

Semantics for Monists

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Assume that the only thing before you is a statue made of some alloy. Call those who think that there is one thing before you in such a case *monists*. Call those who think there are at least two things before you in such a case *pluralists*. The most common arguments for pluralism run as follows. The statue is claimed to have some property P that the piece of alloy lacks (or vice versa), and hence it is concluded that they are distinct. Most often, the predicates employed in such arguments to express the crucial property are predicates expressing 'temporal properties', such as existing at a certain time; or 'modal properties', such as possibly being spherical; or 'constitution properties', such as being made of a certain sort of material. In a recent paper, Kit Fine has noted that such predicates suffer from various defects that make it possible for the monist to plausibly resist the relevant versions of the pluralist's arguments. For this reason, Fine considers a number of predicates that do not suffer from these defects, and constructs new versions of the above argument using them. Fine argues that any attempt on the monist's part to resist his versions of the argument force the monist to adopt implausible positions in the philosophy of language. As against this, I argue that the monist has perfectly plausible responses to Fine's arguments that require the monist to adopt only quite reasonable positions in the philosophy of language.

1. Monists and pluralists

Philosophers these days disagree wildly about how many things I have in my condominium. Not that they have really thought much about my condominium and its contents. But in my condominium I have a nose cone from an air-to-surface missile made from steel. Now supposing my condominium contained nothing else, some philosophers would claim that in those circumstances my condominium would contain one thing: a missile nose cone. Others disagree. My condominium would contain (at least) two things in such a circumstance: a missile nose cone and the piece of steel from which it is made. Let us call those who think my condominium would contain one thing *monists*; and let us call those who think my condominium would contain (at least) two things *pluralists*.¹

¹ Because it is not really relevant to my discussion, I have not bothered here to distinguish various forms of monism and pluralism. See Fine (2003, p. 198) for discussion. I should add that some philosophers would claim that the question 'How many things are in my condominium?' has no determinate answer since they hold that 'thing' is not a genuine count noun. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pointing this out. Perhaps it would be better to talk of how many *objects* are in my condominium.

The most common sort of argument for pluralism runs as follows. The nose cone is claimed to have some property P and the piece of steel is claimed to lack P (or vice versa). Thus, it is concluded that the nose cone is not identical to the piece of steel. Schematically we can represent the form of the argument as follows:

The Master Argument (MA)

$\phi(t)$

$\neg\phi(s)$

So, $(s \neq t)$

where the predicate ' ϕ ' expresses a property and ' s ' and ' t ' are both singular terms (say names or definite descriptions—in the case being considered perhaps 'the nose cone' and 'the piece of steel'). Most often, the predicate ' ϕ ' in arguments employed by pluralists express 'temporal properties' such as existing at a certain time, or 'modal properties' such as possibly being spherical, or 'constitution properties', such as being made of a certain sort of material.

Kit Fine (2003) has noted that such predicates suffer from various defects that make it possible for the monist to plausibly resist the relevant versions of the pluralist's arguments.² For this reason, Fine considers a number of predicates that do not suffer from these defects. Considering a statue and the piece of alloy from which it is made, Fine claims that the statue may satisfy the following predicates, while the piece of alloy from which it is made does not (or vice versa): 'defective', 'substandard', 'well made', 'badly made', 'valuable', 'ugly', 'Romanesque', 'insured', and 'admired'. Thus, instances of MA can be produced using these predicates in place of ' ϕ '. In this way the pluralist avoids the defects of predicates expressing temporal, modal or constitution properties.

Now Fine notes that the pluralist will give the following justification for the validity of her version of MA (which, let us suppose, employs one of Fine's predicates for ' ϕ '). In the first premiss of MA, ' ϕ ' expresses a certain property P and ' t ' designates an object o .³ Thus the premiss is true iff o has P . In the second premiss, ' ϕ ' again expresses P and ' s ' designates an object o' . Thus, the premiss is true iff o' lacks P .

² See p. 206.

³ I use the term 'designate' here instead of 'refer' because I have allowed that ' s ' and ' t ' may be definite descriptions. Roughly, when I say that ' t ' designates (only) o in the premiss, I mean that in virtue of containing ' t ', the premiss is true or false depending (only) on which properties o has.

Now in the conclusion, '*t*' designates *o* and '*s*' designates *o'*' and so the conclusion is true iff *o* is not identical to *o'*'. But then if the premisses are both true, and so *o* possesses and *o'* lacks *P*, then the conclusion has to be true, *o* must not be identical to *o'*', since one thing cannot have and lack the same property.

As Fine rightly points out, the monist owes us some account of where the pluralist's reasoning here breaks down. Assuming that the occurrences of '*s*' and '*t*' in the version of MA in question designate objects and that the occurrences of the predicate '*ϕ*' in the version of MA express properties, if we hold that all the occurrences of '*s*' designate the *same* object, and similarly for occurrences of '*t*', and that all the occurrences of '*ϕ*' express the same property, the pluralist's justification for the validity of MA goes through: the truth of the premisses will then require that *o* possesses and *o'* lacks *P*. And this will ensure that *o* is not identical to *o'*', which is what the conclusion claims (on the assumptions given). Hence if the monist agrees that the occurrences of the terms '*s*' and '*t*' designate objects and the occurrences of '*ϕ*' express properties, it looks as though either he must deny that all occurrences of '*s*' or '*t*' designate the same thing in MA, or he must deny that all occurrences of '*ϕ*' express the same property. For example, if he held that the occurrence of '*t*' in premiss 1 and the occurrence of '*t*' in the conclusion designated different things, the truth of the premisses would not ensure the truth of the conclusion. (Of course, similar remarks apply to '*s*'.) Similarly, if the occurrences of '*ϕ*' express different properties, the truth of the premisses does not ensure the truth of the conclusion.

Thus, again as noted by Fine, unless the monist wishes to challenge the pluralist's justification for the validity of MA in some rather radical way, for example by claiming that occurrences of '*ϕ*' in MA do not express properties at all or by claiming that occurrences of '*s*' or '*t*' do not designate anything, it appears she must either claim that the occurrences of '*ϕ*' in the premisses express different properties, or claim that the occurrences of '*t*' in the premiss and conclusion designate different things (or make this claim about '*s*').⁴

I think Fine is right that the monist must take one (or both!) of these latter options. Versions of MA can be formulated with very many predicates and singular terms. To claim that *every* version breaks down in one of the radical ways (occurrences of '*s*' or '*t*' fail to designate, or

⁴ In claiming that occurrences of '*t*' in the premiss and conclusion designate different things, the monist could claim, for example, that in the premiss '*t*' designates *o* and a 'mode of presentation' of *o*, whereas in the conclusion it designates only *o*.

occurrences of ‘ ϕ ’ fail to express properties) just seems quite implausible. So I think the monist must claim either that the occurrences of ‘ ϕ ’ in the premisses express different properties, or that the occurrences of ‘ t ’ in the premiss and conclusion designate different things (or make this claim about ‘ s ’).

Fine argues that neither of these strategies can be plausibly maintained by the monist. If Fine is right, this leaves the monist without a plausible explanation of where the relevant version of MA breaks down. Fine concludes from this that the original versions of MA employing his favoured predicates ‘should be allowed to stand’, and so pluralism is true. Against this, I wish to argue that plausible versions of *both* strategies of response are available to the monist. One strategy will apply to versions of MA employing some of Fine’s predicates, and the other strategy will apply to versions of MA employing other of Fine’s predicates. By using a ‘divide and conquer’ strategy, applying one strategy to certain cases and the other strategy to other cases, the monist can resist the versions of MA in question. I should emphasize that I am not here defending monism, and I have serious doubts about the view. I claim only that the monist has plausible explanations of why the versions of MA in question are not valid.

The plan of the paper is as follows. In section 2, I present Fine’s argument that the monist cannot challenge the pluralist’s justification for the claim that (the relevant version of) MA is valid by holding that the occurrences of ‘ t ’ (or ‘ s ’) in the premiss and in the conclusion designate different things. I then respond to this argument. In section 3, I present Fine’s argument that the monist cannot challenge the pluralist’s justification for the claim that (the relevant version of) MA is valid by holding that occurrences of ‘ ϕ ’ in the premisses express different properties. I then provide a response to this argument.

2. Referential shift

As indicated, one way the monist could challenge the pluralist’s justification for claim that the relevant version of MA is valid is to claim that the occurrence of ‘ t ’ designates something in the premiss and the occurrence in the conclusion designates something else. Following Fine, let us put this by saying that the monist claims that ‘ t ’ undergoes *referential shift* in MA. Now the monist must have some explanation for why this shift occurs. I agree with Fine that the most *prima facie* plausible explanation of this is neo-Fregean. Just as Frege held that verbs of propositional attitude like ‘believes’ shift the reference of singular terms

they embed, so the monist should hold that the predicate employed in the relevant version of MA, say 'badly made' to use the example Fine mainly employs, shifts the reference of singular terms. The most plausible version of this strategy would hold that the references of both '*t*' and '*s*' are shifted in the premisses. For just as 'John believes that ...' and 'John does not believe that ...' both shift the references of singular terms (and predicates, of course) in the embedded sentences, the monist should hold that '*... is badly made*' and '*... is not badly made*' both shift the references of singular terms in subject positions. Thus, the monist will hold that '*t*' in the premiss designates *o*, '*s*' in the premiss designates *o''*, '*t*' in the conclusion designates *o'*, and '*s*' in the conclusion designates *o'''*. Further, he will hold that in the conclusion '*t*' and '*s*' designate their 'standard referents', since neither the identity predicate nor negation is a reference-shifter. Again following Fine, let us call the shifted referents of '*t*' and '*s*' in the premisses their *nonstandard referents*. Now the explanation of why the relevant version of MA is invalid is quite clear. According to the monist, the premisses jointly claim that *o* is badly made and *o''* is not. And the conclusion claims that *o'* is not identical to *o'''*. Clearly, the conclusion does not follow from the premisses so construed.

