

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22201/iifs.18704905e.2025.1705>

## CONTINGENT *A PRIORI* TRUTHS AS ORIGINAL DECLARATIONS. SOME COMMENTS ON MARCO RUFFINO

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**SUMMARY:** In his book *Contingent A Priori Truths*, Marco Ruffino proposes to understand Kripke's examples of the contingent *a priori* in terms of utterances with a declarative illocutionary force. I think that Marco's approach is very original and insightful, and he provides us with many detailed and thoughtful considerations in its support. Although I agree with the general picture, there are some aspects that remain a bit obscure to me, which will be the focus of this commentary, namely, *the nature of the truth-makers* of the allegedly (contingently) *a priori* true original declarations, and *the transmission of a priori knowledge* from baptizers to later uses.

**KEYWORDS:** declarative speech acts, linguistic and institutional declarations, introduction of proper names, reference fixing, reference borrowing

**RESUMEN:** En su libro *Contingent A Priori Truths*, Marco Ruffino nos propone entender los ejemplos kripkeanos de lo contingente *a priori* en términos de emisiones con fuerza ilocucionaria declarativa. Considero que el enfoque propuesto es muy original y revelador, y el libro contiene muchos argumentos en su favor. Si bien estoy de acuerdo con la visión general, en este comentario me ocupo de analizar dos aspectos que me plantean algunas dudas: *la naturaleza de los hacedores de verdad* de las declaraciones originales y *la transmisión del conocimiento a priori* desde los participantes en el bautismo inicial a los usuarios posteriores.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** actos de habla declarativos, declaraciones lingüísticas e institucionales, introducción de los nombres propios, fijación de la referencia, transmisión de la referencia

In his book *Contingent A Priori Truths*, Marco Ruffino proposes to understand Kripke's examples of the contingent *a priori* in terms of utterances with a declarative illocutionary force. Their declarative nature is taken to account for the fact that not only the baptizers but also later speakers can know *a priori* that they are true, since their truth is the output of being performed. I think that Marco's approach to the traditional and difficult problem of the contingent *a priori* is very original and insightful, and he provides us with many

detailed and thoughtful considerations in its support. Although I agree with the general picture, there are some aspects that remain a bit obscure to me, which will be the focus of this commentary. At the beginning of the book, Marco highlights that there are two main gaps in Kripke's account that are going to be closed by his proposal: one concerns *the nature of the truth-makers* of the allegedly (contingently) *a priori* true original declarations, and the other, *the transmission of a priori knowledge* from baptizers to later uses. In what follows I will make some specific comments on Marco's ways of dealing with both aspects in the general framework of his view.

### 1. *On the Proposed Truth-makers for Original Declarations*

I will start the discussion by mentioning the two examples that have been the focus of both the traditional debate and Marco's analysis, namely, the meter and the Neptune examples (although, of course, any other may work for the sake of presenting the problem at stake).<sup>1</sup> As clearly specified by Marco, it is possible to distinguish between the two sentences in the following pairs:

(M) One meter is the length of  $S$  at  $t_0$ .

<sup>1</sup>From my perspective, the choice of examples is due to the fact that the traditional debate has focused on the acceptance/rejection of a very strong acquaintance constraint, clearly presented by Evans (1982, chapter 4) in the form of the so-called "Russell's Principle": according to it, a subject cannot have a thought or make an assertion about a particular object unless she has discriminating knowledge of it, namely, a capacity to distinguish the object of her thought/assertion from any other. Along the same lines, philosophers like Donnellan (1977) and Salmon (1986, 1987) maintained that a baptizer cannot be taken to know the proposition expressed by the sentence used to introduce a name unless she is acquainted with the object being named. But then the resulting knowledge will be *a posteriori*, not *a priori*. This argument deals directly with the usual, mixed-kind of baptisms, in which a description is used while having perceptual contact with the object at stake. The meter example and purely descriptive baptisms such as Neptune's, instead, might give us the superficial impression that they involve *a priori* knowledge of the proposition in play because in those cases the baptizer is not acquainted with the corresponding object. Accordingly, Donnellan and Salmon focused on arguing that those cases cannot be taken to involve any kind of knowledge (of the proposition expressed) unless the baptizer becomes acquainted with or has some kind of *de re* knowledge of an abstract length or a planet, respectively, which, if effective, will make her knowledge, like in the most common cases, *a posteriori*. So, the output is clearly that no baptism involves the use of a sentence whose propositional content can be known *a priori*. Now, on my interpretation, Marco's account is intended to apply across the board, namely, to all kinds of baptisms. For instance, the mixed baptism of Hesperus, in which a sentence along the lines of

