

## The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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### I.

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One of the most important achievements in philosophy in the latter half of the last century was a movement in the philosophy of language, spilling over into metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind. This movement has come to be known as *the theory of direct reference*. Keith Donnellan's 1966 classic 'Reference and Definite Descriptions'—spotlighting its famous distinction between the referential and the attributive use of definite descriptions—is an early and important precursor to the direct-reference theory, in its contemporary incarnation.<sup>1</sup> Ironically, that article argues for a direct-reference theory on its least promising turf. During the first half of the twentieth century, a broadly Fregean account of meaning and reference was generally held for all linguistic terms. Then the direct-reference theorists began exposing how badly the Fregean picture fit certain sorts of terms. Especially and most obviously, the Fregean account failed for the logician's individual variables. But it failed also for such common expressions as proper names, indexicals, pronouns, natural-kind terms, and more besides (phenomenon terms like 'heat', color words like 'red', artifact terms like 'pencil')—perhaps most, or even all, simple (or single-word) terms. Even after this chip, chip, chipping away of once cherished doctrine into scrap, one might still suppose that, if there are any terms for which the traditional, Fregean perspective is at least more-or-less correct, they are definite descriptions. One might suppose this, that is, but for Donnellan's groundbreaking article. Donnellan argues instead that even definite descriptions are routinely used in a manner that 'comes closer to performing the function of Russell's

As a student I had the privilege through most of the 1970s of taking a number of courses and seminars in philosophy from Keith Donnellan, in whose honor the present chapter was written. I am grateful to the participants in my seminar at UCSB during Fall 1993 (especially Ilhan Inan) for fruitful discussion of the issues presented here, and to Alan Berger for comments. I am grateful to Donnellan both for correspondence in connection with the seminar and more generally for his many contributions to my own philosophical development.

<sup>1</sup> See also Donnellan (1968, 1978). A pioneering direct-reference theorist, Donnellan has made additional important contributions to the literature on the theory, especially in Donnellan (1972, 1974).

[logically] proper names' (1966: 303), hence a use sharply out of sync with the traditional Fregean picture.<sup>2</sup>

A number of direct-reference theorists—including Barwise and Perry (1983: 149–56 and *passim*), Devitt (1981*b*), Kaplan (1979, 1989*b*: 583–4), Recanati (1989*a*, 1993: 277–99), and Wettstein (1981, 1983)—have favored the broad outlines of Donnellan's account. Others—notably Kripke (1977), in a farsighted and still under-appreciated critique—have balked at Donnellan's attempt to extend the notion of direct reference that far, seeing the distinction between referential and attributive use as fundamentally pragmatic in nature, with no special semantic significance.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, however, Kripke (1977: 6–7, 22) concedes, in effect, that he too is inclined to embrace a direct-reference theory for the most common type of definite description by far: the so-called incomplete definite description. Taking the hard line, I have argued (with special reference to Wettstein's arguments) that going even this far is a mistake.<sup>4</sup> I maintain that definite descriptions in English (and in Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, etc.), even referentially used incomplete ones, are not Russellian logically proper names. I say they are more like Fregean terms—or perhaps generalized quantifiers (as Russell thought)—but, I claim, devices of direct reference they are not. So goes the controversy within a controversy within a controversy.

It is not to my purpose here to rehearse the arguments that I have given elsewhere against the thesis of semantic significance. Rather I shall explore a host of philosophical issues raised by the semantic-significance thesis itself, by Donnellan's endorsement of it, by Kripke's criticism of it, and more generally by various attempts to characterize the distinction between referential and attributive. These issues, which concern such things as *de re* belief and related matters, have applications in the theory of knowledge and the philosophy of mind that go well beyond the philosophy of language.

First up: what is this controversial thesis of semantic significance? Suppose that a speaker, Brown, utters the sentence 'Smith's murderer is insane.' For some versions

<sup>2</sup> If definite descriptions go the way of direct reference, is there anything left for the Fregean account to cover? Yes: the comparatively rare attributive uses of descriptions. Also, multi-worded phrases, like 'middle-aged, stocky man with horn-rimmed glasses, a greying beard, and a balding head', and . . . whole sentences! But if sentences may be fruitfully thought of as designating truth-values—as Frege and others have taught us—is it not so that they are typically used referentially, rather than attributively? Something to ponder.

<sup>3</sup> See also Donnellan (1978). Putting the controversy in terms of the presence or absence of 'semantic significance' may be misleading. As Kripke (1977: 21) suggests, speaker reference like anything else can become semantically relevant simply by virtue of being conversationally salient—whenever an expression (such as an anaphoric pronoun) is invoked that relies on conversational salience to secure reference. The point of the thesis of semantic significance is this: When a definite description is used referentially (at least if the description is 'proper', in the Russellian sense, and used referentially for the object 'denoted', in Russell's sense), the fact that it is so used is what *directly* determines that its semantic content is the object referred to by the speaker—by contrast with this being indirectly determined by means of some interceding phenomenon, like conversational salience, which directly determines semantic content. This is the sense in which, according to the thesis, the referential-attributive distinction has *special* semantic significance.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to Wettstein (1981, 1983), see W. Blackburn (1988) and Salmon (1982, 1991).

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of the debate, the description ‘Smith’s murderer’ should be replaced by its ‘incomplete’ variation ‘the murderer’. In either case, the central question concerns whether Brown’s use of the description (‘Smith’s murderer’ or ‘the murderer’) affects which proposition is semantically expressed by the sentence with respect to Brown’s context. There is no (relevant) quarrel if Brown uses the description attributively. The consensus is that the sentence then expresses the proposition about Smith (at least indirectly about him), that whoever murdered him single-handedly is insane. The controversy turns on the question of what the semantic content of the sentence is if Brown uses the description referentially, but correctly (let us say) for Smith’s lone killer. According to the thesis of semantic significance, ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ then semantically expresses a proposition not at all about Smith, but instead a proposition about the murderer, that *he* is insane. Those of us who maintain that Donnellan’s distinction has no special semantic significance contend that the semantic content of the sentence, with respect to the relevant context, is completely unaffected by Brown’s referential use. It still expresses the proposition about Smith.

Donnellan and his followers thus endorse something along the lines of the following theses:

- (SS<sub>a</sub>) If a speaker utters ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ in an appropriate manner in a context *c*, then the speaker uses ‘Smith’s murderer’ attributively in *c* iff ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ expresses the proposition that whoever single-handedly murdered Smith is insane as its English semantic content with respect to *c*.
- (SS<sub>r</sub>) If a speaker utters ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ in an appropriate manner in a context *c*, then the speaker uses ‘Smith’s murderer’ referentially for *x* in *c* iff ‘Smith’s murderer’ semantically refers in English to *x* with respect to *c* and ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ expresses the singular proposition about *x* that he/she is insane as its English semantic content with respect to *c*.

Here the phrase ‘to utter in an appropriate manner’ means to utter a sentence as a sentence of a particular language in a normal way with assertive intent—by contrast with reciting a line in a play, conveying a message by secret code, etc. A singular proposition about an individual *x* is an ‘object-involving’ Russellian proposition that is about *x* by virtue of *x*’s occurring directly as a constituent. Let us call the conjunction of the two theses ‘SS’. It is a thesis to the effect that a definite description is indexical, expressing different semantic contents with respect to different contexts, depending (at least in some instances) on whether it is used referentially or attributively.

Donnellan (1966) was not completely clear on this last point, leaving some readers to speculate that he conceived of his distinction as a lexical ambiguity rather than as a type of indexicality. This has led to some misplaced criticism. It should be noted that Donnellan (1966: 297) explicitly denied that definite descriptions are

semantically ambiguous. And indeed, his contrasting notion of ‘pragmatic ambiguity’ seems to correspond very closely to the contemporary notion of indexicality, or perhaps to a special kind of indexicality.<sup>5</sup> Donnellan’s account may thus be insulated to some extent against Kripke’s (1977: 18–20) appeal to H. P. Grice’s Modified Occam’s Razor principle that one should avoid ‘multiplying senses beyond necessity’.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, there is probably a worthy objection, analogous to Kripke’s plea for semantic economy, against positing indexicality beyond necessity—or at least beyond what is sufficiently plausible on independent grounds.<sup>7</sup>

One of Kripke’s central objections is easily adjusted to target the indexical rather than the lexical-ambiguity version of the semantic-significance thesis.<sup>8</sup> So modified, it runs something like this: Donnellan’s distinction generalizes to cover proper names in addition to definite descriptions. For example, just as one may use the description ‘Mary’s husband’ referentially for someone who is not in fact legally married to Mary, one may also mistakenly use the name ‘Jones’ in reference to Smith, having mistaken him in the distance for Jones. Yet it is not plausible in the least that a proper name shifts in semantic reference with the context, depending on whether there is, over and above the speaker’s general intention always to use that name for the person so named, a particular person (or other object) whom the speaker has in mind and whom, on this particular occasion, the speaker means by the use of the name. Just as the fact that a name may be misapplied on a given occasion does not mean that the semantic reference of the name shifts to erase the mistake, nor does the semantic reference of a description shift to accommodate misapplication of the description.

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## II.

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It is important to note that the thesis of semantic significance primarily concerns the semantic content of definite descriptions (or what is sometimes called the contribution toward ‘truth conditions’, or the ‘intension’), rather than the semantic reference. It is the thesis that the proposition expressed by a sentence containing a definite description (or the question of whether the sentence is true with respect to a given possible world), as opposed to the reference (with respect to the actual

<sup>5</sup> Donnellan has confirmed in personal correspondence (Oct 1993) that the indexicality conception has always been his view of the matter.

<sup>6</sup> See Grice (1969: 142–3; 1978: 118–20).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Recanati (1989*a*, 1993: 277–99) and Salmon (1991: 95 n. 6).

<sup>8</sup> Kripke first presented the objection, targeting the lexical-ambiguity version of the semantic-significance thesis, in Kripke (1980: 25 *no*)—in what is easily seen, in retrospect, to be a compressed summary of the not yet written ‘Speaker’s Reference and Semantic Reference’. See Kripke (1977: 13–21). Kripke’s formulations speak of ambiguity where the version presented here speaks instead of reference shifting with the context.

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world) of the description itself, depends crucially on the use made of the description. Donnellan contends that the referent of a definite description  $\lceil$ the  $\varphi$  $\rceil$  shifts with the context even when its matrix  $\varphi$  is indexical-free. Specifically, he maintains that a referentially used definite description refers (with respect to the context of utterance) to the person or object meant by the speaker even if that person or object does not fit the description. This has proved highly controversial. But as Wettstein (1981) pointed out, the thesis of semantic significance does not actually require Donnellan's controversial contention. It is enough if the proposition semantically expressed when a definite description is used referentially for the right entity is the corresponding singular proposition about that entity. And indeed, Wettstein (1981: 243–4) maintains that the referential–attributive distinction is semantically significant while not endorsing Donnellan's more controversial claim. One can maintain a version of the semantic-significance thesis that does not make Donnellan's additional claim by weakening the controversial thesis  $SS_r$  into the following:

- ( $SS'_r$ ) If a speaker utters 'Smith's murderer is insane' in an appropriate manner in a context  $c$ , then the speaker uses 'Smith's murderer' referentially for Smith's murderer in  $c$  iff 'Smith's murderer' semantically refers in English to Smith's murderer with respect to  $c$  and 'Smith's murderer is insane' expresses the singular proposition about Smith's murderer that he/she is insane as its English semantic content with respect to  $c$ .