Why does Fine object to the monist's referential shift strategy? Fine writes:

Now whatever might be the merits of referential shift as an explanation of opacity in other cases, it is really not an option here. And this is because the monist is not merely proposing a semantic doctrine to the effect that certain contexts are opaque. He is also proposing the metaphysical view that all coincidents are the same and, indeed, it is presumably only because of the metaphysical view that he feels obliged to defend the semantic doctrine. But the danger now is that the explanation of opacity in terms of referential shift will run into conflict with the metaphysical view. For will not the nonstandard referents to which the explanation appeals be distinct from yet coincident with the standard referents for the very same terms? (Fine 2003, p. 210)

So Fine's objection is that the monist will be forced into holding that the nonstandard referents of '*t*' and '*s*' in the premisses are *coincident* with their standard referents, which the occurrences in the conclusion designate. But the monist is committed to identifying coincident entities. So the monist's semantic commitments require him to say that the standard and nonstandard referents are distinct. But he will also be forced to hold that the standard and nonstandard referents are coincident. And then his metaphysical commitments require him to say they

are identical. Thus his semantic views directly conflict with his metaphysical views.

The crucial question to ask about Fine's argument here is why he thinks the monist is forced to hold that the standard and nonstandard referents are coincident, (and hence, given his metaphysical commitments, identical)? So as to make no mistake about interpreting Fine, let me quote him in full:

The proponent of referential shift will hold that 'the statue' in 'the statue is badly made' has a non-standard referent. Now clearly, the nonstandard referent of 'the statue' is distinct from the standard referent. But there is also strong reason for taking it to be a material thing coincident with the standard referent. For we may correctly say that 'the badly made statue is composed of bronze' or that 'the badly made statue is lying on the floor'. Thus, it seems as if the non-standard referent has the very same underlying physical attributes as the standard referent. And given that this is so, it is hard to see how it could fail to be a material thing or fail to be coincident with the standard referent. (Fine 2003, p. 210)

Fine claims that since it is correct to say 'the badly made statue is made of bronze' or 'the badly made statue is lying on the floor' and other such similar things, it follows that the nonstandard referent of 'the statue' has the same underlying physical attributes (being made of bronze, lying on the floor) as its standard referent. But this inference goes through only if the *standard* referent of 'the badly made statue' is the *nonstandard* referent of 'the statue' in sentences like 'the statue is badly made'. For only if this is so does the truth of 'the badly made statue is made of bronze' give us reason to think that the *nonstandard* referent of 'the statue' (in sentences like 'the statue is badly made') is made of bronze and hence 'has the very same underlying physical attributes as the standard referent'.

The problem for Fine is that the monist who is a neo-Fregean reference-shifter should *deny* that the standard referent of 'the badly made statue' is the nonstandard referent of 'the statue', and hence he should hold that the correctness of 'the badly made statue is made of bronze' does not show at all that the nonstandard referent of 'the statue' is made of bronze. Fine assumes that if '... is badly made' is a reference-shifting context, then 'the badly made statue' has as its standard referent the non-standard referent of 'the statue'. His idea, I suppose, is that if, in 'the statue is badly made', '... is badly made' is a reference-shifter, then when we move the reference-shifting predicative material into the definite description yielding 'the badly made statue', the resulting definite description will have as its standard referent the nonstandard refer-

ent of the original description 'the statue'. But there is simply no reason to think this. Indeed the neo-Fregean is compelled to deny it given what he must say about paradigmatic cases of reference-shifting.

Consider this case. In 'Sam believes that the author is smart' the neo-Fregean claims that 'believes' induces a reference shift, so that 'the author' has a nonstandard referent. Now will he claim that lifting the referent shifting material into the definite description here results in a definite description that has as its standard Fregean referent the *non*-standard Fregean referent of 'the author' as it is embedded with respect to 'believes'? That is, does he claim that 'the author believed by Sam to be smart' has as its standard referent the nonstandard referent (e.g. the sense) of 'the author' in the sentence 'Sam believes the author is smart'? Clearly not! The Fregean must claim that the standard referent of 'the author believed by Sam to be smart' is an author, not a sense. And indeed, (given certain assumptions) it is the same author that is the standard referent of 'the author'.⁵

Exactly similarly, the monist who is a neo-Fregean should say that though in 'the statue is badly made', 'the statue' has its referent shifted, none the less the standard referent of 'the badly made statue' is a statue, and indeed is the same statue as is the standard referent of 'the statue'. But then the correctness of 'the badly made statue is made of bronze', far from showing that the *non*standard referent of 'the statue' is made of bronze, shows harmlessly that the standard referent of 'the statue' is made of bronze. Hence, Fine's argument that the neo-Fregean monist must hold that the standard and nonstandard referents of 'the statue' are coincident fails. He is left with no argument against the referential shift strategy of the monist.

But perhaps I have made too much of Fine's use of 'the badly made statue' and his views about its standard referent.⁶ Perhaps Fine would note that I can truly say 'The statue is badly made and lying on the floor'. But then if 'badly made' shifts reference here as the monist claims, I am

⁵It might be claimed that there is a difference in the two cases in that in 'the badly made statue' the reference-shifting predicative material immediately follows the determiner 'the', whereas in 'the author believed by Sam to be smart' it does not. Three points about this. First, though this is true, I see no reason to think that this would result in the former having as its standard referent the nonstandard referent of 'the statue', but not result in the latter having as its standard referent the nonstandard referent of 'the author'. Second, and perhaps more importantly, we can make quite good sense of a description like 'the believed by Sam to be smart author' however marginal it sounds. And this expression clearly has as its standard referent an author and not a sense. Finally, neo-Fregeans will presumably hold that intensional transitive verbs like 'fear' are reference-shifters as well (see discussion below). But again they will not hold that 'the feared author' has as its standard referent the nonstandard referent of 'the author' in 'The author is feared'.

⁶Thanks to an anonymous referee for this point.

truly saying that the nonstandard referent of ‘the statue’ is lying on the floor, and we once again open the door to the standard and nonstandard referent of ‘the statue’ having the same physical attributes and so being coincident and hence identical. Here again, however, the neo-Fregean already has to address this problem in the case of paradigmatic reference-shifting devices. In a sentence like ‘Superman is standing in the corner and believed by Lois to be handsome’ we must be talking about the standard referent in one predication and the nonstandard referent in another.⁷ Somehow, the neo-Fregean needs to be able to get this result, and however she does so, she can apply this mechanism to ‘The statue is badly made and lying on the floor’.⁸ So no new problem arises for the neo-Fregean monist that the neo-Fregean did not already have.

It is important to appreciate what I have tried to emphasize, namely that if the neo-Fregean monist says about this case what he *must* say about exactly similar cases involving what are for him paradigmatic reference-shifting devices (‘believes’), he is immune to Fine’s argument against his referential shift strategy to explain the invalidity of (the relevant version of) MA. Thus, the neo-Fregean monist’s response to Fine here is as principled as it could be.

It is one thing to show that Fine’s argument against the neo-Fregean monist’s referential shift response fails. It is another thing to argue that the neo-Fregean monist’s referential shift response is plausible. Is it? Well, I do not think the claim that the example we have been discussing, ‘is badly made’, is a reference-shifting device is plausible. I stuck with this example here only because Fine uses it and I will discuss ‘is badly made’ in the next section. But I think the referential shift strategy is plausible when applied to versions of MA that employ at least one of Fine’s predicates.

To see this, recall again that the paradigms of reference-shifting devices are verbs of propositional attitude. However, presumably the neo-Fregean philosopher also must say that certain transitive verbs that take NP complements are reference-shifting devices.⁹ Such verbs, which include ‘seeks’, ‘fears’, ‘worships’, and ‘admires’, are called *intensional transitive verbs*. The reason that the neo-Fregean presumably must say

⁷ I am assuming that the neo-Fregean would hold that ‘Superman is believed by Lois to be handsome’ might be true while ‘Clark Kent is believed by Lois to be handsome’ is false.

⁸ In Frege (1892), Frege claims that there are constructions in which a single occurrence of a clause must be ‘taken twice over’, once with its customary reference and once with its indirect reference (p. 169). Since Frege already allows a single occurrence of an expression to be taken once with its customary reference and once with its indirect reference, it seems he could do the same thing in the cases at hand.

⁹ I assume here that the complements of these verbs are noun phrases as they appear to be, though Den Dikken et al (1996) claim that they are really covert clauses.

that these verbs are reference-shifting devices is that they exhibit behaviour that is similar to that of verbs of propositional attitude. In particular, these verbs resist substitution of co-referential terms in object position and sentences containing them have readings on which quantifiers in object position appear to take narrow scope with respect to the verbs. So the first of the following sentences may seem true, while the second seems false:

- (1a) John seeks Mark Twain.
- (1b) John seeks Samuel Clemens.

And the following sentence might seem true, even though there are no unicorns and so John seeks no *particular* unicorn:

- (2) John seeks a unicorn.

Though Frege himself did not discuss these verbs so far as I know, given the similarity of the behaviour of these verbs and verbs of propositional attitude, neo-Fregeans seem forced to hold that intensional transitive verbs are also reference-shifting devices. And so neo-Fregeans like Forbes (2000) want a uniform explanation of the failure of substitution involving verbs of propositional attitude and intensional transitive verbs.

I should mention that though I have talked in terms of reference-shifting here, on a neo-Fregean view like that of Forbes, strictly names do not shift reference in what I have called reference-shifting contexts. Such contexts contain possibly covert occurrences of the logophor 'so'. Hence 'Lois believed Clark is a wimp' is represented as 'Lois believed Clark is a wimp, so labelled'. In the latter, 'Clark' still refers to Clark. The point is, though, that this is a broadly Fregean strategy, since in such cases the truth of the sentence in question depends on *more* than just the referent of the relevant name. In an extended sense, I consider this a reference-shifting strategy: the referent *and* the name itself are relevant to truth or falsity here, whereas in 'non-shifted' cases, only the referent is relevant.¹⁰ It is in part because I am using 'reference-shifting' in this extended sense that I use the term 'neo-Fregean'.