(**M**<sup>\*</sup>) I stipulate (define, declare, etc.) that “one meter” refers to the length of *S* at *t*<sub>0</sub>.

(**N**) (If there is a planet causing the perturbations in Uranus’ orbit) Neptune is the planet causing the perturbations in Uranus’ orbit.

(**N**<sup>\*</sup>) I stipulate (define, declare, etc.) that “Neptune” refers to the planet causing the perturbations in Uranus’ orbit.

Applying Classical speech act theory, Marco considers (**M**<sup>\*</sup>) and (**N**<sup>\*</sup>) to manifest (or make explicit) the declarative illocutionary force of the speech acts involved in uttering (**M**) and (**N**), respectively, at a baptism, namely, the fact that these original acts are not assertions but declarations. Now, according to him, in both cases there is *another act* involved, concerning the sentences in (**M**<sup>\*\*</sup>) and (**N**<sup>\*\*</sup>),

(**M**<sup>\*\*</sup>) I stipulate (define, declare, etc.) that one meter is the length of *S* at *t*<sub>0</sub>.

(**N**<sup>\*\*</sup>) I stipulate (define, declare, etc.) that Neptune is the planet causing the perturbations in Uranus’ orbit.

(**H**) Hesperus is the brightest evening star.

or, closer to Marco’s phrasing,

(**H**<sup>\*</sup>) I stipulate that “Hesperus” refers to the brightest evening star.

is uttered by Hammurabi, is also a case in which an astronomical name is introduced and thus, according to his proposal, we should say that the utterance is made true by its mere performance and, hence, that the baptizer is in a position to know *a priori* what proposition it expresses. Even if the identification of the brightest evening star requires that she should have had a visual experience in the past and, moreover, even if she is having that kind of experience at the time of the baptism, this is not what justifies her knowledge of the proposition at stake —it just gives her *de re* knowledge of Venus. From this perspective, which I take to be both Kripke’s and Marco’s, even if there is *de re* knowledge of the object being named, that does not prevent the involved utterance from being known *a priori* to be true by the baptizer. In this regard, I think that Marco’s focus on the meter and the Neptune’s examples is not clearly justified and that, instead, he could have stressed the fact that his account can be perfectly applied to baptisms that clearly do involve acquaintance with the named objects. In other words, he could have stressed the fact that, on his view, although acquaintance with the named object is not required for a baptism to be successful, when it is present, as in many common, mixed-kind of baptisms, it should not be an obstacle for considering that the baptizer is in a position to know *a priori* the (contingently) true proposition expressed by her utterance.

which is taken to be *an illocutionary consequence* of the original one. In his words:

Let us focus on (**M**<sup>\*</sup>) first, since the effect that I want to highlight is clearer in this case. (Later I will come back to (**N**<sup>\*</sup>) and argue that, despite appearances, it has some fundamental differences with (**M**<sup>\*</sup>).) Now, *this is not the only act performed by the baptizers since, [...], the baptism or stipulation has not only a linguistic effect, but also an extra-linguistic (institutional) effect* (p. 184; my emphasis).

