RIGIDITY AND THE DESCRIPTION OF COUNTERFACTUAL SITUATIONS

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ABSTRACT: In this paper I discuss two approaches to rigidity. I argue that they differ in the general conception of semantics that each embraces. Moreover, I argue that they differ in how each explains the rigidity of general terms, and in what each presupposes in that explanation.

Keywords: rigidity, rigid designator, general terms.

CONTENTS

Ever since Saul Kripke gave the lectures on *Naming and Necessity*,[1] there has been a lot of discussion in the philosophical community about rigidity. A substantial part of that discussion has focused on the idea of rigidity itself, on the many ways in which it can -or should be- understood, and on whether there are or there aren't radical differences among different characterizations of rigidity, both as presented by Kripke himself, and as interpreted by other philosophers.[2] Quite possibly, the last thing we need now is to add yet another straw to that discussion, since it would seem that at this point everything that needed to be said has been said, and then some. Nevertheless, and with apologies, it is my purpose in this essay to compare and discuss two presentations of the notion of *rigid designator*, and the intuitive tests for rigidity that each of these presentations relies on, for I do think we can learn something of value from that discussion.

The two characterizations of rigidity I will focus on are two ways of cashing out Kripke's standard definition of a rigid designator as "a term that designates the same individual in every possible world." The first

reading I will consider is due to David Kaplan[3] and it has become the common currency characterization of rigidity among proponents of Theories of Direct Reference.

The second reading of that characterization of rigidity is due to Kripke himself. It appears explicitly in the second lecture of *Naming and Necessity* and in 'Identity and Necessity,'[4] and on both occasions Kripke offers it with the declared purpose of clearing some misunderstandings surrounding the idea of sameness of designation in every possible world.

I will argue that the two characterizations of rigidity differ in important ways. The difference is not highly dramatic, in the sense that one classifies as rigid expressions that the other does not. Nothing of the kind, I think, is the case: both characterizations are extensionally equivalent and, on the surface, they may even look like versions of one another. The differences, I claim, are more subtle, but no less radical, for they reveal different implicit conceptions of what the fundamental questions are in semantic theory. I will argue, moreover, that the two characterizations diverge as regards the ontological presuppositions required to explain the rigidity of certain terms.

1. The Direct Reference understanding of rigidity

The claim that a rigid designator designates the same individual in every possible world does indeed stand in need of clarification or interpretation, as Kripke himself points out. For, as it is, it might sound as if Kripke were presenting the view that a term is rigid just in case if the term were used under different circumstances, it would still refer to the same object it actually refers to. This is the misunderstanding that Kripke wants to clear up in the second lecture of *Naming and Necessity*, but for the moment let us not focus on Kripke's own way of cashing out the behavior of rigid designators. As David Kaplan stresses in 'Demonstratives,'[5] when we say that a term is rigid,

> we do not mean that the expression *could not have been used* to designate a different object. We mean rather that given a *use* of the expression, we may ask of *what has been said* wether *it* would have been true or false in various counterfactual circumstances, and in such counterfactual circumstances, which are the individuals relevant to determining truth-value (pp. 493-494; emphases are Kaplan's).

From this perspective, a term is rigid just in case the same individual is relevant in every possible world for the evaluation of what has been said by a given use of a sentence. So, the idea of *same designation in every possible*

world is interpreted as *sameness of individual relevant for evaluation in every possible world.*

According to Kaplan every meaningful expression has a *content* whose basic function is to provide the appropriate extension for each circumstance of evaluation. In the case of a definite description the content selects an object at each circumstance. And if the description is rigid, the object selected in each circumstance is the same. Thus, a term such as "the successor of 8" is rigid because its content selects the actual designatum at each circumstance of evaluation as the object that figures in the determination of truth value of the *what is said* by a sentence such as "the successor of 8 is not prime." The definite description "the number of planets," on the other hand, is not rigid because its content selects different objects depending on the goings-on of the counterfactual circumstances under consideration.