¹⁰ Indeed, any view on which whether a given predicate applies to an object depends on more (or something other) than just the properties of the object is a view according to which the predicate is a reference-shifter, the way I use the term. Finally, I should add that, though I talked above as though all intensional transitives resist substitution of co-referential singular terms and allow for narrow scope readings of quantifiers in object position, they actually vary on these features, as Forbes and others have noted. Some seem to allow substitution but also allow quantifiers to take narrow scope in object position (e.g. 'needs'); others resist substitution, but it is not clear that they allow narrow-scope readings for (all) quantifiers in object position (e.g. 'worships', 'admires').

In any case, one of Fine's predicates, 'admires', is an intensional transitive verb. And as I have just argued, the neo-Fregean has independent reason to hold that such verbs are reference-shifting devices. Thus, the neo-Fregean monist should hold that versions of MA employing 'admires' fail due to its being a reference-shifter. It is important to see, what I hope to have already suggested, that the neo-Fregean's rejection of the relevant versions of MA is as principled as it could be, since she is independently committed to intensional transitive verbs, including 'admires', being reference-shifters.

So in summary, I think that the neo-Fregean monist's claim that some versions of MA employing Fine's predicates (those that employ 'admires') fail due to referential shift is independently motivated and very plausible indeed.

3. Predicational shift

A second way that the monist could challenge the pluralist's justification for the relevant version of MA is to deny that there is a single property expressed by the two occurrences of 'ϕ' in premisses (1) and (2). Somehow, the occurrences of 'ϕ' in the different premisses express different properties. If this were right, the truth of the premisses of MA would be consistent with the denial of its conclusion. For the truth of premiss (1) would entail that the thing designated by the occurrence of 't' in it had the property *P* expressed by the occurrence of 'ϕ' in it. And the truth of premiss (2) would entail that the thing designated by the occurrence of 's' in it failed to have the property *Q* (distinct from *P*) expressed by the occurrence of 'ϕ' in it. But this would not require the things designated by the relevant occurrences of 's' and 't' to be distinct. With Fine, let us say that the strategy being considered holds that *predicational shift* occurs in the relevant version of MA.

The crucial question is whether there is a natural, plausible account of how/why predicational shift occurs in the relevant versions of MA. Fine notes that, initially at least, there does appear to be such an account. In Fine's favoured version of MA, the predicate employed in the premisses is 'badly made'. Describing what the monist will claim with respect to predicative shift in such a version of MA, he writes:

In asserting that the statue is badly made but the coincident piece of alloy is not, there must be a shift in the property attributed to the very same thing. We must be saying, in the first case, that the thing is badly made as a *statue* and denying, in the second case, that the thing is badly made as a *piece of alloy*. There is, moreover, a natural explanation of how the shift occurs. The

condition ‘__ is badly made’, absent any subject term, signifies a two-place relation—with one argument place to be filled by the thing that is said to be badly made and the other to be filled by the respect in which it is said to be badly made. The terms ‘the statue’ or ‘the piece of alloy’, on the other hand, both refer to a certain thing and invoke a certain respect, be it *statue* or *piece of alloy*. A sentence, such as ‘the statue is badly made’, is then used to convey that the referent of the subject term is badly made relative to the respect it invokes. (Fine 2003, p. 211)

Unfortunately, Fine never makes clear what these respects (here *statue*, *piece of alloy*) are that predicates like ‘badly made’ are interpreted relative to. But in any case, Fine calls predicates that invoke respects in the manner indicated *respect-relative predicates*. And Fine thinks there are clear cases of a respect-relative predicates: ‘qualified’ is the example he mainly discusses. Hence the monist can claim that just as ‘The professor is qualified’ and ‘The janitor is not qualified’ can both be true even though the professor is the janitor, in virtue of the fact that in the first sentence ‘qualified’ is interpreted relative to the respect *professor* and in the second it is interpreted relative to the respect *janitor*, so ‘The statue is badly made’ and ‘The piece of alloy is not badly made’ can both be true even though the statue is the piece of alloy, in virtue of the fact that in the first sentence ‘badly made’ is interpreted relative to the respect *statue* and in the second it is interpreted relative to the respect *piece of alloy*. Hence the premisses of the relevant version of MA may be true, even though the conclusion is false and the statue is the piece of alloy.

However there is a further wrinkle in the way Fine understands the monist’s account of predicational shift here. Though in the above passage he refers to *statue* and *piece of alloy* as respects, he quickly shifts to calling them *sorts* (Fine 2003, p. 212). He apparently views a sort as a certain type of respect.¹¹ Unfortunately, again Fine fails to say what sorts are. But he does at one point in discussing sorts talk of a thing being of a given sort (Fine 2003, p. 225). This suggests to me that he thinks of sorts as something like *kinds*, though I am not sure how he thinks about kinds.

In any case, this much is clear. Fine thinks there are clear cases of respect-relative predicates, which are interpreted relative to respects. These respects can be supplied by context (as above) or specified linguistically (‘He is qualified *for the position of professor*’). Fine thinks the monist will claim that his predicates like ‘badly made’ are also respect-relative predicates, and that this explains the predicative shift in the relevant version of MA. But in the cases under scrutiny, premisses like

¹¹ Thus, he continues to occasionally refer to sorts as *respects* (e.g. pp. 212, 219).

- (3) The statue is badly made.
- (4) The piece of alloy is not badly made.

Fine thinks the monist will have to claim that the predicates in question are interpreted relative to *sorts* (here *statue* and *piece of alloy*).¹² Fine puts this by saying that the monist will hold that his predicates like ‘badly made’ etc. are *sort-relative predicates* (Fine 2003, pp. 214, 217). Fine then contrasts the clear cases of *respect-relative predicates*, like ‘qualified’, with the monist’s *sort-relative predicates*, like ‘badly made’ (Fine 2003, pp. 214, 217). Fine argues against the monist’s contention that the predicational shift in the relevant versions of MA can be explained by claiming that the predicates in the premisses are *sort-relative predicates* by arguing for the following four claims:

- (i) The monist is forced to hold that her *sort-relative predicates* exhibit strange behaviour in ‘statue’/‘piece of alloy’ sentences not exhibited by clear cases of *respect-relative predicates* (Fine 2003, p. 217).
- (ii) The behaviour alluded to in (i) is mysterious (Fine 2003, p. 217).
- (iii) This mysterious behaviour not exhibited by clear cases of *respect-relative predicates* will force the monist to adopt a ‘special theory’ of *sort-relative predicates* comprising three ad hoc principles (Fine 2003, p. 217).
- (iv) This special theory must then be developed in such a way that it can eventually be undermined (Fine 2003, pp. 218–28).

Claims (i)–(iii), if correct, would show that the monist must adopt an inelegant, ad hoc theory of *sort-relative predicates*. Claim (iv), if correct, shows that even this implausible theory will not do. Fine defends these four claims by giving example after example of sentences containing the predicates in question in which statues and pieces of alloy are being talked about and in which he claims the monist must hold that the predicates exhibit exceptional behaviour that in the end drives the monist to an untenable theory of how the predicates are functioning. Thus, Fine concludes that the monist’s predicational shift strategy for explaining why the relevant versions of MA are not valid fails.

¹² Fine concedes that it may be crucial that in (4) we use the NP ‘the piece of alloy’ and not ‘the alloy’ (pp. 199–200, 206), since the monist may hold that ‘the alloy’ does not designate any single thing but makes plural reference to the constituents of the material. I agree and hence I shall do this throughout.

My strategy in responding to Fine on the behalf of the monist here will be as follows. First, I will describe a class of predicates, generally called *gradable adjectives*, that are widely held to shift which property they express in just the way required to implement the monist's predicational shift strategy. In so doing, I will discuss the diagnostics for determining whether a word is a gradable adjective (henceforth GA). Second, I will show that Fine's predicates satisfy these diagnostics and so are GAs. At this point we will have good prima facie reason for thinking that Fine's predicates do express different properties in different contexts and hence good prima facie reason for thinking that the monist's predicational shift strategy here is correct. I call this account *the GA account of predicational shift*. It is closely related to, but different from, the sort-relative account of predicational shift Fine attributes to the monist and argues against in attempting to establish claims (i)–(iv) above. Finally, I shall consider the examples Fine offers that are supposed to establish claims (i)–(iv) above and so allegedly show that the sort-relative account is untenable. The question is whether Fine's examples establish the following analogues of (i)–(iv) above, which would show that the GA account of predicational shift is untenable:

- (i') The monist is forced to hold that her GAs ('badly made' etc.) exhibit strange behaviour in 'statue'/'piece of alloy sentences' not exhibited by clear cases of GAs.
- (ii') The behaviour alluded to in (i') is mysterious.
- (iii') This mysterious behaviour not exhibited by clear cases of GAs will force the monist to adopt a 'special theory' of her 'special' GAs comprising three ad hoc principles.
- (iv') This special theory must then be developed in such a way that it can eventually be undermined.

I shall show that Fine's examples do *not* establish (i')–(iv') and cannot undermine the GA account of predicational shift. For I shall show that in each of Fine's examples, the behaviour exhibited by 'badly made' (or some other of Fine's predicates) is exhibited by other clear cases of GAs in analogous, philosophically uncontroversial examples. Thus the monist is left with a plausible, natural account of how predicational shift occurs in the relevant versions of MA, and so why they are invalid. We begin our defence of the monist's GA account of predicational shift by discussing GAs.

Paradigm examples of GAs include ‘tall’, ‘expensive’, ‘fast’, ‘slow’, ‘intelligent’, and ‘smooth’. There are a number of properties the possession of which is thought to indicate that an expression is a GA. First, GAs at least appear to be contextually sensitive in that whether they apply to an object can change across contexts without any change in the relevant features of the object. So for example the sentence:

- (5) The watch David bought is expensive.

can seem true in one context and false in another even though the same watch is under discussion and its price does not change.¹³ Second, GAs admit ‘degree modifiers’ such as ‘very’:

- (6) The watch David bought is very expensive.

Third, GAs allow modification with ‘for’ phrases:

- (7) The watch is expensive for a diver’s watch.

Fourth, GAs occur in comparative constructions. Thus,

- (8) That watch is more expensive than this watch.

