Reference and Structure in the Philosophy of Language
A Defense of the Russelian Orthodoxy

Arthur Sullivan
Reference and Structure in the Philosophy of Language
Routledge Studies in Contemporary Philosophy

For a full list of titles in this series, please visit www.routledge.com.

5 Epistemology Modalized
   Kelly Becker

6 Truth and Speech Acts
   Studies in the Philosophy of Language
   Dirk Greimann & Geo Siegwart

7 A Sense of the World
   Essays on Fiction, Narrative, and Knowledge
   Edited by John Gibson, Wolfgang Huemer, and Luca Pocci

8 A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy
   Robert B. Talisse

9 Aesthetics and Material Beauty
   Aesthetics Naturalized
   Jennifer A. McMahon

10 Aesthetic Experience
    Edited by Richard Shusterman and Adele Tomlin

11 Real Essentialism
   David S. Oderberg

12 Practical Identity and Narrative Agency
    Edited by Catriona Mackenzie and Kim Atkins

13 Metaphysics and the Representational Fallacy
    Heather Dyke

14 Narrative Identity and Moral Identity
    A Practical Perspective
    Kim Atkins

15 Intergenerational Justice
   Rights and Responsibilities in an Intergenerational Polity
   Janna Thompson

16 Hillel Steiner and the Anatomy of Justice
   Themes and Challenges
   Edited by Stephen de Wijze, Matthew H. Kramer, and Ian Carter

17 Philosophy of Personal Identity and Multiple Personality
   Logi Gumnansson

18 The Force of Argument
   Essays in Honor of Timothy Smiley
   Jonathan Lear and Alex Oliver

19 Autonomy and Liberalism
   Ben Colburn

20 Habermas and Literary Rationality
   David L. Colclasure

21 Rawls, Citizenship, and Education
   M. Victoria Costa

22 Objectivity and the Language-Dependence of Thought
   A Transcendental Defence of Universal Lingualism
   Christian Barth

23 Habermas and Rawls
   Disputing the Political
   Edited by James Gordon Finlayson and Fabian Freyenhagen
24 Philosophical Delusion and its Therapy
Outline of a Philosophical Revolution
Eugen Fischer

25 Epistemology and the Regress Problem
Scott F. Aikin

26 Civil Society in Liberal Democracy
Mark Jensen

27 The Politics of Logic
Badiou, Wittgenstein, and the Consequences of Formalism
Paul M. Livingston

28 Pluralism and Liberal Politics
Robert B. Talisse

29 Kant and Education
Interpretations and Commentary
Edited by Klas Roth and Chris W. Surprenant

30 Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and Maternal Subjectivity
Alison Stone

31 Civility in Politics and Education
Edited by Deborah S. Mower, Wade L. Robison

32 Philosophical Inquiry into Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering
Maternal Subjects
Edited by Sheila Lintott and Maureen Sander-Staudt

33 Authenticity as an Ethical Ideal
Somogy Varga

34 The Philosophy of Curiosity
Ilhan Inan

35 Self-Realization and Justice
A Liberal-Perfectionist Defense of the Right to Freedom from Employment
Julia Maskivker

36 Narrative Identity, Autonomy, and Mortality
From Frankfurt and MacIntyre to Kierkegaard
John J. Davenport

37 Contemporary Feminist Pragmatism
Edited by Maurice Hamington and Celia Bardwell-Jones

38 Morality, Self Knowledge, and Human Suffering
An Essay on The Loss of Confidence in the World
Josep Corbi

39 Contrastivism in Philosophy
Edited by Martijn Blaauw

40 Aesthetics After Metaphysics
From Mimesis to Metaphor
Miguel de Beistegui

41 Foundations of Freedom
Welfare-Based Arguments against Paternalism
Simon R. Clarke

42 Pittsburgh School of Philosophy
Sellars, McDowell, Brandom
Chauncey Maher

43 Reference and Structure in the Philosophy of Language
A Defense of the Russellian Orthodoxy
Arthur Sullivan
Reference and Structure in the Philosophy of Language
A Defense of the Russelian Orthodoxy

Arthur Sullivan
To Jennifer
Contents

List of Tables xi
Preface xiii

Introduction 1

PART I
Framing the Project 7

1 Two Distinctions Within the Category of Designators 9

2 Further Defining the Central Theses 16

PART II
Rigid Designation, Proper Names, and Structure 27

3 Structure and Rigidity 29

4 Structure and Naming 51

PART III
The Prima Facie Counterexamples 69

Interlude: Interim Review and a Look Ahead 71

5 Referential Uses of Denoting Expressions 75

6 Complex Referring Expressions 93
Tables

1.1 Types of Designator (preliminary version) 12
1.2 Types of Designator 15
4.1 Types of Designator 68
6.1 Dual-Purpose NPs 108
6.2 Varieties of Complex Designators 109
7.1 Russell’s Distinctive Contribution to Philosophical Logic 120
7.2 Types of Designator 121
7.3 Devices of Semantic Reference 126
This book grows out of a Ph.D. dissertation on rigid designation, written around 1997–99 under the supervision of Adèle Mercier at Queen’s University. The most fundamental step in the development of this project is a deep understanding of the importance of rigid designation to various issues in the philosophy of language. A refined sense of the many diverse ways in which rigid designation helps to further what I herein characterize as a Russelian agenda developed subsequently and gradually—due in no small part to the circumstance that Russell’s take on ordinary proper names is a crucial target of the developers of the notion of rigid designation. However, as this book aims to make clear, once we set aside Russell’s take on ordinary names, there is something characteristically Russelian about these Kripke-Kaplan modal-savvy developments in the theory of reference, and the concept of structure lies at the base of it all.

I first read Neale’s (1993) “Term Limits” sometime in the mid-1990s, and his bifurcation of natural language NPs into unstructured referring expressions and structured quantifiers has influenced my thinking about general issues in the theory of reference ever since. That paper first drew my attention to the central theses about reference and structure which are defended in this book.

Another quantum leap in the development of this project was a discussion over lunch in Barcelona in September 2002. As I recall, Dan Lopez de Sa described his recent adventures in commenting on a talk by Scott Soames on rigidity, and my instinctive response was to try to convince Dan (along with the other participants, Adèle, Genoveva Marti, and Josep Macia) of more or less the view defended in Chapter 3. The eventual working out of the view I tried to defend that day appeared as “Rigid Designation, Direct Reference, and Modal Metaphysics” in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* in 2005, and “Rigid Designation and Semantic Structure” in *Philosophers’ Imprint* in 2007.

Given the centrality of rigid designation to various issues in the philosophy of language, by that point many of the dominos were already set up. For example, those considerations about the importance of structure to rigidity implicitly contain the views on proper names defended in Chapter
Preface

4, and Chapter 5 details the ways in which they also further support the orthodox view on referential uses of definite descriptions to which I had always inclined.

Complex demonstratives gave me more trouble. I worried about them for years, ever since reading Neale (1993), as they seemed to fit into neither of the two exclusive and exhaustive categories of designator in which I had gradually come to believe. Finally, spurred by Eros Corazza’s work (and Richard Vallée’s counsel), by the summer of 2006 I arrived at more or less the view described in Chapter 6.

Around that point, it became clear to me that many of the diverse papers that I had been writing, within philosophical logic and the theory of reference—on rigid designation, proper names, complex demonstratives, and so on—could be understood as a defense of something very much like Neale’s (1993) bifurcation of unstructured referring expressions vs. structured quantifiers. So I go to it, and something approaching a first draft of this book was written by the end of 2007. Because of some of the usual pitfalls and potholes, it then spent many months gathering dust in a neglected corner of my office. A sabbatical position at the Russell Archives and Department of Philosophy, McMaster University, for 2010–11 afforded an opportunity to get back to this project. I organized a graduate course around the manuscript, which resulted in many extensive developments and improvements. Thanks especially to Nick Griffin for his role in that course and in helping to fill in some gaps.

First and foremost, thanks to Adèle Mercier, for everything. Thanks also to Kent Bach, Ben Caplan, Eros Corazza, Nick Griffin, Henry Laycock, Brian Loar, Dan Lopez de Sa, Genoveva Marti, Stephen Schiffer, Rob Stainton, and Richard Vallée, for essential help along the way. I am grateful to Josh Dever for his permission to use an excerpt of his work in Chapter 7.

Some of this material was improved by presentations (in 2003 and 2007) at the incomparable Barcelona Workshops in the Theory of Reference. A Workshop in the Philosophy of Language, organized by Richard Vallée at the Université de Quebec à Montréal in 2006, proved to be a big help, as it came at a critical time in the development of this project. Presentations at the Institut Jean Nicod in 2007, at the Institute for Logic, Language, and Information, University of the Basque Country in 2009, and at the Philosophy of Language and Linguistics conference at the University of Lodz, Poland, in 2011, have all significantly impacted this research. Finally, much of this material has been presented at annual meetings of the Canadian Philosophical Association, dating back over a decade. I am grateful to various participants in all of these presentations for their challenges and input.

Thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for supporting various periods and aspects of this research. A Doctoral Fellowship in 1996 allowed me to spend two semesters as a Visiting Scholar at Rutgers University under the supervision of Brian Loar.
(Brian’s natural combination of patience and generosity of spirit with an uncompromising demand for rigor will always stand for me as the model of philosophical mentorship.) A 2002–4 SSHRCC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (undertaken at New York University, under the supervision of Stephen Schiffer) was also invaluable. Subsequent SSHRCC Standard Research Grants have supported the travel necessary to keep connected to pertinent contemporary research, as well as the hiring of students to work on this project. In particular, these grants have funded an ongoing Mind & Language Research Group at Memorial University, various participants of which have helped to hone various parts of this book. Thanks especially to research assistants Steve Gardner, Dave Reynolds, and Rob Seabright, each of whom read the entire manuscript and helped with the bibliography and index.

Finally, thanks Routledge Philosophy editor Felisa Salvago-Keyes, and other members of the fine staff at Routledge, for seeing this project through.
Introduction

It is plausible to think that the notion of structure is tightly connected to the distinction between referring and denoting. For example, paradigm cases of referring expressions lack any internal semantic structure (e.g., ‘I’, ‘this’, ‘Jones’, ‘gold’), and so are in this sense semantically atomic. In contrast, all denoting expressions seem to involve molecular compositional complexity, as is attested by the following representative list from Russell (1905: 479):

. . . a man, some man, any man, every man, all men, the present King of England, the present King of France, the center of mass in the solar system at the first instant of the twentieth century, the revolution of the sun round the earth.

However, not much effort has been spent explicitly mining the exact nature of this connection between reference and structure. The aim of this book is to do exactly that. Its primary exegetical goal is to investigate the precise contours of the connections between reference and structure, and its attendant argumentative goal is to show that the notion of structure, properly excavated, underlies and grounds various important points in the theory of reference.

To be sure, this present line of research into the connections between reference and structure is not entirely without precedent. To my knowledge, the work of Stephen Neale provides the clearest instance. Neale (1993: 89–90) specifies three theses toward which much recent work in both theoretical linguistics and philosophical logic is tending and which delimit what he calls “an especially interesting and fruitful picture of the semantics and logic of natural language.” One of them, which he calls [T1], is this:

Every meaningful noun phrase (NP) in natural language is either a semantically unstructured, rigid referring expression (singular term) or else is a semantically structured restricted quantifier.

Neale has returned to [T1] in passing several times—cf., e.g., (1994: 790–4, 820–3) and (1999: 61–3)—and has recently given it extensive discussion
To some extent, one could view the main argumentative burden of this present work as a defense of a version of Neale’s [T1]. However, given how much digging and sculpting have to be done to yield a worthwhile degree of philosophical precision, it is possible that the central theses defended herein will differ significantly from any view Neale has ever held.1

Neale (1993: 104; 2008: 398) credits Russell (1918) and Wittgenstein (1921) for having identified the underlying connection between reference and structure. An honorary mention would have to go to Frege (1879) for his groundbreaking discovery of the semantics of quantification. For, as has become clear, it is only when contrasted with quantificational NPs that the distinguishing marks of referring expressions become most clearly evident. Still, though, the present work is aptly subtitled “a defense of the Russelian orthodoxy” in that its foundational guiding conception is Russell’s distinctive idea that an adequate philosophical logic must recognize that there are two very different sorts of designator—i.e., referring expressions and denoting expressions. Suitably honed, this marks one of the greatest leaps forward in the ancient philosophical task of drawing a principled distinction between object-dependent and object-independent information. (While Frege does distinguish singular from general truth-conditions, it is Russell who first distinguishes between object-dependent and object-independent truth-conditions. That is, a key advance of Russell’s over Frege is the recognition that a proposition might be about exactly one individual and yet still be object-independent.) The central focus of this work is to attain a refined understanding of the deep connections between the notion of semantic structure and this distinctive Russelian notion of object-dependent truth-conditions, building on and further developing the work of many others.2

As mentioned above, Neale’s [T1] is a case of mutual illumination between work in theoretical syntax, the formal semantics of natural language, and philosophical logic. Some very different lines of thought, drawn from diverse corners of the sprawling interdisciplinary corpus of theoretical work on language, can be seen as converging toward this conception of the connection between reference and structure. (In addition to Neale (1993: §8; 2008: 380, 391), on this point see especially Dever (2001: 272–4).) However, this present work is exclusively an essay in philosophical logic. I am not unappreciative of the beauty and the power of, for example, Neale’s (1993: 105; 1994: 822) attendant thesis that “a phrase can occupy an argument position at LF only if its semantical value is wholly determined by a single axiom, i.e. only if it is semantically atomic.” Still, I neither advance nor evaluate any theses in theoretical syntax in the present work. Rather, my primary interests are more along the following lines: [i] to convince most philosophers of language that they implicitly avow the central theses about the relation between reference and structure detailed herein, and that they have good grounds for doing so, and [ii] to argue against those who dissent. A complete defense of this connection between reference and
structure is an ambitious, sprawling, cross-disciplinary job; my goal is to
take care of one important sub-component of it.

However, given that my chosen sub-component is philosophical logic,
there is a generality and pervasiveness about the following arguments.
This present research is intended to complement and extend the rich and
detailed, but differently focused, work by Neale and others in showing that
the notion of structure, properly honed, is a key concept in the theory of
reference. The principle goal of the following, then, is to develop and defend
a certain specific connection between reference and structure, whose most
thorough and insightful excavators include Russell, Kripke, Kaplan, and
Neale. I aim to demonstrate that Russell’s seminal distinction still provides
the foundation for a simple and comprehensive theory of reference, which
not only accords with but further grounds various important points about
language and thought.

§

The main aim of Part I is to define more precisely what I mean by “the
Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference.” Part II develops positive
arguments in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy, and Part III is addressed
to the strongest *prima facie* counterexamples. Part IV is concerned with
drawing out some general conclusions.

As is the case with Neale (1993, 2008), the arguments concerning refer-
ence and structure which make up the main thrust of this work are somewhat
indirect. The cogency of the Russellian orthodoxy will not be conclusively
demonstrated, or deductively entailed, by any of the considerations logged
herein. The goal is rather an instance of Rawlsian reflective equilibrium
between high-level theoretical principles in philosophical logic (such as, in
particular, my central theses about the connections between reference and
structure) and specific accounts of the semantics of several controversial
sorts of expression (including especially proper names, demonstrative and
indexical pronouns, definite descriptions, and complex demonstratives).
That is, the intrinsic merits of the accounts of the target semantic phe-
omena detailed herein lends further credence to the general theoretical
principles with which they cohere; and, at the same time, motivation for the
general theoretical principles creates a preference for accounts of various
semantic phenomena that accords with those general principles. Hence, my
preferred accounts of rigidity, naming, demonstratives, and referential uses
of denoting expressions are not just consistent with the Russellian ortho-
doxy; further, they go a long way toward explaining why one would want
to espouse such general overarching theses in the theory of reference and
toward developing a philosophical justification for this kind of theoretical
stance in philosophical logic.

In Part II, I will explore in detail the tight constitutive connections
between structure and reference on the one hand, and, on the other hand,
rigidity (in Chapter 3) and naming (in Chapter 4). Rigid designation and proper names play a dual role here: First, they are themselves centrally important concepts for the theory of reference, which would have to be accorded a central place in any work on the topic. Second, they have also served as a catalyst in motivating the Russellian orthodoxy—both in my own work and in the works on which I am building. That is, in the course of working through the details of a proper general definition of rigidity, the importance of structure inexorably becomes paramount. Down a confluent avenue, once it becomes evident that the relevant notion of structure should also be seen to underlie the concept of reference by name, this has the effect of illuminating several contested issues concerning proper names.

In short, the goal of Part II is to demonstrate that structure holds the key to both a satisfactory general definition of rigidity and a comprehensive account of reference by name. Given the evident centrality of rigidity and naming to the core issues in the theory of reference, this will constitute some rather strong grounds in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy. As for the originality of this part of the project: no one to date has gone so far toward excavating the ways in which the concept of structure is central to such core notions for the theory of reference. Hence, this present work will push the frontiers of some relevant debates by explicitly unpacking and then defending principles which are implicitly at work in some of the most influential recent work in philosophical logic.

The aim of Part III is to address the *prima facie* counterexamples to the Russellian orthodox exclusive and exhaustive bifurcation of the set of NPs in natural language. In keeping with relevant trends in the literature, I take the strongest challenge to be posed by putative structured referring expressions. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the case of referential uses of denoting expressions, and Chapter 6 considers the case of complex referring expressions (including especially complex demonstratives). Here I aim to show that, once we have properly digested Russell’s distinction between object-dependent and object-independent truth-conditions (as well as certain contributions of Kripke, Kaplan, and others towards a refined understanding of this distinction), none of the *prima facie* counterexamples should, at the end of the day, be understood in a way which is inconsistent with the central theses.

This will essentially involve addressing certain issues at the semantics-pragmatics interface, a job which will begin in Part I and will continue intermittently throughout the work. To cite one prominent example, Part III makes extensive use of the notion of an unstructured use of a complex designator, a notion that proves enormously useful in attaining a satisfactory theoretical description of some of the mass of considerations that have served to pull theorists in different directions on certain pertinent issues. For a second example, Chapter 5 develops the notion of a pragmatic regularity, which is an essential but largely neglected pillar of the Russellian orthodox take on referential uses of denoting expressions.
A related original contribution developed in this present work is the demonstration that the semantic relation of reference may be alternatively defined in two equivalent ways: (i) as a certain kind of stipulative semantic connection between a designator and its designatum, or (ii) as the relation between designator and designatum which is necessary for the semantic expression of object-independent truth-conditions. Again, this demonstration will involve careful attention to some subtle refinements at the semantics-pragmatics interface (in particular, to the relevantly different ways in which complex designators may be used), as well as to the difference between the (false) claim that what Kaplan (1977) calls “characters” determine reference (even in context) and the weaker (true) claim that characters merely constrain reference.

[§]

To sum up, then: I aim to establish more clearly than anyone has to date the intrinsic connections between structure and reference (i.e., between the lacking or inertness of meaningful proper parts, the conventional and stipulative relation that holds between certain expressions and their designata, and the expression of object-dependent information). I will also show how having done so brings into focus some informative and explanatory connections underlying otherwise disparate debates about various sorts of natural language expression. The overall result is a simple, comprehensive lens which can help to clarify a wide range of semantic phenomena.
Part I

Framing the Project
1 Two Distinctions Within the Category of Designators

1.1 PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF REFERENCE AND STRUCTURE

Humans gather, manipulate, and share information; these phenomena constitute much of our conscious lives and underlie most of our higher cognitive capacities. Philosophy of language is a part of the piecemeal interdisciplinary project of coming up with a comprehensive theoretical description of these phenomena.

One central sub-task within the philosophy of language concerns the individuation of information—e.g., what criteria determine whether two strings of symbols semantically express different information (as do ‘John loves Mary’ and ‘Mary loves John’) or express the same information differently (as do ‘John loves Mary’ and ‘Mary is loved by John’)? A related canonical sub-task within that larger project, which occupies a considerable amount of the attention and energy of twentieth-century philosophy of language, concerns drawing a principled distinction between singular (or object-dependent) vs. general (or object-independent) information. This research project aims to clear further ground toward the proper understanding of this ancient and deeply significant categorical division between types of information.

Alternatively, this particular task concerns identifying a centrally important, substantive fault line within the category of designators in Kripke’s (1972) loose and intuitive sense of the term. More specifically, this essay is focused on two ways of dividing up the category of designators: first, structured vs. unstructured expressions, and second, referring vs. denoting expressions. I will argue that there are many deep and illuminating connections between these two distinctions, so that the notion of semantic structure, properly excavated, underlies and grounds various important points in the theory of reference. I begin by drawing these two distinctions in a preliminary way; the contours of both distinctions will be mapped more precisely as this work proceeds.

The structured/unstructured distinction is relatively straightforward. An expression is structured only if it has independently meaningful proper parts. So, sentences are typically structured, but individual terms can either...
be structured (e.g., compound words like ‘snowball’) or unstructured (e.g., atomic words like ‘ball’). ‘Scott’ vs. ‘the author of Waverley’ and ‘nine’ vs. ‘the number of baseball positions’ are two paradigmatic pairs of co-designative terms—the first of which is unstructured, the second of which is structured. Only structured expressions involve molecular compositional complexity; unstructured expressions are, in contrast, atomic and primitive. (They are ‘primitive’ in that it seems reasonable to hold that, typically, structured expressions ultimately factor out into unstructured bits. There may be a limited set of oddball idiomatic exceptions.)

The referring/denoting distinction is more complex and involved, as it is inextricably tied up with (among other things) Russellian exegesis and controversial theses in the philosophy of language. The most important episode in the pre-history of Russell’s (1905) distinction between referring and denoting is Frege’s (1879: Ch.1, §9) argument that the following subject-expressions illustrate different semantic mechanisms:

[1] 20 can be represented as the sum of four squares.

[2] Every positive integer can be represented as the sum of four squares.

Designators like ‘20’ are semantically suited for singling out a specific individual and expressing a proposition about it; in contrast, designators like ‘every positive integer’ are semantically suited for expressing general (i.e., quantificational) relations among concepts. As Frege’s primary interest here is in logic, his seminal theory of quantification is largely motivated by the different inferential patterns associated with these two types of designators.5

One of the key differences between Frege’s and Russell’s view of these matters concerns exactly how to draw the singular/general divide—i.e., notoriously, whereas Frege (1892a) treats definite descriptions (e.g., ‘the heaviest animal in the Toronto zoo’) as akin to ‘20’, Russell (1905) argues that they belong on the ‘every positive integer’ side of Frege’s divide. In Russell’s view, whether a proposition should be counted as singular or general is not simply a question of whether its truth-condition concerns exactly one individual; rather, it is a question of what kind of semantic mechanism is at work—i.e., referring or denoting. Down this avenue, Frege’s distinction between singular and general truth-conditions develops into Russell’s more fundamental semantic distinction between these two different types of designations.

