

# Intensionality, modality, and rationality: Some presemantic considerations<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

On the basis of arguments put forth by Kripke (1977a, 1980), it is widely held that one can sometimes rationally accept propositions of the form *P* and *not-P* and also that there are necessary *a posteriori* truths. We will find that Kripke's arguments for these views appear probative only so long as one fails to distinguish between semantics and presemantics—between the literal meanings of sentences, on the one hand, and the information on the basis of which one identifies those literal meanings, on the other. This same failure, it will be argued, underlies the popular thesis that intersubstituting co-referring terms sometimes turns true sentences into false ones and *vice versa*. Though seemingly plausible, this thesis has a number of counterintuitive consequences, among them that the occurrence of "snow" in "it is true that snow is white" doesn't refer to snow. An understanding of the distinction between semantics and presemantics suggests a way to develop a semantic system that doesn't have these consequences and that, moreover, reconciles our intuitions concerning cognitive content with some powerfully argued theses of contemporary philosophy of language. Some of this paper's main contentions are anticipated by Andrzej Boguslawski in his 1994 paper "Sentential Complementation and Truth."

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## 1. Introduction

In at least some co

(1) "Hesperus is closer to the Sun than the Earth"

