Donkey anaphora contain relative clauses

Background In the traditional E-type approach to donkey anaphora the co-varying reading of it with the donkey owned is a function of individual variable binding cf. Cooper 1979, Heim 1990 (1a). Recent proposals within the E-type approach have the donkey pronoun be a pure description at LF cf. Elbourne 2001, 2002, Büiring 2004 (1b), i.e. not containing an individual variable. The co-varying reading is a function of the uniqueness presupposition (due to the definiteness of it donkey), by way of situation semantics (cf. Kratzer 1989): The subject introduces base situations s_b each containing a donkey. The VP introduces extended situations s_e such that s_e are extended situations of s_b. In each s_e, it donkey is the unique donkey in s_e and therefore must be identical to the donkey in s_b. The main advantages are A) this solves the problem of the formal link (cf. Kadmon 1987, Heim 1990), B) that it turns the ugly duckling of the E-type approach, the uniqueness presupposition (cf. Heim 1982), into a useful tool, and C) that it captures the sloppy/strict readings in VP-ellipsis contexts, e.g. (2). However, there is an unsettled issue concerning the relation between the descriptive content of the donkey pronoun and the antecedent, which is often tacitly assumed to be one of identity, i.e. it = it donkey in (1).

Claim Assuming Elbourne's proposal to be basically correct, the present paper is an attempt to clarify the relation between the descriptive content of the donkey pronoun and its antecedent. I propose (1c) that they are not identical but instead that the unpronounced noun is essentially void of descriptive content, i.e. it is something like entity, possibly person in case the donkey pronoun is overtly specified for [+human] as in (5) etc. In addition there is evidence that information pertaining to the thematic role of the antecedent is present in the donkey pronoun site. I will represent the thematic specification of the donkey pronoun nominal as a reduced RC, akin to the proposal by Koopman 2003 that nouns have a clausal origin, i.e. that D selects not an NP but a CP. Note that all the major problems related to the traditional E-type approach and solved by Elbourne's proposal pertain to the fact that the traditional approach postulates a bound individual variable pronoun he. Since the present proposal also does not make use of individual variable binding, Elbourne's solutions are automatically inherited, with no loss.

Evidence The arguments in favor of (1c) are based on evidence from multiple antecedents for the donkey pronoun. Consider coordinated subjects: (3) has a donkey reading in which farmer-donkey pairs each participate in beating events. The VP beats it is interpreted in each conjunct (via distributive conjunction à la Partee&Rooth 1983: \[ \text{[and]} = \lambda f, \lambda g, \lambda Q . f(Q) \& g(Q) \]. Clearly it cannot be it donkey in the priest-goat conjunct, nor can it be it goat in the farmer-donkey conjunct. However, it could be it animal, i.e. a description that is a superset denotation of the antecedents. Consider next (4) the case of a coordinated object: Again it cannot be it donkey nor can it be it goat, but it could be it animal, or some other superset denotation. (5) shows that the denotation of him cannot be restricted to a minimal superset denotation of the antecedent. Assuming VP-ellipsis to require identity of meaning between the antecedent VPa and the VPe, the denotation of him in the first conjunct cannot be burglar, but must be some superset, like guy. However, this needs to be determined independently of the second conjunct, i.e. within the first conjunct. The logical conclusion is that the grammar must opt for a maximal superset denotation such as the male person for him, and entity for it. Now, while in (3, 4) the uniqueness presupposition assures that the animal or (non-human) entity in s_e is the same as in s_b and therefore co-varies with the antecedent, in (5) both the burglar and the officer are (can be) male persons. Thus there is no unique male person in s_b. Therefore, in order to satisfy the uniqueness presupposition, the donkey anaphor in (5) must contain additional information to distinguish the two male persons. I propose that this information pertains to the thematic role of the antecedent. Evidence comes from the variants of (5) given in (7) where in (a) distinct verbs with similar thematic properties are used, whereas in (b) verbs with distinct thematic properties are used. Some speakers judge a donkey reading in (7a) significantly more easily available than in (7b). This I propose to generalize such that all donkey pronouns feature a clausal origin in which an abstract predicate relating to the thematic role of the antecedent is interpreted, e.g. (1c).

Conclusion Assuming an E-type approach to donkey sentences, donkey pronouns are best viewed as descriptions featuring a noun that is void of descriptive content and that originates in a relative clause, whose predicate supplies thematic information, allowing the unique identification with the antecedent.
1. Every farmer who owns a donkey beats it.
   a. LF: the donkey he owns.
   b. LF: it donkey.
   c. LF: it entity owned. (= present proposal)

2.a. In this town, almost every farmer who owns a donkey beats it,
   but Father Giles doesn't beat it.
   (*sloppy, ?strict)

   b. In this town, almost every farmer who owns a donkey beats it,
   but Farmer Giles doesn't beat it.
   (?sloppy, ?strict)
   (cf. Elbourne 2001)

3. Every farmer who owns a donkey and every priest who owns a goat beats it.
   a. *
   b. *
   c. ok

4. If Mary sees a donkey or a goat, she waves to it.
   a. *
   b. *
   c. ok

5. Every officer who arrests a burglar \([V_{Pa} \text{ insults } \text{ him } NP]\), and
   every officer who arrests a murderer does \([V_{Pe} \text{ <insult } \text{ him } NP>]\) too.
   (Example reminiscent of Tomioka 1999, Elbourne 2002)

6. Every officer who arrests a burglar \([V_{Pa} \text{ insults } \text{ the male person } "\text{affected}"]\).

7. Every officer who arrests a burglar \([V_{Pa} \text{ insults } \text{ the male person } "\text{affected}"]\).
   a. every officer who captures a serial killer does \(<\text{insult him}>\) too.
   b. every officer who frightens a serial killer does \(<\text{insult him}>\) too.

Selected References:
Heim, Irene. 1990. E-Type Pronouns and Donkey Anaphora. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 13, 137-177