These four features have led most researchers to believe that GAs (taken in context and not in comparative constructions) attribute something like a ‘degree’ of, for example, cost *relative to a standard*, where the standard in question varies with context when the GA occurs alone (5); and the degree attributed can be boosted in context by a degree modifier (6). Further a standard can be specified linguistically, for example by a ‘for’ phrase, instead of provided by context (7). So taken in a context, (5) asserts that the cost of the watch was high relative to a contextually determined standard, and (6) asserts it was very high relative to the contextually determined standard. And in comparative constructions, things are compared in terms of the degree to which they possess, for example, cost.

There are a variety of accounts as to *precisely* how these expressions work semantically. One respect in which such accounts may vary is in terms of how they understand the *standard* that gets contextually supplied in the use of a sentence like (5). Assume that in uttering (5), the speaker was clearly intending to say that the watch had a high cost *for a watch purchased in a department store*. Then some would understand

¹³ Imagine that David comes from a working class family and the watch cost \$300, which no one in David’s family ever paid for a watch. One of his relatives, when apprised of the facts, utters (5) to another relative. Then it seems true. By contrast, suppose David’s Rolex-wearing, status conscious, rich friends are discussing his watch purchase. An utterance of (5) would seem false.

the standard supplied by context here as the class of watches purchased in department stores; others would understand it as being the property of being a watch purchased in a department store; and there are other possibilities as well. Because I think there are reasons for holding that standards must be properties (being a watch purchased in a department store) and not classes of objects (the class of watches purchased in a department store), I shall adopt that view here. But nothing said here hangs on this.¹⁴

Note that on the present view, GAs like ‘tall’, ‘expensive’, etc. may express different properties in different contexts due to the contexts supplying different standards. So in one context, ‘tall’ may express the property of having lots of height relative to standard *S*, and in another context, the property of having lots of height relative to the standard *S'*. Note also that we make no distinction between standards corresponding to Fine’s distinction between respects and sorts. GAs are interpreted relative to standards construed as properties. Such a standard can be the property of being a statue, or being a piece of art produced by a third grader or whatever. Thus, we also have no distinction corresponding to Fine’s distinction between sort-relative and respect-relative predicates.

Now, to return to the main thread, the monist should claim that Fine’s predicates—‘badly made’ etc.—are GAs. Thus, they may express different properties relative to different contexts in virtue of different standards being provided by the contexts. This is what happens in the relevant versions of MA, and so explains why we get predicational shift between premisses in them.

The first point to make in the monist’s favour here is that Fine’s examples possess the properties that are considered diagnostic for GAs.¹⁵ First, ‘well made’ etc. appear to be contextually sensitive in that whether they apply to an object can change across contexts without any change in the relevant features of the object. So for example, suppose that some third grade children are making art. They produce, among other things, some sculptures. Imagine now that we are third grade art teachers and have been discussing the merits of the art produced, clearly employing the standard of being a piece of art produced by a third grader. Looking at a sculpture, I say:

(9) That sculpture is well made.

¹⁴ Thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this issue.

¹⁵ At any rate, the vast majority do. As I have indicated, ‘admire’ is an intensional transitive verb, and so the explanation of why a version of MA containing it is invalid will appeal to the fact that intensional transitive verbs shift reference.

Since the sculpture is an exemplary production for a third grader, the utterance seems true to everyone present. Now suppose that we are viewing sculptures produced by various well known and very talented sculptors, trying to decide what to include in the collection of our museum that features high quality sculptures. Somehow, the third grader's sculpture has gotten into the group of pieces we are viewing. Here, an utterance of (9) will seem quite false. Second, Fine's predicates accept degree modifiers such as 'very':

(10) That sculpture is very well made.

Third, Fine's predicates accept 'for' phrases:¹⁶

(11) That sculpture is well made for a piece of art produced by a third grader.

Finally, Fine's examples may occur in comparative constructions:

(12) This car is more well made/better made than that one.

Given that Fine's examples satisfy the diagnostics for GAs, we have every reason to think that they *are* GAs. But then the monist's contention that in the relevant version of MA we get predicational shift because the predicates in the premisses are GAs has considerable prima facie plausibility! The premiss 'The statue is well made' expresses the claim that the statue is well made for a statue, whereas 'The piece of alloy is not well made' expresses the claim that the piece of alloy is not well made for a piece of alloy. Obviously, the truth of both premisses does not at all tend to show that the statue is not the piece of alloy. So the monist appears to be in pretty good shape so far.

Now let us turn to the data that Fine cites to establish his claims (i)–(iv) above and allegedly undermine the monist's sort-relative account of predicational shift. We shall show that this data does not establish claims (i')–(iv') above, the GA analogues of (i)–(iv), and so cannot undermine the monist's GA account of predicational shift that we have just outlined. Thus, we will construe Fine's arguments that he gives for (i)–(iv) as arguments for (i')–(iv'). In so doing, are we being unfair to Fine? I think not. For Fine's examples of clear cases of what he calls

¹⁶ Fine denies that his predicates can be modified by 'as' phrases involving 'sorts' on pp. 214–15 (this is discussed below). Strangely he does not consider 'for' phrases. Many GAs accept 'for' phrases and not 'as' phrases (e.g. 'tall'). Indeed, accepting 'for' phrases is the norm for GAs, and so the fact that Fine's examples do not take 'as' phrases comfortably is really irrelevant. A Google search produced all sorts of examples of 'well made' with 'for' phrases (of the relevant sort) including: 'A fun shooter and very *well made for* a post WWII type rifle'; 'I do not know exactly how old it is, but it seems quite *well made for* a lower end guitar'; 'The camera is pretty *well made for* a Web cam'.

‘respect-relative’ predicates (‘qualified’, ‘important’, ‘relevant’, etc.) are gradable adjectives (Fine 2003, p. 214). Thus in suggesting that the monist will understand the behaviour of his predicates ‘badly made’ etc. in MA on the model of his clear cases of respect-relative predicates, he is suggesting that the monist will understand the behaviour of ‘badly made’ etc. in MA on the model of gradable adjectives. Hence the GA account of predicational shift we have sketched is at any rate a version of the sort of account Fine imagines the monist adopting. And in any case, surely the question is not whether the precise account Fine attributes to the monist is a plausible account of predicational shift. Rather, the question has to be whether there *is* a plausible account. I claim the GA account of predicational shift is such an account.

The question, then, is whether any of the considerations Fine adduces against the sort-relative account cut against the present GA account. I shall argue that they do not by showing that the behaviour Fine’s predicates exhibit in the examples he considers is exhibited by clear cases of GAs in philosophically uncontroversial cases. If clear cases of GAs behave the way the predicates in Fine’s examples do, then Fine’s examples cannot establish (i’)—(iv’) nor undermine the claim that his predicates are GAs. Hence, again, the monist’s GA account of predicational shift in relevant versions of MA escapes Fine’s attack.

Reconstruing Fine’s arguments against a sort-relative account of predicational shift as arguments against the present GA account will require us to state Fine’s arguments in our terminology. Specifically, his talk of both respects and sorts will be reformulated in terms only of standards, since we have no distinction between standards corresponding to his distinction between respects and sorts. Similarly, his talk of respect- and sort-relative predicates will be reformulated in terms of GAs for the same reason. This slight distortion of Fine is inevitable if his considerations are to make any contact with the GA account of predicational shift.

As we have seen, on the monist’s GA account of predicational shift in the relevant version of MA, the premiss ‘The statue is well made’ asserts (or is most naturally taken as asserting) that the statue is well made *for a statue*. Thus, it is the nominal ‘statue’ in the subject position description that provides the standard (the property of being a statue) involved in the interpretation of the occurrence of the GA here. (Exactly similar remarks apply to the premiss ‘The piece of alloy is not well made’.) Fine’s first argument against the monist’s account of predicational shift is that she cannot explain why, when additional descriptive material is added to the nominals in question, the entire noun phrase consisting of

the original noun phrase plus the new material does not provide the standard involved in the interpretation of the occurrence of the GA in question. That is, Fine claims that all of:

- (13) The piece of alloy that was moulded into such and such a shape for artistic purposes, put on a pedestal in a museum, etc. is badly made.
- (14) The piece of alloy from which the statue is formed is badly made.
- (15) The piece of alloy coincident with the statue is badly made.

are most naturally read as claiming that the piece of alloy is badly made for a piece of alloy, and not that it is badly made for a piece of alloy from which a statue is formed (or etc.) nor that it is badly made for a statue. Thus the additional descriptive material here does not affect what standard the occurrence of the GA is interpreted with respect to. In all these cases it is supplied by the nominal 'piece of alloy' alone. Fine thinks this fact is a 'mystery' for the monist.

But I do not think this is mysterious at all. Other GAs function in the same way.¹⁷ For example, consider:

- (16) The dog that was raised by Oriana and became a police dog is intelligent.

This sentence is most naturally read as claiming that the dog in question is intelligent *for a dog* (and not as claiming that it is intelligent for a dog raised by Oriana etc.). So other GAs behave just as 'badly made' does in (13)–(15).¹⁸ Hence the monist has an explanation of the phenomenon Fine cites here and so Fine's first argument against the monist fails.

Fine's second argument against the monist's account of predicational shift is that with clear cases of GAs such as 'qualified' one can specify the standard relevant to interpreting the GA by means of a prepositional phrase (in this case, a 'for' phrase). So we can say things like 'The person who applied for the position of professor is qualified *for the position of janitor*', using the prepositional phrase to specify the standard relative to which the person is qualified. Now Fine claims that we cannot do this in the case of his examples ('well made'; 'damaged'). Or at least Fine claims that the standards relative to which something can

¹⁷ Sarah-Jane Leslie and Jason Stanley both noticed this independently of me, and mentioned it in discussion. Actually, I think that GAs *may* vary in terms of how stubbornly they adhere to the standard given by only the head noun of the expression in subject position ('dog' in 16). But I will ignore this complication here.

¹⁸ Below I address the question of why 13–15, as well as 'The piece of alloy is badly/well made', cannot be naturally interpreted as claiming that the statue is badly/well made for a statue.

be well made or damaged do not include standards like *being a statue* or *being a piece of alloy*.¹⁹ In support of this Fine notes that '[o]ne cannot very well say that the statue is not damaged as an alloy or as a piece of alloy ... or that the alloy or piece of alloy is not well made as a statue' (Fine 2003, p. 214).