Marco claims that by uttering, for instance, (**M**) or (**M**<sup>\*</sup>), the baptizer is (weakly) committed to uttering, either explicitly or implicitly, (**M**<sup>\*\*</sup>). According to this proposal, the situation in which someone introduces a name in the language is taken to involve the (either explicit or implicit) performance of two illocutionary acts with declarative force: one is a *purely linguistic* declaration and the other is an *institutional* one. Correlatively, two propositional contents are also distinguished: a metalinguistic content, corresponding to the purely linguistic declaration, and an extra-linguistic one, pertaining to the institutional one. The facts created, determinants of their respective truth-makers, are thus different: there is a metalinguistic truth-maker for the first act (the fact that the speaker has stipulated that a certain name refers to a certain object) and a non-linguistic truth-maker for the second one (the fact that the speaker has stipulated the existence of a certain institutional fact).

Now, (**M**<sup>\*\*</sup>) and (**N**<sup>\*\*</sup>) seem to involve a use-mention confusion: the target of the stipulation is a word (not an object), whose reference is intended to be fixed. But, more importantly, I think that by adopting an Austinian perspective, there is no need to duplicate the speech act involved.

According to Austin (1956, 1962), the utterances of (**M**) and (**M**<sup>\*</sup>), on the one hand, and (**N**) and (**N**<sup>\*</sup>), on the other, are to be considered *equivalent in propositional content*. The underlying idea is that the performative verb in (**M**<sup>\*</sup>) and (**N**<sup>\*</sup>) manifests or makes explicit the illocutionary force of the utterances of (**M**) and (**N**) but *does not add anything to their propositional contents*.<sup>2</sup> If that is so, the propositional contents in question do not include the very act of stipulation, since performative verbs are force indicators but do not make any contribution to the propositions expressed by the

<sup>2</sup> Notice that, for Searle (1969), instead, the utterances of (**M**<sup>\*</sup>) and (**N**<sup>\*</sup>) are also assertions and, as such, differ in force and content from the ones of (**M**) and (**N**), respectively.

corresponding utterances. It could then be considered that there is only one fact being declared to exist or created in both cases, namely, the fact that a certain object (an abstract length, a planet), identified by virtue of certain characteristics (being the length of stick *S* at  $t_0$ , causing the perturbations in Uranus' orbit), is named in a certain way (“meter”, “Neptune”). In both cases, the fact correlated with the declarative act can be considered to be a *linguistic* fact (in the sense that it involves an expansion of natural language by virtue of the introduction of a name) but one that has *institutional import* (since the introduction of that name is subject to some scientific norms and has normative effects in the scientific community and, by extension, in the community as a whole). In what follows, I will explain the second part of this last claim.

The introduction of names is *in general* a purely linguistic declaration, namely, a declaration that we are in a position to make, under certain basic success conditions, in as far as we are competent speakers of a natural language —as opposed to the celebration of a marriage, whose success conditions require that the speaker should play some specific legal or religious role, characteristic of non-linguistic institutions such as the law and the church.<sup>3</sup> However, since natural language comprises technical vocabulary, the introduction of certain names, in contrast with standard names for people, animals and everyday life objects, can be considered to have an *institutional* import. Concerning the examples at stake, there are certain further requirements for the introduction of a (scientific) name that are imposed by the practice of science: the speaker must be not only linguistically but also scientifically competent. Likewise, the act has important social normative effects: from the introduction of the name, the scientific community, and, by the division of linguistic labor, the community as a whole become entitled to use a new measurement system or to count on the existence of a new planet. On the other hand, to see the difference between a linguistic declaration with an institutional import and a purely institutional declaration, it may be useful to compare a legislator who writes down a law and comes up with a name for it with a judge who applies it to condemn an accused person: the former is performing a linguistic declarative act with legal (institutional) import, whereas the latter is performing a purely

<sup>3</sup> When I say that there are certain basic success conditions for the performance of a declaration I have in mind, for instance, that for someone to successfully name a boat, she must be the boat's owner (see Austin 1962).

legal (institutional) declarative act.<sup>4</sup> From this perspective, it is not at all necessary to consider that the so-called “linguistic effect” is different from, and previous to, the “institutional” one, as Marco has it.