While referring is a conventional or stipulative relation between certain kinds of designator and what they are used to designate (paradigm cases include ‘I’, ‘this’, ‘20’, ‘Jones’, and ‘gold’), denoting is a distinct sort of connection that holds between certain kinds of designators (such as ‘the person who denounced Catiline’ or ‘a squirrel I saw yesterday’) and which satisfies the condition semantically expressed.7 Utterances of sentences whose subject-expressions are referring expressions semantically express object-dependent propositions (e.g., ‘I am cold’ or ‘20 is even’). Utterances of sentences whose subject-expressions are denoting expressions semantically
express object-independent propositions (e.g., ‘A squirrel I saw yesterday was albino’ or ‘Some cats are fond of dogs’). Even if these latter cases are about exactly one individual, in the attenuated sense of aboutness that Russell calls ‘denoting’, still only a compositionally determined condition is essential to their content (i.e., the content of the proposition stays constant across situations in which distinct individuals, or no individuals, satisfy the relevant compositionally determined condition).9

Initially, it might be thought that I have given two definitions of the term ‘reference’ in the preceding paragraph—i.e., one that takes the criterion of reference to be a conventional, stipulative semantic relation, and a second that ties reference to the notion of object-dependent information. For example, certain indexicals—e.g., ‘she’—might seem to count as referring expressions in only the second sense. By Part IV, I will be in a position to demonstrate that these two definitions are equivalent. In the interim, several refinements are required.

I will employ terms from Bach (1987) and call the semantic mechanism involved in referring ‘relational’ and the semantic mechanism involved in denoting ‘satisfactional’. In the case of a use of a referring expression, its designatum is that which stands in a certain relation to the utterance—i.e., perhaps a causal-historical relation is appropriate, for the case of a proper name or natural kind term; a more character-driven relation, for the case of demonstratives or indexicals; and so on. In contrast, the designatum of a denoting expression is whatever, in the relevant context of evaluation, happens to satisfy the compositionally determined condition that it semantically expresses.10

To sum up this preliminary discussion of the distinction between referring expressions and denoting expressions, consider the difference between my saying the following:

[3] I am wearing glasses.
[4] The tallest person in this room is wearing glasses.

The designators in [3] and [4] happen to designate the same individual, but they instance distinct semantic mechanisms. ‘I’ (as used by me) refers to me, whereas ‘the tallest person in this room’ (in this context) denotes me (i.e., it semantically expresses a compositional condition which I happen to satisfy in this context, but might not satisfy in other contexts). Which individual is relevant to the truth-conditions expressed by [3] stays constant across possible contexts of evaluation, whereas which individual is relevant to the truth-conditions expressed by [4] varies according to circumstances. Crucially, if a seven-foot-tall woman were to have entered this room, in uttering [4] I would designate her while semantically expressing exactly the same proposition.11 Hence, as the following table illustrates, the distinction between referring and denoting lines up with the distinction between object-dependent and object-independent propositions:
12 Reference and Structure in the Philosophy of Language

Table 1.1 Types of Designator (preliminary version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of designator</th>
<th>Referring expression</th>
<th>Denoting expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semantic mechanism</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Satisfactional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition semantically expressed</td>
<td>Object-dependent</td>
<td>Object-independent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The central aim of this research is to excavate the many deep connections between these two distinctions (i.e., unstructured vs. structured designators, and referring vs. denoting designators), and to show that a proper understanding of these connections helps to illuminate various important points within, and beyond, the theory of reference.

1.2 THE CENTRAL THESES

We have on the table two ways of dividing up the category of designators—the first (i.e., structured vs. unstructured) has to do with the absence or presence of molecular complexity; the second (i.e., referring vs. denoting) has to do with the way in which the designatum is semantically singled out. There is some reason to think that both distinctions are both exclusive and exhaustive—i.e., every designator is either but not both structured or unstructured, and either but not both referring or denoting. It is therefore natural that questions arise as to how these two distinctions relate.

It seems initially evident that there is some fairly close connection between the notion of semantic structure and the distinction between referring and denoting. Clearly, there is something relatively atomic about, say, Russell’s (1905, 1911, 1918) paradigm cases of referring expressions, or the expressions upon which Donnellan (1970), Kripke (1972), Putnam (1975), and Kaplan (1977) build the causal-historical theory of reference. These paradigmatic referring expressions—e.g., ‘I’, ‘this’, ‘Jones’, ‘gold’—lack independently meaningful proper parts. In contrast, all denoting expressions involve molecular compositional complexity, as is attested by the following representative list of denoting expressions from Russell’s (1905: 479) seminal work:

By ‘a denoting phrase’ I mean a phrase such as any one of the following: a man, some man, any man, every man, all men, the present King of England, the present King of France, the center of mass in the solar system at the first instant of the twentieth century, the revolution of the sun round the earth. Thus a phrase is denoting solely in virtue of its form.

So, at first glance, it seems that referring expressions are typically unstructured, while denoting expressions are typically structured.

A question that arises, then, is: Are the following theses tenable?
[R iff U] All and only referring expressions are unstructured designators.
[D iff S] All and only denoting expressions are structured designators.

(I will sometimes refer to these as ‘the central theses’, and to views which espouse them as comprising ‘the Russelian orthodoxy in the theory of reference’.) Prima facie, both seem to be open to counterexample. First, there seem to be structured referring expressions, such as complex demonstratives (e.g., ‘that big green-headed duck’) and referentially used descriptions (e.g., ‘the world heavyweight champ’). One might also think that ordinary proper names pose a similar complication, as names are the very paradigm of a referring expression, and yet people tend to be called by complex, molecular expressions like ‘Willard van Orman Quine’ or ‘Louis XIV’. If these appearances hold up to scrutiny, then such structured referring expressions are counterexamples to the [if R then U] and the [if S then D] clauses of the above theses.13

In the other direction, even if unstructured denoting expressions might be harder to find (as it seems that a denoting expression requires a determiner plus a nominal expression), the notion is not entirely without precedent. For example, Russell (1911, 1918) viewed ordinary proper names as disguised or truncated descriptions—e.g., ‘Bismarck’ is just shorthand for, say, ‘the first Chancellor of the German empire’—and so, in a sense, as unstructured denoting expressions.14 Relatedly, perhaps there are grounds for thinking that the relation between utterances of at least some indexical expressions (e.g., ‘I’ or ‘tomorrow’) and their designata is more akin to denoting than referring, as these expressions semantically express a condition that plays a role in singling out a designatum. For another example, Kaplan’s (1975) ‘dthat’ or Kripke’s (1972) descriptive names might be thought to provide a template for artificially creating an unstructured denoting expression. (I am not claiming that Kaplan or Kripke attempt to create such an expression; rather, the idea is that perhaps we are free to vary their stories at certain junctures, toward the end of introducing into the language unstructured designators which function as denoting expressions.15) If some such possibility is coherent, then the [if U then R] and [if D then S] clauses of the above theses are also subject to counterexample.

So, to be sure, the central theses are not obvious or trivial. On the other hand, though, these theses are also not completely lacking for either inherent plausibility or general theoretical appeal. Consider, for example, the following passage from Russell (1911: 218):

Scott is merely a noise or shape conventionally used to designate a certain person; it gives us no information about that person, and has nothing that can be called meaning as opposed to denotation. . . . But the author of Waverley is not merely conventionally a name for Scott; the element of mere convention belongs here to the separate words the and author and of and Waverley. Given what these words stand for, the author of Waverley
is no longer arbitrary. . . . A man’s name is what he is called, but however much Scott had been called the author of Waverley, that would not have made him be the author; it was necessary for him actually to write Waverley, which was a fact having nothing to do with names.

Russell seems to see a close intrinsic fit between these two distinctions, so that the category of designators bifurcates into the sub-categories structured-denoting and unstructured-referring. It is not that Russell takes unstructured/structured and referring/denoting to be exactly the same distinctions, intentionally speaking; it is rather that what makes something a denoting expression thereby guarantees that it is a structured expression, and so an unstructured designator would simply have no choice but to refer.16 Or consider, for another example, Kaplan (1968: 194):

To wonder what number is named by the German die Zahl der Planeten may betray astronomical ignorance, but to wonder what number is named by the German Neun can only indicate linguistic incompetence.

Again, because only structured designators involve molecular compositional complexity, only in their case is there a compositionally determined condition semantically expressed—a condition which one then compares against the empirical facts (in the relevant context) to determine what the designator designates. In contrast, in the case of an unstructured expression, there is certainly nothing compositional at work, and it is notoriously contentious whether an unstructured designator must semantically express any specific condition at all. (Consider, for example, the very intelligibility of the Millian view that proper names are connotationless tags.)

All this is, of course, still a far cry short of the central theses—in particular, in these passages both Russell and Kaplan are (at least implicitly) endorsing something along the lines of [if U then R] and [if D then S], without committing to their converses. However, the further steps are also not unprecedented. For example, in the following passage, Neale (1993: 104) explicitly endorses the stronger claims [if R then U] and [if S then D]:

Following Russell and Wittgenstein (as I read them), I see an important connection between reference and structure: only a semantically unstructured expression can be viewed as a device of reference. . . . As I understand the *semantical* notion of reference—in contrast to the important but quite different notion of *speaker’s* reference—it is an arbitrary relation that holds between a symbol and an individual, and as soon as one invokes a constructive or compositional procedure for determining the semantical value of an expression, one is no longer engaged in trying to establish reference. If an NP has any internal semantic structure it is to be accorded a nonreferential treatment (though of course some of its parts may be referential).17
In this work, I will develop a similar conception of the relation between reference and structure. More specifically, I aim to defend the central theses, and to build the case in favor of the Russelian orthodoxy. Alternatively, I will argue that the following table marks an exclusive and exhaustive fissure in the set of designators in natural language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of designator</th>
<th>Referring expression</th>
<th>Denoting expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semantic structure</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic mechanism</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Satisfctional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposition semantically expressed</td>
<td>Object-dependent</td>
<td>Object-independent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, one of the major tasks of the present work is to defuse the above sorts of prima facie counterexamples to [R iff U] and [D iff S]. That is the aim of Part III. Another, more fundamental task is to motivate these theses: Why argue in favor of this connection between reference and structure? That is the aim of Part II—where I assemble grounds in favor of the claim that, all things considered, a designator’s lack of semantic structure is necessary and sufficient for its being properly characterized as a referring expression—and of Part IV—where I explain how the notion of semantic structure provides the basis of a simple, comprehensive theory which not only accords with but grounds various important points about language and thought.

One final note: provided that the referring/denoting distinction is both exclusive and exhaustive of the category of designators, then the two central theses (i.e., [R iff U] and [D iff S]) are equivalent, and it is redundant to separate them as I have. However, since there are some prima facie counterexamples to both the exclusiveness and the exhaustiveness claims, I will not assume this from the outset. By Part IV, I will be in a position to argue for the exclusiveness and exhaustiveness of the referring/denoting distinction.
2 Further Defining the Central Theses

The main aim of this chapter is to introduce two distinctions that are absolutely crucial for a proper understanding of the relations between reference and structure. The first, discussed in §2.2, is the distinction between speaker’s reference and semantic reference, and the second, discussed in §2.3, is the distinction between structured and unstructured uses of complex or molecular designators. Again, these distinctions will receive a preliminary treatment here in order to get the discussion rolling, and they will be revisited and amplified at several points in the ensuing chapters. Before getting to that, §2.1 discusses some general guiding assumptions. Finally, §2.4 summarizes Part I.

2.1 SOME OTHER IMPORTANT PRELIMINARIES

2.1 (i) Context-Independent Semantic Properties

I begin with a skeptical worry about this entire research project: Doesn’t it presuppose an outdated, untenable conception of the semantics-pragmatics distinction?

Among the variety of debates raging in the disputed territories at the semantics-pragmatics border,1 Bach (2005: 15-6) describes one central dispute as follows:

> Indeed, it is now a platitude that literal meaning generally underdetermines speaker meaning. That is, generally, what a speaker means in uttering a sentence, even if the sentence is devoid of ambiguity, vagueness, or indexicality, goes beyond what the sentence means. The question is what to make of this Contextualist Platitude . . .

On this question, the extreme opposing factions are radical contextualists (who think that the very idea of literal meaning is thereby shown up as inert and sterile) and conservative literalists (who think that the traditional semantics-pragmatics distinction requires only minor refinement in response
Further Defining the Central Theses

17

to this platitude); several positions have been carved out in between these extremes. The present challenge is this: Since this general project primarily concerns theses about context-independent semantic properties, only an extreme conservative literalist would find it significant or interesting. However, most contemporary theorists reject extreme conservative literalism, and so these general questions about reference and structure are no longer very interesting or worthwhile.

To the contrary, though, not even radical contextualists deny that linguistic expressions have context-independent semantic properties; rather, what they insist is that no more substantive content can be given to literal meanings than “semantic potentials” (cf., e.g., Recanti (2004a: 97, 152)). Now, to be sure, this is a bold departure from many traditional conceptions of the semantic enterprise, since a semantic potential “only determines a concept against a rich pragmatic context” (ibid: 97). However, even on this view, a recognizably traditional terrain for semantic theorizing is marked off. Down this avenue, the moral of the contextualist challenge is that linguistic meanings are much more flexible than traditionally conceived, that meanings are malleable—relative to, and as mandated by, the context of utterance. The crucial present point is that these considerations hardly support categorical skepticism about the very idea of context-independent semantic properties. Further, for lots of reasons, we still need this recognizably traditional concept of context-independent semantic properties (e.g., to make sense of the very idea of non-literal usage or pragmatic implication, not to mention more fundamental considerations about learnability or systematicity).

So, my focal questions about reference and structure primarily concern context-independent semantic properties, but it does not follow that their interest is contingent on any particular position—*a fortiori* on an obsolete position—at the semantics-pragmatics border.

2.1(ii) Some Orienting Remarks About ‘Reference’

The next preliminary is to point out that it is not the aim of the present work to provide a (reductive) philosophical analysis of the concept of ‘reference’. There are some deep, perennial questions as to the ultimate nature of this conventional, stipulative semantic relation: i.e., What, in general, is the nature of the relation between an utterance of a referring expression and its intended referent? A broad range of views on this foundational question have been defended—from the idea that reference is essentially a causal relation (cf. Stampe (1977), Fodor (1987)) or essentially a teleological relation (cf. Millikan (1984), Papineau (1993)), to the idea that reference cannot be reduced to, or explained in terms of, any other notions (cf. Davidson (1984), McDowell (1994), Horwich (1998)). Some influential thinkers are skeptical of the very idea of a theory of reference (cf. Quine (1960), Chomsky (1993)).
As it happens, though, these questions about the proper place of reference in nature or about the scientific credentials of the concept of ‘reference’, are orthogonal to the questions about reference and structure in which I am interested. For one thing, philosophical inquiry would grind to a halt if it were a necessary precondition for responsibly developing arguments about some certain concept or issue that all pertinent metaphysical and methodological questions had to be conclusively settled first. More to the present point, though, the issues addressed in the present essay arise in common for philosophers who disagree deeply about the ultimate nature of reference. The issues addressed in this work are common to anyone who recognizes a distinction between object-dependent and object-independent information. So, here at the outset, I will presuppose about referring only (i) that it is a distinct semantic relation from denoting,\(^4\) and (ii) that it is integrally linked to the expression of object-dependent information in some way that I hope to make clearer.

As a final note, even though Kaplan’s work is one of the seminal influences of this present work, I will not make use of his term ‘direct reference’. While that term definitely has an important purpose in historical context, a few decades later—and in no small measure because of Kaplan’s important work—it is now clear that:

\[
\ldots\text{given the distinction between denotation and reference, the ‘directly’ in Kaplan’s ‘directly referential’ is redundant, and ‘indirectly referential’ is an oxymoron. (Bach, 2004: 194)}\
\]

As will be explained in due course, what used to be thought of as ‘indirect reference’ should be classified as a species of denoting, and not referring at all. (This point is first given detailed elaboration in Chapter 3, §3(ii), and then is further developed at pertinent subsequent junctures.)

Kaplan’s term ‘direct reference’ also has significant connotations when it comes to the theory of content, as it was historically bound up with his rejuvenation of the apparatus of Russellian singular propositions as a stark way to illustrate the non-descriptive nature of object-dependent propositions. However (as mentioned above in Chapter 1, note 8), the Russellian orthodoxy, which I defend herein, does not essentially include any such claims about the content or structure of object-dependent propositions. In other words, my neo-Russellianism in the theory of reference need not include or entail a Kaplan-style neo-Russellian theory of content.

So, insofar as we understand ‘direct reference’ as designating a view within the theory of reference, then what follows is greatly influenced by Kaplan’s views; but I hold that, strictly speaking, ‘direct reference’ is a redundant and hence possibly misleading term. Insofar as we understand ‘direct reference’ as designating a position in the theory of content (i.e., the referents of certain designators are themselves propositional constituents), then arguments for or against it lie beyond the scope of this present project.
2.1(iii) The Metaphysical Indifference of Semantics

Another important preliminary topic concerns some general remarks about the division of labor between semantics and metaphysics. It is in my view a prevalent and pernicious error to demand of a semantic theory that it must be held accountable for metaphysical issues. I will say a little here to describe and justify this guiding conception of the metaphysical indifference of semantics; it will be elaborated at pertinent points later on.⁵

Consider, for example, the fact that you have before you a philosophical work on the theory of reference that has no chapter or section explicitly dedicated to empty names or negative existential generalizations. Many would take those to be among the most central and significant concerns within philosophical logic. For this reason, it should prove illuminating to address in a preliminary way how empty names relate to my central theses about reference and structure.

Assume for the sake of argument that ‘Vulcan’ was intended by some to name an inter-Mercurial planet, but that no such planet ever actually existed. ‘Vulcan’ is then an empty name; there was for some time a putative but irredeemably flawed naming practice involving the term in a community. To count as competent with that putative naming practice—to understand the relevant utterances—one had to know at least that it was intended to be used as a proper name. (One would also need to know the relevant quotient of the sortal commitments associated with the term, where the precisification of ‘the relevant quotient’ depends on where one stands on the individualist-externalist spectrum on the question of criteria for competence with proper names.)

Now, what is irredeemably flawed about this putative naming practice is that the world happens to be uncooperative in one crucial respect. No actual individual satisfies the referential intentions that are constitutive of this putative naming practice. If metaphysicians should care to find a place in their theory for (the putative referent of) Vulcan, it should obviously be in a different ontological category than the actual planets. Nonetheless, as I understand the object-dependent/object-independent divide, the following is a bona fide instance of the contrast:

[1] Vulcan has a mass of 80,000 tons.
[2] An inter-Mercurial planet has a mass of 80,000 tons.

An important semantic question here is whether the information is intended by the relevant parties to be about a specific individual, irrespective of whether the putative object in fact exists. (This is one of the morals we should take away from Russell’s (1905–1918) lonely trajectory toward the claim that only ‘this’, used to refer to current sense data, counts as a referring expression. More on this in Chapter 4.) Thus, I am using the expression ‘object-dependent’ in a semantic sense, not a metaphysical one.
Whether or not the speaker’s referential intentions are object-dependent is a crucial determinant as to whether the proposition expressed should be understood as object-dependent. Hence, some object-dependent propositions may turn out to be about no actual object.6

The semantic enterprise in which I am engaged has primarily to do with such things as characterizing the content of speaker’s communicative intentions and with understanding the ways in which propositions expressed are a function of such intentions, the expressions used, and the context of utterance. Thus conceived, I imagine the utterances of [1]—by speakers sincerely intending to communicate object-dependent information about an individual which, as it happens, does not exist—belong in the same semantic category as [3]:

[1] Vulcan has a mass of 80,000 tons.
[3] Venus has a mass of 80,000 tons.

A metaphysician might have grounds for assimilating [1] along something like the following lines:


However, from the semantic perspective (i.e., What are speakers intending to express? What counts as understanding them?), there are deep differences between [1] and anything like [4] or [5]. So given the metaphysical indifference of semantics, empty names are not a semantic kind. The difference between [1] and [3] is a matter of brute extra-semantic metaphysics.7

Again, this conception of the division of labor between semantics and metaphysics is centrally relevant to several discussions below. My present aim is just to briefly characterize my guiding conception of the terrain. Some of these points will be further clarified in passing.

2.2 SPEAKER’S REFERENCE AND SEMANTIC REFERENCE

In Chapter 1, §1, I take it as axiomatic that if the subject-expression of a sentence is a referring expression, then the proposition semantically expressed by a literal use of the sentence is object-dependent. The guiding idea here is that the fundamental job of referring expressions is to facilitate the assimilation and communication of object-dependent information; referring expressions exist expressly for the purpose of tracking (the states and doings of) specific individuals.8 This integral link to object-dependent information is one of the reasons why reference is so fundamental to various sub-areas of philosophy.

The question of whether this axiom should be a bi-conditional—i.e., Is reference not just sufficient but also necessary for the expression of an
object-dependent proposition?—leads us right in to the first of the two crucial distinctions of this present chapter. One precondition for a clear view of the relation between reference and structure is a refined understanding of the relation between what Kripke (1977) calls ‘speaker’s reference’ and ‘semantic reference’. Kripke (1977: 262ff) takes this to be a special case of Grice’s distinction between “what the speaker’s words meant” and “what [the speaker] meant, in saying those words, on that occasion.” To illustrate: there are many things a speaker could use a sentence (say, ‘The cops are around the corner’) to speaker-mean (say, ‘Let’s split’, or ‘We’re about to be rescued’, or ‘We’d better hide this stuff’, or ‘Yell HELP’, or ‘Be quiet’, and so on). Nonetheless, the sentence ‘The cops are around the corner’ expresses one unambiguous semantic meaning; all competent speakers of English grasp it when they encounter this sentence, and the generation-in-context of any indirect, complex speaker-meanings depends on this semantic meaning.

Kripke (1977: 263) motivates the special case of speaker’s reference vs. semantic reference in the following passage:

Two people see Smith in the distance and mistake him for Jones. They have a brief colloquy: “What is Jones doing?” “Raking the leaves.” “Jones,” in the common language of both, is a name of Jones; it never names Smith. Yet, in some sense, on this occasion, clearly both participants in the dialogue have referred to Smith, and the second participant has said something true about the man he referred to if and only if Smith was raking the leaves (whether or not Jones was).

Whereas the semantic reference of a designator is determined by the general, conventional rules of the language, the speaker’s reference is determined by a specific, object-dependent communicative intention. In the general case, given the speaker’s wish to be understood by the audience, the speaker will intend for speaker’s reference and semantic reference to coincide. However, the above sort of case—in which (i) both speaker and audience are mistaken about divergence of the speaker’s reference from the semantic reference, and (ii) an object-dependent proposition about the speaker’s reference is intended to be communicated and is successfully received—prove the theoretical usefulness of the distinction. Although what the second participant semantically expressed (i.e., that Jones is raking the leaves) is (presumably) false, a true object-dependent proposition is communicated via the pragmatic notion of speaker reference.

It is common to speak of semantic reference as a two-place semantic relation between a designator and what it conventionally or literally designates, while holding that speaker reference is irreducibly a four-place relation between a speaker, an audience, a designator, and what it is used to designate. As Kripke (1977: 266) points out, the notion of speaker reference also seems clearly applicable to certain “rather arch and prissy” cases
of existential quantification (e.g., a parent communicates an object-dependent proposition about just one child by saying, “I think that someone needs to wash their hands before dinner”). It also has application to certain ironic, or otherwise non-literal, uses of names—as in Kripke’s (1977: note 22) example of “humoring . . . a lunatic who thinks he is Napoleon”.9 (Famously, Kripke (1977) applies this distinction to the case of referential uses of definite descriptions, but a full account of that story must wait until Chapter 5.)

Speaker’s reference is never completely independent of semantic reference (as is the case for speaker’s meaning vs. semantic meaning, and for pragmatic implications generally). There are, however, a variety of cases in which the two can come apart. These kinds of cases will play a key role later. The important points for now are just that: (i) in particular, the fact that speakers use complex, structured expressions to speaker-refer to specific individuals does not yet refute \([R \iff U]\) or \([D \iff S]\); and (ii) in general, a sophisticated understanding of this distinction between speaker’s reference and semantic reference is necessary for a proper understanding of the connections between the concepts of reference, structure, and object-dependent information.