Fine appears to be making two points here, though he does not clearly distinguish them. First, he appears to claim that unlike other cases of GAs, in the case of his examples, 'well made' and 'damaged', one cannot use prepositional phrases to supply the standards relative to which the monist claims something is said to be well made or damaged.²⁰ If this were correct, it would be a serious blow to the monist's proposal. For the monist is claiming that premisses like 'The statue is well made' and 'The piece of alloy is not well made' mean something like that the statue is well made for a statue and that the piece of alloy is not well made for a piece of alloy. So in the sentences, the standards are provided by the nominals in subject position. But in other cases in which the standard is provided in this way, it can also be provided by an explicit prepositional phrase, as in 'That elephant is small' versus 'That elephant is small for an elephant'. So if in the case of Fine's examples, the standard that the monist claims is supplied by nominal material in subject position in the relevant version of MA cannot be supplied by an explicit prepositional phrase instead, this would cast doubt on the monist's explanation, since she would have to admit that Fine's examples do not work the way clear cases of GAs do. On this first point, Fine is clearly mistaken. Surely one can say things like 'This is well made for a piece of alloy' and here the 'for' phrase supplies the standard (being a piece of alloy) relative to which the thing in question is said to be well made (see also the examples in note 16). Strangely in arguing that the standard in question could not be provided by a prepositional phrase, Fine used an 'as' phrase: 'well made *as a piece of alloy*'. I agree that this is infelicitous, but that is irrelevant since most GAs do not allow 'as' phrases to specify the standard they are interpreted relative to.²¹

¹⁹ Fine writes (pp. 214–15): 'We can indeed talk of respects in which a thing may be damaged or well made or Romanesque. It is merely that these respects are not properly taken to include the status of things as a sort.' Again, on the present view there are simply standards and there is no distinction between respects and sorts. Thus in our terminology Fine must be construed as saying that for his predicates certain standards (corresponding to what he would call sorts—*statue*; *piece of alloy*) cannot be specified in a prepositional phrase.

²⁰ As I have already indicated, oddly Fine considers 'as' phrases instead of 'for' phrases. See example (11) above and note 16. I shall consider 'for' phrases.

²¹ For example, 'He is tall as a basketball player'; 'It is expensive as a car' sound terrible. But 'He is tall for a basketball player' and 'It is expensive for a car' are fine.

It is a bit harder to use ‘for’ phrases with ‘damaged’ but not much. With all GAs, ‘for’ phrases can sometimes sound odd. If I hold up a novel and say ‘This novel is wet for a book’, this certainly sounds odd, though ‘wet’ is clearly a GA and admits ‘for’ phrases that specify standards (‘The Sahara is wet for a desert’). The oddness in the above sentence results from the fact that there is no standard degree of wetness for books. Similarly, in the case of many kinds of things, there is no standard degree of damage for a thing of that kind. So sentences of the form ‘*x* is damaged for a *G*’ can sound strange. But if we ensure that there is a standard degree of damage for things of the kind *G*, perhaps even by explicit stage setting, sentences of the form ‘*x* is/is not damaged for a *G*’ sound fine. Thus, suppose that, as some of my friends think, the standard for being a damaged car is lower than the standard for being a damaged truck. Trucks, unlike normal cars, are supposed to get banged up, they tell me. After an off-road experience in my then new four-wheel drive truck, I was anxiously inspecting various dings and scrapes on it. A friend looked at me incredulously and said in all seriousness ‘Oh come on, it isn’t damaged at all for a truck’. This utterance was perfectly felicitous, and my other friends responded by nodding approvingly. Similarly, I recently visited a hobby website devoted to SPAD model planes. ‘SPAD’ is an acronym deriving from ‘Simple Plastic Airplane Designs’, and the planes called SPADs apparently are much easier to repair than other model planes. A SPAD enthusiast had written: ‘The plane didn’t seem to be badly damaged for a SPAD. Damages that would be almost permanent for most other models seem to be a 10 minute repair job for these things.’ The point of these examples is that if we use a ‘for’ phrase with ‘damaged’ that invokes a standard (truck, SPAD) and we ensure that there is something like a standard degree of damage for things of that kind, such ‘for’ phrases combine perfectly felicitously with ‘damage’. This is why, to take a final example, one can plainly say that this car is not damaged for a car of its age, etc. Even without stage setting we have some sense of what is a standard degree of damage for a car of a certain age, and so such sentences are fine. So Fine’s first claim, that unlike other cases of GAs, in the case of his examples, ‘well made’ and ‘damaged’, one cannot use prepositional phrases to supply a standard in respect of which something is said to be well made or damaged, is incorrect.

Fine’s second point, which he does not clearly distinguish from the first, is that the sentences ‘The statue is not damaged as a piece of alloy’ and ‘The piece of alloy is not well made as a statue’ are odd to the point of being infelicitous. Now as noted above, one problem with Fine’s

point here is that like most GAs, 'well made' and 'damaged' simply do not take 'as' phrases. The 'as' phrases by themselves would make the sentences he provides infelicitous. So the first thing we need to do is to switch to

(17a) The statue is not damaged *for* a piece of alloy.

(17b) The piece of alloy is not well made *for* a statue.

in which we substitute 'for' phrases for Fine's 'as' phrases to be sure the 'as' phrases are not the source of infelicity. Of course the resulting sentences are still infelicitous. However the fact that (17a) and (17b) are quite odd *by itself* is not a problem for the monist. We have seen that in the case of other GAs, we can get odd or infelicitous sentences as well when we add prepositional phrases ('This novel is wet for a book'). We have also seen that, like other GAs, Fine's predicates accept 'for' phrases specifying standards in other cases. So the mere fact that the above ((17a) and (17b)) are odd does not by itself tend to cast doubt on the monist's claim that they are GAs, and that they function in the way she claims in the relevant versions of MA. Thus, with respect to the oddity of (17a) and (17b), the only remaining question for the monist is whether she can find odd sentences involving other clear cases of GAs that are analogous in relevant respects to (17a) and (17b).

This raises the question of what would be a case of an odd sentence containing what is clearly a GA that is analogous in relevant respects to (17a) and (17b). The monist should not claim that (17a) and (17b) are odd for the reason that the sentence 'This novel is wet for a book' is odd. This sentence is odd because there is no standard degree of wetness for books. So saying that something is 'wet for a book' is bound to sound odd. By contrast, the monist claims that in the relevant version of MA, the premiss that the statue is well made or damaged means that it is well made or damaged *for a statue* (similarly for the piece of alloy). But then if these premisses make sense, there must be some standard degree of being well made or damaged for a statue or piece of alloy (at least roughly speaking). This in turn means that making the standard explicit using a 'for' phrase should not result in an infelicitous sentence.²² So, the monist can not claim that the notion of being well made

²² Implicit premiss: if you can say 'x is A' for 'A' a GA and mean in context that x is A for an F, then the sentences 'x is A for an F' should be felicitous (at least in that context). Of course, these things can sound a bit funny when made explicit. For example, if it is clear I am talking about being tall for a man, and I say 'Greg is tall', it may sound odd to say 'Greg is tall for a man'. This is clearly a matter of simply being overly explicit.

or damaged *for a statue or piece of alloy* is not coherent (or well defined) and that this is the source of the infelicity in (17a) and (17b).²³

I think an analogue of (17a) and (17b) in relevant respects for the monist would be an odd sentence of the form:

(18) The *F* is (not) *A* for a *G*.

where (a) '*A*' is a clear case of a *GA*; (b) the notion of *being A for a G* is coherent (or well defined); and (c) the *F* is the *G* (since the monist claims the statue is the piece of alloy). The crucial fourth condition that is primarily responsible for the infelicity of Fine's examples is a bit harder to characterize. People typically do not presuppose in Stalnaker's sense that the statue *is* the piece of alloy, and indeed it is not even clear that typically speakers presuppose that these *could* be identical.²⁴ That is, typically people are not disposed to act as if they assume or believe that the statue is or even could be the piece of alloy and that their audience assumes or believes that the statue is or even could be the piece of alloy. Nor do people typically believe that the statue is or even could be the piece of alloy.²⁵ So a fourth condition for a sentence of the form of (18) being an analogue of Fine's (17a) and (17b) is: (d) typical people do not presuppose or believe that the *F* is or even could be the *G*. Examples meeting only conditions (a)–(c) are felicitous. Thus, as I suggested, it is the fact that (17a) and (17b) in addition satisfy this fourth condition that is, I believe, the primary reason for their infelicity.

Meeting these conditions is rather hard, particularly the combination of (c) and (d). For we want (c) to be uncontroversially true, so that it is clear that the *F* is the *G*; but for (d) to be true, we must have that typical people do not presuppose or believe that the *F* is *or even could be the G*. Unfortunately, it is hard to find cases in which uncontroversially, the *F*

²³ And it seems to me clear that these notions are coherent, and that sentences containing the relevant 'for' phrases are (or can be) fine. So if I find a piece of alloy somewhere and I have it chemically analysed, the analyst can felicitously report as follows: 'It is quite well made for a piece of alloy.' Similarly, if I am looking at various works of art, I can say of a statute I do not like: 'Though I do not like it, it is well made for a statue.' (though sometimes the 'for' phrase can seem 'overly explicit'—see previous note).

²⁴ That is, people do not in general even presuppose that it is metaphysically possible that the statue is the piece of alloy. When this is presupposed, things are quite different I think. I discuss this below.

²⁵ Not that people typically disbelieve these things either. The claims in question simply have not occurred to most people. But note that speakers typically do not even tacitly believe that the statue is the piece of alloy in the sense in which they tacitly believe that there is no hole going through the Earth from the US to China. Though they have never thought of the latter claim, when it is raised they will spontaneously agree to it. When the question whether the statue is the piece of alloy is raised, I find ordinary people are bewildered.

is the *G*, but people generally do not believe or presuppose that it is nor even that it could be. However, here are two plausible examples.