To summarize, by adopting an Austinian perspective, it is possible to stick to the utterances of (**M**<sup>\*</sup>) and (**N**<sup>\*</sup>) as the only available reconstructions or paraphrases of the utterances of (**M**) and (**N**), respectively, in which their declarative illocutionary force is made explicit. Taking into account that the performative verbs do not contribute to the determination of their propositional contents, it can be concluded that each one involves a single correlated fact, namely, the fact that a certain object, identified by means of certain characteristics, is named in a certain way. This fact is a *linguistic fact* in the sense in which it means an expansion of the set of a language’s lexical items, but one that has *institutional import*, in as far as it is both subject to the rules of scientific research and has normative consequences for scientific practices. It is thus possible to avoid the commitment to uttering (**M**<sup>\*\*</sup>) and (**N**<sup>\*\*</sup>), with its concomitant duplication of speech acts.

Moreover, the alternative hereby proposed avoids (what can be viewed as) another undesirable consequence of Marco’s analysis, namely, the positing of an unjustified difference between the meter and the Neptune cases:

Do we have the same effect in the case of (**N**<sup>\*</sup>), i.e., can we say that by performing (**N**<sup>\*</sup>) the speaker is also (weakly) committed to

(**N**<sup>\*\*</sup>) I stipulate (define, declare, etc.) that [Neptune is the planet causing the perturbations in Uranus’ orbits]?

Things are less clear here since, after all, that Neptune is the planet that causes the perturbations in Uranus’ orbit is an astronomical fact that cannot be stipulated (at least not by human beings); this seems to be true independently of any linguistic act. This point is at the heart of Donnellan’s criticism. Kripke indeed sometimes speaks as if Le Verrier had *a priori* knowledge of an astronomical fact as a result of stipulation. And, as we saw, Donnellan complains that it seems preposterous to expect that a mere act of stipulation could bring about a contingent fact. [...] But we can think about the issue from the perspective of performatives along the lines already explained. We must start by distinguishing two questions concerning (**N**<sup>\*\*</sup>): first, is it the

<sup>4</sup> Consider also the difference between the introduction of a religious name by a theologian (what I would classify as a linguistic declaration with institutional import) and the celebration of a marriage by a priest (a purely institutional declaration).

case that, by performing ( $\mathbf{N}^*$ ), Le Verrier was also committed (in the sense explained in Sect. 9.8) to ( $\mathbf{N}^{**}$ )? Second, *can a performance of ( $\mathbf{N}^{**}$ ) ever be successful as a declaration?* The answer to the first question is less clear than in the meter case, and I do not see a decisive reason for an affirmative answer (or for a negative either). (pp. 190–191; my emphasis)

Later on, he gives a more definite answer to the second question:

We can follow both Kripke and Donnellan and *see ( $\mathbf{N}^{**}$ ) as something that Le Verrier (explicitly or implicitly) tries to perform, but as an act that can never achieve its illocutionary point (i.e., bringing about an astronomical fact) because this is not the kind of thing that human beings can do by means of utterances*, although, as Searle says, there is nothing grammatically wrong or nonsensical with Le Verrier's attempting to do it performatively, and maybe even as an illocutionary consequence of performing ( $\mathbf{N}^*$ ). (p. 191; my emphasis)

As I have argued before, it is clearer to construe the example as involving only one declarative act that gives rise to a linguistic fact with institutional import. In my view, there is only one act involved, completely within human powers, and it is a successful one, namely, it achieves its illocutionary point: the introduction of a scientific name in the linguistic community, with its consequent normative changes. In this regard, I think that the Neptune example is no different from the meter one.

Now, I admit there is a *minor* difference between the two cases that could be explained in the following terms. In the meter example, the introduction of “meter” is identical to the *creation* of (what can be described as) a metrological fact, namely, the fact that a certain length will count as the unit of a new system of measurement.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, in the Neptune example, the introduction of “Neptune” is identical to the *discovery* of an (already existing) astronomical fact, namely, the fact that there is another planet beyond Uranus. In clearer words, in making a linguistic stipulation or creating a linguistic fact, the meter baptizer is creating a unit of measurement, whereas the Neptune baptizer is discovering an already existing, though unknown, planet.