It is noteworthy that Neale (2004, 2005, 2007, 2008: *passim*) expresses some skepticism about the utility of the notion of semantic reference. His worry is that while semantic reference is the only sort of reference involved in the case of formal languages, in natural languages the basic notion of reference is speaker’s reference. A plausible theory of interpretation has to derive semantic reference from speaker’s reference, in terms of regularities over intentions. To the extent that philosophers of language run afoul of this, they are spending too much time thinking about formal languages, and their theories do not apply to natural languages.

Even granting that, an empirically plausible notion of semantic reference, along these lines, is a coherent and attainable goal.10 As Neale (1993: 104) clearly avows (in an excerpt cited at the end of Chapter 1, §2), \([R \iff U]\) is, first and foremost, a thesis about semantic reference (otherwise certain phenomena might be mistakenly misclassified as counterexamples); yet still semantic reference can and should be understood as derived from speaker’s reference.11 This important point threads through several discussions in the following chapters and will be tied off and summarized in Part IV.

### 2.3 UNSTRUCTURED USES OF COMPLEX DESIGNATORS

The next crucial refinement, which is related to the distinction between speaker’s reference and semantic reference, concerns the phenomenon of unstructured uses of complex or molecular designators. That is, while designators without any independently meaningful proper parts (such as ‘nine’ or ‘this’) can only be semantically unstructured, tokens of a complex
designator could be used in either structured or unstructured ways. This depends on whether the token is used to designate whatever best satisfies the compositionally determined condition the term semantically expresses, or, if rather the token is stipulatively linked to a specific designatum, regardless of how well or ill the designatum fits the relevant compositionally determined condition. Putative candidates for unstructured uses of complex designators include some tokens of ‘the Holy Roman Empire’, of ‘Louis XIV’, or of ‘the Evening Star’. That is, provided that the relevant regime could be so-designated despite being neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire; or provided that, should a previously forgotten French King Louis be discovered, it would be intelligible to say such things as ‘Louis XIV was actually the fifteenth King of France named Louis’; or provided that one could say, ‘It turns out that the Evening Star isn’t a star after all’. In these cases the tokens in question are unstructured, stipulative uses of complex designators. (To borrow another of Kripke’s (1972) examples, ‘the United Nations’ is almost always used in an unstructured way—otherwise the designator would designate nothing, except during the ten minutes (or so) every decade that there exists anything that even remotely approaches the relevant descriptive condition.)

A complex designator is used in a structured way if and only if the token is used to designate that which (in the relevant context) satisfies the compositionally determined condition the term semantically expresses; a use of a complex designator is used in an unstructured way if and only if the token is used stipulatively to designate one specific entity; and the condition its proper parts semantically compose is not criterial in determining its designatum. In what follows, I will argue that many *prima facie* counterexamples to the central theses of the Russellian orthodoxy should instead be classified as unstructured uses of complex designators. The relevant question of structure is not whether the designator can be broken down into otherwise meaningful proper parts, but rather whether those meaningful proper parts are criterial in determining the designatum.

### 2.4 OVERVIEW

To draw some of these strands together, then: in Chapter 1, §1, we start from two different ways to divide up the category of designators. The first—i.e., structured vs. unstructured designators—has to do with whether or not the expression has meaningful proper parts, and the second—i.e., referring vs. denoting expressions—has to do with the semantic relation between designator and designated. Then, in Chapter 1, §2, along come the theses that these distinctions are integrally tied—i.e., [R iff U], which asserts an integral connection between the expression of object-dependent information and the lacking (or inertness) of meaningful proper parts, and [D iff S], which asserts an integral connection between an expression’s having
meaningful proper parts and its being semantically suited for the expression of object-independent information.

Next, in §§2.2–2.3, we have added two related refinements: the first has to do with the distinction between speaker’s reference and semantic reference, and the second has to do with the distinction between structured vs. unstructured uses of complex, molecular designators. While the central theses do pertain to context-independent semantic properties (i.e., they primarily concern semantic reference, not speaker’s reference), a comprehensive evaluation of the central theses will demand careful attention to such pragmatic notions as speaker’s reference and unstructured uses of complex designators.

The primary aim of the present work is to help to elaborate, justify, and map the conception of the relation between reference and structure embodied by \([\text{R iff U}]\) and \([\text{D iff S}]\), which I take to define the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. My claim is that relevant notion of structure is a fundamentally important concept in the theory of reference—the most central, substantive fault-line within the category of designators is that between unstructured-referring expressions and structured-denoting expressions. Reference is a conventional or stipulative relation, and so “... as soon as one invokes a constructive or compositional procedure for determining the semantical value of an expression, one is no longer engaged in trying to establish reference” (Neale 1993: 104).

The argumentative burden of the present work can be broken up into two interrelated steps. The first is to justify the following two theses:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[R iff U]} & \text{ All and only referring expressions are unstructured designators.} \\
\text{[D iff S]} & \text{ All and only denoting expressions are structured designators.}
\end{align*}
\]

The second is to explain why these theses are the basis of a simple, comprehensive theory, which not only accords with but also grounds various important points about reference. These two steps are clearly interrelated in that each provides considerable motivation for the other. In general, what I am after here is an instance of Rawlsian reflective equilibrium—i.e., independent motivation for the general theoretical principles \([\text{R iff U}]\) and \([\text{D iff S}]\) creates a preference for accounts of various semantic phenomena that accords with those general principles, and at the same time, the intrinsic merits of the accounts of these target semantic phenomena detailed herein lends further credence to these general theoretical principles.

From a bird’s-eye view, the plan is as follows. Part II marshals positive arguments in favor of the two theses, Part III counters the case against them, and Part IV situates these theses in general theoretical contexts.

At a bit more length, the positive arguments marshaled in Part II are indirect. Chapter 3 is dedicated to making the case that the concept of semantic structure holds the key to a general definition of rigid designation. Given the evident connections between rigidity and reference, that structure is integrally related to rigidity is considerable reason to think that
Further Defining the Central Theses

structure is, in turn, integrally related to reference. Chapter 4 will consist of a similar line of argument involving the notion of a proper name. Again, I will argue that there is a deep connection between the notions of structure and naming; and, again, given the close connections between naming and reference, this will amount to another strong premise in favor of the claim that there is a deep connection between structure and reference.

The aim of Part III is to meet the *prima facie* counterexamples to the central theses head-on. Thus, the two primary tasks here are: (i) to explain why there are no structured referring expressions in natural language, and (ii) to explain why there are no unstructured denoting expressions in natural language. In keeping with the recent literature that is relevant to these general questions, referential uses of definite descriptions (Chapter 5) and complex demonstratives (Chapter 6) receive the most attention.

Finally, the aim of Part IV is to summarize the foregoing, and to survey and underline the grounds in favor of my focal theses. One aim here is to draw out general theoretical grounds in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. Another is to situate these theses with respect to certain historical developments.
Part II

Rigid Designation, Proper Names, and Structure

The primary job of Part II is to consolidate the positive case in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. Toward this end, I will excavate the connections between the notions of rigid designation (Chapter 3) and proper name (Chapter 4) on the one hand, and the concepts of reference and structure on the other.

To be sure, there are no simple, bold biconditionals to be derived between any of these notions. (For one example, there are rigid designators that are not unstructured, nor proper names, nor even referring expressions; for another, proper names are by no means the only unstructured referring expressions.) Nonetheless, I will detail the way in which these concepts interrelate and overlap, and thereby draw out considerable support for the central theses \([R \iff U]\) and \([D \iff S]\). Structure holds the key to both a satisfactory general definition of rigidity and a comprehensive account of reference by name; hence the Russellian orthodoxy should be seen as underlying these (and indeed other) overlapping core notions in the theory of reference.

In many respects, the seminal work in the theory of reference spearheaded by Kripke and Kaplan (among others) in the 1960s and ’70s is quite rightly taken to be critical of Russell and to overturn core elements of Russell’s canon. However, there are also some deep and important respects in which this work extends and further establishes Russell’s legacy. As we will see, some of Kripke’s and Kaplan’s innovative developments provide important ways to bolster orthodox Russellian theses about the distinctions between object-dependent and object-independent truth-conditions. There are deep and significant respects in which Russell, Kripke, and Kaplan are allied; Part II aims to establish and explain how and why the central theses lay at the core of this body of agreement.
3 Structure and Rigidity

The business of this chapter is to develop the first and the longest of two positive arguments in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. As mentioned above, this argument is somewhat indirect. It begins from a question which might not seem immediately relevant to the central theses—namely, is there a generally applicable criterion for dividing up rigid from the nonrigid designators? However, in the course of unpacking the answer to this question, considerations about structure and reference become paramount. It is in working through the details of a proper general conception of rigid designation that considerations of structure begin to loom large and can be seen to lay at the very heart of the phenomenon of reference. Further, many of the preliminaries and asides which come up in the course of answering this question about rigidity are deeply relevant to the tenability of \([R \iff U]\) and \([D \iff S]\).

The concept of rigid designation was at the forefront of a revolution in the philosophy of language, in which traditional descriptivist theories of reference were displaced in favor of the contemporary orthodox causal-historical picture of reference. My aim in this chapter is to argue that the concept of semantic structure is intimately related to this seminal notion of rigid designation. In particular, I will develop and defend a general definition of rigid designation based on the tenet that semantic structure is a necessary condition for nonrigidity. It follows from this tenet that all unstructured designators are rigid designators.

The work of this chapter will amount to a key premise in favor of the central theses. Given the intimate connections between rigidity and reference (to be expounded at length later on, particularly at §§ 3.3–3.4), that structure is intrinsically related to rigidity is a firm plank to be used in building a case for the claim that structure is intrinsically related to reference.

3.1 A GENERAL DEFINITION OF RIGIDITY

‘Rigid designation’ is Kripke’s name for a concept that has been in the air at least since the development of quantified modal logics: (a token of a)
designator is rigid if and only if it designates the same individual in every possible world in which the individual exists. Two seminal conclusions for which Kripke (1971, 1972) argues are that proper names are rigid designators, and that there are some deep semantic affinities between proper names and various sorts of general terms. However, even though he does sometimes explicitly attribute rigidity to certain general terms, Kripke nowhere gives a definition of rigidity that applies to general terms. This presents a challenge: Precisely which general terms ought to be classified as rigid designators? More fundamentally: What should we take the criterion for rigidity for general terms to be? There exists a considerable sub-literature, stretching back over 30 years, addressed to this challenge. As the notion of rigidity is at the core of the causal-historical theory of reference, and of closely associated, fundamental criticisms of traditional ideas about language, these questions have been thought to have relevance to various debates in contemporary philosophy.

Two immediately evident options for extending the notion of rigidity to general terms are, in rough outline: (i) classify a general term as rigid if it designates the same extension in every possible world, and (ii) classify a general term as rigid if it designates the same kind (or some such abstract entity—cf. note 8) in every possible world. The problem with (i) is that almost all general terms (including especially all-natural kind terms) turn out nonrigid. That is, there might have been more (or less, or different) tigers than there actually are, and so ‘tiger’ does not designate the same extension across counterfactual situations. Surely, the same is true of ‘gold’, ‘water’, and ‘pain’, of virtually any term that designates contingently existing concrete stuff and things. There is also a quick objection to (ii), which many find compelling—i.e., on this approach, rigidity seems to become trivial as almost all general terms (including the likes of ‘bachelor’, ‘hunter’, and ‘pencil’) come out rigid. The reason is that the conventional link between an expression and its meaning must be held constant across counterfactual situations if we are to study the modal properties of the content of our thought and talk. (As Kripke (1972: 77) puts the point: “One doesn’t say that ‘2+2=4’ is contingent because people might have spoken a language in which ‘2+2=4’ meant that seven is even.”) Whatever ‘bachelor’ means, it means it in every context of evaluation—such conventional word-meaning links are not the sort of thing that we imagine to vary across possible worlds in the course of modal inquiry. (Otherwise all is contingent in a banal and uninteresting sense, for in no case is it necessary that this sequence of sounds or symbols express this meaning.) As we will see in §3.3, this triviality objection is pressed even further: it is alleged that the (ii)-type approach is committed to classifying as rigid not only the likes of ‘bachelor’, but even the very paradigm cases of a nonrigid designator, such as ‘the color of the sky’—for even such descriptions still express the very same meaning or condition from world to world.
So, although views along the lines of (ii) have been defended, many take this triviality objection to be at least a serious obstacle that no one has yet shown the way around, and perhaps even a conclusive refutation of the (ii)-type approach. Within this sub-literature, a prevalent desideratum is a general definition of rigidity that counts natural kind terms in and various other sorts of terms out. More generally, the aim is a partitioning of the set of general terms into rigid vs. nonrigid, somewhere in between the too conservative (i) and the too liberal (ii), that marks off a principled proper subset as the rigid designators; invariably, the target set are terms that are in some way tied up with other aspects of the arguments against descriptivism and for the causal-historical theory of reference (such as externalism about reference, the division of linguistic labor, or Kripke-Putnam realism about natural kinds).

Against this line of thought, I will defend a version of option (ii), according to which unstructured general terms like ‘bachelor’ ought to be classified as rigid, while structured expressions like ‘the color of the sky’ can come out nonrigid. I will present two sorts of argument for it. The first is positive evidence: In §3.3 I argue that the original substance and intent the concept of rigidity best fits with this particular way of extending the notion of rigidity to general terms. (Herein lies the substantive original contribution of the present chapter. Although LaPorte (2000), Salmon (2003), Marti (2004), and Linsky (2006) have recently developed similar views, I do not think that anyone has yet gone quite far enough to motivate this concept of rigidity. My aim is to identify and defend a premise that underlies and justifies this approach to the question of rigidity. This key premise has to do with the connection between rigidity and structure.) The second is negative evidence: In §3.4 I argue that many of the things that get brought up in pressing the triviality objection involve mistakes confusing rigidity with other notions with which it is historically connected but conceptually quite distinct. There is a very clear sense in which most ordinary general terms (including the likes of ‘bachelor’, ‘hunter’, and ‘pencil’) are rigid designators—i.e., from a modal point of view, their semantics are relevantly similar to ‘Benjamin Franklin’ and relevantly different from ‘the inventor of bifocals’. I will argue that it is a mistake to think that this should render the notion of rigidity suspect or worthless.

3.2 GENERAL TERMS AND POSSIBLE WORLDS

I will begin with some orienting remarks about general terms. These remarks will be refined as the discussion proceeds.

Examples of general terms include ‘horse’, ‘pain’, ‘pencil’, ‘bachelor’, ‘philosopher’, ‘unicorn’, and ‘justice’. All monadic predicates include at least one general term; in a related, nominal form, general terms can also occur as designators (i.e., in the subject position). A general term is true of,
or satisfied by, some number of instances (and typically true of, or satisfied by, different instances in different contexts). Intensionally speaking, general terms are semantically associated with features or characteristics, which give or determine the criteria for the term’s correct application, and this semantic association stays constant throughout changes in the term’s extension.\footnote{12} Extensionally speaking, the features or characteristics provide a means by which a domain of objects is (more or less roughly) divided into sets that could be designated as ‘that kind of thing’, ‘not that kind of thing’, and (where appropriate) ‘neither clearly that kind of thing nor clearly not that kind of thing’. Since the semantic association between a general term and its criterial features or characteristics holds constant throughout changes in the term’s extension, it is natural to say that general terms designate kinds of things (as opposed to designating sets of things). My aim here is to give new grounds for the old view (cf. note 8) that if a general term designates the same kind in all possible worlds, then it should be classified as a rigid designator.\footnote{13}

My approach is premised on the following two claims. First, Russell’s (1905) distinction between referring and denoting gets at the heart of two fundamentally different types of designation. Second, this distinction also applies to general terms. A clear view of the connection between rigid designation and semantic structure depends on a clear view of these points, so the bulk of this section is dedicated to their elucidation.

There is a sense in which standard intensional possible-worlds semantics, in which semantic values are represented as functions from indices to truth-values, is blind to Russell’s referring/denoting distinction.\footnote{14} This approach to semantics has many virtues; but insofar as an expression is characterized as a function from indices to extensions, there is no room for a semantic distinction between ‘two’ and ‘the cube root of eight’. Clearly, though, there are significant differences between these types of designators. To illustrate:

[1] Cicero was beheaded in 43 BC.
[2] The person who denounced Catiline was beheaded in 43 BC.
[3] The author of *De Fato* was beheaded in 43 BC.

Call the grammatical subjects of [1]–[3], respectively, (i)–(iii). (i)–(iii) are actually co-extensive, but they clearly come apart across possible worlds. Of course, this difference can be captured by standard intensional semantics—i.e., there are contexts in which (i)–(iii) designate three distinct individuals, and hence worlds in which each of [1]–[3] expresses a truth while the other two are false. However, it is silent on the root of this difference, on the cause of which it is an effect.

In any context, (i)–(iii) designate the same type of thing (i.e., individuals). So, on this approach, the designators (i)–(iii) are classified in the same category (i.e., functions from worlds to individuals). One problem with this
approach is that it leaves unexplained why it is that the possible-worlds extension of (i) is constant\textsuperscript{15}, while those of (ii) and (iii) vary with the circumstances. (That is, if we take an utterance of [1] and consider various contexts of evaluation, only the actual referent of that token ‘Cicero’ is relevant to its possible-worlds truth-condition; whereas, in the cases of an utterance of [2] or of [3], the truth-conditions depend on different individuals at different stops—i.e., on whoever, if anyone, did the appropriate deed at that context.) The cause of which this difference is an effect is that (i) is a referring expression, while (ii) and (iii) are denoting expressions. (Even in cases where this telltale effect is not manifest, such as ‘two’ vs. ‘the cube root of eight’, this same cause is operative.)

It is crucial for present purposes that this distinction between referring and denoting also applies to general terms. In the case of general terms too, the distinction between referring and denoting is obscured in standard intensional possible-worlds semantics, which treats all general terms as functions from worlds to extensions. Again, this approach has its virtues, but it is blind to the semantic differences between terms that refer to kinds (e.g., ‘gold’ or ‘bachelor’) and terms that denote kinds (e.g., ‘the element most highly prized by local jewelers’ or ‘the marital status of Prince William in 2009’).\textsuperscript{16} Unstructured general terms are stipulatively, conventionally linked to particular kinds, whereas structured general terms express a compositionally determined condition and designate whatever kind, if any, satisfies that condition, in the relevant context. I will argue that this semantic distinction is crucial for a clear view of the question of rigidity, as it pertains to general terms.

As a final preliminary, note that, thus far, this use of ‘kind’ is metaphysically neutral. This is as it should be, as rigidity is a semantic claim about a designator, not a metaphysical claim about the essence of what is designated.\textsuperscript{17} The question of what kinds really are (or even of whether such entities as the designata of kind terms exist, somewhere out there) is orthogonal to the question of rigidity. So, it would be off the mark to complain that this sort of approach to rigidity for general terms is inconsistent with nominalism. I will briefly elaborate this point, before proceeding to defend my thesis connecting rigidity and structure.\textsuperscript{18}

Philosophers of all metaphysical orientations agree that there is a \textit{prima facie} commitment to kinds in our ordinary thought and talk—i.e., all parties agree that general terms are often used \textit{as if} they designate (in cases like, say, ‘Justice is a virtue’ or ‘Whales are mammals’). That is all that is required to render intelligible the question of whether they are used rigidly or nonrigidly (i.e., whether or not they are used such that their putative designatum is constant across contexts of evaluation); metaphysical qualms about the status of the putative designata are a different matter entirely. What divides Platonists, conceptualists, and nominalists is not an issue about how speakers use terms—much less an issue about possible-worlds truth-conditions—but rather the question of what to make of this \textit{prima facie}
facie ontological commitment. Platonism, conceptualism, and nominalism about kinds are one and all consistent with the view that kind terms are used rigidly (and with the view that kind terms are used nonrigidly); their dispute concerns metaphysics, not semantics.

Nominalists do not deny that speakers associate particular features or characteristics with general terms, or that one learning a language is prone to end up with (more or less) the same associations between general terms and features or characteristics as the people from whom one learns the language. Rather, what nominalists deny is that when we get down to the business of cataloguing the metaphysical furniture, abstract objects (such as kinds) should be said to exist. Approached down this avenue, nominalism is an error theory about kinds—i.e., we (in some sense) think and talk about such things all the time, and we (pretty well) know what one another is talking about; but, strictly speaking, this thought and talk is literally false.

In any case, the crucial point is that what divides Platonists, conceptualists, and nominalists is not the semantic question of rigidity (i.e., Is the link between the expression and its actual designatum rigid or nonrigid?), but rather the question of precisely what metaphysicians ought to make of this prima facie ontological commitment to kinds (i.e., At the end of the day, ought we to say that the designata of at least some general terms exist?). The view that a general term is rigid if it designates the same kind in all possible words and is consistent with nominalism, as it is with Platonism or conceptualism, for the claim that ‘justice’ or ‘whale’ is rigid is a claim about how speakers use terms—about possible-worlds truth-conditions—not a thesis of metaphysics. Therefore, since the existence, or nature, of kinds is not the issue here, we should leave open the wide range of options about the metaphysics of kinds.

3.3 THE POSITIVE CASE

This section is the heart of the chapter, and it is divided into four parts. First, in 3.3(i) I sketch the view that semantic structure holds the key to a general definition of rigid designation. Second, in 3.3(ii) I address three objections to this view. Third, in 3.3(iii) I argue that there is ample textual evidence for this view in Kripke’s work. Finally, in 3.3(iv) I summarize the preceding and trace some relations to some more general themes.

3.3(i) Preliminary Statement of the Positive Case

All semantically unstructured general terms are rigid designators, and any intuitions to the contrary are accommodated by a proper understanding of Russell’s (1905) distinction as it pertains to general terms. That is, just as in the case of discrete individual objects, kinds can be designated in two ways: they can be denoted (e.g., ‘the color of my car’) and they can be referred to
Denoting expressions can either be rigid (e.g., ‘the element with atomic number 79’) or nonrigid (e.g., ‘the element most highly prized by local jewelers’). However, any expression that refers to a kind designates it rigidly, and all semantically unstructured general terms refer to (as opposed to denote) kinds.

An expression is a nonrigid designator only if (holding fixed linguistic conventions) what it designates will vary relative to accidental changes throughout contexts of evaluation. No semantically unstructured term—be it ‘gold’, ‘bachelor’, ‘tiger’, or ‘hunter’—could meet this condition. Examples of nonrigid designators include ‘the number of planets’, ‘the author of De Fato’, ‘our most precious resource’. It is no accident that these are all semantically structured denoting expressions, for that is a necessary condition for nonrigidity. The question of rigidity—i.e., take a given token of a designator, survey a number of contexts of evaluation, and identify what that token designates at each stop—does not get a foothold in the case of reference, because the (stipulative, conventional) relation of reference is indifferent to the sort of accidental changes that distinguish different contexts of evaluation. A given token of an expression could designate different things in different possible worlds only if what it designates at a world is determined by contingent, qualitative facts; only denoting expressions, which semantically express a compositionally determined condition that could be satisfied by different individuals or kinds in different worlds, could satisfy this condition.