Using the picture of structured propositions that Kaplan uses in 'Demonstratives'[6] we may say that the content of "the successor of 8 is not a prime number" is a structured proposition and one of its constituents is the content of the definite description, a complex of attributes that selects the same object in every possible world as the object relevant for the evaluation of the proposition.

The rigidity of names and indexicals, however, is explained on different grounds. Neither names nor indexicals have a content whose function is to select objects for evaluation in different circumstances. The content of a name or a use of an indexical is just the referent. Thus names and indexicals are rigid, on Kaplan's view, not because their content *selects* the same object in every circumstance, but rather because their content *is* already the object relevant for evaluation in every circumstance.

If we resort again to the picture of Russellian propositions, proper names, uses of indexicals and demonstratives, and referential uses of definite descriptions, if there are any of those, are rigid because the referent becomes part of the proposition and so the object relevant for the evaluation of the proposition in different circumstances is the propositional constituent itself.

Now, we may observe that the Direct Reference characterization of rigidity makes essential use of the notion of content. A term is rigid because its content is either an object, or it is a non-singular content that selects the same object in every possible world. But here it is important to spell out what inspires the use of the notion of content. For clearly by *content* we do not mean cognitive or epistemic content, we do not mean that which speakers understand or learn when they incorporate the term into

their vocabulary; in the case of a singular term,[7] the content is that which for each circumstance of evaluation provides the object that figures in the computation of truth value of what is said by a use of a sentence. The intuitive test for rigidity that underlies this approach to the notion of rigid designator asks us to think about what is said by a use of a sentence and what our intuitions tell us as regards its truth conditions: under which circumstances it is true or false and which objects make it so. The intuitions that one seeks to summon from this perspective are essentially truth conditional. Given a use of a sentence that contains a singular term, we question ourselves what would have to be the case for the sentential content to be true. If it turns out that the same object is relevant for the evaluation of the content in all circumstances, the term is rigid.

Kripke himself talks about rigidity in similar terms, not in the body of *Naming and Necessity*, where he does not use the notion of content or proposition expressed, but in the 1980 Preface: "The intuition is about the truth-conditions, in counterfactual situations, of (the proposition expressed by) a *simple* sentence" (p. 12). And:

> (...) we can ask whether what is expressed [by "Aristotle was fond of dogs"] would be true of a counterfactual situation if and only if some fixed individual has the appropriate property. *This* is the question of rigidity (p. 9).

The notion of rigidity characterized in terms of content is an *evaluation*-oriented notion. As a consequence, this explication of rigidity is framed within a semantic orientation that is essentially *sentential*: the way to test intuitive data as regards whether a given term is or is not rigid consists in asking ourselves whether what is said by a use of a sentence containing the term is true or false under specified conditions, and if so which individuals make it true or false.

I will argue that these two features of the Direct Reference characterization of rigidity reveal important differences with respect to the explication of rigidity that we will focus on next.[8]

2. *The clarifications*

> What do I mean by 'rigid designator'? I mean a term that designates the same object in every possible world. To get rid of one confusion which certainly is not mine, I do not use "might have designated a different object" to refer to the fact that language might have been used differently. For example, the expression 'the inventor of bifocals' might have been used (...) to refer to the man who corrupted Hadleyburg (...). That is not what I mean. What I mean by saying that a description might

have referred to something different, I mean that in *our* language as *we* use it in de-
scribing a counterfactual situation, there might have been a different object satis-
fying the descriptive conditions *we* give for reference ('Identity and Necessity', p.
145).

To clear up one thing which some people have asked me: When I say that a designa-
tor is rigid, and designates the same thing in all possible worlds, I mean that, as
used in *our* language, it stands for that thing, when *we* talk about counterfactual
situations. I don't mean, of course, that there mightn't be counterfactual situations
in which in the other possible worlds people actually spoke a different language
(*Naming and Necessity*, p. 77).

These remarks are offered by Kripke in order to clarify a potential misun-
derstanding generated by the characterization of a rigid designator as a
term that designates the same individual in every possible world. The
potential misunderstanding to be cleared up is an interpretation of the idea
of sameness of designation in every possible world according to which a
designator is rigid just in case it would still designate its actual desig-
natum if *used* in a different possible world. And in both remarks Kripke
illustrates the crux of the confusion by reminding us that the inhabitants, so
to speak, of those other possible worlds might well speak a different lan-
guage or have no language at all. Thus, that a designator is rigid does not
entail that the designator cannot mean something different or be used to
designate different things.