Notice that the last case is pretty common: not all declarations involve the creation of the objects constituting the facts that are

<sup>5</sup> Just a clarification point: “metrological” derives from “metrology”, a word designating the scientific study of measurement.

declared to exist. The celebration of a marriage, for instance, does not involve the creation of the two people who are declared married but a change in their normative *status* —already existing people become wife and husband/wives/husbands. Likewise, the introduction of “Neptune” does not involve the creation of the planet that is being named but a change in its normative *status* —an already existing planet, identified by means of certain characteristics (causing perturbations in Uranus’ orbit) starts being considered part of the solar system. If this is so, there is no reason why the idea that the Neptune example involves a successful declaration should commit one to the preposterous view that introducing the name “Neptune” amounts to an *astronomical creation* (rather than a significant breakthrough).

The difference between the examples I have just pointed out accords with Marco’s conception of mathematical axioms and definitions as providing us with a useful model for approaching the study of a (presumably) independently existent mathematical reality (cfr. chapter 11 of the book, pp. 208–209). My point is that to ascribe that important function to mathematics, and to science in general, it is not necessary to conceive of the introduction of scientific names in terms of declarations with purely metalinguistic effects occasionally followed by creative consequences achieved by means of subsequent illocutionary acts. In contrast, they can be taken to be themselves acts of either genuine creation or significant discovery.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. *On the Transmission of A Priori Knowledge Based on Original Declarations*

Inspired by both Austin (1956, 1962) and Searle and Vanderveken (1985)’s idea that there are connections among different illocutionary acts and their respective conditions of success, Marco maintains

<sup>6</sup> As is clear then, I do not agree with Marco’s conclusion: “The perspective that I am proposing suggests that there is an asymmetry between the two cases and, hence, both Kripke and Donnellan are partially right and partially wrong. In one of the cases, the declaration does succeed in achieving the illocutionary point (provided that the one performing ( $\mathbf{M}^{**}$ ) has the required institutional authority, etc.), it indeed creates a fact, and there is *a priori* knowledge of this fact. In the other case, ( $\mathbf{N}^{**}$ ) fails to achieve the point (which would be to make true that Neptune is the planet that causes the perturbations in Uranus’ orbits by means of the very utterance), although the related declaration ( $\mathbf{N}^*$ ) (which is presupposed by ( $\mathbf{N}^{**}$ )) does achieve its illocutionary point and creates a fact (i.e., the metalinguistic fact that a particular planet has the name “Neptune”). We can say that the first declaration ( $\mathbf{M}^{**}$ ) can be successful, but the second (( $\mathbf{N}^{**}$ )) cannot, and this is not due to semantics, but to the limitations concerning what we can produce linguistically. And this is so despite the fact that ( $\mathbf{M}^*$ ) and ( $\mathbf{N}^*$ ) can both be successful” (p. 192).

that “the declarations performed with (**M\*\***) and (**N\*\***) require, for their success, that those other speakers [the ones not present at the baptism] *assert the propositional content at later times and have as main justification for their assertions only the original declarations*” (p. 194; my emphasis). In other words, he considers, first, that later speakers must make assertions with the same propositional content as the original declarations for these to be successful, and, secondly, that they should be taken to also know *a priori* the propositions expressed by them, by virtue of the fact that they exclusively rely on (their knowledge and memory of) the original declarative acts.