So, regardless of whether it is discrete individual objects or kinds under discussion, the question of nonrigidity only comes up in the case of a structured denoting expression. Further, the connection between ‘bachelor’ and bachelor, akin to the connection between ‘gold’ and gold, is stipulative, conventional reference, not satisfactional denoting. There is no mechanism that goes from situation to situation, in the case of our ‘bachelor’ thoughts and utterances, and seeks out which kind in that situation is relevant to truth-conditions. The semantic glue that holds ‘bachelor’ to bachelor stays constant throughout contexts of evaluation. So, as compared with the different kinds of semantic link between, say, the rigid and nonrigid designators ‘Benjamin Franklin’ and ‘the inventor of bifocals’ and their common designatum, from a modal point of view, the semantic links between the expressions ‘gold’ and ‘bachelor’ and that which they designate is on par.

It should prove instructive to draw a distinction between kind-dependent and kind-independent propositions, analogous to the distinction between object-dependent and object-independent propositions. Call a proposition ‘kind-dependent’ if and only if the subject-term refers to a specific kind, and ‘kind-independent’ if and only if the subject-term denotes whatever kind might happen to satisfy its linguistic meaning. Thus, compare the following:

[5] The element most highly prized by local jewelers is a metal.
The designator in the subject-position in [4] specifies a particular kind, whereas in [5] the designator expresses a complex condition satisfied by different kinds in different contexts. Clearly, these differ significantly in possible-world truth-condition. Consider further:

[6] Bachelors make up 80% of the market for expensive sports cars.
[7] The set of men who are of the same marital status as Prince William in 2009 make up 80% of the market for expensive sports cars.

Exactly the same contrast holds between the possible-world truth-conditions of [6] and [7], for the same reason: i.e., [6] is kind-dependent, while [7] is kind-independent. Despite the myriad differences between the types of term, ‘gold’ and ‘bachelor’ belong in the same category, with respect to the question of rigidity.24

Even if the point is most dramatically made with nominal forms of the general terms in the subject-position, it by no means depends on their occurring in the subject-position. That is, from a modal point of view, the predicates ‘is water’, ‘is the stuff that fills rivers and lakes’, and ‘is our most precious resource’ admit exactly the same contrast as do the designators ‘Cicero’, ‘the person who denounced Catiline’, and ‘the author of De Fato’. The possible-worlds satisfaction-conditions for ‘is water’, akin to ‘Cicero’, are homogeneous, as compared to the heterogeneous possible-worlds satisfaction-conditions for ‘is the stuff that fills rivers and lakes’ or ‘is our most precious resource’. (That is, ‘is water’ refers to the same first-order function in any context, whereas ‘is the stuff that fills rivers and lakes’ or ‘is our most precious resource’ denote different first-order functions in different contexts.25) And, again, the predicates ‘is a bachelor’ and ‘is of the same marital status as Prince William in 2009’ exhibit the very same contrast.

The key claim of the present section is that semantic structure is a necessary condition for nonrigidity. Structure is definitely not sufficient for nonrigidity, as a variety of cases suffice to show (cf., e.g., Kripke’s discussion of ‘the element with atomic number 79’ (1972: 134–43 passim), or Kaplan on any expression containing ‘actually’ or ‘dthat’ (1977: 530ff)).

To sum up: regardless of whether the designata are discrete individual objects or kinds, a designator is nonrigid only if what it designates will vary relative to accidental changes throughout contexts of evaluation. No semantically structured designator could satisfy this condition, and so any unstructured designator is bound to be rigid.

3.3(ii) Three Objections

I now consider three related fundamental objections to this conception of the relations between rigidity and structure. The first objection is that semantic structure simply cannot hold the key to rigidity because which designators are structured is a function of contingent historical accidents,
whereas this is not so for the question of which designators are rigid. The second objection is as follows: ‘Of course there can be unstructured non-rigid designators! Otherwise Kripke would not have been arguing against anyone. What about the Frege-Russell theory of names, or Lewis’ unorthodox view of certain kind terms?’ The third objection, pressed by Soames (2002: 261ff), concerns whether descriptions like ‘the color of the sky’ really do come out nonrigid, based on the sort of view articulated above.

First objection: The issue of which terms in a language are semantically unstructured is basically a matter of historical etymology, yet that does not seem to be the right kind of consideration to determine what is, or is not, a rigid designator. Thus, words like ‘telephone’, ‘teacher’, and ‘bicycle’ are semantically structured, whereas ‘bachelor’ is not in English (though ‘célibataire’, its French translation, is semantically structured). Which expressions are structured is entirely a contingent historical accident, but the distinction between rigid and nonrigid designators runs deeper than that. Therefore, structure cannot hold the key to the concept of rigidity.

Although there is something important to this objection, there is also a mischaracterization involved, so the first thing to be done is to cleave off this mischaracterization. Again, the claim to be defended is that the question of rigidity only gets a foothold in the case of a structured expression, that semantic structure is necessary for nonrigidity. However, this objection is aimed at the view that considerations of structure determine what is or is not a rigid designator. That is not my view; for, again, there clearly are several varieties of structured rigid designator. What I deny is the possibility of an unstructured but nonrigid designator.

So, given this, the question remains: Since historical accidents play a role in determining which designators are structured, am I not still committed to the unwelcome consequence that which designators are rigid is a function of historical accidents? The answer, developing herein, is no. I concede that:

(i) which designators are structured is a function of historical accidents,

but deny that:

(ii) which designators are rigid is a function of historical accidents.

Claim (i) is undeniable—clearly, historical contingencies affect linguistic conventions. However, the prevalence of varieties of complex, structured rigid designators accounts for why (i) does not entail (ii).

First, on the whole, it would be rather unsurprising and inconsequential if we found that another language only had a structured nonrigid designator as its best candidate for translating an expression that is an unstructured rigid designator in English (or vice versa). It is to be expected that a natural language will have rigid designators for the individuals and kinds
that are most important to its speakers; so there will be some peripheral variance among languages (e.g., Does the language have a rigid designator for ‘unicorn’ or ‘taupe’?), but very little variance at the core (e.g., Does the language have a rigid designator for ‘food’ or ‘water’?) Still, though, a difference in modal profile would count against the adequacy of a proposed translation. For example, if ‘célibitaire’ were actually co-extensive with ‘bachelor’, but the two expressions differed in possible-worlds truth-condition, ‘célibitaire’ would thereby fall short of adequate translation of ‘bachelor’. Historical contingencies differ among natural languages, but that does not touch the point that sameness of modal profile is a desideratum for adequate translation.

Next, we have to distinguish two different sub-cases when it comes to the above examples on which this objection is based. One sub-case, a representative instance of which is ‘telephone’, is similar to the unstructured uses of complex designators introduced Chapter 2, §3 (and further discussed at several junctures below). Whatever the etymology of ‘tele-’ and ‘-phone’ and whatever the range of artifacts that expression might have been used to mean, ‘telephone’ is rather clearly used in a stipulative, unstructured way by contemporary speakers. Many general terms for artifacts (e.g., ‘elevator’, ‘drywall’, or ‘airport’) are also instances of this phenomenon. They are originally coined because of the fit between their component-meanings and their designatum, but they are not subsequently used to designate whatever might fit their component-meanings. The meanings of the parts are no longer criterial in determining the designata of the expressions. (Consider, for example: ‘That device may well serve to carry loads from one floor to the next, but it’s no elevator’ or ‘That may well be a dry wall, but it’s not drywall’.) Whether these should be classified as unstructured uses of complex designators or a new, more specific (unstructured, stipulative) sense for the designator is neither here nor there for present purposes. Either way, there are no makings here of a counterexample to the claim that structure is necessary for nonrigidity.

The second sub-case, a representative instance of which is ‘teacher’, is akin to LaPorte’s (2000: note 12) ‘bald, happy humans’, or Kaplan’s (1989: note 30) ‘is a horse’.28 Given that both ‘teach-’ and ‘-er’ are rigid, the result of conjoining them will also turn out rigid. Again, structure is clearly not sufficient for nonrigidity. It may well be a historical accident whether a language ends up having a structured or unstructured designator for a certain kind of thing. (Compare, for example, the British ‘lift’ with the North American ‘elevator’.) It is still the case that any community relevantly similar to ours is bound to have rigid designators for teacher and elevator, whether they are structured or not. It is still the case that the distinction between rigid and nonrigid designators has important consequences both within and beyond the theory of reference. The key point here is that neither of these sub-cases shows that (ii) is true (i.e., neither ‘telephone’-cases nor ‘teacher’-cases entail, or even suggest, that which designators are rigid
is entirely a function of historical accidents). Which designators are used rigidly depends on speakers’ intentions, and these intentions depend primarily on their beliefs, needs, and interests. Historical contingencies only affect which vehicles (i.e., ‘bachelor’ or ‘célibataire’, ‘elevator’ or ‘lift’) are used to fulfill these intentions.

Therefore, while historical contingencies affect which designators are structured, they do not undermine the relevant connection between rigidity and structure. Structured designators are a function of historical accidents, but rigid designators are not. In particular, to get back to the main claim of this chapter, these considerations do not have any promise to yield an unstructured but nonrigid designator. They afford no reason to think that the question of nonrigidity could get a foothold in the case of an unstructured referring expression.

Next objection: Do the descriptivist views of Frege, Russell, or Lewis refute the thesis that there can be no unstructured rigid designators? Of course, a descriptivist who takes an unstructured expression to be semantically equivalent to a structured denoting expression might hold that the former is nonrigid. This is no counterexample to the present conception of rigidity, though, because it is the structured denoting expression that does all the work toward the designator coming out nonrigid. Again, this phenomenon calls for my central thesis about rigidity and structure to be refined, not rejected.

To begin, let us call an unstructured expression ‘vicariously structured’ if and only if it is semantically equivalent to a structured denoting expression (in the sense that the expression’s designatum is determined via the satisfaction of the condition semantically expressed by the structured denoting expression). A central pillar of a descriptivist account of reference, then, is the view that (at least some) referring expressions are vicariously structured. The Frege-Russell theory holds that ordinary proper names are vicariously structured (for instance, a token of ‘Bismarck’ might be semantically equivalent to ‘the first Chancellor of the German empire’); or again, Lewis holds that such terms as ‘heat’ and ‘pain’ are vicariously structured (‘heat’ is equivalent to ‘the cause of the sensation of warmth’ (1983: 44), ‘pain’ is equivalent to ‘the occupant of the pain role’ (1994: 304)).

Next, let us distinguish two claims:

(iii) Certain natural language expressions are vicariously structured.
(iv) A vicariously structured expression can be a nonrigid designator.

Claim (iii) is a controversial hypothesis of descriptive semantics, a conjecture about how ordinary speakers use certain terms. For the past three decades or so, largely due to the influence of Kripke, (iii) is an unorthodox, minority view—particularly in the case of proper names, natural kind terms, and pronouns. Claim (iv), in contrast, is virtually undeniable, but innocuous. I shall explain why (iv) is consistent with my central thesis about rigidity and
structure, and hence why, even if (iii) is true, no counterexample to my thesis is forthcoming down this avenue. Then I will make some brief remarks about (iii), as it applies to general terms.

Claim (iv) is true—a vicariously structured term can turn out nonrigid, as its designatum at a context of evaluation depends upon the satisfaction of a certain compositionally determined condition. The crucial point is that the term’s nonrigidity depends on the claim that there is some manner of semantic structure at work here. This is not a case of unstructured rigidity, and hence not a counterexample to the view that semantic structure is necessary for nonrigidity. Rather, this a mundane case of structured nonrigidity, coupled with a controversial descriptive semantic thesis about certain unstructured referring expressions. It is ‘the first Chancellor of the German empire’ or ‘the occupant of the pain role’, which is uncontroversially nonrigid; the controversial claim is that these expressions are equivalent to, respectively, ‘Bismarck’ and ‘pain’. However, regardless of the fate of that latter claim, the present conception of rigidity is consistent with (iv). So, if there are any vicariously structured terms, then some of them will turn out rigid, others will turn out nonrigid, and so be it.

The question of whether there are any vicariously structured terms—i.e., of the tenability of (iii)—is of course deep and involved. Here I make just a few brief comments. First, consider Kripke’s response to Donnellan’s (1977) suggestion that, while it seems that some uses of some names are clearly rigid, names could be introduced to abbreviate nonrigid descriptions:

My view is that proper names (except perhaps, for some quirky and derivative uses that are not uses as names) are always rigid. . . . It would be logically possible to have single words that abbreviated nonrigid definite descriptions, but these would not be names. The point is not merely terminological: I mean that such abbreviated nonrigid descriptions would differ in an important semantical feature from (what we call) typical proper names in our actual speech. (1977: note 9)

Kripke concedes that we could introduce vicariously structured terms that look like names, but insists that our ordinary uses of ordinary names just are not like that. For one thing, our ordinary uses of ordinary names have a different modal profile than typical descriptions; but this is an effect of a more fundamental cause, of what Kripke sees as an important semantical difference between reference by name and denotation via the satisfaction of some property or condition. Of course, Russell or Lewis or whoever might not share Kripke’s intuition on the above question of descriptive semantics. Again, though, the crucial point for present purposes is that this complex question of descriptive semantics is not really pertinent to our central questions about rigidity and semantic structure anyway. Given that vicarious structure is still structure in the relevant sense, the truth of (iv) is consistent
with the view defended herein; and so the question of the tenability of (iii) is tangential to present concerns.

Note though, as I will explain in more depth below, that there is also a considerable case, analogous to the above excerpt from Kripke (1977), to be made about general terms. That is, we could introduce general terms that were disguised descriptions of kinds, but these terms would differ from our everyday uses of ordinary general terms. (As we will see, this point applies not just to the likes of ‘gold’, but also to cases like ‘bachelor’.) At the root of this difference lies the difference between the relatively immediate relation of reference and denotation via the satisfaction of some property or condition. My view is that unstructured general terms are always rigid, as a descriptive semantic hypothesis about how these terms are used in their ordinary thought and talk. Of course it would be possible to have vicariously structured general terms, but they would differ in an important semantical feature from our typical uses of ordinary general terms. 29

To sum up, the issue between Kripke and Lewis over how ordinary speakers actually use terms like ‘heat’ and ‘pain’ in their thought and talk is very complex, and so cannot be seriously treated in a sub-section of a chapter on a different topic. Even if Lewis is right, that would show that (iii) is true, not that there can be unstructured nonrigid designators. Ultimately, the status of (iii) is beside the point, though, as (iv) is consistent with my core claims that semantic structure is necessary for nonrigidity, and so lacking semantic structure is sufficient for rigidity.

Third objection: One of Soames’ (2002: 261ff) reasons for rejecting the sort of view defended here concerns the following sort of case:

[8] Her eyes are the color of a cloudless sky at noon.

The problem is to specify precisely which of the following is thereby attributed to her eyes:

[8a] the color that cloudless skies at noon are instances of
[8b] the property of being the same color as a cloudless sky at noon

Clearly, these are not equivalent: [8a] is a nonrigid expression that designates different colors in different possible worlds, whereas [8b] is a rigid expression that designates the same relational property in every possible world (i.e., in any context, it picks out the property of being whatever color a cloudless sky is at noon). 30 Soames argues that there are no good grounds for favoring one of these over the other, and hence that this presents a big problem for the present strategy.

Salmon (2003), Marti (2004), and especially Linsky (2006) all discuss this challenge and develop related responses. (It is here that they experiment with the distinctions mentioned in note 16.) Rather than rehearsing their responses, I will develop briefly a different response that I take to be...
consonant with theirs. First, it is relevant that a similar problem can arise for structured designators in the subject-position. One might hold that, say, ‘the Prime Minister of Canada’ can be used either (akin to [8a]) to nonrigidly designate an individual or (akin to [8b]) to rigidly designate a certain office or role:

[9a] the individual (in the relevant context) who is the Prime Minister of Canada
[9b] the office or role of being the Prime Minister of Canada

An example of this second sort of use might be: ‘The Prime Minister of Canada has greater executive autonomy than the President of the United States’ (or ‘The Pope is the head of the Catholic church’); as opposed to the more familiar sort of uses (along the lines of [9a]): ‘The Prime Minister of Canada met today with the President of the United States’ (or ‘The Pope is ill’). These expressions admit of these (and, of course, many other) different types of use; in context, interlocutors can easily tell which type of use is in play. So, I do not see that Soames’ objection gets at anything distinctive about predicates, or about general terms, as the underlying phenomenon is quite general.

In any case, concerning these uses of descriptions, although it is possible speakers might use the expression ‘the Prime Minister of Canada’ to rigidly designate a certain role (i.e., [9b]), I submit that (as a matter of descriptive semantics) the expression is more typically used to nonrigidly designate that which fills the role in the relevant context (i.e., [9a]). More generally, speakers typically use structured denoting expressions to specify the individual or kind that satisfies the relevant condition. These [9b]-type uses, on which the condition itself is the subject of discourse, though not unfamiliar, are relatively rare.

Now, these points about denoting expressions also apply to Soames’ objection. The question of whether [8] attributes [8a] or [8b] is answered by the speaker’s intention: Precisely what is the speaker using the expression (i.e., ‘are the color of a cloudless sky at noon’) to attribute? Again the answer is almost certainly that the speaker intends to attribute, via a nonrigid designator, a certain specific shade of blue to her eyes. (Speakers typically use structured predicates to specify the kind that satisfies the relevant condition (i.e., [8a]).) There is another reading of the sentence—although, to be sure, in the present case it is somewhat bizarre—according to which the speaker is attributing the property of having, in any context, the same color had by a cloudless sky at noon, at that context (i.e., [8b]). Given a specific intention to do one of these things—and, again, in the case of [8], what is attributed is almost certainly [8a]—Soames’s challenge is met. The speaker’s intentions determine which of these candidates is meant; the more common reading is unproblematically nonrigid, the more bizarre reading is innocuously rigid.
3.3(iii) Can this be Kripke’s view?

Many recoil from the sort of view defended here, on the grounds that this cannot be what Kripke had in mind. However, there is ample textual evidence in Kripke’s work for the view. For example, Kripke articulates the intuition behind the thesis that names are rigid as follows:

Not only is it true of the man Aristotle that he might not have gone into pedagogy, it is also true that we use ‘Aristotle’ in such a way that, in thinking of a counterfactual situation in which Aristotle didn’t go into any of the fields and do any of the achievements we commonly attribute to him, still we would say that it was a situation in which Aristotle did not do any of those things. (1972: 62)

Clearly, this line of thought holds true not only of ‘tiger’ or ‘gold’, but also of the various types of non-natural kind term that many seek to classify as nonrigid. For example, not only is it true that, say, bachelors might not have made up 80% of the market for expensive sports cars, it is also true that we use the term ‘bachelor’ in such a way that such a counterfactual situation is correctly described as one in which (well, what else?) bachelors do not buy so many expensive sports cars. If that is the test of rigidity, then ‘bachelor’ is in. Any unstructured general term will pass this test.32

Another way that Kripke (1972) articulates the question of rigidity is with the following sort of question: What would it take for a counterfactual situation to be correctly described as one in which Aristotle is fond of dogs? It would not suffice for the teacher of Alexander to be fond of dogs, or for the author of Metaphysics to be fond of dogs, . . .—and so on, for any description believed to be true of Aristotle. (No description that Aristotle contingently satisfies affords a means of specifying the correct truth-condition.) Now, one reason to think that the term ‘dog’ is rigid is that a similar point holds for it—i.e., a counterfactual situation in which kangaroos are the most prevalent housepets, are known as human’s best friends, and Aristotle is fond of kangaroos, could not be properly characterized as one in which Aristotle is fond of dogs; a situation in which squirrels bark and drool, are very loyal to us and follow us around, and Aristotle is fond of squirrels, could not be properly characterized as one in which Aristotle is fond of dogs; and so on. (No description that dogs contingently satisfy affords a means of specifying the correct truth-condition.) Given that we use both proper names and terms for species as rigid designators, our own Aristotle will have to be fond of the kind of thing that we call dogs in order for a situation to be properly characterized as one in which Aristotle is fond of dogs.

However, again, what is true of ‘Aristotle’ and of ‘dogs’ is also true of ‘bachelors’, ‘philosophers’, ‘pencils’, ‘unicorns’, and so on—of various types of non-natural kind terms that many seek to classify as nonrigid. Only a
situation in which our own Aristotle is of the very marital status that we
call ‘bachelor’ is truly described as one in which Aristotle is a bachelor; the
sentence ‘Aristotle was a philosopher’ expresses a truth in a context only
if Aristotle is, in that context, the sort of thing that we call ‘philosopher’.
No description that bachelors or philosophers contingently satisfy affords a
means of specifying the correct truth-condition. These are uncontroversial
facts about how we use these terms; and, on Kripke’s criterion, they suffice
to show that terms like ‘bachelor’ and ‘philosopher’ are typically used as
rigid designators. Rigidity—the question of relative variance in truth-con-
ditions across possible worlds—does not distinguish any metaphysically
interesting subset of the set of semantically unstructured general terms.33

3.3(iv) Summary

So, denoting expressions can be nonrigid, as the relevant compositionally
determined condition might be satisfied by different individuals or kinds
in different contexts. However, not so for terms whose job is to refer to (as
opposed to denote) a kind (including terms that refer to manifest descriptive
features, to contingent accidental characteristics, or to artificially imposed
functions). To denote something via its contingent accidental features or
characteristics is to designate it nonrigidly, but nonetheless manifest
descriptive (nominal, artificial, superficial, and so on) kinds can be rigidly
referred to, and that’s what unstructured general terms typically do.

In the case of singular terms, whose role is to single out a specific indi-
vidual object, it is the extension that matters for truth-conditions (and
hence for the question of rigidity). This is the grounds for why it is plau-
sible—although contentious—to identify a singular term’s semantic value
with its referent. The role of a general term, in contrast, is to categorize or
classify, not simply to identify or single out. Notoriously, extension and
truth-conditions are separate questions when it comes to categorizing or
classifying.34 Given the semantic role of a general term, its contribution to
propositional content remains constant throughout changes of extension
over time and throughout possible worlds. (Otherwise it is not a general
term, but rather a name for a set.) It follows that, for general terms as
opposed to singular terms, it is not the extension that matters for truth-
conditions (and hence for the question of rigidity). Hence, while a singular
term should be classified as rigid if and only if one and the same individual
is relevant to the possible-worlds truth-condition of propositions expressed
by sentences containing it, a general term should be classified as rigid if
and only if one and the same kind is relevant to the possible-worlds truth-
condition of propositions expressed by sentences containing it.

Thus, in accord with Kaplan (1977, 1989), Neale (1993, 2008), and
Recanati (1993), I hold that all referring expressions are rigid designators
and that the modal phenomenon of rigidity falls right out of the semantic
phenomenon of referring to and expressing object-dependent information.
about specific individuals.\textsuperscript{35} To this I add, with respect to the origin and intent of the distinction between rigid vs. nonrigid designators, that semantically unstructured general terms are relevantly similar to referring expressions, and relevantly different from denoting expressions. Therefore, the modal phenomenon of rigidity falls right out of the semantic phenomenon of referring to and expressing kind-dependent information about specific kinds.

What I am calling the positive case for this conception of rigidity boils down to this: Semantic structure is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for nonrigidity; reference (as opposed to denoting) is a sufficient (but not necessary) condition for rigidity. Therefore, when a term lacks semantic structure, it is implied that it cannot satisfy the necessary condition for nonrigidity, and a referring term (as opposed to denoting) expression implies that it is a rigid designator. Both lines of thought hold true of ‘bachelor’, ‘philosopher’, ‘hunter’, and ‘pencil’, just as surely as of ‘gold’ and ‘tiger’. Thus, all semantically unstructured general terms should be classified as rigid designators.