The appeal to the irrelevance of how expressions are used in different
possible worlds, although it does drive an important point home, makes it
very tempting to misinterpret the clarifications as establishing the impor-
tance of keeping the language, i.e., the meanings of expressions, "fixed"
when thinking about what is designated by a term in a different possible
world. Thus, it is tempting, although wrong, to say that "the successor of
eight" is rigid because in every possible world, and as long as we keep in-
variant the meaning of "successor," "eight" and so on, the extension of the
description is the number nine. On the other hand, "the inventor of bifocals"
is not rigid because even without altering the meaning of the expressions
involved, the extension of the description varies from world to world.

So interpreted, it would seem, *contra* Kaplan, that we could cash out the
notion of rigidity, after all, in terms of *uses* of expressions in different
circumstances of evaluation; it is just that, in order to elicit the right intui-
tive results, one has to be careful not to consider in the picture those worlds
in which the language has been altered or the meanings of the expressions
are different from their actual meanings. Thus, it is tempting to say that a
term is rigid just in case in every possible world in which the meanings of

expressions are the same as in the actual world, a use of the term designates its actual designatum.

The reason why this is the wrong way of reinterpreting rigidity is that this characterization of rigidity seems supported by intuitive data as long as we are thinking of definite descriptions only. It is an intuitive datum that if we hold the meanings of the expressions fixed, a *use* of "the successor of eight" in a different possible world would designate the number nine, whereas even with the meanings of "inventor" and so on fixed, a *use* of "the inventor of bifocals" could have designated someone different from Franklin.

However, the same line of reasoning does not work when we focus on proper names.[9] It is not an intuitive datum that, as long as we keep the meaning of "Aristotle" fixed, a use of "Aristotle" in a different counterfactual situation still refers to Aristotle. In fact, the descriptivist Frege-Russell that Kripke is attacking defends the opposite view: if "Aristotle" is synonymous with "the tutor of Alexander" the reference of "Aristotle" varies from world to world, even keeping meanings fixed. The problem is that it is not an obvious intuitive datum that altering the reference of "Aristotle" when considering a different counterfactual situation in which "Aristotle" is used constitutes an alteration of the language. If anything, that is what the discussion in *Naming and Necessity* aims to establish; it is not one of the intuitive data upon which the claim that names are rigid can rest. So, the test for rigidity that goes hand in hand with this interpretation, quite simply, does not elicit any clear intuitions when applied to proper names and thus it does not support what Kripke means to be an intuitive conclusion: that names are rigid designators.

Hence, those clarifications should not be interpreted just as a reminder of the importance of keeping meaning fixed when intuitively assigning extensions to expressions in possible worlds and they should not be understood as amending the definition of rigidity to read "a term is rigid just in case it designates the same individual in all possible worlds in which the meaning of the term is held fixed."

I think that the idea underlying the clarifications quoted here is that a term t is rigid just in case when we use t in the description of a counterfactual situation, the situation described is one that involves the actual designatum of t. Before trying to be a tad more explicit, I would like to think in terms of the intuitive test for rigidity that accompanies the characterization of rigidity under consideration.

Suppose that I am speaking English and I describe a counterfactual situation using the following sentence: "consider a situation in which the President of the US in 1995 lost the 1996 election." Now, the intuitive question: is this a situation in which the *actual* designatum of the description "the President in 1995" loses the election in 1996? And the intuitive answer, it seems to me, is: maybe or maybe not. Now, suppose that I describe a counterfactual situation as follows: "consider a situation in which the successor of eight numbers the moons of Jupiter." The intuitive question is again: is the situation I describe one in which the actual designatum of "the successor of eight" is the number of the moons of Jupiter? And in this case the intuitive answer is: yes. So, we can conclude the test: the former description is not rigid, the latter one is.