Let  $SS'$  be the conjunction of theses  $SS_a$  and  $SS'_r$ . It is neutral on the question of what happens when the speaker uses 'Smith's murderer' referentially for someone other than Smith's murderer. Donnellan's thesis  $SS_r$  supplements  $SS'$  to provide an answer to that question. Indeed, I believe  $SS_r$  is the only natural complement to  $SS'_r$  with regard to the question at hand. But  $SS_r$  represents Donnellan at his most defiant, prompting at least one follower to retreat to the neutral version of the semantic-significance thesis.

The mere possibility of the more neutral version of the thesis of semantic significance demonstrates that the objection from Kripke sketched at the end of the previous section stands in serious need of repair. First let us calibrate the referential–attributive distinction more finely. One should distinguish among three types of uses of definite descriptions: (i) correctly applied referential uses, that is, the use of a definite description  $\lceil$ the  $\varphi$  $\rceil$  referentially for the person or object that satisfies  $\varphi$  (or the person or object that satisfies a suitable expansion of  $\varphi$ , in case the description is incomplete); (ii) incorrectly applied referential uses, that is, the use of  $\lceil$ the  $\varphi$  $\rceil$  referentially for someone or something that does not uniquely satisfy (a suitable expansion of)  $\varphi$ ; and (iii) attributive uses. Donnellan's distinction is between (i)-cum-(ii) on the one hand, and (iii) on the other. The distinction-within-a-distinction between (i) and (ii) reveals a further interesting distinction, perpendicular to the referential–attributive distinction. Let us say that a use of either type (i) or type (iii) is a *Good* use, and that a use of type (ii) is *Bad*. The point made above may

now be rephrased by saying that the thesis of semantic significance does not require Donnellan's complementary claim that a definite description, when used Badly, semantically refers to the entity meant by the speaker. A less defiant version of the thesis confines itself to Good uses, holding that the semantic content of a description with respect to such a use depends on whether that use is of type (i) or of type (iii). An effective objection to the semantic-significance thesis must expose some difficulty with the latter claim.

Kripke's Jones/Smith argument is aimed at Donnellan's more full-blooded version of the thesis of semantic significance which asserts  $SS_r$ . In the example, a misapplied use of a proper name is contrasted with a correctly applied use of the name, where the former is analogous to a Bad use of a definite description, the latter to a Good use. It is argued that the Bad use cannot affect the semantic reference of the name. This pays no attention to the question of semantic content, and hence inevitably misses the neutral version of the semantic-significance thesis.

Even when evaluated in this light, however, the argument is flawed—and not merely because it leaves the door open for the neutral version of the semantic-significance thesis. The principal defect is that Kripke has not succeeded by his Jones/Smith example in extending the referential/attributive distinction to proper names. His discussion presupposes that typical correctly applied uses of a name are the analogue of the attributive use of a definite description. Correct uses of names are indeed Good, but they typically bear a much stronger kinship to Good uses of type (i) than to those of type (iii). The contrast between the correct use and the misuse of 'Jones' is roughly analogous to the distinction among referential uses between (i) and (ii). Since Kripke has not demonstrated a genuinely *attributive* use for a name, his Jones/Smith example does not adequately replicate the full grounds for the semantic-significance thesis. For the purposes of Kripke's objection, it still needs to be shown that a proper name can have contrasting uses analogous to, and as different as, the referential use of a definite description (encompassing (i) + (ii)) and the attributive.

As we shall see in section V below, what Kripke actually provides is a distinction between uses that are, in a certain sense, automatically Good, and uses that are either Bad or only accidentally Good. This comes close, but still falls significantly short of capturing Donnellan's distinction. Inevitably, there are competing, non-coextensive ways of generalizing Donnellan's distinction for definite descriptions to extend it to proper names. My point is not that one of these extensions is right and the rest are wrong. (This way of putting things threatens to ignite a dispute that is largely terminological.) The point is rather that a natural and plausible extension—one that aspires to capture and respect what is conceptually and philosophically at the core of Donnellan's distinction—will cast our commonplace uses of ordinary names on the referential side rather than the attributive. And this is something Kripke's generalized distinction evidently fails to do.

I believe it is relatively uncontroversial that proper names are at least normally used referentially. Indeed, in his initial characterization of the distinction,

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Donnellan likened the referential use of a definite description to the use of a name, or at least of a ‘logically proper name’:

Furthermore, on Russell’s view the type of expression that comes closest to performing the function of the referential use of definite descriptions turns out, as one might suspect, to be a proper name (in ‘the narrow logical sense’). Many of the things said about proper names by Russell can, I think, be said about the referential use of definite descriptions without straining senses unduly. (Donnellan 1966: 282)

The crucial question for the purpose of Kripke’s argument is: can a proper name be used instead in something more like the manner of an attributively used definite description?

In order to construct a plausible and relatively clear-cut example of such a use, one is naturally led to consider the sort of cases that Kripke (1980: 54–60, 70, and *passim*) discusses under the rubric of *fixing the reference of a name by a description*, that is, examples like Kaplan’s (1969: 228–9) introduction of the term ‘Newman 1’ as a name for whoever will be the first child born in the twenty-second century.<sup>9</sup> Very well, here is a proper name that is used attributively (if used at all). But can *this* name be used referentially? It can, though presumably not by us. Unless and until we take ourselves to have someone in mind who Newman 1 will be, we are powerless to bestow upon the proper name so defined what Russell (1988: 21) described as ‘the direct use which it always wishes to have, as simply standing for a certain object, and not for a description of the object’.<sup>10</sup> Imagine, then, that Newman 1’s future parents will be avid followers of the philosophical debates of the latter half of the twentieth century, and will decide that Kaplan has spared them the anxiety of finding the right name for their child. They will be able to use the name referentially. *Voilà*: a referential–attributive distinction for proper names.

But now Kripke’s intended argument encounters a serious obstacle. The problem is that some philosophers would maintain, and indeed it is not at all implausible, that the parents’ future use of ‘Newman 1’ and our present use differ in semantic content. In fact, judging from his more recent writings, it is not clear that Kripke himself is prepared to insist (as I am) that, despite the obvious difference in flavor between the two uses, the name ‘Newman 1’ is semantically univocal.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> I owe the point that such reference-fixing ‘definitions’ plausibly gives rise to attributive uses for names to my student, İlhan Inan.

<sup>10</sup> In Kaplan’s later writings, ‘Newman 1’ has been changed into a name for the first child to be born in the twenty-first century rather than the 22nd. See e.g. Kaplan (1979: 397). No reason for the change was given. Perhaps having recognized Inan’s point (see the immediately preceding note), an indulgent Kaplan is simply growing impatient to give the name the direct use which it always wishes to have. (The change in example is accompanied by a radical change in view regarding what one can do with the name: see below.) Since the various controversies that surround reference-fixing stipulations will not likely be resolved before the turn of the century, I am granting us a small reprieve by reverting to Kaplan’s original example. I shall alter some quotations below accordingly.

<sup>11</sup> I have in mind certain passages in the preface to Kripke (1980: 20–1), and especially in Kripke (1988: 146–7 n. 43 and 44). Kripke explicitly proclaims his neutrality on such issues.

Finally, suppose this roadblock is somehow circumvented. Even if the case is successfully made that ‘Newman 1’ retains the same semantic content regardless of whether it is given a Good referential use or an attributive use, it is still open to the semantic-significance theorist to argue, not implausibly, that this precisely reflects the semantic gulf—which Kripke himself (1980: 55–8 and *passim*) insists upon—that separates the name from the description that fixes its reference.

### III.

There is no dispute concerning the legitimacy of the referential/attributive distinction. The bone of contention concerns its significance, or lack of significance, for semantics. Given the existence of this controversy, one cannot simply take (an appropriate generalization of) the conjunction of theses *SS*—or alternatively, the conjunction of theses *SS'*—as a neutral characterization of the distinction. Fortunately (and wisely), Donnellan (1966) provides distinct characterizations of the distinction.

In the opening section, he characterizes it in terms of another distinction, that between the Russellian ‘denotation’ of a definite description and what a speaker refers to in using an expression. In ‘On Denoting’, after presenting his theory of descriptions, Russell explains his notion of denotation for definite descriptions as follows (using the word ‘proposition’ where nowadays we would probably use the word ‘sentence’):

Every proposition in which ‘the author of *Waverley*’ occurs being explained as above, the proposition ‘Scott was the author of *Waverley*’ (i.e. ‘Scott was identical with the author of *Waverley*’) becomes ‘One and only one entity wrote *Waverley*, and Scott was identical with that one’... Thus if ‘*C*’ is a denoting phrase [i.e. definite description], it may happen that there is one entity *x* (there cannot be more than one) for which the proposition ‘*x* is identical with *C*’ is true, this proposition being interpreted as above. We may then say that the entity *x* is the denotation of the phrase ‘*C*’. Thus Scott is the denotation of ‘the author of *Waverley*’. (Russell 1905: 169)<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, then, the Russellian denotation of the description ‘Smith’s murderer’ is defined as being the person who actually murdered Smith, if there is exactly one such person, and nothing otherwise—irrespective of whom the speaker might have

<sup>12</sup> An important aspect (all too often ignored) of Russell’s theory in ‘On Denoting’ is that a definite description [‘the  $\varphi$ ’, though allegedly having no ‘meaning in isolation’, is nevertheless said to ‘denote’ the object that satisfies its matrix  $\varphi$ , when there is only one such object, and to ‘denote’ nothing otherwise. This semantic relation is not simply an idle wheel in Russell’s philosophy; it carries a vitally important epistemological payload. It is through denoting, in this sense, that we are supposed to form beliefs and other thoughts ‘about’—and thereby to gain crucial cognitive access to—the many and varied objects so important in our lives but with which we are not *directly acquainted* (in Russell’s sense). See especially the first two paragraphs of Russell (1905).



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in mind and mean, on a particular occasion, in using of the phrase. The referential–attributive distinction may then explained by saying that in a referential use of a definite description, but not in an attributive use, there is someone or something the speaker has in mind and to which the speaker refers using the description (and which the speaker’s assertion is thereby directly about), independently of its satisfying, or its not satisfying, the particular conditions that would make it the denotation, in Russell’s sense, of the description used.

