (5) would be

15. Galileo said something which same-tokens with this. The earth moves.

The novelty here lies in introducing the relation of same-tokening, which Cappelen and LePore wish to leave as context-sensitive and as free from *a priori* constraints as Davidson's original same-saying relation is meant to be.⁸

According to this version of the theory, (5) can indeed come out true in the light of its analysis, provided that Galileo said something which same-tokens with the demonstrated item of (15).

The demonstrative theory of quotation can be easily applied to cases of quotational mixing of use and mention along the following lines:

4. Quine says that quotation 'has a certain anomalous feature'
is analysed as

16. Quine says, using something which same-tokens with this, that quotation has a certain anomalous feature.

(The full analysis, incorporating the complementary treatment of indirect discourse, would be 'Some utterance of Quine's same-tokens with this and same-says with this. Quotation has a certain anomalous feature.') Under this analysis, the 'mention' side of this mixed case is achieved by the demonstrative 'this' pointing to the tokens of the last five words of (16), 'has a certain anomalous feature', whereas the 'use' side is supplied by their also functioning as they would had they not been quoted, as part of the 'that'-clause.

Cases of quoting written words, where a bracketed item is inserted into the quotation in order to facilitate the smooth embedding of the quoted material, can be easily accommodated. For example,

8. Quine says that quotation has '[a]nomalous features'
can receive the demonstrative treatment

17. Quine says, using something which same-tokens with this, that quotation has anomalous features

where the demonstrative 'this' points to the tokens of the last sixteen characters of (17) with the relevant spacing. And a case like the one in which only a proper part of a proper name is being quoted can receive an analogous treatment. Thus

⁸ See their 'Reply to Tsohatzidis', *Mind*, 107 (1998), pp. 665–6.

11. The Senator said that ‘Bobby’ Kennedy was the brightest of all the Kennedy siblings

would be analysed as

18. The Senator said, using something which same-tokens with this, that Bobby Kennedy was the brightest of all the Kennedy siblings.

Here the demonstrative ‘this’ would point to the first part of the proper name ‘Bobby Kennedy’.

Now even though no proponents of the demonstrative theory of quotation appear to suggest this themselves, their theory can be extended in a straightforward manner to accommodate cases such as the following:

19. How many times must I tell you ‘Don’t do that’?
 20. To this I just say ‘Whatever will be, will be’.

Concerning both of these examples, we might be inclined to say that the quoted material is not just being mentioned. The first might seem to include the imperative ‘Don’t do that’ and not just a mentioning thereof; the second might seem to include the adage ‘Whatever will be, will be’ and not just a mentioning thereof. These cases are unlike the paradigmatic cases of quotational mixing of use and mention discussed in the literature, in that rendering (19) and (20) as not involving the mixing in question does not engender ungrammaticality. But it seems clearly advantageous if a theory of quotation can accommodate cases such as (19) and (20) and construe them as mixed cases of use and mention.

Under a demonstrative approach, (19) and (20) would receive the following analyses:

21. How many times must I tell you something which same-tokens with this? Don’t do that.
 22. To this, I just say something which same-tokens with this. Whatever will be, will be.

The principal advantage of this account as it pertains to such examples is that the speaker of (20), for example, can be understood in the light of its analysis to be making two separate claims. The first is about something the speaker actually goes on to say, which bears the same-tokening relation to the second item of the analysis (this is the ‘mention’ side of the mixed case). The second claim is about the future (this is the ‘use’ side). The novelty of the analysis lies in permitting the quoted material to function as it would had it not been quoted. This is not to say that the quoted material would have to be uttered assertively, as it were. The speaker of (20) may be

best understood, in context, to be employing the habitual indicative mood in speaking of his detested habit of repeating empty truisms, in which case (20) should not be construed as mixing use and mention. But if (20), given a suitable context, should be so construed, then according to the demonstrative theory's account we should understand the second item of (22) as being uttered assertively. Similarly, if (19) should be taken as a mixed case of use and mention, the second item of (21) is uttered with imperatival force. The fact that the exhibited items of paratactic analyses may possess independent illocutionary force is a feature of these accounts which is often overlooked.⁹

Other accounts of quotation (i.e., the name theory and the description theory) would only have the speaker of (20) speak of the linguistic item in question by employing a singular term. This means that on these alternative accounts the item spoken of, 'Whatever will be, will be', would either merely be called upon by name, or merely receive a structural description. According to the identity theory, the quoted expression would be used in a special way (i.e., quotationally) to mention itself. This means that on all three accounts, whatever is being quoted could not also be functioning as an expression of, say, stoicism about the future (this being but an extension of these theories' general inability to accommodate the quotational mixing of use and mention). Likewise, to say, as Saka must, that the quoted words in such examples cannot retain their ordinary extensions is to ignore the possibility that we may employ quotation while fully endorsing as our own what we quote. In (20) the speaker is, among other things, fully endorsing the quoted phrase as his own, with the intent of saying something about the future. The demonstrative theory permits the quoted material to function as it would but for the fact of quotation while being quoted. All this comes out just as we expect it to. Thus since the demonstrative theory of quotation can accommodate the quotational mixing of use and mention, in the very fact that it permits the quoted material to function as it would had it not been quoted, this theory still has no genuine rivals.

Drawing on the discussion with which I began, I conclude that the demonstrative theory is the only theory of quotation currently available which does not flagrantly promote the malignant version of the use/mention distinction.¹⁰

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⁹ But Davidson remarks on it at *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* pp. 106–7.

¹⁰ For comments on earlier versions of this paper I am indebted to Jeremy Fantl, Richard Heck, James Pryor, Hilary Putnam, Shelly Rosenblum and an anonymous referee for *The Philosophical Quarterly*.