I do not see what the grounds are for the first part of the claim. In my opinion, as a normative consequence of original declarations, later speakers are not compelled but *entitled* to make assertions featuring the *names* introduced in the original declarations. More specifically, they are entitled to use the introduced names characteristically, though not exclusively, in assertions (they could also use them, for instance, in giving orders or expressing feelings). Therefore, I also have doubts concerning the second part of Marco’s claim: what original declarations allow for is *using the new names in future speech acts but not necessarily using the introductory sentences themselves* because the descriptions employed by the baptizer only play an instrumental role —although they are useful for introducing the names, they are not the target of the declarative acts. The baptizer’s illocutionary purpose is to introduce a name for a certain (previously identified) object, and it is only the name (in standard cases, with its referent) that gets transmitted to the other members of the linguistic community. As is known, according to Kripke, the transmission mechanism (that allows for reference borrowing) is purely causal; the descriptions used in the baptism (in standard cases, to fix the referent) do not play any role in that subsequent process. Consequently, in terms of the Searlean institutional approach (Searle 1995) alluded to by Marco, in the case of the introduction of scientific names like “meter” and “Neptune”, what can be considered to be subject to the imposition of a *status* function by means of collective intentionality are the names themselves (there is a collective intention to use them to refer to a certain length and to a certain planet, respectively) but not the sentences used to introduce them in the language (which were mere tools for the scientist). So, in my opinion, the original declarations do allow for future assertions involving the new names, but they do not allow for future assertions *of the original propositional content*, due to the merely auxiliary role played by the corresponding descriptions. If that is so,

original declarations cannot be considered an *a priori* source of justification for later speakers' knowledge of the propositions expressed by them.

I think that Marco's position is motivated by the fact that he tends to conceive of all declarations on the model of *definitions* (in particular, mathematical definitions), as suggested by the following passage:

Austin already suggests something along these lines when he remarks that some illocutionary acts invite subsequent effects for their successful achievement. In that sense, we have a kind of implication between illocutionary acts, and this might provide a clue to the understanding of the transference of *a priori* knowledge from speaker to speaker or from one speaker at  $t_0$  to that same speaker at a later time. That is to say, *if someone defines X as Y and in a future occasion does not follow this same definition, this implies that the definition was not successful as an illocutionary act. A successful definition (which is a declarative illocutionary act) requires the speaker to engage in some assertions and not others at later times.* (p. 193; my emphasis)

No doubt, all definitions can be considered to be declarative illocutionary acts, but, of course, not vice versa: there are many declarative acts that are not definitions, and, in particular, the acts of introducing names in the language by means of descriptions are not definitions. As Kripke (1980) famously has it, the description used in introducing a name serves to fix its referent but does not give its meaning.

Finally, I would like to briefly address a related point: it should be taken into account that the descriptions employed by the baptizer can be either false of the object being named or fail to identify any object whatsoever. In other words, the successful introduction of a name in the language requires neither that the purportedly referred object should have the properties mentioned in the description nor that it should exist. I will expand a bit on each aspect.

Regarding the first aspect, let's consider (**H**), the example mentioned in footnote 1

(**H**) Hesperus is the brightest evening star.

or, in parallel with the previous examples,

(H\*) I stipulate that “Hesperus” refers to the brightest evening star.

uttered by Hammurabi, with the illocutionary purpose of introducing the name “Hesperus” for a certain celestial body. He can thus be taken to create a linguistic fact, namely, the fact that a certain object, identified as the brightest evening star, is named “Hesperus”, namely, that the name “Hesperus” (with its corresponding referent) has been incorporated into Hammurabi’s language. But notice that the associated mechanism of identification is not working with precision, since the description used to pick out the object does not apply to it (Hesperus is not a star but a planet). It seems to me then that Hammurabi can be considered to know *a priori* that an object (perceptually identified but erroneously described by him as being the brightest evening star) is named “Hesperus”, but he cannot be considered to know *a priori* that the brightest evening star is named “Hesperus”. Alternatively, we could say that his utterance of (H\*) expresses a proposition (*that the brightest evening star is named “Hesperus”*) that is *a priori* believed but not *a priori* known to be true by Hammurabi: if one wants to speak of truth and falsity, it should be agreed that some (contingently) false sentences may turn out to be useful for introducing a name. In any case, some kinds of mistakes do not seem to prevent a declaration from being successful.