Interestingly, Donnellan’s initial characterization of the referential–attributive distinction thus closely parallels Kripke’s later characterization of a more general distinction, of which Donnellan’s is supposed to be a special case, in terms of the Gricean distinction between *speaker reference* (what the speaker refers to) and *semantic reference* (what the expression refers to). The parallel is striking, but it is also very likely misleading. It is my impression—based on numerous lectures and discussions, as well as his writings—that Donnellan presupposes what I call the *speech-act centered conception of semantics*. On the speech-act centered conception, semantic attributes of expressions—like a singular term’s referring to an object, or a sentence’s expressing a proposition—somehow reduce to, are to be understood by means of, are derived from, or at least are directly determined by, the illocutionary acts performed by speakers in using those expressions, or perhaps the illocutionary acts that would normally be performed in using those expressions. This contrasts with an *expression centered conception*, which I favor, according to which the semantic attributes of expressions are not conceptually derivative of the speech acts performed by their utterers, and are thought of instead as intrinsic to the expressions themselves, or to the expressions *as* expressions of a particular language and as occurring in a particular context. The expression centered conception takes seriously the idea that expressions are *symbols*, and that as such, they have a semantic life of their own. The expression centered conception need not deny that semantics, at least for a natural language, may be ultimately a result or product of speech acts, rather than (or more likely, in addition to) the other way around. But the expression centered conception marks a definite separation between semantics and pragmatics, allowing for at least the possibility of extreme, pervasive, and even highly systematic deviation between the two. The speech-act centered conception is more reductionist in spirit.

The expression centered conception is the received conception in the tradition of Frege and Russell. With their emphasis on artificial or idealized languages, it is they more than anyone else who deserve credit for cultivating the expression centered conception among contemporary philosophers of language. Wittgenstein focused, in contrast, on spoken, natural language in his impenetrable but seemingly penetrating diatribe against the expression centered conception. Whether or not he himself subscribed to the speech-act centered conception, it is he—with his influential slogan that ‘meaning is use’—who must bear the brunt of responsibility for that rival conception.

If Donnellan subscribes to the speech-act centered conception, he is not alone. I fear it may be the dominant conception—especially among philosophers with a propensity toward nominalism, physicalism, anti-realism, or other reductionisms, and among those, like Donnellan, who trace their scholarly lineage to Wittgenstein. Anyone whose lineage traces back to Wittgenstein can trace it a step further to Russell. And there are indeed clear elements of both traditions manifest in Donnellan's thought on reference and related matters. Still, his commitment to the speech-act centered conception might explain Donnellan's unwavering endorsement of the stronger version of the semantic-significance thesis. The speech-act centered conception cannot distinguish correctly between the semantic content of a sentence with respect to a given context and the content of the assertion, or assertions (statements, utterances), normally made by a speaker in uttering the sentence in that context. If this interpretation (which is somewhat speculative) is correct, then Donnellan conceives of speaker reference as, at least implicitly, a semantic, rather than a pragmatic, notion. Furthermore, he then conceives of Russell's notion of denotation for definite descriptions as a *non-semantic* notion, since it does not concern (at least not directly) acts of speakers' reference normally performed with descriptions. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the subsequent discussion in Donnellan (1978). There he adopts Kripke's terminology of 'speaker reference' and 'semantic reference', but he does not equate what he means by the latter with Russellian denotation, vigorously arguing instead that 'semantic reference' depends on, and is determined by, speaker reference, which may be other than the Russellian denotation.<sup>13</sup>

It is the expression centered conception, and the general Frege–Russell tradition, that is the natural habitat of the distinction between speaker reference and semantic reference (as well as such other Gricean distinctions as that between speaker meaning and sentence meaning). My own view—well within the Frege–Russell tradition—is that Donnellan's apparent cataloguing of speaker reference as semantic and of Russellian denotation as non-semantic gets matters exactly reversed. It is just one piece of evidence of the extent to which the speech-act centered conception presents a seriously distorted picture of what semantics is, enough so that I am

<sup>13</sup> Donnellan sometimes appears to allow for semantic reference in the absence of speaker reference. On the one hand, Donnellan (1978: 30, 32) says that in using a definite description attributively, the speaker does not refer to anything even if the description happens to be proper, in the Russellian sense. But he also seems to say (on the same p. 32, and in the same paragraph) that an attributively used description itself refers to its Russellian denotation. This leads to the curious position that when a speaker uses a proper description attributively, the description refers but the speaker does not. And this does not fit well the speech-act centered conception of semantics. But coupled with Donnellan's more central position that when a description is used referentially for something *x*, both the description and the speaker refer to *x* even if *x* is not the Russellian denotation, nor does this curious position exactly fit the expression centered conception—or any other conception that I can think of. Though I am uncertain what to make of Donnellan's assertions here, I believe that a careful reading reveals that appearances are deceptive, and that Donnellan (through a carefully placed occurrence of the subjunctive 'would') deliberately avoids any commitment to the claim that an attributively used proper description has semantic reference. I may be wrong.

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tempted to say that those in the grip of that conception, when applying such semantic terms as ‘refer’ and ‘express’ to expressions, are not talking about anything semantic at all.<sup>14</sup> In any event, from the perspective of the expression centered conception it would be dangerous to take Donnellan’s characterization of the referential/attributional distinction in terms of speaker reference and denotation at face value.

## IV.

Donnellan (1966: s. III, 285–9) alternatively characterizes the referential–attributional distinction in terms of what a speaker asserts (states, says) and the *de re/de dicto* distinction. He does not use the actual terms ‘*de re*’ and ‘*de dicto*’, nor any other arcane terminology for the latter distinction, but he clearly appeals to it. The central idea may be illustrated by a pair of theses paralleling those comprised by *SS*. Let us call the conjunction of the following theses ‘*DT*’, for ‘Donnellan’s Thesis’:

- (*DT*<sub>a</sub>) If a speaker utters ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ in an appropriate manner in a context *c*, then the speaker uses ‘Smith’s murderer’ attributively in *c* iff the speaker, in uttering ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ in *c*, asserts *de dicto* that whoever single-handedly murdered Smith is insane (and does not assert of anyone, *de re*, that he/she is insane).
- (*DT*<sub>r</sub>) If a speaker utters ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ in an appropriate manner in a context *c*, then the speaker uses ‘Smith’s murderer’ referentially for *x* in *c* iff the speaker, in uttering ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ in *c*, refers to *x* and asserts of *x*, *de re*, that he/she is insane (and does not assert *de dicto* that whoever single-handedly murdered Smith is insane).<sup>15</sup>

I believe that many philosophers—including many who reject *SS*—would take *DT* to be analytic, by means of an appropriate generalization that literally *defines* the referential–attributional distinction in terms of *de re* and *de dicto* illocutionary acts (stating, asking, etc.). For example, in a criticism of Donnellan on the semantic-significance thesis, Scott Soames characterizes the distinction by saying that

a referential use of a description to refer to an individual *o* is a use in which the speaker *says of* *o* that *o* is such and such. What, we might ask, is it to *say of* an individual that it is such and

<sup>14</sup> See Salmon (1995: 18–19 *n.* 27).

<sup>15</sup> Donnellan has confirmed in correspondence (see *n.* 5) that he endorses both of these theses in addition to *SS*. There are passages in Donnellan (1966) in s. III and again in s. VIII, suggesting, contra *DT*, that one makes a *de re* assertion when using a proper description (in the Russellian sense) attributively. Donnellan says that any such suggestion was unintended.

such? The answer, it seems to me, is that to say of an individual that it is such and such is to assert the singular proposition that predicates such and such of that individual. . . In short, referential uses of definite descriptions are cases in which the speaker asserts a singular proposition about the individual the description is used to refer to. (Soames 1994: 149–52)<sup>16</sup>

Soames's remark alludes to an intimate relationship that obtains, on the direct-reference theory, between the *de re/de dicto* distinction, on the one hand, and the distinction between singular and general propositions, on the other. To assert (or deny, believe, disbelieve, etc.) that such-and-such is to assert (deny, etc.) a certain proposition, the proposition that such- and-such. So to assert *about* (or to assert *of*) someone or something *x* that he/she/it is thus-and-so is to assert the proposition *about x* that *he/she/it* is thus-and-so. The latter is a singular proposition. *De re* assertion (or denial, etc.) is nothing more nor less than assertion (denial) of a singular proposition.<sup>17</sup> Recognizing this relationship, an equivalence between *DT* and *SS* can be seen to follow from a general principle governing the separate phenomena that I distinguish under the epithets of 'speaker assertion' and 'semantic content' (Salmon 1982: 40–1).

(AC) If a speaker utters an English sentence *S* in an appropriate manner in a context *c*, then *S* expresses proposition *p* as its English semantic content with respect to *c* iff the speaker, in uttering *S* in *c*, asserts *p*.

This assertion/content principle is plausible. Some might even hold it to be analytic, true solely as a consequence of the meanings of 'assert', 'semantic content', and 'utter in an appropriate manner'.<sup>18</sup> And especially those under the spell of the speech-act centered conception of semantics tend to embrace the principle as trivial. Soames, on the other hand, must deny *AC*. For it is logically true that if *AC*, then (*DT* iff *SS*). Donnellan and his followers may have arrived at *SS* precisely via the assertion/content principle *AC* in combination with an implicit definition or characterization of the referential/attributive distinction in terms of *de re* and *de dicto* assertion. But taking *DT* to be true, let alone analytic, is a mistake. In fact, I contend that both theses *DT<sub>a</sub>* and *DT<sub>r</sub>* have straightforward counter-examples. Indeed, I believe all are false: *AC*, *DT*, and *SS*.

The case against *DT* and *AC* is probably best seen in the light of a phenomenon that Kaplan (1989*a*) has called *the pseudo de re*:

<sup>16</sup> Compare also Neale (1990: 85). Though some of the general conclusions reached by Soames are friendly to the views expressed both here and in my previous writings on the subject, most of the arguments he uses to reach those conclusions are not (as will shortly become clearer).

<sup>17</sup> I provide an argument for this in Salmon (1986: 2–6) and a more detailed treatment in Salmon (1990).

<sup>18</sup> The word 'assert' is used throughout the present chapter in its usual sense, which is strict enough to allow for the distinction—highlighted by Grice—between what a person asserts (or 'says') and what he/she means ('implicates') by what was actually asserted. Not everything that a speaker means is asserted, nor vice versa. Cf. Salmon (1991: 88).