Now comes the crucial case. Are names rigid designators according to this test for rigidity? To answer that question I proceed to describe a situation as follows: consider a counterfactual situation in which Bill Clinton lost the 1996 election. And we ask again the same question: is this a situation in which the actual designatum of "Bill Clinton" loses the election, i.e., a situation that involves Bill Clinton? If Kripke is right, when we reflect about a case like this one, our response is, yes, and thus, names are rigid.[10]

But what justifies the intuition that names are rigid, from this point of view? What grounds the intuitive response, it seems to me, is the following datum: I, the describer of the situation, use the name "Bill Clinton" because I *want* to describe a situation that involves Clinton. I do not want to describe just a situation in which someone who looks a lot like Clinton, is named "Clinton" and has many of the properties that Clinton actually possesses loses the election. In describing the situation at hand, I use the words that guarantee that the individual involved, the one who loses the election, is the individual I want to talk about and not someone else. That's precisely why I use his name, and not a definite description such as "the former governor of Arkansas," for the latter does not guarantee that the situation described is about the same individual.[11]

In other words, what grounds the intuition of rigidity is the fact that *we*, the describers of counterfactual situations, *use* words with *our* meanings to produce a picture; and in producing that picture we use the words that allow us to describe what happens to the objects that we want to talk about:

> The doctrine of rigidity supposes that a painting or picture purporting to represent a situation correctly described by ["Aristotle was fond of dogs"] must *ipso facto*

purport to depict Aristotle himself as fond of dogs (*Naming and Necessity*, Preface, p. 12).

Naturally, speakers do not automatically know, on many cases, whether a described situation involves the actual designatum of a term. If *being an F* is an essential an uniquely identificatory property of Bill Clinton's, so far undiscovered and discoverable only *a posteriori*, when I describe a situation using the F it will not be apparent that the situation described involves Bill Clinton. Typically, whether the actual designatum is the one the situation is about will be apparent to speakers only when we use expressions that are rigid designators by virtue of linguistic conventions, such as names, indexicals and demonstratives in context, and descriptions of the form the actual G; namely *de iure* rigid designators.

The characterization of rigidity that springs from the intuitive test considered here could run as follows: a designator *t* is rigid just in case whenever *t* is used to describe a counterfactual circumstance using simple sentences of the form consider a situation in which *t* is *P*, the situation described is one in which the actual designatum of *t* is *P*.

Now, observe that from this perspective, saying that a certain term is rigid is not a point about the content of the term being an object, or a complex that selects the same object in all possible worlds. It is not a point about which individual is relevant for the evaluation of a *what is said* with respect to circumstances of evaluation. It is rather a point about what kind of situation ends up being described when we use a term.[12]

From the point of view of the *content* presentation of rigidity, deciding whether a term such as "Aristotle" is rigid requires that we ask ourselves the following question: consider what is said by a sentence such as "Aristotle was a cook." Is that true in a counterfactual situation in which the actual designatum of the name is a cook and, say, someone else who is not a cook writes the *Nichomachean Ethics*, proposes the metaphysical theory of hylemorphism and so on? And if the content is true, what makes it true in that circumstance? I..e, what enters the computation of truth value?

From the point of view of the *counterfactual description* approach to rigidity, determining whether "Aristotle" is rigid requires that we ask ourselves: when we describe situations using the name "Aristotle" do we describe situations that involve the actual designatum of the name?

Something to be noticed here is that the counterfactual description approach, unlike the content approach, is pre-evaluational and pre-sentential. The question asked is independent of questions as regards how to evaluate a

what is said by a sentence; no truth conditional intuitions have to be summoned in order to answer the question about rigidity posed by the counterfactual description approach. This is not to say that the latter approach leaves open which objects determine the truth value of contents in counterfactual situations. If the counterfactual situation described is one that involves Aristotle, it goes without saying, I think, that he is relevant in the determination of the truth value of the sentence used to describe the situation. So, I am not saying that the content and the counterfactual description approach differ bluntly in this respect. Nevertheless, I think that the difference in perspective, the difference in the question each asks to determine rigidity, accounts for some interesting contrasts.