As for the second aspect, Marco highlights the fact that Donnellan’s following claim can be taken to set a precedent for his own position: “It is a condition on the stipulation that the  $\varphi$  exists and should it turn out that it does not, the stipulation, we might say, has been an unhappy one and not to be taken as being in effect” (1977, p. 19) (footnote 17, p. 192). I would like to question this claim as well. According to Sainsbury (2005), there are two ways in which a baptism can be successful: it can be successful in *presenting an object*, which is what happens in the standard cases; but it can also be successful in *originating a naming practice* in those non-standard cases in which there is no object involved but still a naming practice gets off the ground. The paradigmatic examples are provided by some failed scientific names, such as “Vulcan” and “aether”, among many others. On Sainsbury’s view, those are genuinely referential terms without referents, namely, they are introduced in baptisms that are similar to the ones of standard names but, due to various causes, there is no object to be perceived or described, and, hence, named.

Accordingly, by focusing on the second horn, a successful declaration does not seem to require the existence of an object correlated with it.<sup>7</sup>

To summarize, I do not think that declarative success is directly related to truth. As I said before, a name introduction can be successful even if the description employed does not serve to identify the object named and, moreover, even if there is no object at all to be identified. A successful name introduction brings about a linguistic fact (sometimes, with an institutional import) that is correlated with the declarative utterance,<sup>8</sup> but it sounds odd to me to say that that fact makes it true, since, first, the involved description may fail to identify the object referred to, and second, the introduced name may be empty. The idea that declarative speech acts have a double direction of fit shouldn't be taken to secure a crucial role for truth, since it may well be that it is only a single direction of fit, going from language to the world, that gives rise to truth.<sup>9</sup> It can be taken into account that, in the framework of the correspondence theory of truth that is in play, truth has always been thought to be an asymmetrical relation, according to which it is a world fact that grounds the truth-value of an utterance and not the other way around.

### 3. *Conclusion*

In this brief commentary I have dealt with two problems that are fairly central to Marco's proposal. First, I focused on the question of the nature of the truth-makers or, more in general, the facts that are correlated with the declarative acts performed in introducing scientific names such as "meter" and "Neptune". Marco proposes to conceive of them in terms of a combination of metalinguistic and institutional facts corresponding to two different speech acts, a linguistic declaration and an institutional one. My suggestion is that his proposal is not sufficiently motivated: a convenient Austinian stance may allow for a simpler view, according to which scientific original declarations, like the examples at stake, are correlated with linguistic

<sup>7</sup> In my opinion, if one wants to stick to the idea that original declarations have a truth-value, the existence of the object should be considered a preparatory condition for their truth but not for their success.

<sup>8</sup> Concerning the present example, I would say that the fact at stake is the fact that a certain object, perceptually identified and incorrectly described by Hammurabi as being the brightest evening star, is named "Hesperus".

<sup>9</sup> Cfr., for instance, this passage: "The most important feature of such acts is the double direction of fit, i.e., the act itself, if successful, creates automatic alignment between word and world (differently from other kinds of illocutionary acts) because the act itself brings about a new fact that verifies it" (p. 182).

facts that have institutional import. Secondly, I addressed the issue of the possibility for later speakers to have *a priori* knowledge of the propositions expressed by the original declarations. Although Marco has argued for a positive stance on this matter by appealing to illocutionary relations between the baptizer's declarations and subsequent assertions, I objected that those relations can serve to validate the transmission of names but not the transmission of the whole sentences by means of which the names were introduced. Relatedly, I included some considerations concerning the appropriateness of taking the declarations performed to introduce names in the language as being true by virtue of the facts correlated with them, and hence as being known *a priori* to be so by the corresponding baptizer.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I thank Marco Ruffino for a wonderful reading experience and for motivating me to reflect about many interesting philosophical problems, and Santiago Echeverri for inviting me to take part in this symposium and for his comments on a previous version of this essay.

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*Received: February 24, 2025; accepted: February 26, 2025.*