The first example involves a ski run at Squaw Valley called *Rockslide*. Rockslide is a steeply angled rock that is virtually never covered with snow. To ski it, you ski down fifty or so feet of bare rock.²⁶ That is all there is to the run Rockslide. So Rockslide is a ski run, but it is also a (single) rock.²⁷ Now suppose we use ‘the rock’ and ‘the ski run’ to designate Rockslide. Consider the following sentences:

(19a) The rock is smooth for a ski run.

(19b) The ski run is smooth for a rock.

Now these sentences sound *very* odd to the point of infelicity. I take it that they sound every bit as bad as Fine’s (17a) and (17b). Note that our above conditions are satisfied: (a) ‘smooth’ is a clear case of a *GA*; (b) the notion of *being smooth for a ski run/rock* is coherent (or well defined); (c) the rock is the ski run; (d) typical people do not presuppose or believe that the rock is or even could be the ski run.²⁸

For a second example, consider Dave McCoy, the founder of the Mammoth Mountain ski area in California’s Sierra Nevada mountain range. As a member of the Eastern Sierra Ski Club, McCoy helped implement the first portable rope tow for the club. According to *The Dave McCoy Story*²⁹, Dave and other members of the club ‘took a Model “A” Ford truck, pulled the drive wheel off, locked the brake, jacked up the rear end and ran a rope up the mountain to a pulley. This “portable” rope tow allowed the skiers to ski anywhere in the valley from Independence to Bridgeport.’ So the truck is the (portable) rope tow. (Let me add that this conforms to actual usage—people often say that the first rope tow in the Mammoth area was a jacked up Model A truck.) Now consider these sentences:

(20a) The rope tow is slow for a truck.

(20b) The truck is slow for a rope tow.

²⁶ This is pretty hard on one’s skis. Generally, skiers who ski Rockslide are sponsored and get skis for free.

²⁷ I appeal here to Gaffney (2003), the authoritative guide to extreme skiing at Squaw Valley. Rockslide is called both *a line* (p. 145—this term is almost synonymous with ‘ski run’) and *a run* (p. 141). It is completely clear that it is a rock.

²⁸ ‘Hard core’ Squaw Valley skiers would presuppose that the rock is the ski run. But hard core Squaw Valley skiers are far from typical!

²⁹ Available on the web at <http://www.intrawestmammoth.com/vision/davestory.html>

These sentences again are odd to the point of infelicity. And again our four conditions are satisfied: (a) ‘slow’ is clearly a GA; (b) the notions of *being slow for a truck* and *being slow for a rope tow* are completely coherent (or well defined); (c) the truck is the rope tow;³⁰ and (d) typical people do not presuppose or believe that the truck is or could be the rope tow.

If these two examples are thought to be problematic in any way, it would be easy to construct others. To take one example, suppose that in the future, computers are allowed to be chess grandmasters (I do not know much about chess, but I do not think they currently can be.) Consider now some computer that is a grandmaster: the computer is the grandmaster. Now consider sentences like: ‘The computer is small for a grandmaster’; ‘The grandmaster is smart for a computer’. Again, these are as odd as Fine’s (17a) and (17b), and conform to our four conditions.

In any case, with (19a) and (19b), and (20a) and (20b) it is primarily the fact that typical people do not believe or presuppose that the rock is or even could be the ski run or that the truck is or even could be the rope tow that results infelicity. Thus, my hunch is that if people came to be familiar with the details of Squaw Valley skiing and knew that a rock is a ski run there, (19a) and (19b) would be felicitous. Similarly, if people became familiar with the Dave McCoy story, (20a) and (20b) would start to sound better.³¹

Now I think this same feature is present in Fine’s (17a) and (17b). People do not believe or presuppose that the statue is the piece of alloy, nor do they believe or presuppose that it even could be.³² Thus the infelicity of (17a) and (17b). Further, as in the other cases, I suspect that in a context in which people do presuppose that the statue is the piece of alloy, (17a) and (17b) would not sound infelicitous to the people in the context. Thus, at monist conventions, (17a) and (17b) probably pass muster (but see fn. 31).

To summarize then, that Fine’s sentences (17a) and (17b) are odd to the point of being infelicitous does not damage the monist’s case for the

³⁰ Some might think that the truck by itself is not the rope tow because we need the rope to be attached to the truck. But I do not think that is right for two reasons. First, as I have indicated, people say that the rope tow was a truck. Second, suppose we use the rope tow one afternoon and leave it in place. We come out to use it the next morning and the rope has been taken. It would be natural to say that *the rope tow* was missing its rope.

³¹ One bit of evidence: skiers who knew the story (it is fairly well known among serious skiers in Northern California) tended to find (20b) passable to perfectly fine. For any of (19a), (19b), (20a), or (20b), or Fine’s (17a) or (17b) to be *completely* felicitous in a context, there would have to be some explanation of why—for example, if one wanted to say that the ski run/rock is smooth *for a rock*, one used ‘the ski run’ (instead of ‘the rock’) to designate it in that context. So to get felicity, one would have to construct the context in question in such a way that there is such an explanation.

³² Of course, I am not saying that people typically presuppose that they could *not* be identical.

claim that ‘damaged’ and ‘well made’ are GAs and that predicational shift occurs in the relevant versions of MA due to the fact that the different occurrences of the GAs in the premisses get assigned in context different standards. For the monist can come up with sentences that are as odd as Fine’s, where the relevant identity is uncontroversial (the rock is the ski run; the rope tow is the truck) and where the relevant expressions in the sentences are clear cases of GAs. Further, we have a reasonable explanation of the oddness of all these sentences, Fine’s included, that is consistent with the monist’s claim about how Fine’s predicates ‘well made’ and ‘damaged’ function semantically.

The third argument Fine offers against the monist’s account of predicational shift concerns the phenomenon of non-linguistic context contributing the standard involved in the interpretation of an occurrence of a GA. As Fine correctly points out and as we have already seen, with clear cases of GAs, such as ‘qualified’, I can in the appropriate context say ‘The person who applied for the position of janitor is qualified’ and mean that the person in question is qualified *for the position of professor* (just imagine that I advertised for both positions, and in the context of trying to determine who is qualified for the position of professor, I happen to look at the applications for the position of janitor, which inexplicably include details of the academic credentials of the applicants for the janitor position). In this case, context provides the standard relevant to the interpretation of the GA, and the predicative material in subject position does not (i.e. though the subject is ‘The person who applied for the position of janitor’, we managed to say that the person denoted by this term is qualified for the position *of professor*).

Now, Fine asks, can this happen in the case under dispute? That is, can an utterance of

(21a) The piece of alloy is well made

in the right context convey the claim that the statue made from the alloy is well made for a statue? Fine correctly responds that it can, though ‘Not very readily’. He writes:

Suppose I am describing the styles of statues made from various materials. Then I might say ‘the alloy (or even the piece of alloy) is Romanesque’ to mean that the statue is Romanesque; and similarly for the predicate ‘badly made’. (Fine 2003, p. 215)³³

³³ Similarly also, I assume, for the predicate ‘well made’, which I shall stick with only for the sake of consistency. The points go through for Fine’s other examples (except ‘admired’—see Sect. 2 and fn. 15 above).

According to Fine, the monist will claim this is ‘trumping’, or non-linguistic context providing the relevant standard, of the sort we saw in the case of ‘qualified’, and hence will claim that ‘well made’ works in the same way. Fine’s pluralist responds that this is either a case of ellipsis (‘the alloy’ was elliptical for ‘the alloy statue’), a case of metonymy (the piece of alloy ‘goes proxy’ for the alloy statue in the way the ham sandwich goes proxy for the guy who ordered it when a waitress says ‘The ham sandwich left a lousy tip’) or ‘piece’ is being used to mean ‘piece of art’.³⁴

Fine proposes to adjudicate the dispute here by ‘controlling’ for ellipsis, metonymy and ‘special’ meanings of ‘piece’. So, Fine says, consider:

- (21b) The piece of alloy from which the statue is formed is well made.³⁵

Here we have eliminated the possibility of ellipsis (the subject term cannot be elliptical for something like ‘the alloy statue from which the statue is formed’), and of metonymy (if we wanted to use ‘The piece of alloy from which the statue is formed’ to talk about the statue, why mention the statue in the very noun phrase?). And there is no natural way to interpret ‘piece’ here to mean ‘piece of art’. Now, Fine says, this sentence cannot be used to convey the claim that the statue is well made for a statue. But then this is evidence that the pluralist was right to claim that (21a) only managed to convey the claim that the statue is well made for a statue by means of either metonymy or a special meaning of ‘piece’, and that the claim was not conveyed by non-linguistic context contributing the relevant standard (in this case, the standard in question is the normal degree of ‘well-madeness’ for statues).³⁶ Fine thinks this shows that the monist is forced to hold that the way context can contribute standards in cases like (21a) and (21b) is different from the way it can do so with ‘ordinary’ GAs.

In response to Fine here, let me first note that his predicates do in fact allow ‘contextual trumping’, that is they do allow (non-linguistic) context to contribute the relevant standard (as opposed to having the term in subject position contribute the standard) and in this respect behave as do clear cases of GAs like ‘tall’. Though this in effect has

³⁴ I guess Fine has in mind for the latter that ‘the piece of alloy’ might be used to mean ‘the piece of art made of alloy’. So perhaps this is a case of ellipsis too on Fine’s view.

³⁵ Fine uses ‘Romanesque’ and ‘badly made’ but again the particular example does not matter.

³⁶ Fine claims that if there is any further question about his sentences (21a) and (21b) conveying claims about the statue, it is to be addressed by a phenomenon he calls ‘predicative slide’ (p. 216). Because this is irrelevant to my response here, I ignore it.

already been illustrated (see example (9) and surrounding discussion), I provide another example. Suppose I am at a museum viewing a display of very old Native American weapons. An expert on the subject is discussing techniques for producing the weapons, what makes a high quality weapon of each sort and so on. She points to a bow and says:

(22) The bow is well made.

If the context is right, clearly she may well convey the claim that it is well made for an old Native American weapon (and not for a bow). So here, the standard (a typical degree of ‘well-madeness’ for an old Native American weapon) is contributed by context and not by the term in subject position. In this way, Fine’s ‘well made’ behaves just like clear cases of GAs like ‘tall’, as the monist must claim it does. So this supports the monist’s case.