I said before that the content approach to rigidity is sentence and evaluation-oriented. This should be no surprise, for it goes hand in hand with a pervasive general conception of semantics espoused by the Theory of Direct Reference. Semantic theory, on this conception, should assign to each sentence (or use of a sentence) a bearer of truth or falsity, a *what is said* that represents, correctly or incorrectly, a fact-like piece of the world, and that is either true or false depending on what the world is like.

There is, by contrast, a less explored conception of semantics that does not focus primarily on sentential contents and on what makes those contents true or false. This other conception of semantics sees semantic rules as explanations of how different types of expressions function, and how different expressions connect in different ways to pieces of the world. The focus of semantic theorizing here is not whether "Aristotle was a philosopher" and "the tutor of Alexander was a philosopher" differ in which objects make the respective claims true or false in each world. The focus is rather on the explanation of how names and definite descriptions differ in the way in which they connect to their designata.

Glimpses of this view are explicit in J.S. Mill. When Mill distinguishes proper names from other kinds of expressions, he does so not by focusing on what is a name's contribution to truth conditions, but simply by trying to convince us that a name *connects* to its referent in a way that is not dependent on the properties the referent satisfies.[13] Mill does not ponder on the truth conditions of "Dartmouth is near a river," he focuses directly on how we *use* "Dartmouth."

More surprising, maybe, is that Bertrand Russell, at times, joins this way of proceeding in semantic discussion:

(...) it should be observed that *the author of Waverley* is not a *mere* name, like *Scott*. *Scott* is merely a noise or shape conventionally used to designate a certain person (...) But *the author of Waverley* is not merely conventionally a name for Scott; the element of mere convention belongs here to the separate words *the* and *author* and *of* and *Waverley*. Given what these words stand for, *the author of Waverley* is no longer arbitrary (...) A man's name is what he is called, but however much Scott had been called the author of Waverley, that would not have made him be the author; i t was necessary for him actually to write Waverley, which is a fact having nothing to do with names. [14]

Granted, neither Mill nor Russell thought much about counterfactual situations. Nevertheless, I think that the counterfactual description characterization of rigidity discussed here provides another illustration of the non-sentential non-evaluational orientation exemplified by Mill and (at times) by Russell, for it addresses primarily the question of how certain expressions are used, in this case, how they are used in the description of counterfactual situations. It does not start by addressing the question of what those expressions contribute to the determination of truth value of sentential contents in counterfactual situations. This, obviously, does not entail that we are dealing here with two incompatible or opposed conceptions of semantics. We are not. But I think it is patent that these are two different ways of *starting* to think about semantics and two different ways of approaching semantic questions, and the two characterizations of rigidity discussed here illustrate the two approaches. Now, it may be argued that this difference between the two characterizations of rigidity is too fine to be of any real import.[15] So, let us focus now on a coarser case.

3. *Explaining the rigidity of some general terms*

(...) certain general terms (...) have a greater kinship with proper names than is generally realized. This conclusion holds for certain for various species names, whether they are count nouns, such as 'cat', 'tiger', 'chunk of gold', or mass terms such as 'gold', 'water', 'iron pyrites'. It also applies to certain terms for natural phenomena, such as 'heat', 'light', 'sound', 'lightning', and, presumably, suitably elaborated, to corresponding adjectives -'hot', 'loud', 'red' (*Naming and Necessity*, p. 134).

Let us suppose we agree that at least the general terms mentioned by Kripke are rigid. How does the content approach to rigidity account for their rigidity? Well, clearly terms like "gold," "tiger" or "red" are not rigid in the way in which some descriptions are. A rigid description, we may recall, has a content that determines the same extension in every circumstance of evaluation. Whatever it is that accounts for the rigidity of "gold," "tiger" and "red" it is not the fact that their content presents the

same extension in every possible world; surely there could be more gold, or fewer tigers, and different things might have been painted red. Given that the extension of rigid general terms typically varies from world to world, modeling the rigidity of general terms on the definite description case will not do.