Before tying this point back to the central theses, in §3.5 I will first work through some negative reasons in favor of this conception of the relation between rigidity and structure.

### 3.4 THE NEGATIVE CASE

The negative case for this conception of rigidity concerns irrelevant and troublesome turns taken by attempts to satisfy what I called the prevalent desideratum—i.e., a definition of rigidity that applies exclusively to some favored subset of unstructured general terms.

Many moves in the debates over how the notion of rigidity should be extended to general terms have embodied mistakes about the concept and failures to distinguish it from other things to which it is historically, but not intrinsically or conceptually, connected. The concept of rigid designation grew out of work in quantified modal logic. Subsequently, Kripke uses the notion to motivate a number of theses about reference and content; subsequent to that, philosophers influenced by Kripke have continued to try to put rigidity to further work. In some cases, to suit these subsequent ends, things have become associated with the concept or rigidity that are, at least, distinct from and, at worst, in tension with the original conception. I will cite two specific instances of this general trend. The first involves bringing counter-productive metaphysical concerns to bear on the question of rigidity; the second involves clouding the issue with epistemological distractions.

First, under the influence of the idea that, on pain of triviality, a general definition of rigidity should count natural kind terms in and the likes of ‘bachelor’ or ‘philosopher’ out, Soames (2002: Ch 9) is tempted toward
essentialism in characterizing the desired sense of ‘rigid’. (Cf. p.251ff, where Soames formulates the hypothesis that “a predicate is rigid if and only if it is an essentialist predicate,” and investigates some more precise characterizations of what it means to be an essentialist predicate.36) Soames does come to reject this line of thought, but nonetheless I think that his very temptation in this direction is illustrative of a widespread and potentially grave mistake. Kripke—along with Kaplan and Stalnaker, among others—had to do much hard work to prove that rigidity is itself not a metaphysical thesis at all, let alone an objectionable one, before it and its ilk (i.e., the terms of quantified modal logic) were commonly acceptable philosophical parlance. The point that these terms are, as Kaplan (1986: 265) puts it, “prior to the acceptance (or rejection) of essentialism, not tantamount to it,” was crucial and hard won. To link rigidity with essentialism—indeed, with any particular metaphysical doctrine—risks losing some of this hard-won ground and adding currency to the vague and mistaken objection that rigid designation is an obscure essentialist doctrine. Rigidity is a claim about the semantics of a designator, not about the essence of what is designated.

Second, Schwartz (2002: 270–1) raises the challenge: If rigidity is so rampant, then why isn’t the necessary a posteriori more prevalent? In the course of developing an objection to an example from LaPorte (2000), Schwartz compares the following:

[10] Water is H₂O.

He says (2002: 270):

In order for this [view—i.e., a general term is rigid iff it designates the same kind in every possible world] to be effective [11] must be not only necessarily true but a posteriori.

Two preliminary comments: First, the necessary a posteriori status of [10] is far from uncontroversial, even among Kripke’s allies and followers.37 Second, I do not think that [11] is the proper analogue to [10] anyway. The relevant sort of statement to compare with [10] is not [11], but rather something essence-identifying, along these lines:

[12] The honeybee is S(n). (where S(n) is a bio-chemical formula that singles out a species via its DNA sequence)

Given that ‘honeybee’ is a natural kind term, then [12] is quite plausibly as strong a candidate as [10] for necessary a posteriori status.

Regardless of those fussy points, though, there is a deep mistake underlying this line of thought. Directly contrary to Schwartz’s contention, rigidity, per se, says absolutely nothing about epistemic status. If all of the relevant
terms are rigid, then [10]–[12] express necessary truths that are compatible with a wide range of positions regarding their respective epistemic statuses. Many premises are required to get from the rigidity of the designators to the *a posteriori* of any one of these, let alone all of them. So, even if there is this epistemic difference between some of the likes of [10]–[12], this does not entail anything having to do with which designators are rigid. With respect to the question of rigidity, *a posteriori* is a red herring.

One thing motivating these prevalent desiderata is the idea that the concept of rigidity must do some specific sort of work in order to earn its keep. However, the concept of rigidity earned its credentials as a significant and worthwhile notion long before the onset of these subsequent debates. If the notion of rigidity cannot solve every subsequent problem to which Kripke or his followers have tried to apply it, this would not render it incoherent or useless. This might instead point to problems for the subsequent theses, not with the notion of rigidity. In particular, rigidity was not introduced to explain anything about mind-independent essences or epistemic status. The original point is that (contra a descriptivist approach to natural kind terms) ‘gold’ has a different modal profile than ‘the yellow metal with such and such surface properties’, not that ‘gold’ has a different modal profile than ‘bachelor’.

Another motivation for some of these desiderata for a general definition of rigidity is an intuition along the following lines: The thesis that proper names are rigid designators was at the forefront of a revolution in the philosophy of language, and so something similarly monumental is likely to come from rigidity in the case of kind terms. Such expectations are bound to go unfulfilled. The reason why the notion of rigidity initially caused such a splash is that some of the things Frege and Russell said about certain singular terms entail that they are nonrigid; so if these singular terms are rigid, then some pillars of the seminal views of Frege or Russell must be altered or rejected. However, for the reasons given, rigidity—i.e., relative variance in designata across possible-worlds—does not provide a promising way to characterize any interesting subset of the set of semantically unstructured general terms. So while something monumental may well fall out of a definitive understanding of the semantics of natural kind terms, there is good reason to doubt that it will have anything to do with rigidity.

To sum up: the original notion of singular-term rigidity helps us to spot some flaws in, for example, the Frege-Russell approach to reference. Similarly, the notion of general-term rigidity is useful for the detection of analogous errors and fallacies (e.g., ‘gold’ means ‘yellow metal’ or since ‘bachelorhood’ is actually co-designative with ‘the marital status of Prince William in 2009’ then those two designators should be interchangeable within the scope of modal operators, and etc.). If some have employed the original notion of singular-term rigidity toward ends that have lacked plausibility, that is no argument against the coherence of the original notion. Analogously, it is mistaken to think that the proponent of general-term-rigidity has to prove that
the notion can do substantive metaphysical or epistemological work before
the notion can be responsibly invoked. To the contrary, I have argued in §3.3
that there is a perfectly coherent notion of general-term rigidity which lines
up closely with Kripke’s original conception of singular-term rigidity; and
in this present section I have explained how this conception helps to make
it clear that these demands for various sorts of usefulness involve conflating
rigidity with various other distinct issues. The notion of general-term rigidity
is no less and no more useful that the notion of singular-term rigidity.

Contrary to the triviality objection, the thesis that all unstructured
general terms are rigid designators affords a sense of historical conti-
nuity of the steady progress in philosophical logic from Mill to Frege
and Russell through to Kripke and Kaplan. Each of these thinkers has
made a significant, convergent contribution toward an understanding of
the distinctive semantic properties of unstructured referring expressions.
The thesis of rigidity did not come from out of nowhere, but is rather
a consequence of Russell’s (1905) notion of referring (as distinct from
denoting) once we take modal matters seriously. That all unstructured
terms are rigid does not trivialize Kripke’s brilliant, seminal work—it
is also trivial, in a sense, that water is H₂O or that the rising sun is not
new every morning, but always the same. Indeed, the thesis of rigidity is
in some ways akin to Kripke’s examples of necessary a posteriori state-
ments: It is an important and hard-won discovery about the modal status
of the terms of our thought and talk and is by no means self-evident,
but nonetheless constitutive of the way we use our terms. A language
in which ordinary unstructured terms were nonrigid would be rather
strange indeed.

3.5 SOME GENERAL REMARKS AND
INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that a general term is rigid if and only if it designates the same
kind in all possible worlds, and hence that all semantically unstructured
general terms are rigid designators. How exactly does this apply to predi-
cates, or adjectives, or to linguistic expressions in general?

One big obstacle here is the problem of identifying any one clear sense
of ‘designator’ such that the question of rigidity applies to all of these
types of expression. Indeed, one of the contested issues in recent litera-
ture is whether there is any one sense of ‘designator’ that applies to both
singular and general terms, such that the question of rigidity applies in
common to both. 41 If those waters are already murky, they are further
muddied by stirring into the mix various other types of linguistic expres-
sion. What does ‘is a horse’ designate? What about ‘in virtue of’? Can
any linguistic expression, simple or complex, be significantly said to des-
ignate something?
I will enter two general remarks on this general problem. First, regardless of whether there is any one reasonably homogenous semantic relation common among all of these linguistic expressions and their respective semantic values such that all should be classified as designators, there is nonetheless a clear sense in which all simple unstructured expressions are rigid. Generalizing from Kripke’s contrast between ‘Benjamin Franklin’ and ‘the inventor of bifocals’, all simple terms, from whatever grammatical category—from ‘if’ to ‘of’ to ‘very’ to ‘vary’—belong on the same side of the divide as ‘Benjamin Franklin’, if only because the question of rigidity simply does not arise in their case. Second, lots of predicates, adjectives, and adverbs clearly come out nonrigid—although, crucially, all that do are semantically structured. That is, there is a clear sense in which ‘is yellow’ comes out rigid while ‘is the color of my car’ does not, or in which ‘loud’ is rigid while ‘louder than bombs’ is not, or in which ‘slowly’ is rigid while ‘more slowly than molasses’ is not; semantic structure and Russell’s referring/denoting lie at the heart of the explanation as to why. For any expression that can be said to designate, the referring/denoting contrast can arise; in any such case, semantic structure is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for nonrigidity, and referring (as opposed to denoting) is a sufficient (but not necessary) condition for rigidity.

Let us now widen our focus, and underline the relevance of the arguments of this chapter for the general issue of the cogency of the Russellian orthodoxy. As discussed above, there is an evident connection between rigidity and reference (i.e., all referring expressions are rigid designators, as the modal phenomenon of rigidity falls right out of the semantic phenomenon of referring to and expressing object-dependent information about specific individuals). A central thesis of the present chapter is that all unstructured designators are rigid designators. Of course, there is nothing formally entailed by these two premises:

[P1] All referring expressions are rigid designators.
[P2] All unstructured designators are rigid designators.

(Related, replacing ‘all’ by ‘only’ would render either [P1] or [P2] false.) Still, though, these connections between rigidity and structure amount to a considerable piece of evidence in favor of the central theses [R iff U] and [D iff S]. Given that all referring expressions are rigid designators, that all unstructured expressions are rigid designators is a compelling reason to think that there is an intimate connection between the conventional, stipulative relation of reference, the expression of object-dependent information, and the lacking (or inertness) of meaningful proper parts. (From the other direction, if it is true both that only structured designators are nonrigid and that only denoting expressions are nonrigid, then these considerations about the question of rigidity amount to a reason in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy.)
Structure is indispensible to a general understanding of rigidity, and rigidity is indispensible to a general understanding of reference. That suggests that there is a tight intrinsic connection between reference and structure. This significant point will be amplified and abetted in the chapters that follow.

In Part IV, I will further unpack the consequences of the results of this chapter for my central theses. First, the business of the next chapter is to add more foundational planks to the argument by excavating some relations between the notion of semantic structure and some other central concepts in the theory of reference.
4 Structure and Naming

It is evident why proper names have always been taken to be paradigmatic referring expressions, as the job of a proper name is to single out a specific designatum. Anything that is of enduring interest to speakers can be given a name; which name is then tailored for the semantic expression of object-dependent information about the individual. So, given that the notion of object-dependent information lies at the heart of the phenomenon of reference, if proper names are tailored precisely for the storing and transmission of object-dependent information, then proper names lie at the heart of the notion of reference.

The aim of this chapter is to argue that the notion of a proper name is also intimately tied up with the concept of semantic structure. Again, given the intimate connections between naming and reference, if there is an intimate connection between structure and naming, then this is further motivation in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy.

The outline is as follows. The aim of §4.1 is to frame the question: What is it, exactly, for an expression to be used as a name? The aim of §4.2 is to argue that, once again, the notion of structure is the crucial ingredient in a satisfactory answer to that question. §4.3 is focused on a way of discriminating fine distinctions among types of designator, which has played an important role in recent discussions about names—and whose general usefulness in discriminating object-dependent from object-independent information will be further attested throughout Part III. In §4.4 I discuss connections between proper names and pronouns, and connect that discussion to some larger themes. Finally, in §4.5 I will draw out some consequences and implications of this conception of naming for some other central concepts in the theory of reference.

4.1 TO USE A TERM AS A NAME

The semantic relation between a token of a proper name and its designatum might seem to be relatively clean and straightforward, as names are free of some of the distinctive complications that pertain to other kinds
of expressions that do similar work, such as descriptions and pronouns. (Tokens of ‘Betty’, for instance, just simply single out Betty; more exactly, they identify as the topic of discourse a contextually salient individual that is so-called.) Nonetheless, the semantics of names is the subject of long-standing entrenched debates.2

Indeed, this elementary quality of the naming relation is one of the factors that account for why names are the subject of such complex debates. This seemingly immediate, transparent connection between ‘Betty’ and Betty does not much lend itself to theoretical description. As Kaplan has put it:

Proper names may be a practical convenience in our mundane transactions, but they are a theoreticians’ nightmare. They are like bicycles. Everyone learns easily how to ride, but no one can correctly explain how he does it. (1975: 318)

Insofar as philosophers of language aim for a comprehensive theoretical description of what competent speakers do so effortlessly, in the mundane process of communicating information, names are surprisingly hard. An elaborate theory would seem misguided and inappropriate (your name is what you’re called; what’s all the fuss about?); but disquotational schemas (i.e., ‘Betty’ refers to Betty) or nominal descriptions (e.g., ‘Betty’ means ‘the bearer of “Betty”’) leave more or less unilluminated what it is that speakers who are competent with a name know, or are able to do. Hard problems that are completely untouched by these otherwise attractive minimalist approaches to the semantics of names include: (i) Evans’s (1973) ‘Madagascar’ case (in which a speaker who attempts to fall into line with a naming practice instead inadvertently creates a new, distinct name), (ii) the problem of homonymy (e.g., there are thousands of people named ‘Betty’, and yet (typical) tokens of ‘Betty’ unambiguously refer to exactly one of them), and, at the root, (iii) the fundamental question of reference—i.e., What is it in virtue of which a particular token of the name ‘N’ refers to the individual that it does?3

One principal factor that further complicates these issues, and helps to stalemate the entrenched debates about the semantics of names, is a lack of clarity concerning what, exactly, counts as a proper name. It is presumed that such debates concern one homogenous sort of use of one univocal type of expression; however, the set of utterances and inscriptions of expressions that have some claim to membership in the intuitive, marketplace category of proper names is vast and varied. As came up in the discussion of speaker’s reference in Chapter 2, §2, all tokens of ‘Elvis’ or of ‘Einstein’ hardly form a homogenous category, let alone when we stir into the mix ‘Shakespeare’, ‘Kermit the Frog’, ‘Timbuktu’, ‘Exxon’, ‘Lorelei’, ‘Nasdaq’, ‘the Rolling Stones’, ‘Santa Claus’, ‘Beethoven’s 6th’, ‘Lou Gehrig’s disease’, and ‘Barcelona FC’. There is enormous diversity among what proper names name, and there is also considerable diversity among the communicative
intentions speakers have in mind in uttering or inscribing tokens of these kinds of expressions. So what, then, is it to use a term *as a name*?

One thinker who confronted this issue of precisely what it is to use a term as a name is Russell. In several passages, Russell makes assertions premised on some evidently specific conception of naming:

We are not acquainted with Socrates, and therefore cannot name him. . . . [W]e certainly do not use the name as a name in the proper sense of the word. (1918: 201).

. . . [B]eing used as descriptions . . . is a way in which names are frequently used in practice, and there will, as a rule, be nothing in the phraseology to show whether they are being used in this way or *as* names. (1919: 284).4

Given the work to which Russell puts this notion—for example, it is intimately linked to his conception of object-dependent propositions5—it is evident that he has something quite specific in mind. However, Russell never comprehensively fleshes out this notion of what it is to use a term as a name. He never offers much beyond the contrast with denoting.

One might think that whatever exactly Russell’s notion of using a term as a name comes to, any interest in it is contingent upon Russell’s descriptivist view that many terms that appear to be names are actually disguised descriptions. However, that would be a mistake. For example, as discussed in Chapter 3, §3, Kripke appeals to some such notion in response to Donnellan’s (1977) suggestion that even if our ordinary proper names are rigid designators, surely there could be nonrigid names:

My view is that proper names (except perhaps, for some quirky and derivative uses, that are not uses as names) are always rigid. . . . It would be logically possible to have single words that abbreviated nonrigid definite descriptions, but these would not be names. The point is not merely terminological: I mean that such abbreviated nonrigid descriptions would differ in an important semantical feature from (what we call) typical proper names in our actual speech. (1977: note 9).6

Kripke rejects Donnellan’s suggestion on the grounds that to use a term as a name is to use it as a rigid designator. Like Russell, though, Kripke leaves this notion of using a term as a name at the intuitive level, unexplained.7

So, even if this notion of using a term *as a name* is most closely associated with Russell’s version of descriptivism, then, its importance is not contingent on any specific theory of proper names. To the contrary, I aim to show that: (i) despite their widely divergent views on the semantics of proper names (indeed, Russell and Kripke are seminal representatives of entrenched, opposed camps concerning the semantics of names), they mean
essentially the same thing by ‘using a term as a name’; (ii) this Russell-Kripke notion of using a term as a name has everything to do with structure; and (iii) excavating this notion will help to illuminate many facets of the semantic and pragmatic differences between referring and denoting.

4.2 EXPLICATING THE CONNECTION

The question at hand, then, is: What is it, exactly, for a term to be used as a name? As is clear in the passages from Russell cited above—especially (1919: 284)—my target notion is token-relative: the question concerns what a speaker intends to do with a particular sequence of marks or noises. Virtually any sequence of marks or noises could be used as a name, if used with the requisite intentions. Whether the expression-type in question should be classified as a name is a subsequent question of a different order, of whether the term is semantically tailored explicitly for this work, or, rather, only a subset of tokens of the type are being put to this particular kind of use. (So, I will argue, the expression-types ‘John’ and ‘Mary’ are names because they are primarily suited to this kind of work; in contrast, even if some tokens of ‘the champ’ or ‘the penguin’ are used as names, these expression-types might belong in a different category because they are also, and typically, suited to various other jobs.)

Another way to put the above point is to say that proper names form a semantic, not a syntactic, category—i.e., the question of whether a token of an expression is used as a proper name is a question about the semantic work to which the token is put and what makes an expression appropriately characterized as a proper name is that it is suited for, and is typically put to, this particular semantic job. Some might balk at this assumption, but it strikes me as both intrinsically satisfactory and without serious competition. Of course, all of this still leaves open the substantive, difficult question of precisely what semantic work characterizes the notion of a proper name.

Turning now to that question, I take it as axiomatic that tokens that are used as a name are stipulated to designate one specific designatum. I take that axiom as definitive of the phenomenon which I am trying to explicate, as opposed to a contentious conjecture about naming. To motivate (a little) the notion that this kind of stipulative connection constitutes the essence of naming conventions, I offer the following varied list of supporters:

Proper names are attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on the continuance of any attribute of the object. (Mill 1843: 20)

An ordinary proper name is, roughly, a word, used referentially, of which the use is not dictated by any descriptive meaning the word may have, and is not prescribed by any such general rule for use as a referring expression . . . as we find in the case of such words as “I”, “this”, and
“the”, but is governed by ad hoc conventions for each particular set of applications of the word to a given person. (Strawson 1950: 340)

Unlike a general term, a proper name does not have a meaning which must be respected when we are proposing to confer that name on a person or thing, a meaning fixed in advance of any such christening... Lack of meaning—the fact that we must have non-linguistic knowledge of what is intended, and cannot derive this from an interpretation of the name—explains the inclination to say that names are not part of the language. (Rundle 1979: 79-80)

Proper names are unique among singular terms in that the conventional correlation whereby a name can be used to refer to a thing can be specified only by reference to that thing: there is a practice of using the name to refer to it. In the case of every other kind of singular term, the term is able to refer to the thing because the term is correlated with something—a character, a constraint, a rule, whatever—that is specifiable without reference to anything to which the term might be used to refer. (Schiffer 2003: 218)

So then, I am assuming that to use a term as a name is to use a term that is stipulatively linked to a specific individual. My question then is this: In what does this stipulative connection consist?

My conjecture is that the notion of semantic structure holds the key to this stipulative naming connection—i.e., to use a term as a name is to use it in a semantically unstructured way. That is, the notion of an unstructured use of a designator (whether or not that designator may be broken up into otherwise meaningful proper parts), first discussed in Chapter 2, provides a necessary condition for a term to be used as a name. To illustrate, then, this necessary condition for using a term as a name: What this claim about naming and structure amounts to can be illustrated by considering designators that were originally coined because they express a meaning that is appropriate to their referent, but subsequently the referent ceases to fit (or to best fit) that meaning. Whether such a designator is used as a name depends on what happens once the designatum fails to (best) fit the linguistic meaning. Take, for example, the name ‘Dances with Wolves’. According to the story, set in the 19th century United States, a disgraced soldier is posted alone away on the frontier, where he comes to befriend a wolf. Some locals observe the man and the wolf together singing at the full moon and dub the man ‘Dances with Wolves’. Now suppose the man and the wolf have a falling out after the name has been in use for some time, and subsequently the man comes to spend all of his time sulking among the sheep. Suppose further that another derelict soldier moves into the region, and the locals observe that this second soldier has taken to dancing with wolves. Now the question of whether these speakers use ‘Dances with Wolves’ as
a name or as a description can be clearly posed. If they continue to use the name to refer to the first soldier, even though he no longer fits the linguistic meaning of the expression, then they are using ‘Dances with Wolves’ as a semantically unstructured label, and hence as a name. If instead they begin to call the second soldier ‘Dances with Wolves’ (while, perhaps, beginning to call the first soldier ‘Sulks with Sheep’), and if they do this because of the fit between the linguistic meaning of the designators and the antics of the relevant individuals, then these designators are not being used as names, but rather as semantically structured descriptions.

The term ‘Newfoundland’ provides another example. The island it refers to is, next to Greenland, the closest part of North America to Europe, and so it was one of the first parts of North America to be encountered by European explorers. In 16th century logs and maps, it was explicitly designated by the complex expression ‘the New Found Land’. If these explorers had used the term ‘Newfoundland’ to temporarily designate other newly discovered lands, then the term would not have been used as a proper name. Since they did not and only Newfoundland was called ‘Newfoundland’ even after other lands were newly found, the term is used as a semantically unstructured proper name. (Many surnames exhibit a similar, related phenomenon—e.g., to be a Baker, it is neither necessary nor sufficient to be a baker.)

The present point can also be made using a descriptive name. In Evans’s example, the name ‘Julius’ is introduced to designate whoever invented the zip. Suppose we do so and subsequently become convinced as to Julius’s identity—say, we believe that Julius was a Scottish tailor who introduced several clothing innovations in the last decade of the 19th century. All is well for a while and years pass with this tailor’s place in history acknowledged, until we discover that we were mistaken and someone else in fact invented the zip. Now the question of whether we were using ‘Julius’ as a name or, rather, as shorthand for a description, comes to this: to say that ‘Julius did not invent the zip, after all’, is to use ‘Julius’ as a name, while to say that ‘It turns out that someone else is Julius’ is to use Julius not as a name but as shorthand for a structured description.