The only remaining question is whether the monist can explain why (21b) cannot convey the claim that the piece of alloy/statue is well made *for a statue*, which I agree it generally cannot.³⁷ I think the monist can explain this, and in so doing show that the same thing occurs with other cases of GAs. The crucial point is that an audience who hears (21b) will not in general presuppose that the statue is the piece of alloy, and the speaker does nothing to indicate that she is presupposing this. Further, the use of the subject term ‘The piece alloy from which the statue is formed’ in (21b) if anything will tend to make the audience assume that the piece of alloy and the statue are not identical (or that the speaker believes they are not), or at least that the speaker is trying to make an assertion about the piece of alloy (since he mentioned the statue as a way to help pick out the piece of alloy). The upshot is that the audience will have no reason to think or presuppose that the statue is the piece of alloy, or that the speaker is presupposing that it is.³⁸ This will make it virtually impossible for the speaker to convey that the piece of alloy/statue is well made for a statue by uttering (21b). Consider a similar example. Suppose that there is a janitor and a professor. In fact,

³⁷ The hedge here is due to the fact that I think perhaps (21b) could convey the claim in question under certain conditions. But I want to explain why it generally cannot.

³⁸ Note that I have not here appealed to the fact that typically people will not even presuppose or believe that the statue *could be* the piece of alloy, as I did in explaining why Fine’s sentences (17a) and (17b) are infelicitous. Though I think that this is true, I also think we can explain why (21b) will not be interpreted to mean that the piece of alloy/statue is well made for a statue in terms of people having no reason to think that the statue is the piece of alloy, or that the speaker presupposes this. To be on the safe side, I also consider an example in which typically people do not presuppose or believe that the one thing even could be the other ((24) below).

the janitor is the professor, but this is neither known nor presupposed by my audience. Nor do I make clear that I am presupposing this. I say:

- (23) The professor who is in the same place as the janitor is well paid.

Certainly, it is virtually impossible for my audience to hear this as conveying the claim that the professor is well paid for a janitor. So we find the same behaviour here as we do in Fine's (21b), but 'well paid' is clearly a standard GA. This is evidence that the behaviour noted with respect to (21b) is to be expected in this sort of situation, if, as the monist is claiming, it is a GA. A second example: consider again the truck that is the portable rope tow. Suppose that again that my audience does not know or presuppose that this is the case or that it could be.³⁹ Nor have I as the speaker indicated that I presuppose this. Now I say:

- (24) The truck that is involved in the operation of the portable rope tow is slow.

Again, my audience simply cannot hear this as conveying the claim that the truck is slow for a rope tow. Again, the GA 'slow' behaves as does Fine's 'well made'.

Finally, let me mention, what is perhaps obvious, that if we make clear to the audience that the statue is the piece of alloy (or that the speaker is presupposing this), then we can get non-linguistic contextual trumping of the relevant sort. So suppose I say:

- (21c) The piece of alloy that is identical with the statue is well made.

My audience may not agree with me that the statue is the piece of alloy, but if I utter (21c) in a context in which it is clear that whether various statues are well made is in question, (21c) could clearly convey the claim that the piece of alloy/statue is well made for a statue.

On the basis of the arguments he has given so far, Fine writes:

First, the behaviour of the allegedly respect-relative predicates ['well made' etc.] is anomalous, they do not behave in the same way as predicates that are clearly respect-relative. Second, their behaviour is something of a mystery; it is unclear how their anomalous behaviour is to be explained, since it is not in conformity with one's general understanding of how respect-relative predicates might be expected to behave. (Fine 2003, p. 217)

These are his claims (i) and (ii) above, which he thinks have been established on the basis of the examples thus far considered. Our concern is whether Fine's considerations to this point establish our analogues (i')

³⁹ See previous note.

and (ii') above. Obviously, if what I have said to this point is correct, those conclusions cannot be drawn. For I have argued precisely that Fine's predicates *do* behave just as do other GAs in analogous cases.⁴⁰

On the basis of drawing these conclusions, Fine claims that the monist must adopt the view that Fine's predicates are respect-relative predicates that are '*sui generis* and subject to their own special principles'. He then spells out the principles that he thinks the monist must claim govern their behaviour (Fine 2003, p. 217). This is Fine's claim (iii) mentioned above. Again, our question is whether the considerations Fine has adduced to this point establish claim (iii'), the analogue of claim (iii). The answer is clearly 'no'. For in each of the cases involving his predicates we have discussed, we have shown that other clear cases of GAs behave in the same way. Thus, clearly no special theory of Fine's predicates qua GAs is called for. They behave in the same ways other GAs do.

So I reject Fine's contention that the monist needs a 'special theory' of the behaviour of his predicates that is not applicable to all GAs. This makes it a bit more delicate to reply to the rest of Fine's arguments against the monist, for he sees himself henceforth as arguing that the monist's 'special theory' cannot be upheld.⁴¹ Since I think no special theory is required, it is not entirely clear what to say about the rest of Fine's points. Fine's remaining arguments amount to citing various phenomena involving his predicates and arguing that they create various difficulties for the monist's special theory. I propose to respond by in each case claiming that the same phenomena arise with clear cases of GAs.⁴² Thus, I claim that in the end Fine has not shown that the monist must attribute to Fine's predicates any sort of exceptional behaviour not exhibited by other GAs. So Fine fails to establish any of (i')–(iv'). This in turn means that Fine has given no reason to doubt the monist's GA account of predicational shift in the relevant versions of MA.

⁴⁰ I should note that I think there are differences in the behaviour of various GAs. But Fine's examples do not exhibit behaviour not exhibited by other clear cases of GAs in relevantly similar examples.

⁴¹ Thus, on p. 217 bottom Fine writes 'In what follows we shall therefore focus on the question of whether a special theory of this kind can be sustained'.

⁴² Fine actually gives five or so arguments against the monist in this portion of the paper (Sects. 6 and 7). In the interest of brevity, I here consider what I take to be the three strongest arguments Fine gives (see also notes 36, 43, 48, 50, and 51).

The first phenomenon Fine considers damaging to the monist's case concerns sentences such as:

(25) The item Nicole admired is well made.⁴³

We are to imagine a case in which Nicole, as we would put it, admired the piece of alloy without realizing it is a statue. Now Fine notes that in this circumstance, (25) can only be interpreted as requiring for its truth that the piece of alloy be well made for a piece of alloy. I agree with Fine's assessment here. But, again, I think that other GAs in analogous situations behave in the same way. Thus that (25) has only the interpretation Fine mentions is no problem for the monist. As in the case of (21b) and (23), I think the crucial feature of (25) is that the audience does not presuppose or believe that the statue is the piece of alloy and the speaker does not make clear that she presupposes this. Consider two examples with clear cases of GAs that share this feature. First, suppose that Nicole admires a pencil, not knowing that it is also a birthday gift for Missy. Indeed, suppose no one in my audience presupposes or believes that it is a birthday gift for Missy, nor do I as the speaker make clear that I am presupposing this.⁴⁴ I say:

(26) The item Nicole admires is expensive.

This can only be interpreted as requiring for its truth that the pencil is expensive for a pencil. Of course, this is exactly parallel to (25). Or suppose that Nicole admires the truck discussed earlier that is, unbeknownst to her, a portable ski tow. And suppose no one in my audience presupposes or knows that the truck is the rope tow, and on one presupposes that it even could be. Further, again suppose that as the

⁴³ P. 219. Fine also considers the example 'The item Al created is well made' in a case in which Fine claims that Al created the piece of alloy but not the statue. Fine imagines that Al mixed the metals to form the alloy, but George designed the mould for the statue into which the alloy is poured to form the statue. Thus he thinks that Al created the piece of alloy but not the statue. I have not discussed this case because I perhaps disagree with Fine on the facts of the case. It is not clear to me that in this case Al created the piece of alloy. After all, George is partly responsible for the production of the piece of alloy—he is responsible for the shape of the piece of alloy! What is perhaps clear is that Al created the alloy (instead of the *piece* of alloy—see note 12). Because of these complications I have focused on Fine's other example (25).

⁴⁴ Note that here I do not claim that typical people do not believe or presuppose that the pencil could be the birthday gift. I think the explanation as to why (26) only can be used to convey the claim that the item is expensive for a pencil requires only that my audience does not presuppose or believe that the pencil is the birthday gift and that as the speaker, I do not make clear that I am presupposing this. The explanation as to why (21b) and (23) lack certain interpretations is the same in relevant respects. See note 38.

speaker, I do not make clear that I am presupposing that the truck is the rope tow.⁴⁵ I say:

(27) The item Nicole admires is slow.

It seems clear to me that this can only be interpreted as requiring for its truth that the truck is slow for a truck. Again, this parallels (25).

So again here that Fine's (25) has only the interpretation he mentions is no problem for the monist. For the monist claims that the predicate in Fine's (25) is a GA; and clear cases of GAs in analogous sentences considered in analogous situations have only the analogous interpretation. As before, this if anything bolsters the monist's case, since here Fine's predicate 'well made' behaves just as do other GAs.

The second phenomenon Fine considers concerns a case in which Al produces an inventory of items he considers well made. The sole entry in the inventory is 'the piece of alloy'. Now Fine considers the sentence:⁴⁶

(28) Al referred to a well made item.

Suppose now that (as Fine would put it) in fact the piece alloy was not well made, though the statue formed from it is. In such a case, Fine claims, (28) is false on its most natural interpretation. This means that the monist must claim that 'well made' here is interpreted relative to the standard of well-madeness for pieces of alloy, so that (28) asserts something like that Al referred to an item that was well made for a piece of alloy. Since the item is in fact not well made for a piece of alloy, (28) is false. The question here is whether the monist can give a non ad hoc explanation of why only the standard of being a piece of alloy can come into play here; why not the standard being a statue, in which case (28) would be interpreted as true by the monist's lights (since Al referred to an item that was well made for a statue)? Again, I claim that the monist can explain this in a non ad hoc way, since other GAs again exhibit the same behaviour in similar circumstances. Yet again the key is that no one presupposes or believes that the statue is the piece of alloy in the

⁴⁵ Here to be on the safe side, I do appeal to the fact that no one presupposes that the truck even *could be* the rope tow. But as I say in the main text, I suspect that all that is needed to explain why 25 only has the interpretation it has is that the audience does not presuppose or believe that the statue is the piece of alloy, and the speaker does not make clear that she presupposes this. See notes 38 and 44.