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A typical example is ‘John says that the lying S.O.B. who took my car is honest’. It is clear that John does not say, ‘The lying S.O.B. who took your car is honest’. Does John say ‘ $\delta$  is honest’ for some directly referential term  $\delta$  which the reporter believes to refer to the lying S.O.B. who took the car? Not necessarily. John may say something as simple as, ‘The man I sent to you yesterday is honest’. The reporter has simply substituted his description for John’s. What justifies this shocking falsification of John’s speech? Nothing! But we do it, and often recognize—or don’t care—when it is being done. The form lends itself to strikingly distorted reports. As Church has shown, in his *Introduction to Mathematical Logic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), on page 25, when John says ‘Sir Walter Scott is the author of *Waverley*’ use of the *pseudo* de re form (plus a quite plausible synonymy transformation) allows the report, ‘John says that there are twenty-nine counties in Utah!’ I do not see that the existence of the *pseudo* de re form of report poses any issues of sufficient theoretical interest to make it worth pursuing. (Kaplan 1989*a*: 555–6 n. 71)

The Church argument mentioned by Kaplan is principally concerned with the question of whether sentences should be said to refer (‘denote’). The argument shows under relatively minimal assumptions that ‘Scott is the author of *Waverley*’ and ‘There are 29 counties in Utah’ refer to the same thing, thus supporting Frege’s doctrine that sentences refer to their truth-values. Adapting Church’s original argument to embeddings of such sentences within the non-extensional phrase ‘John says that’, Kaplan tacitly considers the following chain of assertion attributions (where we may let the first be true by hypothesis):

- (i) John says that Scott = the author of *Waverley*
- (ii) John says that Scott = the man who wrote 29 *Waverley* Novels altogether
- (iii) John says that the number  $n$  such that Scott = the man who wrote  $n$  *Waverley* Novels altogether = 29
- (iv) John says that the number of counties in Utah = 29.

Here both (ii) and (iv) are obtained from their immediate predecessors by the liberal sort of substitution characteristic of the so-called *pseudo* de re, whereas (iii) is obtained from (ii) by the mentioned ‘plausible synonymy transformation’—in this case the assumption that ‘Scott = the man who wrote 29 *Waverley* Novels altogether’ and ‘The number  $n$  such that Scott = the man who wrote  $n$  *Waverley* Novels altogether = 29’ are synonymous (or at least sufficiently close in meaning that if John asserted the content of the first, then he may be accurately reported as having asserted the content of the second). The final attribution (iv) intuitively does not follow from (i). Following Church, Kaplan considers a further attribution obtained from (iv) by a second application of the synonymy transformation, though this is strictly unnecessary to the argument. Indeed, even (iv) is unnecessary, since (iii) already goes well beyond what may be validly inferred from (i).

Kaplan’s apparent conclusion—based at least in part on his liberal adaptation of Church’s argument—is that *pseudo* de re substitutions are not in general truth-preserving. It is presumably for that very reason that they are supposed to pose no

interesting theoretical issues. Wettstein (1986) has argued that the phenomenon in question leads, on the contrary, to a highly significant conclusion:

In many, many contexts of reporting what other people say, think, believe, and so on, substitutions of embedded singular terms preserve truth, and so do substitutions of names for other names, even names for definite descriptions, definite descriptions for names, or definite descriptions for definite descriptions, as the following examples illustrate.

... Tom, a new faculty member, is told about all the new funding that the dean has arranged for faculty research. He says, not having any idea of who the dean is, 'The dean is obviously very smart'. I report to Barbara that Tom believes that Mike is very smart or that Jonathan's soccer coach is very smart (in case Barbara, say, characteristically refers to the relevant individual as 'Mike' or is most familiar with him in his role as Jonathan's soccer coach).

Such substitutions, at least in the sorts of contexts indicated [like Kaplan's], are perfectly acceptable. Nor do we, in making such substitutions, have to worry about preserving or reporting the Fregean sense of the original remarks. In such contexts at least, the truth or falsity of the report depends not upon accurately capturing the Fregean thought believed, but simply upon correctly formulating who it is the believer has a belief about and what the believer believes about him....

... Belief reports are extremely resistant to neat theoretical treatment—and this is so on either the Fregean or the anti-Fregean orientation. Perhaps a neat treatment is not even possible. (Wettstein 1986: 205–8)

Wettstein adds in a footnote that truth-preserving substitutions of nonsynonymous expressions in assertion or belief reports, etc., 'are particularly interesting, since not only Fregeans but just about everyone has assumed that such substitutions ought not to preserve truth. This shows, I think, that we've virtually all had the wrong idea about the semantics of attitude reports.' In sharp contrast to Kaplan's summary dismissal of the so-called *pseudo* de re as theoretically uninteresting, Wettstein says that the phenomenon, in combination with other data, 'suggests that what is reported is not (at least not exclusively) propositional content believed'. Wettstein adduces this data to motivate an unorthodox and highly controversial theory of the meanings of attitude reports. (Since he does not address Kaplan's discussion, Wettstein does not respond to Kaplan's adaptation of Church's argument.)

Wettstein's example involving Tom and the dean is sufficiently similar to Kaplan's involving John and the lying S.O.B. that both obviously qualify as instances of the general phenomenon that Kaplan means by his phrase 'the *pseudo* de re'. One significant difference between the two cases, however, or at least a potentially significant difference, is that John presumably uses the description 'the man I sent to you yesterday' referentially for the liar in question, whereas Tom uses 'the dean' attributively. This is supported by (and may be the main point of) Wettstein's remark that Tom has no idea who the dean is. But this difference does not matter as regards the overall pattern. In fact, the attributive use in Wettstein's example makes it a purer example, in some sense, of the phenomenon that Kaplan has in mind. The main

point is: it seems we readily accept the reporter's substitution of his own description in either case.

The position I take with regard to the *pseudo* de re steers a middle course between the diametrically opposed conclusions of Kaplan and Wettstein, and has more to recommend it than either of these other treatments. I agree with Wettstein, as against Kaplan, that such substitutions are truth-preserving. But I do not agree that they call for an unconventional account of attitude attributions. The central characteristic of the *pseudo* de re—and the precise reason for the presence of the words 'de re' in the phrase—is that, as Wettstein puts it, 'the truth or falsity of the report depends not upon accurately capturing the Fregean thought believed, but simply upon correctly formulating who it is the believer has a belief about and what the believer believes about him'. One can put this without begging the crucial question by talking about the *acceptability* or *unacceptability* of the report instead of its truth or falsity. The defining feature of the *pseudo* de re is that such reports behave in ordinary discourse as if they were de re. They do this, I contend, for a very simple reason: they are de re. I mean that they are not 'pseudo' at all; they are genuine, ordinary, conventional, authentic, bona-fide, run-of-mill, barnyard-variety, par-for-the-course de re, nothing more and nothing less. In Russell's terminology, the relevant description occurrence is a *primary occurrence* rather than a *secondary occurrence*, the description has *wide scope* rather than *narrow scope*. Kaplan's term 'pseudo de re' is a seriously misleading misnomer.

In Wettstein's example, Tom believes the proposition that *whoever* is dean is very smart. This is de dicto rather than de re, general rather than singular. But, and in part in virtue of this general belief, Tom also believes *of* the dean, that is, of Jonathan's soccer coach Mike, that *he* is very smart. It is this latter de re belief that I contend Wettstein is reporting when he says, 'Tom believes that Jonathan's soccer coach is very smart'. In any event, that report must be interpreted de re rather than de dicto—with the description 'Jonathan's soccer coach' taking wide rather than narrow scope—if it is to have any hope of being a sincere attempt at accurate reporting (assuming that Wettstein does not believe that Tom has independently formed the opinion, after watching Jonathan play, that he has been cleverly coached). It would also seem that the report, so interpreted, is indeed true. Tom's having no idea who the dean is does not prevent him from forming a favorable opinion about the dean's intelligence. Likewise in Kaplan's example, the report 'John says that the lying S.O.B. who took my car is honest' must be interpreted de re rather than de dicto if it is to have any hope of being accurate—the de dicto reading being ruled out of court as a gratuitous attribution of inconsistency. And interpreted de re, the report is quite accurate, even if not completely faithful. (Indeed, the truth of the de re report is perhaps even more evident in Kaplan's example, despite his misgivings, due to John's referential use of the relevant description.)

One may object that in uttering the words 'The man I sent to you yesterday is honest', what John *literally* says is that whichever man he had sent the day before

is honest. This observation is indeed correct. But it should not be lodged as a protest. For again I say that it is precisely *by* literally saying that whichever man he had sent the day before is honest that John says *of* the liar in question, *de re*, that he is honest. (A faithful report would presumably report what John *literally* asserts, rather than what he *indirectly* asserts by virtue of his literal assertion.) This is by no means a singular or unusual case. Nor does it take essential advantage of the fact that the original speaker used a description referentially. There is also someone whom Tom says is very smart (namely of course, the dean/coach), even when using the description 'the dean' only attributively. Virtually *whenever* one asserts that the such-and-such is thus-and-so, one thereby asserts *of* the such-and-such, if there is exactly one, that he/she/it is thus-and-so. Whether for good or bad, this evidently is how our notion of *de re* assertion works.<sup>19</sup>

This position (unlike Wettstein's) easily blocks Kaplan's adaptation of Church's argument. In the succession of assertion reports (i)–(iv), each must be read either *de dicto* or *de re*. If the transition from (i) to (ii) is to be an instance of the same general phenomenon as we find in the lying S.O.B. case and the dean/coach case, then (i) is to be interpreted *de re*, reporting that John says *of* the author of *Waverley* that Scott is *him*. Interpreted *de re*, (ii) then straightforwardly follows (assuming that Scott wrote exactly twenty-nine *Waverley* Novels). Similarly, if the transition from (iii) to (iv) is to be an instance of the same phenomenon, then both are to be interpreted *de re*, as reporting that John says *of* a certain number that *it* is twenty-nine. So interpreted, however, the transition from (ii) to (iii) cannot be justified as a 'plausible synonymy transformation'. Indeed, so interpreted, (iii) does not even appear to follow from (ii); if John is sufficiently taciturn, (iii) may be false, interpreted *de re*, even when (ii) is true (interpreted either way). The transition from (ii) to (iii) can be justified as a mere synonymy transformation only if both are interpreted *de dicto* rather than *de re*. It thus emerges that Kaplan's adaptation of Church's argument turns on the fallacy of equivocation—where the crucial ambiguity is not lexical but an ambiguity of scope.<sup>20</sup>

Invoking the connection between the *de re* and singular propositions, the position I am defending is tantamount to the claim that in asserting a general proposition to the effect that the such-and-such is thus-and-so, one typically also asserts the corresponding singular proposition. In a single utterance John asserts at least two different things: that the man sent the day before is honest, and the singular proposition about the liar in question that *he* is honest. More generally, in uttering a sentence  $\lceil \psi(\text{the } \phi) \rceil$ , one thereby typically asserts two propositions: the general

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Salmon (1982:1–2; 1991: 88). It is not implausible that exceptions arise in cases where  $\lceil \text{such-and-such} \rceil$  trivially entails  $\lceil \text{thus-and-so} \rceil$ , as e.g. in 'The shortest spy is a spy'. See Searle (1979b: 207); and Salmon (1982: 45 n 7). I am strongly inclined to believe, however, that these are not genuine exceptions to a fully encompassing latitudinarianism with respect to assertion.

<sup>20</sup> Church's original argument commits no fallacy; in my judgment, its soundness is unimpeachable. It is Kaplan's adaptation of Church's argument that commits the fallacy of equivocation.