In contrast, if a term is used to designate whatever best fits its linguistic meaning—perhaps this individual in this context, perhaps other individuals in other contexts—then it is not used as a name. This is a fundamental difference between names and descriptions: even though descriptions can be used referentially, and even if some (such as ‘the champ’ or ‘the Pope’) seem to be used referentially more often or more typically than used attributively, nonetheless descriptions are unlike names in that they express a compositionally determined condition as their linguistic meaning.

Note that there is still semantic structure at work, albeit in a non-standard way, in the case of referential uses of structured denoting expressions. (I just touch on a relevant point here. This issue is discussed extensively in Part III.) Regardless of the fact that the speaker’s referent may diverge from that which satisfies the description, the meanings of the constituent bits, e.g. ‘the man
drinking a martini’ or ‘Smith’s murderer’, are nonetheless crucially involved in the speech acts in which the terms are referentially used.14 In the other direction, even though such names as ‘Rolling Stones’ or ‘Detroit Lions’ are chosen (in part) for their evocative powers, they are subsequently used as names because the designatum of an utterance of the term is not a matter of whom or what best fits what is expressed or evoked by the term.

Also, the fact that people tend to have syntactically complex, molecular names—say ‘Willard van Orman Quine’—does not undermine the view that the lack of semantic structure is essential to names. The kind of molecular complexity exhibited by ordinary names is clearly quite different from the compositional structure at work in, say, ‘Ohio’s most accomplished philosopher’. Crucially, at any context of evaluation, determining which individual counts as the designatum of ‘Willard van Orman Quine’ is not a matter of figuring out who best fits the complex, uniquely identifying, compositionally determined condition semantically expressed by its constituent bits. The key difference here is that each of the parts of ‘Willard van Orman Quine’ is itself a name; their sum is the sort of complex, molecular name that prevails in most contemporary cultures. In contrast, semantically structured designators involve a compositional harmony of expressions from different syntactic and semantic categories, the sum of which is an identifying condition.15 (Compare: (i) two people disagree over whether ‘Willard van Orman Quine’ designates \( \alpha \) or \( \beta \), with (ii) two people disagree over whether ‘Ohio’s most accomplished philosopher’ designates \( \alpha \) or \( \beta \). These would be rather different kinds of debates.)

To illustrate further, we are also now in a position to return to a thread left dangling in Chapter 1—i.e., there are significant differences between molecular proper names like ‘Willard van Orman Quine’ or ‘Louis XIV’ and what I characterize in Chapter 1, note 13, as ‘Boolean referring expressions’, such as ‘bald, happy humans’ or ‘January 24, 2002’. Considered as a whole, molecular names are still purely stipulative (and hence designate relationally, not satisfactionally); in contrast, even though the basic bits of Boolean referring expressions are stipulative, as a unit they are not. (Even if all the basic bits of a Boolean referring expression designate relationally, the whole designates satisfactionally.) Compare:

[1] It could turn out that Louis XIV was not in fact the fourteenth French king named ‘Louis’.
[2] It could turn out that Willard van Orman Quine was never so-named. (E.g., if two infants were switched after having been named, and the mistake was never detected.)
[3] It could turn out that January 24 is not in January.
[4] It could turn out that bald, happy humans are not humans.

I take it that while [1] and [2] are far-fetched and would be surprising discoveries, nonetheless there would be nothing semantically anomalous with
Reference and Structure in the Philosophy of Language

the embedded sentences semantically expressing truths. [1] and [2] could be significant, and so are coherent. Not so, though, for [3] and [4], in which case the embedded sentences are self-contradictory. This, then, is a deep and central difference between Boolean referring expressions and molecular proper names.

To sum up, then: If a term is used to designate one specific individual entity over time and across counterfactual situations as opposed to being used to designate whatever best suits or fits any linguistic meaning it might have, then it is used in a semantically unstructured way. In contrast, if a term is used to designate whatever best suits or fits its semantic properties—perhaps this individual in some contexts, perhaps that individual in others—then it is being used in a semantically structured way and not used as a name. The key condition for a use of a term to count as a name is that the relevant token is used in a semantically unstructured way so that the token is (intended to be) stipulatively linked to one specific individual. Again, almost any expression could be used as a name—provided that there is the (explicit or implicit) dubbing and that these subsequent uses defer back to the dubbing, with (deliberate or tacit) disregard for the whatever linguistic meaning the term might otherwise have. (It is also important to bear in mind that there are various non-typical uses of proper names, as of many sorts of expressions; but I must defer discussion of that point until §4.5(i).)

It is of the essence of a name to be used in a semantically unstructured way; this point underwrites why it is that proper names designate relationally, as opposed to satisfactorily. At the level of context-independent semantic properties, then, an expression should be counted as a proper name if it is tailored for such unstructured uses and typically used to designate in this relational way. (In other words, while more or less any designator may be used as a name (e.g., ‘the Penguin’, ‘the New Found Land’, ‘Dances with Wolves’), the notion of semantic reference does not apply to all such uses of designators, but only those which have attained a certain (vaguely-defined) conventional status.

As for the relation between the arguments of this section and the Russelian orthodoxy about reference, then: We began from the familiar observation that proper names are paradigmatic referring expressions. To that we add arguments for a tight intrinsic connection between the notions ‘proper name’ and ‘unstructured designator’—lack of structure (in the relevant sense) is a necessary condition for an expression to be used as a proper name. Again, as in the case of the arguments of Chapter 3, my claim is definitely not that the following two premises formally entail [R iff U], or indeed anything:

[P1] Proper names are referring expressions.
[P2] To use a designator as a proper name is to use it in an unstructured way.

Rather, again, this is a further, considerable brush-stroke on the canvas. If a designator is used as a name, then it is used in an unstructured way,
and if a designator is used in an unstructured way, then the proposition expressed by the utterance in which it figures must be object-dependent. (In the other direction, if the proposition expressed with an utterance is object-independent, then the sentence uttered must include a structured designator.) Given the tight links between naming and reference, these connections between naming and structure constitute further reason to think that there is an intrinsic connection between structure and reference, i.e., between the conventional, stipulative relation that holds between unstructured expressions and their designata, the expression of object-dependent information, and the lacking (or inertness) of meaningful proper parts.

4.3 THE COUNTERFACTUAL TEST

I turn now to a way of illustrating and further reinforcing these above claims about structure and naming. While the immediate aim is to bolster some of the central points of this chapter, there is a widely applicable method instanced here which will prove useful in Part III when it comes to distinguishing object-dependent from object-independent information in difficult, contested cases. Most generally, the mechanism described in this present section plays a central role when it comes to drawing out the ways in which the modal-savvy developments in the theory of reference, spearheaded by Kripke, serve to bolster the case in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference.

What I will call ‘the counterfactual test’ is a diagnostic method that employs the possible-worlds framework to discriminate fine distinctions among semantic contents, originally developed in the course of Kripke’s (1972) battery of arguments against descriptivist theories of proper names. The archetype instance of this test is the modal argument, which starts with an utterance such as:


What would it take for a counterfactual situation to be correctly described as one in which [1] is true? Well, it would not suffice for the teacher of Alexander to be fond of dogs, or for the author of *Metaphysics* to be fond of dogs, or . . .—and so on, for any (ordinary, non-modal) description believed to be true of Aristotle. Since it is contingent that Aristotle taught Alexander, the truth values of [1] and ‘The teacher of Alexander is fond of dogs’ can vary independently. Similar reasoning shows that no description that Aristotle contingently satisfies affords a means of specifying the correct truth-condition; this is a problem for any view which takes names to be semantically equivalent to descriptions.

The idea I will try to develop is that the modal argument is just one instance out of a range of possible employments of a generally applicable
method. I will call this method ‘the counterfactual test’. The test involves focusing on a given utterance and then considering various different contexts of evaluation. The point of the original employment of the counterfactual test, i.e., Kripke’s modal argument, is that the truth-conditions expressed by utterances containing names are object-dependent, not object independent. More generally, though, this method of considering truth-conditions across various possible contexts of evaluation provides a useful means of constraining the set of plausible interpretations of what is semantically expressed with an utterance of a sentence.

I will use this test to further illustrate the connection between naming and structure developed above. Consider the following case of a descriptive name. Suppose, following Kripke (1972: 79), that Leverrier introduces ‘Neptune’ to designate the cause of the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus. Suppose further that he subsequently truly asserts:

\[ [2] \text{Neptune has a diameter of over 40,000 kilometers.} \]

Now consider these two possible interpretations of the content expressed by [2]:

\[ [2, \text{OI}] \quad \text{(the } x: x \text{ is the cause of the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus)} \]
\[ x \text{ has a diameter of over 40,000 kilometers} \]
\[ [2, \text{OD}] \quad \alpha \text{ has a diameter of over 40,000 kilometers} \]

[2, OI] is an object-independent proposition, which interprets ‘Neptune’ as a satisfactional, vicariously structured term—more or less exactly as Russell (1911) interprets ordinary proper names. [2, OD], in contrast, is the object-dependent proposition which Kripke interprets Leverrier as asserting; the description just fixes the reference of ‘Neptune’, but then plays no further constitutive role in the semantics of the term.

The counterfactual test affords a clear way to determine which of these two Leverrier intended to assert. We sit Leverrier down and ask him to consider various possible scenarios:

(i) one in which a moon of Jupiter with a diameter of 20,000 kilometers caused the perturbations, while (the intrinsic duplicate counterpart of) our actual Neptune has negligible influence on Uranus
(ii) one in which an asteroid with a diameter of 10,000 kilometers caused the perturbations, while (the intrinsic duplicate counterpart of) our actual Neptune has negligible influence on Uranus

And so on. Then we ask Leverrier: If it had turned out that, say, (i) were the actual state of affairs, would the original utterance of [2] have been true or false? If Leverrier says true, then [2, OD] is what the original utterance of [2] was intended to express. If he says false, then he was
using ‘Neptune’ as a vicariously structured term and intended to express \([2, \text{OI}]\). What I am calling the counterfactual test, then, is in this case a way of deciding between these two possible interpretations of an utterance of \([2]\).

Now, according to the thesis about naming and structure developed in the last section, the counterfactual test also tests whether Leverrier has used ‘Neptune’ as a name. That is, he has used ‘Neptune’ as a name only if he has expressed \([2, \text{OD}]\). Naming is intrinsically linked to the stipulative, relational expression of object-dependent information. (If there is in natural language any such thing as vicarious structure in the sense defined in Chapter 3, §3, then it is quite distinct from the sense of ‘naming’ explicated in this present chapter.) This distinctive kind of answer to the counterfactual test, according to which the proposition expressed is shown to be object-dependent by considering various contexts of evaluation, then is an important consequence attendant upon using a term as a name.

Again, there is more on the counterfactual test and its pertinence to our central theses, in Part III.\(^{16}\) This is among the key innovations of Kripke’s which goes directly to furthering the Russellian agenda in the theory of reference. The distinction between object-dependent and object-independent truth-conditions has always lain at the core of Russell’s bifurcation; Kripke affords a way to strengthen some of the old arguments and develop some new ones afresh by systematically considering truth-conditions across counterfactual situations.

### 4.4 NAMES VS. PRONOUNS

Many demonstrative (e.g., ‘this’) and indexical expressions (e.g., ‘he’) are unstructured designators—i.e., atomic and lacking meaningful proper parts. However (as is stressed in several of the excerpts cited in the middle of §4.2), such expressions differ from names in having a clear and distinct character, and thus in not instancing exactly the same stipulative link that is characteristic of a naming convention. I will say a bit here about differences between proper names and these kinds of terms to ward off the suggestion that they pose counterexamples to any claims I am making about names in this chapter. (There will be more extensive discussion of how unstructured indexicals relate to the central theses in Part IV.)

One important minimal point is simply that my claim is that lack of structure is a necessary condition for being a name, not a sufficient one; so even if there are terms distinct from proper names which are unstructured in the relevant sense, still that is consistent with the central theses. Further to that, much can be said about the differences between names on the one hand, and demonstratives and indexicals on the other. For example, there
is a clear sense in which these expressions are referentially promiscuous, while names are relatively monogamous. Demonstratives and indexicals are suited to singling out something in particular only so long as that thing satisfies the relevant character or role semantically associated with the pronoun; in contrast, names are tailored to continue to fit one particular individual throughout its history, even across various contexts. Names are much more stable tags; they are better suited to tracking individuals over time and throughout accidental variations. A proper name is stipulated to designate one specific individual (relatively) permanently throughout its actual history and across counterfactual situations.

The reason why demonstratives and indexicals are relatively promiscuous (i.e., suited to singling out different individual in different contexts) is that they have a context-independent linguistic meaning, a stable character or role, that fits them out for work as sort of general purpose, temporary singular terms. (In this respect, pronouns are not like bicycles.) In contrast, there is no qualitative character or contextual role involved in being named ‘Betty’. (There is nothing semantically awry about naming a rock, Wednesday, or the square root of -1 ‘Betty’; unlike in the case of demonstratives or indexicals, in the case of an utterance of ‘Betty’ there are no pragmatic or contextual constraints on the relation between the speaker and the designatum—e.g., the referent of ‘you’ must be the addressee, the referent of ‘that’ [accompanied by a demonstration] must be the demonstratum, etc.) Competent speakers with access to the context of utterance can generally determine what is designated by a token of an indexical, but more than just such general context-independent linguistic knowledge is required in the case of a token of a name. So, even though some demonstratives and indexicals are semantically unstructured, their reference is not determined via exactly the same kind of stipulative link that is characteristic of proper names.

In any case, the most important present point is just that the phenomenon of unstructured indexicals shows that the necessary condition for using a term as a name developed earlier is obviously not also a sufficient condition. Again, there will be further consideration of the distinctive semantics of these expressions in Part IV. In addition to helping us to further hone the central theses, at that point I will also be able to use indexical pronouns to cash a check I wrote in Chapter 1—with respect to the question of whether the two definitions of reference I give there (one in terms of object-dependent information and one in terms of stipulative, conventional links to a designatum) are equivalent.

4.5 SOME IMPLICATIONS

The present section discusses some connections between the above-motivated connections between naming and structure on the one hand, and,
on the other hand, some longstanding issues in philosophical logic which pertain to the semantics of names.

4.5(i) On the Many Different Uses of Proper Names

The thesis defended in §4.2 concerns the typical use of proper names; it does not rule out any of the myriad varieties of non-typical uses of names as incoherent or illegitimate. It is no part of my view that proper names can only be used in only one way (or only two, or three, ways). I will elaborate some aspects of this important point.

First, as Kripke (1972, 1977) points out, something quite close to Donnellan’s (1966) referential/attributive distinction applies to proper names. For example, even though the *modus essendi* of such a designator as ‘Shakespeare’ is to be a semantically unstructured label, the truth-conditions of some utterances of the term depend on whoever authored certain works, not on whoever was so-dubbed. The term can be used attributively, as an abbreviation for a structured description. The view defended in this chapter is that referential uses of proper names are typical, while attributive uses of names are non-standard (and relatively rare). Proper names are devices of semantic reference; to use one literally is to use it to refer.

Second, this leads into the general point that proper names, like any expression, are amenable to an indefinite range of kinds of non-typical uses. In addition to attributive uses, a second kind of non-literal use of proper names is mentioned in Chapter 2, §2, and further discussed in Part III—e.g., ‘Check out Elvis over there’, ‘Way to go, Einstein’. This general point is important, because some (e.g., Burge (1973); Bach (1987, 2002)) are prone to make much of the fact that names can combine with determiners to form complex, structured designators. The following sorts of examples are alleged to raise embarrassing problems for the sort of view about names, which I defend here:

[2] Some but not all David Kaplans are philosophers.
[3] A David Kaplan joined our club this week.

However, I do not see that such cases pose much of a challenge. [1] strikes me as a rather straightforward meta-linguistic statement, containing an expression that designates a name-type and asserting that six distinct so-called individuals are listed in the book. Further, I think that the likes of [2] and [3] are appropriately suited to more or less exactly the same sort of analysis. That is, the expression ‘David Kaplan’ in [2] and [3] is being used elliptically for the expression ‘person named ‘David Kaplan”. What is asserted by an utterance of [2] or [3] is in this sense meta-linguistic. So, these cases do not have much potential to undermine the notion that proper names are referring expressions.
Names, like most any expression, can be used in multiple ways, but nonetheless proper names are devices of semantic reference. The typical and characteristic use of a name is as a semantically unstructured referring device.

4.5(ii) The Principle of Substitutivity

Questions concerning the notion of substitutivity lie at the root of the long-standing entrenched debates over the semantics of names. Under what conditions, or in which contexts, can co-designative names be interchanged without affecting truth-conditions or propositional content?

My thesis that the notion of semantic structure holds the key to the distinctive stipulative semantic link between name and named yields a clear sufficient condition for substitutivity—i.e., it strongly suggests that two terms used as names in the sense characterized above are, if co-referential, completely and without qualification semantically equivalent. This corresponds to Russell’s (1918: 245) criterion for individuating object-dependent propositions (alluded to earlier in note 5 of this chapter): If ‘a’ and ‘b’ are (i) both used as names and (ii) co-referential, then ‘Fa’ and ‘Fb’ express exactly the same proposition. This is, of course, a controversial view, but it is not without intuitive support. Given that to use a term as a name is to use it as an unstructured tag or label, it is compelling to think that co-referential tags are semantically equivalent, for the shape or sound of the tag per se is of no more semantic significance than the speaker’s pronunciation or the particular spelling conventions (e.g., ‘color’ vs. ‘colour’) to which the author adheres.

At least part of the reason why this sufficient condition for substitutivity is controversial is that co-referential tokens that are used as names obviously can differ in what, exactly, they communicate to a given audience. Related, there are familiar and considerable reasons to distinguish between the content of the attitudes ascribed by ‘S φs that Fa’ and ‘S φs that Fb’—where ‘φ’ is a propositional attitude verb, and ‘a’ and ‘b’ are co-referential names. The controversial question is whether those points are of any semantic relevance, as opposed to appropriately classified as non-semantic phenomena (e.g., subjective psychological vagaries, and/or amenable to a pragmatic explanation).25 Those who are inclined toward a negative answer to that question (i.e., to hold that mere differences of cognitive significance are semantically irrelevant) are likely to be attracted to the Russell-Kripke line about structure and names developed earlier. That is, it is natural (though not inevitable) to take the above sufficient condition for substitutivity to further bolster the controversial claim that the truth-conditions of an attitude ascription are not affected by interchanging co-referential names.26

Down this avenue, it is a mistake to think that Frege (1892a) discovers something significant about the semantics of proper names. Rather, Frege’s data concerns propositional attitudes, and it, per se, counts neither for nor
against any particular theory of proper names. In other words, this view has it that what Frege calls ‘informativeness’—according to which true ‘a=b’ statements can, but ‘a=a’ statements cannot, be informative—is not a semantically relevant notion. Hence, the above line on the close connection between naming and structure is in close affinity with, and further supports, the Kripkean (1971, 1972) line that what were commonly known as ‘informative identity statements’ involving names should be understood as necessary a posteriori statements. This dovetails with familiar Kripkean reasons to hold that the explanation of their a posteriority lies beyond the scope of semantic theorizing.

There is no necessary condition for substitutivity forthcoming down this avenue—in various contexts, relations much weaker than synonymy will license substitutivity. Substitutivity is a context-relative notion subject to shifting constraints; and so it seems that no hard-and-fast, context-independent, necessary and sufficient conditions for substitutivity are likely to be forthcoming. Notwithstanding all that, there is much to be said for the sufficient condition for substitutivity, limited to tokens of terms that are used as names.

Let me sum up this strand of discussion by considering the following question: If everything said in §4.2 is true, does this provide any vindication for Russell’s notion of a logically proper name? The answer is ‘yes’ and ‘no’. ‘Yes’ in that there is a fairly clearly delineated category of uses of designators that obeys Russell’s (1918: 245) criterion for individuating propositional content. If two designators used as names are co-referential, then they are completely equivalent from a semantic point of view. ‘No’ if we impose Russell’s stringent epistemological demands on the notion of a logically proper name. In particular, for Russell, if one is competent with the logically proper names ‘a’ and ‘b’, then there is no possibility that one judge that ‘a=b’ is both true and informative. Surely one of the least contentious cases of progress in the philosophy of language in the last century is the unanimous dissent from Russell on this point. The semantic questions (e.g., ‘What is it to use a term as a name?’ or ‘Is there a difference in content between true statements of the form ‘a=b’ and ‘a=a’?’) must not be conflated with the epistemic questions (e.g., ‘What does a hearer need to know to identify the content expressed with an utterance containing a name?’ or ‘Under what conditions would a given speaker find a true statement of the form ‘a=b’ informative?’). Any relations between these sorts of questions must be established by argument, and not assumed at the outset.

4.5(iii) Representation de re

The de rer de dicto distinction is another technical distinction that is tied in with these issues in the theory of reference in various ways. In addition to tying in with the distinction between object-dependent and object-independent information, the de rer de dicto distinction is also inextricably bound
up with various other sorts of modal matters. Nonetheless, it should prove worthwhile, in honing our central theses, to investigate some of the alleged relations between using a term as a name and representation *de re*.

I will focus on what I take to be the hardest case—the distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* attitudes. The case of *de re* vs. *de dicto* modal properties differs in several respects, but (as Kaplan (1968, 1986) and Kripke (1971, 1972) demonstrate, and Chapter 3 should help to elaborate) it is relatively easier if we keep an eye firmly on the distinction between rigid and nonrigid designators.

It is tempting to try to use our notion of using a term as a name in formulating a necessary and sufficient condition for an attitude to be classified as *de re*—i.e., an attitude is *de re* if and only if one of the terms required to express the content of the attitude is used as a name. (Cf. Jeshion (2002, 2010) for defense of this sort of claim.) Much caution is required though.

Note first that I am talking about attitudes, not attitude reports. The primary data to be explained here is that there are at least two very different sorts of propositional attitudes (e.g., believing that the candidate who gets the most votes will win the election vs. believing that Ralph Nader will win the election). There is a long-standing tendency to cast the primary data as a question about two different kinds of attitude reports, but it is becoming clear that the reports are a separate matter. There can be *de dicto* reports of *de re* attitudes and *de re* reports of *de dicto* attitudes (cf. Bach 2004, 2010).

Another requisite refinement is that the phenomena fall along a continuum, from clear paradigm *de re* cases through murky shades of grey to clear paradigm *de dicto* cases (e.g., at what point were the Inspectors at Scotland Yard able to entertain *de re* beliefs about Jack the Ripper? At what point was Leverrier able to entertain *de re* beliefs about Neptune?) To some extent, the correct theoretical explanation of the intermediate cases is a matter to be settled by stipulation, not investigation. In any case, it is evident that there are clear paradigm cases at the extremes—just because there is an indefinite range of shades of grey does not mean that nothing is either black or white, or that the concepts of black and white are insignificant.

Lastly, a lot rests on exactly what it means to say that a certain term is required to express the content of a certain attitude. Here again one of the qualifications mentioned in note 28 is important: What counts as an adequate or satisfactory expression of the content of an attitude is, to some extent, context-relative, varying widely from the pub to the courtroom to the philosophy seminar. Nonetheless, again there are clear paradigm cases at the extremes—you have to refer to Ralph Nader to express the content of my object-dependent belief that Nader will win the next election. In context, you may be able to do so with ‘he’ or a description used referentially, but you cannot express the content of that belief using a description—any description—attributively. Singular reference is essential to expressing the content of a *de re* attitude. (Indeed, this is part of why the *de re/de dicto*
distinction got all tied up with issues in the theory of reference in the first place—i.e., \textit{de re} attitudes involve object-dependent information, while \textit{de dicto} attitudes involve object-independent information.)