There are two ways in which these terms can turn out to be rigid according to the content approach to rigidity: either each of them has a content that determines the same *thing* as referent in every possible world (where the thing in question cannot be just a set or an aggregate of objects or stuff, for that will typically vary from world to world) or, and this is the second way, they are directly referential, i.e., they refer to some *thing* (which, again, cannot be a set or an aggregate) and they do not have any other intermediate content, the referent itself is the content.

Either way, it seems that the content approach to rigidity requires the postulation of some *entity* (a property? a species or substance? a color?) which can serve as the object designated by a rigid general term, so that we can achieve sameness of designation in every possible world, in the sense of sameness of entity relevant for evaluation. This is all fine, and it is not my purpose to object to the proliferation of entities on the basis of the attractiveness of desert ontologies. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the claim that there are substances, species and colors -over and above the specific chunks of a substance, the individual members of a species and the physical objects of a certain color- should be the conclusion of a purely metaphysical argument. In any case, it would be desirable not to be forced to postulate the existence of such entities on the basis of our intuitions about the content and the truth conditions of, say, "Tom is a tiger" vs. "Tom is a large carnivorous feline with stripes."

The situation is different when we look at things from the perspective of the counterfactual description approach. Suppose I describe a counterfactual situation as follows: "consider a possible world in which the sky is red." The reason why "red" is a rigid designator is that when I describe this counterfactual situation I am describing a situation in which the sky (in the described situation) is *the same color as*, the sweater than I am wearing today or the things that we actually call "tomatoes", when ripe and juicy.

By contrast, "my favorite color" and "the color of tomatoes" are not rigid designators. In my description: "consider a situation in which the sky is the color of tomatoes" the sky may or may nor be the same color as the *actual* color of tomatoes -it all depends on what color tomatoes are in the described counterfactual situation.

"Gold" and "tiger," on the other hand, are both rigid because describing a situation in which Tom is a tiger consists in describing a situation is which Tom is *the same kind of animal* as the things which we actually call "tigers" and describing a situation in which there is gold in my backyard consists in describing a situation in which there are chunks of matter in my backyard that have the *same relevant physical properties* (in this case, the same atomic number) as the stuff we call "gold."[16]

The rigidity of general terms, from this perspective, is explained by appeal to the notion of *being the same kind of thing*, without the presupposition that whenever two things are the same kind of thing, there is a third thing: the kind they both belong to. Each one of the situations described is one in which the particular animal, the chunk of matter or the specific sample of color in question share some relevant similarities with actual individual tigers, chunks of gold, and red objects. No appeal to entities over and above the latter is required. The reason for this is that, on this approach to rigidity, we are not forced to find some entity to play the role of the *same* thing relevant for evaluation in all circumstances. And the fact that the counterfactual description approach is, as pointed out before, non-evaluational plays a crucial role in accounting for this difference.

All things being equal, I think this puts the counterfactual description approach at an advantage when it comes to explaining intuitively why certain general terms are rigid. From my point of view, the reason, though, is not so much that this approach allows us to keep closer to a barren ontology. The better reason, I think, is that this approach allows us to offer, if we so desire, the kind of arguments that *should* be offered for the postulation of entities such as species, substances, colors and whatnot. Those arguments should not have much to do with the difference in the way in which we use "red" and the way in which we use terms such as "my favorite color" and "the color of tomatoes" when we describe the way we think the world is or could be.

The lesson here could be put as follows: even without denying that semantic and metaphysical issues are intertwined, I think it is clear that questions about language, and how language is used, are different from questions about ontology. Thus, in general, an approach to issues about the use and function of expressions that remains neutral as regards traditional metaphysical issues is to be preferred. I have argued here that there is an important difference between the counterfactual description approach to rigidity and the content approach, and that the former affords us a more

neutral perspective, as regards the ontology, in the explanation of the rigidity of general terms.