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proposition which is the semantic content of the sentence (this is one’s literal assertion); and indirectly (and non-literally), in virtue of the first assertion, also the corresponding singular proposition about the person or object that uniquely satisfies  $\varphi$ , if there is one. The speaker buys two propositions for the price of one. This is so, I contend, whether the definite description ‘the  $\varphi$ ’ was used referentially or attributively, *and even if the description was used Badly*, that is, even if it was used referentially for someone who does not satisfy  $\varphi$ . In this special case, the speaker may have asserted no less than three propositions—all for the price of one. It is precisely this possibility of multiple assertion by a single utterance that defies principle AC and both  $DT_a$  and  $DT_r$ .

The availability of this simple, straightforward account of the so-called *pseudo de re* has not been widely recognized.<sup>21</sup> There are a number of sources for this oversight. First, there is the familiar (if still somewhat controversial) observation that *de re* belief does not follow from *de dicto*, even assuming the relevant person or object exists. In the now hackneyed example, Kevin may believe, solely on the basis of reflection on the concepts, that whoever is shortest among spies is a spy, without thereby suspecting anyone in particular of being a spy. That is to say, *latitudinarianism*—the doctrine that the inference from the *de dicto*, together with an existence premise, to the *de re* is valid—is mistaken. In order to graduate from *de dicto* belief to *de re*, one must bear some epistemically substantial *connection* to the person or object in question. Notoriously, there is no consensus concerning the precise nature of *de re* connectedness, but there is widespread (even if not unanimous) agreement that it is cognitively more ‘real’ than the mere coincidence that obtains between Kevin’s apprehension of the concept *he/she who is shortest among spies* and the person whom that concept happens to fit. To use Kaplan’s (1969) phrase, one must be *en rapport* with the entity in question. Russell held that one must be *directly acquainted* with the entity, in his peculiar sense. This requirement is easily seen to be excessive, and more recent philosophers have substituted various weaker acquaintance relations for Russell’s. Many embrace the view that one must merely *know who* the person is, or *know what object* it is, in an ordinary sense. Some say instead—or in addition—that one must have the person or object ‘in mind’ sufficiently to be able to use a term referentially for him/her/it.<sup>22</sup> It is assumed furthermore that *de re* assertion has an analogous prerequisite, one appropriate to assertion in lieu of belief. For example, it is held that the subject must possess and use a special sort of singular term—‘a vivid name’ perhaps, or a directly referential, logically proper (Millian) name, or at least a term used referentially rather than attributively.<sup>23</sup> In

<sup>21</sup> One possible exception is Sosa (1975: 890). See also Searle (1979b).

<sup>22</sup> For an example of the first view, see Quine (1981: 272–3); Soames (1994: 159–62) is similarly flawed by presupposition of an admixture of both the first and second view.

<sup>23</sup> Kaplan (1969) seems to have required the use of a vivid name (among other things). Later in Kaplan (1979) and also in his brief discussion (quoted above) of the so-called *pseudo de re* in Kaplan (1989a), he evidently presupposes instead that use of a directly referential term is both necessary and sufficient. Still later, in Kaplan (1989b: 583 n. 36), he appears to move toward the less restrictive view that a referential

addition to all of the above, there is a general pre-evidential bias in favor of the tenet that a speaker is allowed only one assertion per utterance of an unambiguous sentence (perhaps as a consequence of the assertion/content principle *AC*).

These are myths. The example of the shortest spy does indeed show that latitudinarianism with regard to belief is mistaken. But *de re* belief does not require anything as stringent as knowing who the person is or having the object 'in mind', in a Donnellanian sense. An eyewitness distinguishing the culprit from the decoys in a police lineup has a *de re* belief, but may not 'know who' that person is, in the usual sense. And when the investigating homicide detective utters 'Smith's murderer is insane' using the description attributively, there is indeed someone of whom the detective suspects insanity, though not someone he has in mind (in the relevant sense). The detective need not even be 'acquainted' with the murderer, in any ordinary sense; his knowledge of the murderer is *by description*, in Russell's phrase. Never mind; he still manages to pull off a *de re* belief. It is enough that the believer is appropriately cognitively connected to the person or object. The *de re* connection need not be direct and intimate; it may be remote and indirect, perhaps consisting of a network of causal intermediaries interposed between the cognizer and the object.<sup>24</sup>

Donnellan (1979: 58) suggested that in order to assert something *de re* about a person or object, there is no requirement, of the sort Kaplan (1969) laid down, that the speaker use a vivid term or even that the speaker use a term that denotes the entity in question. Interestingly, Donnellan suggested instead that Kaplan's third and final condition is both necessary and, by itself, sufficient: that one use a term that is a *name of* the entity for the speaker—analogueous to the sense in which a bad photograph may be a *picture of* an object that it does not resemble, and fail to be a *picture of* another object to which it bears an uncanny resemblance (Kaplan 1969: 227–9). That is, Donnellan suggested that it is necessary and sufficient that the entity enter properly into the 'genetic' account of how the speaker came to learn the term he/she uses to refer to it. I am suggesting that some such condition (perhaps one involving 'mental names?') may be operative in the formation of *de re* beliefs, thus blocking Kevin from suspecting anyone in particular of espionage while allowing the homicide detective to form his *de re* diagnosis of insanity. But *pace* Donnellan, any such condition seems to me overkill for the making of a *de re* assertion. Kaplan's well-documented change of attitude toward the *de re* is also accompanied by a shift in which attitude is alleged to be *de re* (see n. 10 above). Kaplan (1969: 228–9) says, 'I am unwilling to adopt any theory of proper names which permits me to perform a dubbing in absentia, as by solemnly declaring "I hereby dub the first child to be born in the twenty-second century 'Newman 1'", and thus grant myself standing to have beliefs about that as yet unborn child.' Kaplan (1979: 397) recants:

use is sufficient. As should already be clear, I believe this permissive trend in Kaplan's thought is entirely positive and ought to be followed to its natural, and plausible, conclusion.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Sosa (1975). See also Salmon (1986: 179–80 n 19; 1987/1988: 199 n 8, 204 n 11, 213 n. 17).

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‘All this familiarity with demonstratives has led me to believe that I was mistaken in “Quantifying In” in thinking that the most fundamental cases of what I might now describe as a person having a propositional attitude (believing, asserting, etc.) toward a singular proposition required that the person be *en rapport* with the subject of the proposition. It is now clear that I can assert *of* the first child to be born in the twenty-first century that *he* will be bald, simply by assertively uttering ‘Dthat (“the first child to be born in the twenty-first century”) will be bald’.

I say that Kaplan was right on both counts. Where he goes wrong is in thinking that his second observation shows that his first was mistaken. Saying something about Newman 1 is a piece of cake. Forming a belief about him/her, by contrast, requires some degree of cognitive connection, however sparing. *De re* connectedness is required for *de re* belief, not for *de re* assertion.

We must guard against deciding at the outset, before considering the evidence, that all of the propositional attitudes behave as one—especially if something that makes as little cognitive demand on the subject as mere assertion is counted as one of the attitudes. Perhaps one must apprehend propositions in order to believe them. And perhaps one must apprehend propositions in order to make assertions. But it is doubtful that one must apprehend what one is asserting in order to assert it. Whereas latitudinarianism fails in the case of belief, some form seems to govern assertion. This conclusion does not reflect an idiosyncratic theoretical bias. Regardless of one’s views on the controversial issues, there seems every reason to admit that, intuitively, when Tom says ‘The dean is very smart’ he thereby says *of* the administrator in question that he is very smart, and when John says ‘The man I sent to you yesterday is honest’ he thereby says *of* the liar in question that he is honest. There is even some intuition that when I say ‘Newman 1 is unconnected to us’, I thereby assert something *of* a particular future individual.

Ironically, evidence in favor of my proposal comes indirectly from Donnellan (1979). The burden of that article is to challenge Kripke’s famous examples of allegedly contingent a priori statements. Kripke’s examples are trivial consequences of stipulations that fix the reference of a new name or other term by means of a definite description—sentences like ‘Assuming Newman 1 will exist, he or she will be born in the twenty-second century’. The overall structure of Donnellan’s argument is that the sort of knowledge contained in such sentences is *de re*. Yet one typically cannot gain such *de re* knowledge merely on the basis of the reference-fixing introduction of the name, without further experience of the object. In the course of the argument, Donnellan applies a pair of general principles to show that one has not gained the relevant *de re* knowledge. The principles—let us call them ‘*K1*’ and ‘*K2*’—are stated by Donnellan as follows:

- (*K1*) If one has a name for a person, say ‘*N*’, and there is a bit of knowledge that one would express by saying ‘*N* is  $\varphi$ ’ then if one subsequently meets the person it will be true to say of him, using the second-person pronoun, ‘I knew that you were  $\varphi$ ’,

- (K2) If an object is called by one name, say 'N', by one group of people and by another name by a second group, say 'M', and if, in the language of the first group 'N is  $\varphi$ ' expresses a bit of knowledge of theirs and if 'is  $\psi$ ' is a translation of 'is  $\varphi$ ' into the language of the second group then if the relevant facts are known to the second group, they can say truly that the first group 'knew that M is  $\psi$ '. (Donnellan 1979: 55)<sup>25</sup>

Here the 'you' and the 'M' are to be taken as occurring within the scope of the non-extensional operator 'knew that'. Donnellan adds that

essentially the same considerations that were adduced for denying that there was knowledge of an entity just in virtue of the sort of stipulation that introduces a rigid designator by means of a description can be applied to the other propositional attitudes. It would, for example, seem to me just as incorrect to say to John who turns out to be the first child born in the [twenty-second century], 'I believed about you some [one hundred and] twenty-five years before your birth ...' (Donnellan 1979: 56–7).

Donnellan evidently endorses the following analogues of his stated principles:

- (A1) If one has a name for a person, say 'N', and one makes an assertion (in the ordinary way) by uttering 'N is  $\varphi$ ' then if one subsequently meets the person it will be true to say of him, using the second-person pronoun, 'I said that you were  $\varphi$ ',
- (B1) If one has a name for a person, say 'N', and one believes what one would express by saying 'N is  $\varphi$ ' then if one subsequently meets the person it will be true to say of him, using the second-person pronoun, 'I believed that you were  $\varphi$ '; etc.

These various principles, in effect, licence the substitution, under appropriate circumstances, of a name or of a simple indexical ('you') for a co-referential name in an attribution of an assertion or other propositional attitude. The basis for these principles is the fact that such sentences as 'You were  $\varphi$ ', 'N is  $\varphi$ ', and 'M is  $\psi$ ', with 'N' and 'M' being names, semantically contain singular propositions (in the relevant languages), so that one who utters them assertively makes a literal *de re* assertion about the referent of the name or indexical, and any knowledge or belief of the propositions they contain is *de re* knowledge or belief.<sup>26</sup> This suggests certain more fundamental principles:

<sup>25</sup> In an endnote Donnellan recognizes that for the purposes of his argument, he does not need to defend these principles even for cases in which the user of the name 'N' also uses a second name for the same person or object, believing the two names to refer to different entities. But Donnellan also there expresses a temptation to extend the principles to some of these cases as well. (My own view is that they should be extended across the board to all such cases.)