Given all that, the sufficient condition part of the above proposal—i.e., an attitude is \textit{de re} if one of the terms required to express its content is used as a name—is on relatively firm ground. If the term in question is used as a name (i.e., used in an unstructured way), then there simply is no \textit{dictum} (i.e., no sense, no identifying conceptual condition, etc.) available to figure in the content of the attitude. This reflects the fact that \textit{de re} attitudes essentially involve a particular \textit{res}. The necessary part of the proposal—i.e., an attitude is \textit{de re} only if one of the terms required to express its content is used as a name—is on less firm ground. For one thing, the proposal must be refined to include indexical pronouns, as pronouns can clearly be used to ascribe \textit{de re} attitudes even though they are not used as names. (The reason is that, as discussed earlier, unlike in the case of names, a distinctive kind of context-independent character or role is involved.) For another, the proposal may run afoul of some of the intermediate cases mentioned above. That is, there seem to be cases in which a \textit{dicta} (i.e., the semantic properties of the relevant expression) clearly plays a role in hooking up the agent to the object, but nonetheless there is some inclination to classify the attitude as \textit{de re}. (E.g., ‘The perpetrator of this crime was left-handed’ or many of Kripke’s (1972) contingent \textit{a priori} cases.)

So, contra Jeshion (2002, 2010), I am hesitant about the claim that naming is a necessary condition for an attitude to count as \textit{de re}.\textsuperscript{30} It is clear that the notion of naming is closely linked to the notion of a \textit{de re} attitude (i.e., both notions are integrally linked to object-dependent information), but it is much less clear how to weigh the theoretical pressures which push us toward distinct sharpening of the notion of a \textit{de re} attitude.

To sum up this strand, if we add the sufficient condition for substitutivity (from 4.5(ii)) to the sufficient condition for a \textit{de re} attitude (from 4.5(iii)), we get the following two fairly intuitive and closely connected principles: using a term as a name is sufficient for expressing an object-dependent proposition, and only attitudes toward object-dependent propositions count as \textit{de re}.

4.6 SUMMARY OF PART II

It will be useful at this stage to briefly revisit what has been developed, toward the end of a defense of the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. In Chapter 3, I argued that unstructured expressions are rigid; in Chapter 4 I have added arguments to the effect that lack of structure is the key to proper namehood. Given the evident connections between rigidity, proper names, and reference, this constitutes considerable evidence in favor of the central theses [R iff U] and [D iff S].
At a bit more length: The thesis of the present chapter is that the notion of semantic structure holds the key to the distinctive stipulative semantic link between name and named, and that this account gets us to the heart of what Russell and Kripke (among others) have in mind when they employ the notion of using a term as a name. It has long been thought that proper names lie at the heart of the phenomenon of reference; what I have added here is the notion that structure lies at the heart of the notion of a proper name. Here are a few pertinent principles defended in this chapter, whose purpose is to further bolster the Russellian orthodox picture:

- All proper names are unstructured designators.
- No designator that is used in a structured way is used as a name.

Likewise for Chapter 3, whose central conclusions are as follows:

- All (but not only) referring expressions are rigid.
- All (but not only) unstructured designators are rigid.
- All nonrigid designators are structured (in the relevant sense).

The aim of Part II, then, has been to clearly show the extent to which the notion of structure lies at the core of some central concepts in the theory of reference. Some of these morals will be helpful in Part III when it comes to sorting out the most tenable accounts of certain varieties of complex, molecular designator. For now, the dual purpose is to at once help to substantiate the content of the following table (which first appeared in Chapter 1, §2), as well as to further motivate the general picture it describes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of designator</th>
<th>Referring expression</th>
<th>Denoting expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semantic structure</strong></td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semantic mechanism</strong></td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Satisfactional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposition semantically expressed</strong></td>
<td>Object-dependent</td>
<td>Object-independent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is becoming clear that the importance of structure to reference is deep and pervasive and has not yet been generally acknowledged. The case is growing in favor of the orthodox Russellian exclusive and exhaustive fissure in the category of designators, between structured-denoting designators and unstructured-referring designators.
Part III

The *Prima Facie* Counterexamples
Interlude
Interim Review and a Look Ahead

The aim of Part II has been to assemble positive evidence in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy by excavating the connections between the notion of structure and some core concepts in the theory of reference. This mounting evidence will be added to and amplified as this work proceeds. However, I will now turn to putative counterexamples to these theses. Despite all these fancy, general grounds in favor of this particular conception of the relation between reference and structure, aren’t these theses just plain false in that they rule out as impossible types of expression which are current and common? As mentioned in Chapter 1, is it not evident that there exist structured referring expressions? Or, again, that unstructured denoting expressions are at least a coherent possibility?

In keeping with the literature, I take the strongest challenge to the central theses to be posed by putative structured referring expressions. In particular, both referential uses of definite descriptions (i.e., ‘the F’) and complex demonstratives (i.e., ‘that/this F’) are commonly conceived of in ways that seem to contradict both the [if R then U] and the [if S then D] clauses of the central theses. Consider:

1. The reigning world heavyweight champion will be here to sign autographs.
2. That big duck with the green head has an injured leg.

There are considerable grounds for classifying both of these italicized designators as structured referring expressions. First, there is reason to count them as structured, as they have meaningful sub-parts and semantically express compositionally determined conditions. Second, there is reason to count the designators as referring expressions, as sentences like [1] and [2] can be used to communicate object-dependent propositions. (That is, on these referential uses, the semantic relation between designator and designatum seems to be relational, not satisfactional. Much more on this to come.) So, regardless of whatever support for the central theses is to be found in reflection upon such concepts as rigidity and naming, if these above suspicions turn out to be warranted, then the central theses are untenable.
Hence, the major argumentative burden of Part III is to explain why it is that these sorts of cases do not spell the end for the central theses.

Of course, such questions like whether definite descriptions ought to be classified as referring expressions or whether complex demonstratives are structured in the relevant sense are not to be answered with just a quick glance at superficial appearances. There are in fact considerable arguments and counter-arguments to be digested, evaluated, and weighed. Appearances are at least as likely to mislead in philosophical logic as they are anywhere else—if anything even more so, as our subject matter (i.e., the phenomenon of reference in natural language) is so open-textured, dynamic, context-sensitive, and complex. Further, our understanding of the referring/denoting and structured/unstructured contrasts have undergone considerable refinements up to this point in the book, with much further fine-tuning still to come.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the case of referential uses of denoting expressions (such as [1] above), and Chapter 6 considers the case of complex referring expressions (such as [2] above). Of course, there are few, if any, issues in 20th-century philosophy of language—and perhaps even the discipline of philosophy as a whole—which have been the focus of as much scrutiny, counter-argument, and counters to the counter-arguments, than the semantics of definite descriptions. At this point in time, one could hardly even cover the topic comprehensively in a Ph.D. dissertation. The field has not been quite so crowded when it comes to complex demonstratives, though here too there has been much discussion and several competing theories developed over the last couple of decades.

On the one hand, then, it is clearly incumbent upon me to engage in serious depth with what I take to be the strongest prima facie counter-examples to the central theses. On the other hand, though, it is no part of the present project to get into a book-length treatment of descriptions or demonstratives. Therefore, it cannot be the aim of Chapters 5 or 6 to give a balanced, comprehensive treatment of these crowded sub-fields. Rather, the main aim is to describe and motivate one of the leading contenders within these debates, which I hold to be the most satisfactory account of the target phenomena, and to show that this preferred account is consistent with our central theses [R iff U] and [D iff S].

At the absolute minimum, it is incumbent upon me to show that countenancing structured referring expressions or unstructured denoting expressions is not inevitable or necessary. As long as there is some alternative coherent and plausible account of all the relevant data, then the central theses are not proven false. If, in addition, the positive arguments of Part II are persuasive, then the present essay should be accounted some measure of success in its primary intended aim.

Of course, though, I will aim much higher than that. My goal in Chapters 5 and 6 is to show that (all things considered) the most satisfactory accounts of such phenomena as referential uses of descriptions or complex
demonstratives are, despite some reasons to the contrary, consistent with our central theses. The present tasks are paradigm instances of the kind of Rawlsian reflective equilibrium that I am after, in general, in the essay as a whole; independent motivation for the general theoretical principles \[\text{R iff } U\] and \[\text{D iff } S\] creates a preference for accounts of these target phenomena that accords with those general principles, and the intrinsic merits of the following accounts of these target phenomena lend further credence to these general theoretical principles.

To help orient the discussion, I will state here in a very rough way my preferred strategy for accounting for referential uses of descriptions and complex demonstratives. The main thesis of Chapter 5 is that definite descriptions ought to be classified as structured but not referring expressions, and the main thesis of Chapter 6 is that complex demonstratives ought to be classified as referring expressions but not structured (in the relevant sense). At a bit more length: All things considered, the distinction between the speaker’s meaning and semantic meaning affords the best account of the phenomenon of referential uses of descriptions, and complex demonstratives turn out to be typically used in a certain distinctive kind of unstructured way. As will be detailed further, both accounts are consistent with the central theses.

It should come as no surprise that I will uphold the Russellian orthodoxy concerning referential uses of definite descriptions, since one of the core motivations for this entire work is the conviction that Russell’s referring/denoting distinction marks one of the greatest leaps forward in the ancient philosophical task of drawing a principled distinction between object-dependent and object-independent information. This might suggest an easy way with complex demonstratives, given recent developments of the idea that complex demonstratives are but a variety of description. However, I cannot take that easy way in good conscience (for reasons which will be discussed at length in Chapter 6). It would be rash to hold that there are no deep, substantive similarities between the two cases. (For example, both complex demonstrative and definite descriptions belong in a category that I will call ‘dual-purpose NPs’—i.e., they conventionally both single out and characterize a designatum.) Still, the data compel me toward the conclusion that descriptions are structured denoting expressions while complex demonstratives are referring expressions which lack structure (in the relevant sense).
5 Referential Uses of Denoting Expressions

This chapter is dedicated to explaining why the phenomenon of referential uses of denoting expressions should not be understood in a way that contradicts the central theses. Most importantly, I will argue against classifying referential uses of definite descriptions as structured referring expressions. §§5.1–2 are dedicated to preliminary discussion. In §§5.3–4 I will develop the orthodox Russellian response to the challenge of referential uses and explain how it withstands a number of objections that have been raised against it. Parts of §5.4, and all of §5.5, are dedicated to drawing out some morals that pertain to the central theses.

5.1 Speaker's Reference and Semantic Underdetermination

At this point I need to pick up a thread from Chapter 2 concerning the distinction between speaker’s meaning and semantic meaning. I mentioned there that a proper understanding of the connection between reference and structure depends on a more sophisticated grasp of this distinction than has yet been developed. In particular, this distinction is crucial to the arguments of Part III, which are dedicated to developing a satisfactory account of certain prima facie counterexamples. I will begin by motivating the semantic meaning/speaker’s meaning distinction a little further via discussion of a few examples, and then I will turn to expounding some concepts that pop up along the way, which will be important in the ensuing discussion.

Any well-formed expression has a semantic meaning, which can be thought of as a kind of context-independent potential to do communicative work.¹ Semantic meanings are general rules for use that competent speakers associate with expressions, upon which the expressions’ communicative potency rests. Consider the following:

[1] Why are you so lazy?
[2] Everyone is here now.
Each of [1]–[3] has a semantic meaning, which is a function of the context-independent semantic properties of their parts and the way in which they are combined. [1] clearly and obviously differs in semantic meaning from ‘Why are you so slow?’; [3] clearly and obviously differs in semantic meaning from ‘Way to go, Jimmy!’; and so on. Competent speakers of English will assign (more or less) the same semantic meaning to these sentences.

In contrast, speaker’s meaning is a property of utterances of expressions. (If you like: semantic meaning is a property of types, but speaker’s meaning is a property of specific, dated tokens.) Speaker’s meaning is never completely independent of semantic meaning, but even the staunchest of conservative literalists concede that semantic meaning does not always completely capture the speaker’s communicative intentions. With an utterance of [1], for example, the semantic meaning is a certain particular question about the cause for or explanation of the addressee’s laziness; but in this case the speaker is likely to be posing a rhetorical question, and indirectly speaker-meaning that the addressee is lazy. In this kind of non-literal or indirect speech act, while the semantic meaning is a question, the speaker’s meaning is an implied statement. In the case of [2], the semantic meaning is just a general-purpose character or role for saying that all of the members of some group are presently at some proximal, salient location. The speaker’s meaning in such a case is not likely to be a different kind from the semantic meaning, as in the case of [1], but rather to be much more specific than this context-independent semantic meaning (e.g., all the students in Philosophy 2210 are in classroom A-1043 at five after noon on Friday February 2; or all the members of our party are at the airport at 9 am on Wednesday November 10; or etc.). [2] illustrates the generally prevalent phenomenon of semantic underdetermination—i.e., the ubiquitous cases in which the context-independent semantic properties of the expressions used seem to fall short of characterizing the content expressed. (There is further discussion of semantic underdetermination immediately below.)

[3] illustrates the special case of speaker’s reference vs. semantic reference, first discussed in Chapter 2. The semantic referent of ‘Einstein’ is, of course, Einstein; but it is not uncommon to encounter non-literal (i.e., ironic) uses of the name to assert that the speaker’s referent (i.e., some contextually salient individual) has done something stupid. Nonetheless ‘Einstein’ does not semantically mean either Einstein or whoever is the contextually salient person who the speaker has in mind. Rather, the speaker’s referent can be distinct from the semantic referent in this kind of non-literal speech act. So, more generally, the semantic meaning of [3] is a compliment to Einstein’s efforts, but this sentence is commonly used non-literally to speaker-mean that some specific contextually salient person is deserving of abuse and mockery.

So, then it is undeniable that there are general conventions linking well-formed expressions to semantic meanings, and that these (more or less vague) conventional regularities are the basis of a community-wide framework to
be exploited in communicating information with others. Semantic meaning may be thought of as potential to (combine with various sorts of contexts of utterance and) do various kinds of communicative work. The question of how often or how far or how typically speaker’s meaning outruns semantic meaning will be left completely open for present purposes—speaker’s meaning might always outrun semantic meaning, as radical contextualists hold, or it might only do so in (relatively rare) non-literal speech acts, as the conservative literalists hold. Given the core goal of explaining why certain phenomena should not be taken to constitute counterexamples to the central theses, all that I crucially need from the general theory of speech acts is that: (i) well-formed expressions have semantic meanings (i.e., context-independent semantic properties); (ii) there are various kinds of speech acts in which speakers use language to systematically express things distinct from, or over and above, the relevant semantic meaning; and (iii) the distinction between semantic reference and speaker’s reference is one instance of this more general distinction between semantic meaning and speaker’s meaning.

Now, thus far, I have not at all ventured beyond the elementary Gricean picture of speech-act theory sketched by Kripke (1977: §3(b)) or Neale (1990: Ch.3). But of course, much has transpired since that era within the branches of linguistics, psychology, and the philosophy of language which study pragmatics. Indeed, Neale (2004: 173) has himself conceded that some subsequent developments (which are described further in this chapter) “undermine . . . the standard, wooden, Gricean explanation” of some relevant phenomena. (As we will see, Neale is specifically critical of his own (1990) analysis of referential uses of descriptions for being too glib and superficial in certain respects.) Again, though, when it comes to our goal of defending the central theses [R iff U] and [D iff S], a comprehensive treatment of subsequent developments within the study of pragmatics would be a distraction. For example, even Neale (2004, 2008), after going far deeper in these waters, is still of the opinion that a refined and updated neo-Gricean picture is up to the task of incorporating the phenomenon of referential uses of definite descriptions into a view which encompasses the central theses. On the evidence, it seems reasonable to hold that no subsequent development in semantics or pragmatics undermines, or even drastically changes the situation with respect to, points (i)–(iii) cited in the last paragraph, and they are what is essential to the core arguments of this chapter.

Before turning to those arguments, though, I must go a bit further into two concepts which will be important to the discussion: the phenomenon of semantic underdetermination and the notion of a pragmatic regularity.

Semantic underdetermination is the mundane and ubiquitous phenomenon wherein what speakers communicate with a literal use of an expression seems to go beyond the semantic properties of the relevant expressions per se. For example, it is plausible to hold that what is literally semantically expressed in context by the use of the following which outstrips the semantic meanings of the constituent bits:
A conservative literalist might dismiss such cases as loose talk—that is, merely leaving the obvious unsaid for the sake of convenience—but it seems that even an otherwise completed, neither vague nor ambiguous sentence (e.g., ‘John finished Sally’s book’) can be used to express an indefinite number of distinct propositions (e.g., John finished binding the book that Sally wrote; John finished reading the book that Sally recommended for their book club; John finished writing the book that he dedicated to Sally; etc.). Contextualists take the kind of creative, supplementary interpretive process which Recanati (2004a, among other places) calls ‘free enrichment’ to be the norm, not a peripheral and circumscribed oddball (e.g., when we hear ‘She took out her key and opened the door’, we take the sentence to assert that she opened the door with the key).

Down this avenue, contextualists take semantic underdetermination to be a key element in a series of considerations that show that the work of conservative literalists is of limited scope and of questionable relevance. Relatedly, contextualists hold that traditional conceptions of the semantics-pragmatics interface are neither all that clear nor all that important, since these challenges to literalism suggest that—even in such thoroughly mundane and simple cases—pragmatic interpretive processes are required prior to identifying truth-conditions. Conservative literalism is by no means dead, though. To a literalist, the radical contextualists’ conclusions are at best drastically unwarranted and at worst a barely coherent reactionary fad. There are grounds to be pessimistic as to the prospects of any theory of linguistic interpretation that does not give central importance to literal meanings or to the semantics/pragmatics divide.

My aim here is to flag this debate, not to try to resolve it. The questions of the extent and proper theoretical treatment of semantic underdetermination are difficult, contentious, open questions in the study of language. They are also deeply relevant to the issue of referential uses of denoting expressions, as we shall see below. One specific and distinctive sub-case of semantic underdetermination will be especially relevant—namely, the problem of quantifier domain restriction. We typically take sentences such as the following to make significant, and possibly true, assertions:

[2] Everyone is here now.
[7] There is no coffee left.

The quantifiers are not taken to range over the entire universe—otherwise neither [2] nor [7] would, as a matter of fact, ever semantically express truths. Hence, such constructions in natural language are generally taken to be restricted quantifiers—quantifiers that range over some limited (more
or less vague) contextually salient domain. The fact that there is coffee on the island of Sumatra does not contradict my utterance of [7] at 7 am in my kitchen because Sumatra is clearly outside of the relevant contextually salient domain.) What, then, determines the exact truth-conditions for such cases? Again, this is a massive and difficult open question in the philosophy of language. To the extent that definite descriptions, among other denoting expressions, have quantificational semantics, the same complications will pertain to ‘The book is on the table’ or ‘The car broke down’. As we will see, this point must be kept in mind, when it comes to addressing some of the putative counterexamples to the Russelian orthodoxy about definite descriptions.

5.2 AMBIGUITIES VS. PRAGMATIC REGULARITIES

As for the notion of a pragmatic regularity, consider again:

[1] Why are you so lazy?

Even if this question is used rhetorically to make a statement much more often than it is used literally to ask a question, that would not entail that its semantic meaning is assertoric as opposed to interrogatory. To the contrary, the regularity in question should be understood as a pragmatic one, and should not be understood as semantically encoded or determined. Compare [1] with the following:

[8] How old are you?

While literal uses of [1] seem to be statistically rare—e.g., a therapist might sincerely ask it to her patient—[8] is a case concerning which there are plenty of literal uses, as well as plenty of non-literal, indirect uses (e.g., to admonish a person for acting immurely). Surely one wants to say that, from the point of view of semantic meaning, [1] and [8] belong in the same category, and in the same category of interrogative sentences which are (as a matter of fact) never actually used to make the above kind of non-literal, indirect speech act. It is a pragmatic regularity that [1] is used rhetorically more commonly than [8], or that [8] is used rhetorically more commonly than, say:

[9] What is your mother’s maiden name?

From a semantic point of view, [1], [8], and [9] belong in the same category despite these differences of usage. Certainly, one who wanted to argue that [1] is semantically ambiguous between an interrogative meaning and an assertoric meaning would be
subject to pretty rough handling. There would be serious questions both pertaining to the theoretical motivation for these putative assertoric meanings, and pertaining to the boundaries of the category.

Similarly, consider again:


Regardless of how statistically common ironic, non-literal uses of ‘Einstein’ (or ‘Elvis’, to cite another example) have become, these are facts about usage and about speech acts, not about the semantics of these particular proper names. Just as it is implausible to claim that [1] and [8] are semantically ambiguous—even worse, that [8] is more semantically ambiguous than [1] on the one hand or [9] on the other hand—so too it is implausible to hold that these regularities of ironic usage concerning ‘Elvis’ and ‘Einstein’ show or entail that these names are semantically ambiguous. Surely one does not want to say that the currency of these kinds of ironic, mocking uses of ‘Einstein’ (and ‘Elvis’ or ‘Socrates’, etc.) has engendered the terms with a new semantic meaning. Among other complications, that option would also bring in its train a host of difficult questions, concerning the precise boundaries of this distinctive kind of ambiguity.

To the contrary, this kind of communicative regularity too is, on balance, best explained in terms of pragmatic implicature—i.e., the message is carried by *the use of that sentence in that context*, as opposed to by what [3] semantically expresses. All things considered, the claim that these names are semantically univocal, but that they are subject to a pragmatic regularity, seems much more satisfactory.

More generally, then: the fact that speakers often use questions (e.g., ‘Why are you so lazy?’ or ‘Who do you think you are?’) rhetorically, to make statements, does not mean that the interrogative form is semantically ambiguous; and the fact that speakers often use compliments (e.g., ‘Way to go!’) sarcastically, to insult, does not show that the relevant sentences are semantically ambiguous. In each case, the literal semantic meaning is operative and plays a role in the further non-literal, indirect speech act. The regularities in question are pragmatic ones, and should not be understood as semantically encoded or determined.

This notion of a pragmatic regularity stems from Grice’s (1975, 1989) seminal factorization of what is communicated with a use of a sentence (in context) into what is semantically expressed and what is pragmatically implicated. It immediately follows from Grice’s factorization that not all differences in what is communicated by two expressions $E_1$ and $E_2$ (in context) should be counted as, or traced to, a difference in what $E_1$ and $E_2$ semantically express. (A key sub-case is where $E_1 = E_2$, in which case the question is whether the relevant expression should be understood as ambiguous.) This was a devastating blow to some strands within the ordinary language tradition in philosophy, which fed on case-by-case cataloguing
of subtle distinctions between what is communicated via different uses of certain terms.14

More generally, though, Grice’s factorization has a drastic and across-the-board effect on how philosophers can go about motivating conclusions about meanings. In the wake of Grice’s factorization, it is more difficult to draw any conclusions, back or forth, between what is communicated and what is semantically expressed. One cannot establish synonymy merely on the basis of sameness in what is communicated, nor can one refute a claim to synonymy by pointing to a difference in what is communicated.15 One would have to address the alternative of a pragmatic explanation in order to justify any such conclusions.

So, some multiplicities of use are cases of semantic ambiguity; but crucially not all are. Some should be understood as pragmatic regularities—i.e., cases in which one expression with its univocal semantic properties has come to be used in diverse ways. As we will see, this notion of a pragmatic regularity is especially crucial to a clear view of the notion of referential uses of denoting expressions.