Notes

1 Harvard University Press, 1980.

2 See, for instance, Baruch Brody: 1981, 'Kripke on Proper Names', in Peter A. French, Theodore Uehling and Howard Wettstein (eds.): *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 75-80. A.D. Smith: 1984, 'Rigidity and Scope', *Mind*, 177-193. Robert Steinman: 1985, 'Kripke Rigidity versus Kaplan Rigidity', *Mind*, 431-44. Joseph Almog: 1986, 'Naming Without Necessity', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 210-242. A.D. Smith: 1987, 'Semantical Considerations on Rigid Designation', *Mind*, 83-92 and François Recanati: 1993, *Direct Reference*, Blackwell (especially chapter 1).

3 See section IV of 'Demonstratives', in J. Almog, J. Perry and H. Wettstein (eds.): 1989, *Themes from Kaplan*, Oxford University Press, pp. 481-563.

4 Munitz. Milton K. (ed.): 1971, *Identity and Individuation*, New York University Press, pp. 135-164.

5 Almog, Joseph, Perry, John and Wettstein, Howard (eds.): 1989, *Themes from Kaplan*, Oxford University Press, pp. 481-563.

6 This is an aside, but I think it is important to stress that the apparatus of Russellian structured propositions is meant to be a picture in 'Demonstratives'. See footnote 17 (p. 493) and the first paragraph of p. 496, where Kaplan explicitly stresses that the picture is convenient but not an essential part of the theory. I think it is important to keep this in mind because the claim that sentences containing names, indexicals and demonstratives express singular propositions has become for some the emblem of the theory of reference Kaplan presented and defended in 'Demonstratives'. And it shouldn't be so. Whatever the crucial ideas of the Theory of Direct Reference are, they are prior to and independent from the apparatus of structured propositions. I have discussed this issue in 'The Essence of Genuine Reference', *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 1995, 275-289.

7 I am using *singular term* here loosely to include proper names, indexicals and demonstratives and definite descriptions.

8 Just to avoid any chance of misunderstanding, I want to prevent the reader from forming the pre-conception that by focusing on Kaplan's version rigidity I will approach an issue that figures prominently in Kaplan's discussion, i.e., the question of the appropriateness of distinguishing weak from strong rigidity. Except for a passing remark (in footnote 12), the issue as to whether or not rigid designators designate in worlds in which the actual designatum does not exist is *not* one of the differences I will be discussing here.

9 Even more obviously, that line of reasoning gives us the wrong results when we apply it to indexicals, but they were not part of the argument in *Naming and Necessity*.

10 The very same type of questions are the ones asked by Kripke when he introduces the notion of rigidity in the first lecture of *Naming and Necessity*.

11 The same intuitive test can be applied to other expressions. Suppose that I describe a situation in which I just won the lottery. When I use "I," I do want to describe a situation that involves me. One usually doesn't spend time daydreaming about a situation in which someone who has the self-concept that one has of oneself does win the lottery. So, uses of indexicals, and demonstratives, are rigid too.

12 From this point of view, I think, there is no possible confusion arising from the fact that the bearers of some names exist contingently. When we describe a situation using "consider a situation in which Aristotle does not exist," according to the characterization of rigidity considered here, this is a situation in which the actual bearer of "Aristotle" does not exist. No temptation should arise to interpret this as stating that the name does not refer in that situation. In fact, in the second lecture of *Naming and Necessity*, Kripke himself argues in the way proposed here: "If you say: 'suppose Hitler had never been born' then 'Hitler' refers here, still rigidly, to something that would not exist in the counterfactual situation described" (p. 78).

13 Stuart Mill, John: 1846, 'Of Names', Chapter ii, Book I of *A System of Logic*. New York, Harper.

14 'Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description', p. 163. *Mysticism and Logic*, Totowa, Barnes & Noble Books, 1981, pp.152-167.

15 Moreover, whether there is or there isn't a genuine difference here depends in part on how deep the difference is between the two approaches to what kinds of questions are the primary focus of semantics. I am not undertaking this task in this paper.

16 Of course, as Kripke and Putnam have pointed out (see Putnam's 'Meaning and Reference', in Stephen P. Schwartz (ed.): 1977, *Naming, Necessity and Natural Kinds*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, pp. 119-132), which properties are relevant or which similarities account for being the same kind of thing is an intra-world *a posteriori* discovery.

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