<sup>26</sup> Donnellan (1974) more or less endorses the idea that 'predicative statements' (those predicating properties other than existence, or its cognates) involving names semantically express singular propositions.

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- (A1') If an expression, say ' $\varphi$ ', expresses a property (state, condition)  $F$  in one's language, then one asserts about a person, *de re*, that he/she is  $F$  iff, if one were subsequently to meet the person, it would be true to say to him, using the second-person pronoun, 'I said that you were  $\varphi$ '.
- (B1') If an expression, say ' $\varphi$ ', expresses a property (state, condition)  $F$  in one's language, then one believes about a person, *de re*, that he/she is  $F$  iff, if one were subsequently to meet the person, it would be true to say to him, using the second-person pronoun, 'I believed that you were  $\varphi$ '; etc.

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine a justification for *A1* that does not go by way of the notion of *de re* assertion, or some closely related notion. In any event, I think it is clear that Donnellan bases his principles on more fundamental principles like these.<sup>27</sup> Earlier, Ernest Sosa also implicitly relied on principles like these in making a determination concerning whether one has a given *de re* belief about someone or something, or has made a *de re* assertion, etc.<sup>28</sup> I shall call this 'the Donnellan–Sosa test'. Illustrating how the test applies to the case of Newman 1, Donnellan observes,

If the first child born in the [twenty-second century] comes to be named 'John' it would not be correct to say then that although we had a different name for him we knew [one hundred and] twenty-five years beforehand that John would be the first child born in the [twenty-second century] . . . I suggest that the reason is that the stipulations have not given rise to any knowledge (other than of linguistic matters). And so not to any knowledge *a priori*. (1979: 55)

My principal concern here is not with the thorny question of whether Kripke's alleged examples of the contingent *a priori* hold up under such careful scrutiny.<sup>29</sup> Our concern is instead with the more immediate matter of whether there is *de re* belief or assertion present in the sort of examples that Kaplan has labeled the *pseudo de re*. And here the more fundamental principles *A1'* and *B1'* are the ones to

<sup>27</sup> Strictly speaking, only one of the two conditionals making up the biconditional in *B1'* is needed for Donnellan's argument, though I believe it is clear that he would endorse the full biconditional. Just before formulating his general principles, Donnellan (1979: 54) says, 'I am assuming, to use the jargon, that if we now have any knowledge (other than about linguistic matters) just as a result of the stipulation concerning the sentence, "Newman 1 will be the first child born in the [22nd] century" it would have to be knowledge *de re*. That is, it would have to be knowledge *about* an individual in the sense that there is (or will be) an individual about whom we now know something and if that individual turns out to be John we now know something about John.'

<sup>28</sup> See Sosa (1975: 890–1). Others besides may have also used the test. I believe Sosa may be the first to have done so, and to have concluded, correctly, that in some cases, one may have a *de re* belief (or other attitude) about someone without knowing who it is.

<sup>29</sup> I discuss this issue at length in Salmon (1987). In a lecture presented in 1984 at a conference at Stanford University, Kripke responded to Donnellan's criticism, arguing that what I am calling 'the Donnellan–Sosa test' does not support Donnellan's contentions in the case of Leverrier's introduction of 'Neptune' as a name for whatever planet it is causing particular perturbations in the orbit of Uranus. Cf. Kripke (1980: 79 *n.*). Notice that 'Neptune' was already a *name of* the planet (in Kaplan's sense) for Leverrier when he so named it, even before it was located in the sky. The case is quite different with 'Newman 1', where Donnellan's criticism of Kripke seems significantly stronger. In the Stanford lecture, Kripke developed and modified his position on the contingent *a priori*. See Salmon (1987: 203 *n.*).

employ. By contrast to the Newman 1 case, John in Kaplan's example, having sincerely uttered the sentence 'The man I sent to you yesterday is honest', surely could truthfully address the man in question with the words 'I said that you were honest', and even with 'I believed that you were honest'. Hence, applying  $A1'$  and  $B1'$ , John did assert and believe of the man, *de re*, that he was honest. And just as certainly, Tom in Wettstein's example could address the dean truthfully (if shamelessly) with the words, 'I told Wettstein that you were very smart', and with 'Even before I learnt who you were, I had already formed the opinion that you were very smart, based on the wonderful things you have done for the faculty'. Consequently, Tom made the relevant *de re* assertion, and had the corresponding *de re* belief.

The contrast between Kaplan's example and Wettstein's now looms large. Recall that Tom, unlike John, uses his description attributively. Since Donnellan endorses  $DT_r$  as well as the principles  $A1$ , etc., in order to avoid inconsistency he must deny that Tom can truthfully say to the dean 'I said, and believed, that you were very smart'. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that he says of the Newman 1 case, 'It would... seem to me just as incorrect to say to John who turns out to be the first child born in the [twenty-second century], "I believed about you some [one hundred and] twenty-five years before your birth...'", "I asserted about you some [one hundred and] twenty-five years before your birth...'", etc.<sup>30</sup> In fact, however, these two sentences seem significantly different. It is indeed dubious that Newman 1's future contemporaries could truthfully utter 'Some philosophers of the late twentieth century believed that you would not be born until the twenty-second century'. For despite Kaplan's heroic efforts, we simply are not sufficiently *en rapport* to have *de re* beliefs about Newman 1. The *de re* connection is lacking. By contrast, there is no reason why Newman 1's contemporaries could not truthfully utter 'Some philosophers of the late twentieth century had a name for you, and using that name, they said about you that you were not knowable by them (that you would be born in the twenty-second century, etc.)'. They might add, 'Of course, they did not know (or even believe) that they were talking about *you*—how could they?—but you are the one they were talking about'. The case of Tom and the dean is clearer. The analogue of Donnellan's remark is plainly incorrect, for both belief and assertion. Worse, since Donnellan also endorses  $DT_a$ , he must also deny that John said that the man he had sent the day before was honest. But surely that is exactly what John did say.

The Donnellan–Sosa test does not conclusively settle all such questions. There are some very hard cases. Inevitably individual intuitions in particular applications of the test will sometimes clash. But they often converge, or tend to converge, as in the case of Kevin and the shortest spy. It is fair to say that intuition in applying the Donnellan–Sosa test is not squarely on Donnellan's side. In many cases—especially cases of attributive use where there is also an epistemically 'real' (e.g. causal)

<sup>30</sup> Similar remarks, explicitly echoing Donnellan, occur in Soames (1994: 165)

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connection—it seems clear that intuition is squarely on the other side. (See again n. 30.) Thus, in an article coincidentally published in the same year as Donnellan’s article in which he proffers the Donnellan–Sosa test, Searle says:

if I know the sheriff said ‘attributively,’ ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’ and I know Jones is Smith’s murderer I might indeed tell Jones, ‘Jones, the sheriff believes you are insane’, or even report, ‘About Jones, the sheriff believes he is insane’. Furthermore even where I know that Jones is not Smith’s murderer and I know that Ralph said ‘referentially’ ‘Smith’s murderer is insane’, and I know he had Jones in mind, I can still report his speech act by saying, ‘Ralph said that Smith’s murderer is insane’, for he did indeed say just that. (Searle 1979: 207)

## V.

A correct characterization of Donnellan’s distinction remains neutral with regard to the theses *AC*, *DT*, and *SS*. And this requires that the distinction be given in overtly pragmatic terms. As noted, Kripke has made the tantalizing claim that one distinction characterized in just this way covers the referential/attributional distinction and applies more generally to proper names and other non-descriptive terms. We saw in section II above that one of Kripke’s arguments in this connection is flawed in that he did not provide an example of a genuinely attributive use of a proper name, and that he misclassifies our routine, everyday uses of names as attributive rather than as referential. But we also saw that attributive uses of names do genuinely exist. Let us consider Kripke’s more general distinction in greater detail. He writes:

In a given idiolect, the semantic referent of a designator (without indexicals) is given by a *general* intention of the speaker to refer to a certain object whenever the designator is used. The speaker’s referent is given by a *specific* intention, on a given occasion, to refer to a certain object. If the speaker believes that the object he wants to talk about, on a given occasion, fulfills the conditions for being the semantic referent, then he believes that there is no clash between his general intentions and his specific intentions. My hypothesis is that Donnellan’s referential/attributional distinction should be generalized in this light. For the speaker, on a given occasion, may believe that his specific intention coincides with his general intention for one of two reasons. In one case (the ‘simple’ case), his specific intention is simply to refer to the semantic referent: that is, his specific intention *is* simply his general semantic intention. (For example, he uses ‘Jones’ as a name of Jones—elaborate this according to your favorite theory of proper names—and, on this occasion, simply wishes to use ‘Jones’ to refer to Jones.) Alternatively—the ‘complex’ case—he has a specific intention, which is distinct from his general intention, but which he believes, as a matter of fact, to determine the same object as the one determined by his general intention. (For example, he wishes to refer to the man ‘over there’ but believes that he *is* Jones.) In the ‘simple’ case, the speaker’s referent is, *by definition*, the semantic referent. In the ‘complex’ case, they may coincide, if the speaker’s belief is correct, but they need not. (The man ‘over there’ may be

Smith and not Jones.) To anticipate, my hypothesis will be that Donnellan's 'attributive' use is nothing but the 'simple' case, specialized to definite descriptions, and that the 'referential' use is, similarly, the 'complex' case. (Kripke 1977: 15)

One discerns in this passage the source (or at least a source) of Kripke's generalizing Donnellan's distinction into a conceptually separate distinction. He explicitly catalogues what seems a perfectly ordinary use of the name 'Jones' as a 'simple' case, and hence, on his proposal for generalizing Donnellan's distinction, as a generalized attributive, rather than a generalized referential, use. But it is not clear from Kripke's wording that such uses really exemplify the simple rather than the complex case. I have a 'general' intention to use the name 'Donnellan' generally as a name for Keith Donnellan. On a particular occasion when I use the name, I also have a 'specific' intention to refer to Donnellan by my use of the name (as opposed to a specific intention to refer to Kripke, or to the man 'over there', etc.). Are these intentions of mine the same intention, or are they different? How is one supposed to tell? Must I be conceiving of Donnellan as *he whom I generally mean by the name* in my specific intention in order for it to be the same as my general intention? If so, then my general intention is an intention generally to mean by the name he whom I generally mean by the name. How can such an intention succeed in determining a semantic referent for the name, as Kripke claims?

Kripke evidently presupposes that the intentions are one and the same. But how can a standing intention generally to do such-and-such be strictly the *very same* intention as an occurrent intention on a particular occasion to do such-and-such *on that occasion*? Or is the relevant intention supposed to be not an intention to refer to Donnellan *generally* by one's use of the name, nor to do so *now*, nor to do so *at time t*, nor to do so *sometime or other*, but simply to do so (period)? Do we have temporally nonspecific intentions? Can intentions even *be* temporally nonspecific in this way?