⁴⁶ P. 222. Again, I have altered details of the example so that we can stick with the predicate 'well made'. Nothing hinges on the changes. Fine wants to consider the reference of *expressions* like 'the piece of alloy', but uses sentences like (28), which appear to talk of *speaker's* reference, apparently because they are more natural than things like 'An expression on Al's inventory referred to ...'. See his note 31.

situation, the speaker does not make clear that he is presupposing this, and so the standard of being a statue cannot come into play in interpreting (28).⁴⁷ Consider a similar case involving another GA, say ‘qualified’. Suppose Al has an inventory of people he considers qualified. The sole entry is ‘the professor’. Now consider the sentence:

(29) Al referred to a qualified person.

Suppose now that the professor is in fact not qualified for the position of professor. His work is shoddy and incompetent and he is a terrible teacher. Then (29) is false on its most natural interpretation. Suppose now that unbeknownst to everybody (except perhaps the professor), the professor is a ski instructor. He is highly qualified for this position. Now why cannot the standard *ski instructor* or *position of ski instructor* come into play in the interpretation of (29), so that it is naturally interpreted as true? Answer: because no one knows or presupposes that the professor is a ski instructor and the speaker did not make clear that he was presupposing this, so there is no reason for this standard to come into play. So here (29), which contains a clear case of a GA, ‘qualified’, exhibits the same behaviour as (28) in similar situations. Again, this is good for the monist and bad for Fine.⁴⁸

The final phenomenon Fine considers again concerns a sentence like (28), repeated here:

(28) Al referred to a well made item.

⁴⁷ Again here I do not appeal to the fact, appealed to in the discussion of Fine’s (17a) and (17b), that typically people do not even presuppose that the statue could be the piece of alloy. As in previous cases, I think the explanation here only requires that people do not know or presuppose that the statue is the piece of alloy and that the speaker does not make clear that he is presupposing this. See notes 38, 44 and 45.

⁴⁸ Fine also considers a more complex case in which the sole entry in Al’s inventory is ‘the referent of the sole entry in Bo’s inventory’, where the sole entry in Bo’s inventory is ‘the piece of alloy from which the statue is formed’ (p. 223). Fine then considers a sentence like (28) again. I would account for what is going on here in the more complex case in exactly the same way as I accounted for what is going on in the simpler case. Again, the point is that the standard of being a statue cannot come into play in the interpretation of (28) in the more complex case because no one knows or presupposes that the statue is the piece of alloy, nor does the speaker make clear that he is presupposing this. Similarly, finally, for Fine’s sentence ‘Al referred to an item that was well made but formed from some alloy that was badly made’ (p. 225—again I have changed the details of the example to be consistent with my other examples, but nothing hinges on this). Not only do the same factors block the standard of being a statue from coming into play here as have that effect in the case of (28), but the predicative material ‘formed from some alloy that was badly made’ also prevents the standard of being a piece of alloy from coming into play in the interpretation of the occurrence of ‘well made’ in the sentence. The result is that the sentence seems quite deviant in the situation described. But the monist can explain this, as I just did.

Fine supposes that the monist will claim that (28) in the situation described above can be interpreted as conveying the claim that the statue is well made (Fine 2003, pp. 225–26). In that case, Fine says that (28) is interpreted by reference to the standard of being a statue. But then, Fine says, we also should be able to interpret (28) by reference to the standards of being a skyscraper and being a soap dish, if, for example, I utter (28) believing that the item is a sky scraper or a soap dish. In that case, Fine claims, (28) should have readings on which it is false that Al referred to something well made, since the item is not well made for a skyscraper or soap dish.⁴⁹ But (28) cannot be interpreted as conveying the claim that the item is well made for a skyscraper or soap dish.

In response to this, I have argued that the monist should *not* claim that (28) can be interpreted as conveying the claim that the statue is well made for a statue. She should and does give a principled explanation of why the standard of being a statue cannot come into play in the interpretation of (28) in the situation described. She therefore should also claim that the standards of being a skyscraper and being a soap dish cannot (in normal cases) come into play in the interpretation of (28) either. I think the reason is fairly clear. In the case described so far, the speaker of (28) has radically false beliefs to the effect that the item in question is a skyscraper or a soap dish. And we are given no reason to think that his beliefs are shared by or even known to his audience or Al. But then despite the intentions of the speaker in such a case, (28) cannot be used appropriately to convey the claim that the item was a well made skyscraper or soap dish.

Again the crucial point is that clear cases of GAs exhibit the same behaviour in analogous situations. So suppose that Nicole makes an inventory of expensive items. She sees a fancy pencil in a store that costs three hundred dollars. Thinking this expensive for a pencil, her inventory ends up containing the sole entry ‘the pencil’. Now I believe the pencil is a skyscraper though neither Nicole nor my audience does, nor do they know of my beliefs. Thinking three hundred dollars is cheap for a skyscraper, I say:

(30) Nicole referred to an inexpensive item

attempting to convey the claim that the item was inexpensive for a skyscraper. It seems clear that (30) can no more convey this claim than an utterance of (28) can convey the claim that the item in question is well

⁴⁹ Fine here seems to assume that a sentence ‘*x* is *A*’, for ‘*A*’ a GA, will be false if the sentence is interpreted by reference to a standard that *x* does not possess. But this is not clearly correct. None the less, I will go along with the claim here.

made for a skyscraper or soap dish. So here the GAs 'expensive/inexpensive' exhibit the same behaviour exhibited by 'well made/badly made' in (28) in an analogous situation. Again, this vindicates the monist's claims here.^{50, 51}

The road has been a bit long, but I have responded to Fine's arguments to the effect that the monist's claim that predicational shift occurs in the relevant versions of MA and this is why those arguments break down cannot be maintained. If the response is successful, then the monist's GA account of predicational shift can be maintained.

4. Conclusion

Kit Fine (2003) argues that the monist has no plausible explanation of why or how the relevant versions of the argument MA break down. He concludes from this that the arguments in question must be allowed to stand. Thus, he concludes, pluralism is true. As against this, I have argued that the monist has plausible explanations as to why relevant versions of MA are invalid. For some of the versions of MA employing Fine's predicates (e.g. 'admires'), the monist has a plausible story to tell about why referential shift renders the argument invalid; for other versions of MA employing other examples of Fine's (e.g. 'well made'), the monist has a plausible story to tell as to why predicational shift renders the argument invalid. Thus is the monist able to resist Fine's versions of MA.

However, I wish to emphasize that there are additional manoeuvres available to the pluralist. What is the monist to say about the following

⁵⁰ Fine also seems to think that the monist cannot explain why the sentence 'Al referred to an item that was well made but formed from some alloy that was badly made' cannot be appropriately used to convey something true in a situation in which the statue is well made, the alloy is not and the sole entry in Al's well made inventory is 'the piece of alloy'. (See pp. 225–26—again I have changed the details of the example to be consistent with my other examples, but nothing hinges on this). This amounts to asking why the sentence can not convey in part that Al referred to something that was well made for a statue, which is true by the monist's lights in this situation. In turn, this amounts to asking the monist to explain why the occurrence of 'well made' here cannot be interpreted relative to the standard of being a statue. See note 48 and surrounding discussion for the monist's explanation of this.

⁵¹ Fine actually has one more argument against the monist given in Sect. 8 of his paper (pp. 228–30). Fine's argument here concerns what the monist must say about sentences such as 'A diverse collection of items was referred to'. I will not respond to this argument for two reasons. First, I find that the argument is somewhat cryptically stated and so I have a hard time grasping precisely what the argument is. But second, the argument seems to be somewhat independent of the main thrust of the paper. That is, so far as I can tell, it does not concern the monist's attempt to explain where the relevant versions of MA break down. My main purpose here has been to argue that, contra Fine, the monist has reasonable explanations of where and how arguments like the relevant versions of MA break down.

argument: The statue was made by Donatello. The piece of alloy was not made by Donatello. Hence the statue is not identical to the piece of alloy.⁵² Here ‘made by Donatello’ is not a gradable adjective, and so the predicational shift story told here as to why certain versions of MA are invalid is not applicable. Further, it is not clear that a referential shift strategy is plausible in this case either. It may be that in this case or others, the monist must simply deny that both premisses are true.⁵³ Further, consider the following argument: The statue is more valuable than the piece of alloy. Nothing is more valuable than itself. So the statue is not identical to the piece of alloy.⁵⁴ Here the monist might claim that in the first premiss, two standards are implicitly invoked, so that it means the statue/piece of alloy is more valuable for a statue than the statue/piece of alloy is valuable for a piece of alloy. (With respect to an earlier example, consider ‘The truck is slower than the portable rope tow’—again, if true, this might be thought to mean that the truck/rope tow is slower for a truck than the truck/rope tow is slow for a rope tow). This would be consistent with the claim that the statue is the piece of alloy. Alternatively, the monist might want to deny the first premiss. So I think it is premature to declare the debate on these issues over. I have tried to argue that the issues here are more complicated than Fine made them out to be, and that the monist has many resources available to answer the pluralist’s arguments.⁵⁵

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⁵² Imagine that Donatello made the mould for the statue and an assistant created the alloy by mixing metals as they were poured into the mould. This argument was suggested to me by Timothy Williamson.

⁵³ See note 43. The point is that it is not clear that Donatello made the statue (he had help!), nor is it clear that he did not (help) make the piece of alloy (as opposed to the alloy—see note 12) since he is responsible for its shape.

⁵⁴ Jason Stanley suggested this argument.

⁵⁵ Versions of this paper were given at University of California at Santa Cruz, the University of Oslo, the University of Maryland College Park, University of Texas at Austin and Princeton University. I thank the audiences on those occasions for helpful discussion. Thanks to Thomas Baldwin, Sarah-Jane Leslie, Laurie Paul, Jason Stanley, Timothy Williamson and two anonymous referees for helpful discussions and/or comments.

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