One ought to feel uneasy, maybe even annoyed, with these questions, at least in the present context—much as we do when the philosophically uneducated ask for the sound of one hand clapping, or when the philosophically miseducated make equally ridiculous demands. It is preferable to minimize the extent to which the legitimacy and intelligibility of Donnellan's distinction is made to depend on the identification and differentiation of intentions in such contexts. More importantly, if commonplace uses of ordinary names fall under Kripke's notion of a *simple* case (as he evidently believes), then as noted above, his distinction between simple and complex cases fails to generalize Donnellan's distinction for definite descriptions in the most natural and plausible manner.

Notice, by contrast, that typical uses of names whose reference was fixed by an attributive use of a definite description seem more clearly to fall squarely within the parameters of what Kripke means by 'the simple case'. We have the general intention to refer by 'Newman 1' to the first child to be born in the twenty-second



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century. Kripke would say that our specific intention in connection with our use of the name on a given occasion is this very same intention. Either that, or else barnyard-variety attributive uses of definite descriptions will exemplify the complex case, contrary to Kripke's intent. One may raise skeptical questions in this connection—like those I have already posed, and more—but it is clear, or at least relatively clear, that in this case, there is no potentially conflicting, non-semantic intention to refer specifically to this person or that, in addition to our pre-set semantic intention to refer to whoever is born first on New Year's Day, 2100 AD (or is it AD 2101?) The problem with Kripke's characterization is not that it is off the wall. It is simply off target.

It is at least arguable, as we have seen above, that there is (and there will be) no one for whom we now have a *de re* intention to use 'Newman 1' as a name. This observation—and not the differentiation of intentions—provides the key to Donnellan's distinction and its most natural generalization to other sorts of terms. It will not do, however, to say that a use of a term is referential whenever there is an occurrent specific *de re* intention concerning some particular person or thing, to refer to him/her/it by the term. As we have seen, the homicide detective investigating Smith's murder may be said not only to make *de re* assertions but also to have *de re* beliefs concerning the murderer (e.g. that he is insane), even at the earliest stage of the investigation before the detective is in a position to use the description referentially. (Recall the Donnellan–Sosa test and the quote from Searle in section IV above.) Intention is sufficiently like belief that it would seem correct to say that, even at that stage, the detective also has the specific *de re* intention, concerning Smith's murderer, to refer to him/her by the phrase 'Smith's murderer'. The required *de re* connection has already been established.

The same phenomenon can arise with proper names. A case in point may be the name 'Deep Throat', coined by Washington *Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein for a highly placed, confidential source in their famous investigation of the Watergate scandal. (This example is mentioned by Donnellan 1978: 38–9.) It seems correct to say of typical readers or viewers of the work, *All the President's Men*, that there is indeed someone whom they mean, *de re*, by 'Deep Throat', and about whom they are expressing their views when discussing the *Post's* coverage of Watergate—even though the readers do not know, and may even have no guess concerning, that person's actual identity. Here again, the Donnellan–Sosa test seems to bear this out. On a given occasion of use, the typical reader has a specific intention to refer to this same person. In this respect, 'Deep Throat' is more like 'Jack the Ripper' (or 'Smith's murderer') than 'Newman 1'. A typical reader who does not have even a hunch as to Deep Throat's identity, however, does not have anyone in mind, in Donnellan's sense, when reading and using the name. That is, the reader does not have anyone in mind sufficiently to be able to use a definite description referentially. A similar situation arises when one encounters someone's name for the first time without being adequately introduced (even if only *in*

*absentia*) to the person so named—say by looking at a new class-enrollment list or a luggage identification tag. If one then uses the name to state something about the person so named, while still having no idea whose name it is, one makes a *de re* assertion and expresses a *de re* belief. ('This belongs to one Byron Mallone. Mr Mallone, whoever he is, has traveled to the Israel and was very recently around someone who smokes cigars.') Such uses are not referential.

Donnellan's notion of *having an individual in mind*—the notion of having-in-mind that is a requirement for using a definite description referentially—seems to fall somewhere closer to the notion of knowing who someone is, or perhaps to that of having an opinion as to who someone is (the doxastic analogue of the epistemic notion of knowing-who), than to the distinct notion of having *de re* beliefs, intentions, or other cognitive attitudes concerning the person in question. To be sure, the notions of having someone in mind and of knowing-who are not the same. One can use a description referentially for someone while having no opinion, let alone knowledge, concerning that person's identity, in the usual sense. But the notions seem connected or similar, more so than the notion of having-in-mind is similar to that of having *de re* attitudes. I believe that the relevant notion of having-in-mind, like the notions of knowing-who and having-an-opinion-as-to-who, is best thought of as a cognitive relation between a cognizer and a content appropriate to a singular term.<sup>31</sup> In nearly all of the cases discussed by Donnellan and others in connection with referential use, what one has in mind is an individual person or object that the description is supposed to fit. Donnellan (1966: 290–1) provides an example in which a speaker uses the description 'the king' referentially for someone whom he believes to be a usurper, but whose claim to the throne is known to be unquestioned by the people with whom he is conversing. In such a case, the speaker does not believe the description used actually fits the object he/she has in mind, but is adopting the pretense that it does. In still other cases, one might instead have in mind not a particular individual but what Church (following Carnap) calls an *individual concept*, that is, a descriptive content appropriate to a definite description. The latter type of situation is characteristic of an attributive use. When the homicide detective says 'Smith's murderer is insane', he has no one in particular in mind; what he has in mind is the individual concept *that person, whoever he or she is, who single-handedly murdered Smith*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Salmon (1987: 213 n. 17, 214 n. 19). I now think that, in so far as there is a difference (however subtle), I should have used the phrase 'knows what *F*' instead of 'knows which *F*' for the generic notion of which knowing-who is a species. It seems likely that the notion of knowing-who is, at least to some extent, interest relative; someone whose epistemic or cognitive situation remains unchanged might be correctly described in one context (setting one range of interests) as knowing who someone else is, and in another context as not knowing who the other person is. The notion of having someone in mind does not seem interest relative—at least not in exactly the same way and to exactly the same extent as is the notion of knowing-who. It is possible that Donnellan's notion of having an individual in mind is logically related to the semantic content of the phrase 'knows what *F*'—or more likely, 'knows which *F*'—with respect to one sort of context or range of interests. (I do not feel confident about how to resolve these issues.)

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In pointing out the existence of the referential use of a definite description, Donnellan highlighted the possibility of using a description while having a particular person or object in mind that the description may not denote, in Russell's sense. There is an analogous possibility, which has not been generally recognized, of using a definite description while having a particular individual concept in mind that the description does not semantically express. It very often happens that what a speaker has primarily in mind in using a definite description is *neither* the concept conventionally contained in the description used nor an individual that the description is supposed to fit, but a *different description* (or at least a different descriptive content), one that the speaker can only use attributively. To modify Donnellan's king example slightly, consider that the speaker does not have any idea who the usurper is, believing only that the rightful king has been wrongly deposed by someone or other. What he primarily thinks when he says 'the king' is: *whoever it is that is taken to be king*.<sup>32</sup> Or again, suppose that the investigating detective is completely convinced that Johnson was murdered by the same culprit, so far still unidentified, who committed the recent, very similar murder of Smith. The homicide department has no suspects, no witnesses, and no leads in either case; the detective's firm belief is based entirely on the common MO. When the detective uses the phrase 'Smith's murderer' at the scene of the later crime, he primarily means: *the guy, whoever he is, who murdered Johnson*. The detective does not actually have the murderer in mind, in the relevant sense; otherwise, he could use the phrase referentially. Instead the detective thinks of Johnson's murderer by description.

Such uses as these are a kind of pseudo or mock referential use. In a sense, the mock referential use is what you get when you cross referential with attributive. In many such uses, there is even someone or something that the speaker intends (de re) to refer to by the description. The only thing preventing the use from being bona-fide referential is the exact nature of the user's cognitive access to the individual. In this respect, mock referential uses are more attributive than referential. But in other respects, they are so much like genuine referential uses that they ought to have been included in previous discussions of the referential use, and ought to be included in subsequent discussions.

A referential use of a definite description is Good or Bad, according as the individual that the speaker has in mind is, or is not, denoted (in Russell's sense) by the description. A mock referential use of a definite description is either Good or Bad, depending on whether the individual concept that the speaker has in mind is, or is not, coextensive with the concept conventionally expressed by the description. Let us say that a Good mock referential use is a *Pretty* use, and that a Bad mock referential use is *Ugly*. Recall in this connection that Donnellan allows that Russell's theory of descriptions may give the correct analysis for attributive uses of definite descriptions, though not for referential uses. Whatever reasons Donnellan may have

<sup>32</sup> This modification of Donnellan's original example is due to Ilhan Inan.

for withholding Russell's analysis from referential uses seem to extend straightforwardly to mock referential uses. When the detective says 'Smith's murderer left a smudge print here' at the scene of Johnson's murder, someone of Donnellan's ilk might argue that, in some sense, the detective will have stated something true as long as the smudge was made by *Johnson's* murderer, whether or not he also murdered Smith. More revealing, such a philosopher would argue further that, in some sense, the detective will have stated something *false* as long as Johnson's murderer did not make the relevant smudge print—even if the detective's belief that Smith and Johnson were murdered by the same person is incorrect and, purely by happenstance, Smith's murderer coincidentally left the smudge there sometime prior to Johnson's murder. An Ugly use of a definite description is a very close facsimile of a Bad referential use.

We have seen that Kripke's attempt at generalizing Donnellan's distinction casts the ordinary use of proper names on the attributive side when they are more at home on the referential side. There is a further difficulty, but opposite in kind. Other uses of terms are miscast as referential when they are attributive, or at least more attributive than referential. This is due to the fact that Kripke's notion of the complex case does not include as a necessary condition that the speaker have a particular someone in mind, in the relevant sense. It is sufficient that the speaker have an occurrent specific intention distinct from, and in addition to, his/her standing general intention. Mock referential uses satisfy this condition. On a particular occasion when the homicide detective uses the phrase 'Johnson's murderer', he may have the occurrent specific intention to refer to the repeat murderer responsible for the deaths of both Smith and Johnson. This is clearly different from his background semantic intention always to use the phrase with its usual English meaning. His use therefore exemplifies the complex case. The two intentions may even conflict. If Johnson's murderer is a copycat, the detective's use of the phrase 'Johnson's murderer' is Ugly. It does not fit the paradigm for a referential use, since there is still no one whom the detective has in mind. Otherwise, he should also be able to use 'Smith's murderer' referentially. But he cannot (even though he has various *de re* beliefs concerning Smith's murderer, e.g. that he murdered Johnson).

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## VI

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Kripke distinguishes between standing ('general') intentions always to use a term in such-and-such a way and occurrent ('specific') intentions to use the term in such-and-such a way on a particular occasion, saying that semantic reference is given by the first kind of intention and speaker reference by the second. This distinction among intentions seems an excessively delicate basis for the comparatively firm distinctions between semantic reference and speaker reference, and between

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referential and attributive use. If I have the occurrent intention to use ‘Smith’s murderer’ to mean the man ‘over there’ on this occasion, because I genuinely believe that man murdered Smith, do I not also form a standing intention *always* to use the phrase for that man? Conversely, it seems rather likely that standing intentions in connection with our use of language typically (if not invariably) give rise to occurrent intentions on particular occasions. This may even be built into the notion of a standing state.

I believe it may be more helpful to replace Kripke’s distinction between standing and occurrent linguistic intentions with a different one: the distinction between linguistic intentions that are *purely semantic* in nature and those that are not. We who speak English intend to use our words generally with their conventional meanings. Our knowledge of what those words mean allows us to form more specific semantic intentions. Thus I intend to use the word ‘guitarist’ in whatever is its usual English sense. Given my knowledge of what the word means in English, I form the additional intention to use the word specifically as a term for one who plays the guitar. The first is a general background intention, one that specifies the intended meaning only as *whatever the term means in English*; the second identifies a particular meaning for the term. Both are purely semantic intentions, in that they are meant to govern not merely which individuals the word ‘guitarist’ *happens to* apply to, but what the word applies to *as a matter of the semantics of my idiolect*. Indeed, they are also meant to govern what the word is to *mean*. The second intention may be termed an *identifying semantic* intention. If I believe that all and only guitarists keep their fingernails short on one hand and longer on the other, I may form the additional linguistic intention to use the word to apply to individuals of exactly that class. Such an intention would also be an identifying semantic intention, in the sense I intend, since it identifies a particular extension for ‘guitarist’ (in contrast with an intention to use the word to apply to exactly the things to which it correctly applies in English). But it would not be a purely semantic intention; it depends on an extra-linguistic belief of mine, one which is (and which I recognize to be) non-semantic in nature.

In using a singular term the speaker typically has a purely semantic, identifying intention of the form ‘By my use of this term, I intend to refer to  $\alpha$ ’. And it is arguably this intention, rather than some non-semantic standing linguistic intention, that governs semantic reference for the term in the speaker’s idiolect. The meta-linguistic variable ‘ $\alpha$ ’ here may be a stand-in for a definite description—or if the quasi-quotation marks are interpreted as content-quotation marks, rather than as syntactic quotation marks, the ‘ $\alpha$ ’ may be a stand-in for an individual concept. For example, one may have the purely semantic intention expressed by ‘By my use of the phrase “Smith’s murderer”, I intend to refer to whoever single-handedly murdered Smith.’ In this case, the intention is a product of more fundamental identifying semantic intentions: to use ‘Smith’ to mean Smith, to use ‘murderer’ as a term for murderers, etc. But the  $\alpha$  might instead stand in for a proper name of a

person or object. In the case of a typical proper name, the relevant purely semantic, identifying intention is 'singular' or de re: 'By my use of "Smith", I intend to refer to Smith [*that very guy*].' By contrast, in the case of a name whose reference is fixed by an attributive use of a definite description, the purely semantic, identifying intention is 'general' or de dicto: 'By my use of "Newman 1", I intend to refer to whoever is born first in the twenty-second century.' This is not the same as an intention to use 'Newman 1' specifically as a name for *that particular future individual*, Newman 1. The Donnellan–Sosa test would seem to indicate that we do not have the latter intention. No de re connection has been established.<sup>33</sup>

Before attempting to extend Donnellan's distinction to proper names and other terms in a natural and plausible way, a further point must be made. Our use of a particular term is often accompanied by a plurality of identifying semantic intentions, each of the form 'By my use of this term, I intend to refer to  $\alpha$ '. It may happen that the speaker regards one or more of these as essential to what he or she means, and the rest as so much window dressing, mere accoutrement. Suppose the speaker is asked, 'Consider a hypothetical scenario in which your intention to refer to  $\alpha$  by the term and your separate intention to refer to  $\beta$  conflict, because these are different individuals. In such a case, which do you mean by your use of the term?' In reply the speaker may cite one intention as the superseding, decisive intention. We may call this the speaker's *primary* linguistic intention.

One may come close to generalizing Donnellan's distinction, then, by invoking the various notions of purely semantic intentions, primary linguistic intentions, and identifying semantic intentions. Let us distinguish between *generalized referential* and *generalized attributive* uses as follows. In a g-attributive use of a singular term, the speaker has a primary, identifying, purely semantic intention of the form 'By my use of this term, I intend to refer to  $\alpha$ ', where  $\alpha$  is a definite description. This intention is general, as opposed to singular; it is a de dicto intention.<sup>34</sup> Further, the speaker does not have in addition a supplementary primary linguistic intention of the form 'By my use of this term, I intend to refer to  $\beta$ ' that is not purely semantic in nature, or where  $\beta$  is a directly referential, Millian term (e.g. a name) for an individual person or object that the speaker 'has in mind', in the relevant sense. Here there is no potential conflict (from the point of view of pure semantics) with the primary de dicto linguistic intention, and speaker reference is therefore governed by that purely semantic intention. In a g-referential use of a term, by contrast, the speaker has a primary linguistic intention (either purely semantic or not) of the form 'By my use of this term, I intend to refer to  $\alpha$ ', where this time  $\alpha$  is a directly referential term for an individual person or object (rather than a definite description), one whom the speaker 'has in mind' in forming this intention.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. also Salmon (1993a; 1993b: 99–100 n. 27).

<sup>34</sup> I do not mean by this to rule out the possibility that the intention is also de re or singular. Some intentions, beliefs, etc. are both de dicto and de re. The detective's belief that whoever single-handedly murdered Smith is insane, e.g. is de re (singular) with regard to Smith and de dicto (general) with regard to his murderer. Cf. Salmon (1982: 44–5 n. 3).

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The speaker's primary linguistic intention is a *de re* intention concerning the person or object for which the speaker is using the term *g*-referentially. In this case, speaker reference may be governed by both this primary linguistic intention and a separate purely semantic intention. It may even happen that the speaker inadvertently refers simultaneously to two (or more) entities by a single use of a term.

This distinction aims at capturing conceptually critical elements of the referential and the attributive use of a definite description. The generalized distinction has several noteworthy features. First, it seems clear that a use of a definite description is referential if it is *g*-referential, and attributive if *g*-attributive. The distinction between *g*-referential and *g*-attributive use is mutually exclusive, or nearly enough so; no use of a term can be both *g*-referential and *g*-attributive except (perhaps) where a speaker has linguistic meta-intentions that create a duality of use by giving equal weight to conflicting linguistic intentions, neither one of which supersedes the other. Donnellan seems to have originally intended his more restrictive distinction also to be mutually exclusive (at least to this same extent).

Kripke (1977: 8) says that he does not regard Donnellan's distinction as exclusive. In his example of a use that might be regarded as simultaneously partially referential and partially attributive (1977: 25–6n28), a speaker utters 'Smith's murderer is insane' based both on the grizzly condition of Smith's body and also on the peculiar behavior of the person whom the speaker has in mind and is observing (believing him to be Smith's murderer), where 'neither consideration would have sufficed by itself, but they suffice jointly'. I believe Donnellan would probably say that this is simply a referential use and not attributive, and I do not see a compelling reason to dispute this verdict. Indeed, if Kripke's case is to be regarded as somehow involving an attributive use in combination with a referential use, it raises the specter that most (or at least a great many) uses that are generally taken to be referential and not attributive will turn out to be combined referential–attributive. This would run counter to how we ordinarily conceive of the distinction.<sup>35</sup> While the generalized distinction is exclusive, it is not exhaustive. Many uses of definite descriptions are neither *g*-referential nor *g*-attributive. Mock referential uses, for example—which are common in ordinary speech—have elements of both referential use and attributive use. For that very reason they do not fit the paradigm for either use, as Donnellan set out the original distinction.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> In so far as it is desirable to allow for such a thing as a combined referential–attributive use, the generalization proposed here might be adjusted to accommodate Kripke's intuitions about the case (perhaps by deleting the condition on *g*-attributive use that there be no primary purely semantic intention concerning someone or something that the speaker has in mind and/or the condition that there not be a second, non-semantic intention). Kripke's attempt at generalizing Donnellan's distinction—in terms of the identification or differentiation of 'general' and 'specific' linguistic intentions and the distinction between 'simple' and 'complex' cases—does not straightforwardly allow for combined uses. Furthermore, since strict identity is a clear-cut, all-or-nothing affair, it is by no means obvious how to adjust Kripke's distinction to accommodate combined (partially simple, partially complex) uses—and especially how to do so without making most referential uses into combined uses. Perhaps this can be done.

<sup>36</sup> Neale (1990: 202–3) describes a case similar to the detective's use of 'Johnson's murderer', as set out above, declaring that it is attributive, by Donnellan's criterion, and not referential. Inan independently gave

More interestingly, uses of proper names whose reference has been fixed by an attributive use of a definite description are typically g-attributive. Some other unusual uses of names are also g-attributive, as in the 'Deep Throat' example. But commonplace uses of ordinary names are typically g-referential.

Perhaps most importantly, one of Kripke's principal criticisms of Donnellan is upheld. Especially telling, and to the point, is Kripke's observation—made forcefully with the aid of a variety of postulated languages (1977: 15–17)—that the pragmatic phenomena involving speaker reference, speaker assertion, and the like adduced by Donnellan in connection with the referential use are no evidence for the thesis of semantic significance. The generalized distinction is neutral regarding controversial theses like *SS* and *SS'*. Using that characterization of the referential–attributive distinction, it is possible to provide an account of the referential use, and more generally of the g-referential use, that attributes to it no special semantic significance, while accommodating, and even predicting, the circumstances and frequency of its occurrence in everyday speech. The latter therefore has no bearing on the question of semantic significance.

a similar example, judging it to be attributive, and concluding, more carefully, that Donnellan's explicit criterion for attributive use fails to capture the intent. An informal survey of many of the cognoscenti showed that, aside from one explicit abstention, all nine remaining respondents unanimously regard the detective's use of 'Johnson's murderer' as: (a) attributive; and (b) not referential. I continue to believe that the use is neither referential nor attributive, as Donnellan intended these terms. It is a mock referential use in which the detective primarily intends *whoever single-handedly murdered both Smith and Johnson*, rather than *whoever single-handedly murdered Johnson (whether or not he also single-handedly murdered Smith)*. I believe Donnellan would therefore withhold Russell's analysis from it, by contrast with a genuine attributive use. (Two respondents, Anthony Brueckner and Genoveva Marti, supplemented their vote with unsolicited remarks showing a sensitivity to the sort of considerations raised in the text in connection with Ugly uses, like the detective's use of 'Smith's murderer' for whoever murdered Johnson, where Johnson's murderer turns out to be a copycat.) Attributive or not, as already noted, the fact that the use is clearly not referential even though it exemplifies the 'complex case' shows that Kripke's attempt to generalize Donnellan's distinction for definite descriptions does not get matters exactly right.