5.3 THE RUSSELLIAN ORTHODOXY ON DEFINITE DESCRIPTIONS

The claim to be defended in this section is that definite descriptions should not be classified as structured referring expressions. The most central reason is that, following Russell (1905), definite descriptions should be classified as denoting expressions, not referring expressions. There are good grounds for holding that designators of the form ‘the F’ belong in the same semantic category as those of the form ‘an F’ or ‘all Fs’—i.e., that ‘the’ is a quantifier, not a device of semantic reference.16 To the extent that this is so, definite descriptions pose no counterexample to the central theses [R iff U] or [D iff S].

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the fundamental and distinctive Russellian claim about definite descriptions is that utterances of sentences in which they occur semantically express object-independent propositions. For starters, take a sentence like:

[1] A man I met yesterday on the road to Sligo gave me a bottle of water.

Now consider two different contexts of utterance, in both of which [1] is true; one in which Alf was the only man I met, the other in which Bert was the only man I met. The claim that [1] semantically expresses an object-independent proposition is precisely the claim that utterances of [1] in these two different contexts would semantically express exactly the same proposition (regardless of the fact that they would be about different men—in the attenuated sense of ‘aboutness’ which Russell calls ‘denoting’). Even if it is
the case that there is exactly one man I met yesterday on the road to Sligo, still what is semantically expressed by my utterance of [1] concerns only concepts and does not specify any particular individual. 17

Russellians claim that (almost 18) exactly the same holds of an utterance of:

[2] The man I met yesterday on the road to Sligo gave me a bottle of water.

Here again, only a compositionally determined condition is essential to the content of the proposition semantically expressed with an utterance of [2]—i.e., the content of the proposition stays constant across contexts of evaluation in which distinct individuals, or no individuals, satisfy the relevant compositionally determined condition. (I.e., whether we are considering a context in which I met Alf, or Bert, or no one, an utterance of [2] would semantically express exactly the same object-independent proposition.) Phrases of the form ‘the F’ denote, rather than semantically refer to, individuals. On this view, the truth-condition of what is semantically expressed by an utterance of [2] is captured by the following first-order formula:

\[ 2^* \exists x (\forall y (Gy \leftrightarrow y=x) \& Fx) \]

(‘G’ symbolizes the predicate ‘. . . is a man I met yesterday on the road to Sligo’ and ‘F’ symbolizes the predicate ‘. . . gave me a bottle of water’.) 19

In short, the notion of reference is primarily relevant to the central theses is semantic reference, and semantic reference concerns an expression’s context-independent semantic properties; further, the context-independent semantic properties of descriptions—unlike the cases of, say, proper names, demonstratives, or personal pronouns—are object-independent. Descriptions typify the satisfactional connection, which is characteristic of object-independent propositions. That is, the semantic relation between expression and denotation is mediated via a compositionally determined condition, and hence different individuals might be denoted in different contexts of evaluation. Thus, from a semantic point of view, definite descriptions belong on the denoting side of the referring/denoting contrast.

Seminal statements of some big problems for Russell’s theory include Strawson (1950) and Donnellan (1966). While each of these papers raises lots of different challenges and charges, one point that both press is that speakers often use definite descriptions in the course of communicating object-dependent propositions (i.e., propositions whose truth-conditions are not plausibly captured by any quantified formulae, along the lines of [2*]). That is, one might utter [2] with the intention of expressing that Alf gave you a bottle of water, such that what you intended to express would be false in a context in which Alf did not meet you on the road to Sligo and give you some water—regardless of whether anyone else did. Simple examples abound:
[3] The car is being repaired today.

It is not contentious that definite descriptions can be used to refer and that such sentences can be uttered with the intention to communicate object-dependent information (i.e., propositions whose truth-condition across counterfactual situations is relationally tied to a specific individual). Following Donnellan (1966), I will call uses of definite descriptions to communicate an object-dependent propositions ‘referential uses’, and uses of definite descriptions to communicate object-independent propositions ‘attributive uses’. Prima facie, referential uses of definite descriptions pose some tension with Russell’s theory of the semantics of definite descriptions.

The standard Russellian response to the challenge of referential uses is that such uses of definite descriptions are an instance of the more general phenomenon of referential uses of denoting expressions; which is, in turn, an instance of the more general phenomenon of speaker’s meaning diverging from semantic meaning.20 First, as Neale (1990: 88) and Bach (2004: 203) explain, all denoting expressions lend themselves to the distinctive kind of speaker-meaning that Kripke calls ‘speaker-reference’.21 However, that an expression can be used to speaker-refer does not entail that it is a device of semantic reference. (Consider the case of a parent communicating an object-dependent proposition about exactly one child by saying, “Some-one needs to wash their hands before dinner”. Or, to borrow an example from Bach (2004: 203), the expression ‘three thugs’ may be well-suited to the expression of object-dependent information—e.g., ‘On my way over here, three thugs attacked me and stole my wallet’—but nonetheless, ‘three thugs’ is not semantically ambiguous between its standard quantificational reading and, on the other hand, a referring expression which designates the three specific assailants.) The question of semantic reference concerns the expression’s typical use, the best all-things-considered account of its context-independent semantic properties. Russellians have given considerable grounds for categorizing definite descriptions as devices of semantic reference; and it is far from clear that considerations pertaining to speaker-reference could undercut or outweigh those grounds.

Now, to be sure, there is a much stronger case for classifying definite descriptions as devices of semantic reference than there is for any other kind of denoting expression. Definite descriptions especially lend themselves to referential uses, precisely because they semantically single out exactly one individual. When one wants to express object-dependent information about an unnamed individual or about an individual whose name is not mutually known among present interlocutors, definite descriptions are often the best means available. Still, there is nothing here that a Russellian must downplay or whitewash. Given the Russellian claim that definite descriptions are denoting expressions whose compositional semantics single out exactly one individual, then it is not at all surprising (let alone
inconvenient or embarrassing) that referential uses of them are “common, standard, regular, systematic, and cross-linguistic” (Neale 2004: 173). The definite description’s one univocal, quantificational semantics is still evident and operative on referential uses. So definite descriptions stand out among denoting expressions as the best tailored for referential uses, but it is far from clear that this does anything to undermine the Russellian’s case.

So, consider again:

[3] The car is being fixed today.

The Russellian’s claim is that an utterance of [3] semantically expresses the object-independent proposition that there is one car (salient, in the relevant domain of discourse) and that it is being fixed today. To use this description attributively is to use it to express this sort of object-independent proposition. Attributive uses are thus literal, in the sense that the speaker’s meaning is identical to the semantic meaning.

Now, a speaker may well utter [3] with the intention to communicate an object-dependent proposition, but the apparatus that is already out on the table can accommodate this phenomenon. Like any sentence, [3] can be used to communicate something distinct from its semantic meaning. Even further, unlike any sentence, sentences like [3] especially lend themselves to referential uses, precisely because definite descriptions semantically single out exactly one individual. In the case of a referential use, the speaker of [3] has a specific car in mind, and intends to communicate an object-dependent proposition about it. Necessary conditions for the hearer to understand what has been said include (i) that she identify the object, and (ii) that she grasp that the truth-conditions are object-dependent. The semantic meaning of the expression ‘the car’ fits it out for this sort of use in appropriate contexts.

This phenomenon is consistent with the Russellian picture. The need for the distinction between speaker’s meaning and semantic meaning has long been evident, and it suffices to ground an explanation for how one univocal word ‘the’ would admit of these different sorts of use. Semantic meanings provide a context-independent framework for our creative use; referential uses of definite descriptions are among the most inevitable of non-literal uses. A simple, comprehensive explanation has the potential to cover an indefinitely broad range of cases. The fact that speakers often use questions (e.g., ‘Why are you so lazy?’) rhetorically to make statements does not mean that the interrogative form is semantically ambiguous; the fact that speakers often use compliments (e.g., ‘Way to go, Einstein!’) sarcastically to insult does not show that the relevant sentences are semantically ambiguous; and the fact that descriptions can be used to express object-dependent propositions does not undermine the Russellian analysis of the semantics of ‘the’. In each case, the literal semantic meaning is operative, and plays a role in the further post-literal speech act. The regularity in question is a pragmatic one, and should not be understood as semantically encoded or determined.
The standard Russellian response to the challenge of referential uses, then, concedes that they are common and significant, while still insisting that attributive uses are also common and significant. A decisive way to tell which kind of use is intended, with a particular utterance of ‘The F is G’, is Kripke’s counterfactual test (introduced at Chapter 4, §3), concerning truth-conditions across contexts of evaluation. We consider a non-actual context of evaluation in which (the individual that the speaker is presuming that the audience is presuming to be) the actual F is neither F nor G, but some distinct individual that is both uniquely F and G. If the original utterance should be counted false at that context of evaluation, the use is referential; whereas if the original utterance should be considered true at that context of evaluation, the use is attributive.

To illustrate: suppose that we are watching the news (in 2007), and at an appropriate point I utter:

[5] Only the President of the United States would try a stunt like that.

Whether the description is used referentially or attributively, either way George W. Bush is the intended designatum. But nonetheless there are differences here—for if the description was used referentially, then I have referred to him and expressed an object-dependent proposition; but if the description was used attributively, then I have merely denoted him and expressed an object-independent proposition:

\[
\text{[5, OD]} \quad \text{only} \quad \alpha \quad \text{would try a stunt like that} \\
\text{[5, OI]} \quad \text{(the} \quad x: \quad x \quad \text{is the President of the United States) only} \quad x \quad \text{would try a stunt like that} \]

\[25\]

\[
\text{[5, OD]} \quad \text{is about the audacity of a certain man; [5, OI] is about the audacity that uniquely fulfilling a certain office or role would bestow on anyone.}
\]

Now, how can we tell whether this use is referential or attributive?

The answer depends entirely on the speaker’s intentions. One asks the speaker: ‘Suppose that Al Gore were the President of the United States in 2007; suppose further that, even in that case, Gore would not, but Bush nonetheless would, try a stunt like that. Would what you asserted be true or false in this context?’ If the speaker says ‘true’, then the use is referential; if ‘false’ then attributive.\[26\]

Once again, the counterfactual test provides a useful means of discerning whether truth-conditions are object-dependent or object-independent. We will have further use for this test at several points later on.

5.4 FURTHER PROBLEMS AND IMPORTANT REFINEMENTS

Now, to be sure, this is a crowded field, and there have been several other problems raised for the Russelian orthodoxy about descriptions in addition
to (and in some case further developing) the challenge of referential uses. Some of these I will not get into at all—such as what Neale (2004, 2008) calls the “argument from anaphora” and the “argument from nesting” because I think that there is little to be said about them in the wake of previous rebuttals, and they do not seem to me to raise issues that are pertinent to refining my central theses. I will also not get into the provocative challenge that descriptions ought to be understood as predicates, not quantifiers, (cf. Graff (2001) for a powerful recent statement). That, too, would take us far afield from my central theses; for if Graff’s thesis is true, that would be an interesting result about (at least some) structured denoting expressions, as opposed to a devastating blow to my central theses. Furthermore, though, it is a core pillar of the Russellian orthodoxy that, from a semantic point of view, Russell’s middle course which treats definite descriptions as akin to referring expressions in some respects and akin to predicates in other respects is intrinsically superior to any view which assimilates descriptions to either referring expressions or predicates. (This last point will be further elaborated later on at Chapter 6, §4, and Chapter 7, §3.)

As noted at a couple of points above, some other anti-Russellian challenges have played roles in convincing Neale (2004, 2008) that his (1990) defense of Russell was, in important respects, somewhat glib and superficial. My view is that amplifying and extending the above sketch of the Russellian orthodox response can address some of these challenges. There is for example the “argument from convention”:

... referential uses are common, standard, regular, systematic, and cross-linguistic; indeed, so much so that it would be a bit rich to deny that such uses are conventional, a direct function of linguistic meaning in a way that referential uses of other determiner phrases are not (Neale 2004: 173).

Neale agrees with Reimer (1998) and Devitt (2004), among others, that this argument “undermines ... the standard, wooden, Gricean explanation of referential uses” (2004: 173). Another case in point here is Schiffer’s (1995, 2005) and Devitt’s (2004) “argument from psychological parity.” The idea here is that, in context, ‘The woman is insane’ and ‘She is insane’ (for example) communicate exactly the same content; hence ‘the woman’ has as strong a claim to conventional referring status as does ‘she’.

However, while these challenges prompt refinements to both the orthodox Russellian position and the neo-Gricean theory of speech acts on which it relies, I do not see much here to deeply trouble the idea that our central theses are safe on the referential-descriptions front. The argument from psychological parity, for example, is best accommodated via the notion of a pragmatic regularity—i.e., that ‘The woman is insane’ conventionally communicates an object-dependent proposition no more entails that ‘the woman’ refers than that ‘Why are you so lazy?’ conventionally communicates a
statement entails that that statement is semantically expressed by the question. Related, the argument from convention misdiagnoses some predictable effects of the fact that definite descriptions are unique among denoting expressions in that they semantically single out exactly one individual. All things considered, these sorts of consideration do little to undermine the wealth of syntactic and semantics reasons for classifying definite descriptions on the denoting side of the referring-denoting divide.

Closely related to the challenge about referential uses (and also constituting a central strand of Strawson’s (1950) arguments) is the problem of incomplete descriptions. This is another of the challenges that convinced Neale (2004, 2008) to amend his (1990) view. I will discuss this problem a bit further here, since it taps into some centrally important points about linguistic communication.29

Incomplete descriptions (also sometimes called ‘improper’ descriptions) are the thoroughly common and mundane cases in which the condition semantically expressed by the designator falls far short of uniquely specifying a particular individual. (While paradigm cases of incomplete descriptions are also paradigm cases of referential uses, it is widely conceded, and important to bear in mind, that incomplete descriptions can also be used attributively.) For example, consider Strawson’s (1950) now canonical example of “The book is on the table.” Given that uniqueness is built into the Russellian truth-conditions for definite descriptions, there is an obvious problem here. Do such constructions semantically entail that there exists exactly one book and exactly one table? Do such sentences (containing incomplete descriptions) always literally express falsehoods? Since neither of those options seems all that attractive, what then should the orthodox Russellian say about seemingly true statements involving incomplete descriptions?

Stretching back to when Strawson (1950) first raised this problem, there are two Russellian strategies for handling this challenge. The explicit-Russellian response is that the speaker will have in mind some particular uniquely identifying description, which the speaker might have said but omitted for reasons of style, convenience, laziness, etc. (e.g., the book which I borrowed from you last week . . .), while the implicit-Russellian response is that there is always an implicit background restriction on the context of utterance, and it is uniqueness over that delimited domain that matters. (In a room in which there were five tables, all with books on them, “The book is on the table” would not be a useful thing to say; and if that sentence is used more helpfully in a room in which just one table is salient, there is not the slightest reason for a Russellian to claim that it semantically entails that there exists only one table in the universe.) Neale (1990: §3.7) provides an important discussion of this implicit/explicit debate, in which he leaves it as a draw, an open question in pragmatics. Either strategy might be right, perhaps even both are right in some unforeseen synthesis, but that is for the future of pragmatics to decide. In any case, Neale held that there is no serious challenge for Russell’s theory of descriptions forthcoming here.
Again, Neale (2004: *passim* but especially 105–11) is critical of his (1990: §3.7) glibness about this issue, and goes far deeper into the matter. As in the case of the argument from convention and on the question of incomplete descriptions, literature emerged in the interim that convinced Neale that there is a more serious challenge to Russell’s theory here than he had assumed. For example, problems for both the explicit and the implicit approaches have been pressed by Schiffer (1995, 2005), Bezuidenhuit (1997), Reimer (1998), and Devitt (2004).

To be sure, the explicit Russellian strategy has come under some fairly heavy criticism since 1990. (Devitt (2004) does quite a thorough job of arguing against the explicit strategy30, and cf. Recanati (2004b: 22) for discussion and references, in which he says: “I have the feeling that most theorists nowadays consider such a theory as preposterous and hardly worthy of a serious reply.”) It seems to presuppose or embody a position on semantic underdetermination that now seems quite hopeless. Consider also the following blunt but insightful remarks:

> When [a use] of a description is made, the task of the audience is surely to fasten upon the right *object*, rather than upon the right candidate description; there will be several equally good candidates between which it would be quite pointless to choose. (Evans 1982: 325)

> [To know which entity is the intended designatum is] a single piece of knowledge which can be given in countless different ways by countless different descriptions. (Wiggins 1975: 11)

So, while it would be theoretically convenient forRussellians if communication involving descriptions functioned in this way, it does seem completely implausible to presume or demand that speakers always have some such unique completion in mind. This avenue does not seem to be worth pursuing further.

Given that, the most promising line of response to the problem of incompleteness is the implicit-Russellian response.31 If descriptions are quantifiers, and since there is generally an implicit, background restriction on the domain over which any quantifier expression ranges (e.g., ‘*Everyone* is here now’, ‘*There is* no coffee left’, etc.), then it is to be expected that incompleteness is “common, standard, regular, systematic, and cross-linguistic”32 when it comes to communication involving definite descriptions. However, down this avenue, we are heading into some massively open questions in the theory of linguistic interpretation—including especially the general problem of quantifier domain restriction, and the related but more general question of the exact upshot for systematic semantic theorizing of the phenomenon of semantic underdetermination. The general prevalence of semantic underdetermination is, as is to be expected, manifest in the case of definite descriptions too.33
So, on the one hand, here I recognize an important exposed flank for my central theses—i.e., a Russelian needs a good answer to the problem of incomplete descriptions, and an explanation of how it is that that answer is compatible with the central theses. On the other hand, it seems unreasonable to demand that a proponent of the central theses must come up with a comprehensive account of domain restriction (and, more generally, of semantic underdetermination), or else give up on any theses about reference and structure. For my general argumentative purposes here, what matters is that definite descriptions are in the same boat as quantifier expressions generally, when it comes to these kinds of questions. The arguments from convention and from psychological parity might be thought to suggest otherwise and to show up something distinctive about the semantics of definite descriptions, but I have explained above why I think that these arguments should not be taken to do so.34

The problem of incomplete descriptions is how the generally acknowledged phenomenon of semantic underdetermination is manifest, for the case of this particular kind of quantifier in natural language. In general, we do not completely unambiguously semantically characterize the propositions we semantically express—compare, e.g., ‘I am ready’ and ‘I will be back later’. If I use, say, ‘the car’ referentially, my intention is to express an object-dependent proposition. The expression ‘the car’ has a certain semantic meaning that fits it for this sort of use in appropriate contexts. Barring unforeseen complications, my audience will fasten on the appropriate object and grasp the proposition I intend to express. Given unforeseen complications, I will have to say more. Similar points apply not only to other quantifiers such as ‘everyone’ and ‘there is’, but to ubiquitous varieties of expression, such as ‘ready’ and ‘later’. At this stage in the dialectic, it seems that those who want to press a special problem for Russelian approaches to definite descriptions are unfairly holding ‘the’ be held to a higher standard than the rest of the lexicon.

In the absence of compelling reasons to think that the correct account of semantic underdetermination, or of quantifier domain restriction, is incompatible with the central theses, then, it seems that proponents and opponents of the central theses are afloat in the same boat on these difficult open questions.

Let me now take stock, and review what has been assembled toward the end of demonstrating why I hold that [R iff U] and [D iff S] are safe on the referential-descriptions front. For a defender of the central theses, the biggest problems for Russell’s theory are these considerable reasons to classify definite descriptions as structured referring expressions. However, to the contrary, there are stronger grounds on which to hold that, considered at the level of expression-types, definite descriptions are denoting expressions, not referring expressions. To the extent that that is so, then referential uses of descriptions pose no compelling counterexample to our central theses. When a definite description is used typically or literally, then speaker
meaning and semantic meaning coincide and an object-independent proposition is semantically expressed. Semantic meaning provides a framework for our creative use; referential uses of definite descriptions are among the least creative and most inevitable of non-literal uses.

Russell’s theory of descriptions, then, is an independently motivated account of a major *prima facie* counterexample to the central theses on which, contrary to some initial appearances, referential uses of descriptions pose no tension for the central theses. In the next section, I aim to show that some of the morals of this approach to referential uses of denoting expressions also have clear and illuminating application to some other *prima facie* counterexamples. In particular, the important, general claim that I take this phenomenon of referential uses of descriptions to illustrate is this: Any complex designator that is used referentially (i.e., with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition) is used in an unstructured way.

5.5 MISDESCRIPTIONS AND TRUTH-CONDITIONS

Qua expression-types, definite descriptions belong in the category of denoting expressions—and so in this respect differ from some other dual-purpose NPs such as molecular names (e.g., ‘Louis XIV’)—as argued in Chapter 4—and complex demonstratives (e.g., ‘that big green-headed duck’)—as I will argue in Chapter 6. However, referentially used tokens of definite descriptions still have much in common with both molecular names and complex demonstratives—i.e., there is reason to hold that all of these complex designators are often if not typically used in unstructured ways. In these cases, it is typical that speaker meaning and semantic meaning can diverge. Let me elaborate this point a little here; I will come back to it at various points of the ensuing chapters.

The characteristic mark of an unstructured use of a molecular designator is a certain kind of gulf between speaker’s meaning and semantic meaning. This gulf is most evident in cases where compositionally determined semantic meanings diverge from the properties of the intended designatum (e.g., ‘The United Nations cannot reach consensus on anything’). To illustrate how this pertains to referential uses of descriptions, suppose that you and I are in the courtroom in which Jones is on trial for Smith’s murder. A considerable amount of circumstantial evidence points toward Jones as the perpetrator, there are no other suspects, Jones has confessed, etc., etc.—i.e., you, I, and everyone else believes that Jones, acting alone, murdered Smith. At a certain point, as Jones is behaving erratically, I turn to you and say:

[1] Smith’s murderer is insane.

This is a referential use, and an object-dependent proposition about Jones is intended to be sent and is successfully received. But suppose further that,
while Jones is in fact insane, he is also in fact innocent of this crime. Finally, suppose further that the person who is—unbeknownst to all—the real perpetrator is perfectly sane. Does this referential utterance of [1] thereby semantically express a falsehood?

This is a complicated question, to which it is virtually impossible to give a non-stipulative, knock-down answer. What I shall do instead is take the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers in turn and explain why neither poses any problem for the Russelian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. First, if the answer to the question is ‘yes’, then there is no tension between referential uses of descriptions and our central theses. If this utterance of [1] semantically expresses a falsehood, despite the fact that a true object-dependent proposition is intended to be sent and successfully received, then the designator is treated as a (satisfactional) denoting expression with no constitutive semantic link to the speaker’s object-dependent referential intention. From a semantic point of view, this utterance consists of a garden-variety structured denoting expression just doing its typical thing and expresses the following:

\[[1, \text{OI}] \ (\text{x: x is Smith’s murderer}) \ \text{x is insane}\]

However, of course, from a pragmatic point of view another proposition may be afloat.

On the other hand, if the answer to that question is ‘no’, then this utterance of [1] is understood as semantically expressing something true:

\[[1, \text{OD}] \ \alpha \ \text{is insane}\]

In this case, the central theses are still on safe ground, though for a different reason. To embrace this option is to concede Donnellan’s (1966) contention that one of the deep and central differences between referential and attributive uses is that something true can be expressed with a referential use of a description even if the description in fact misdescribes its intended target. That is, to take this option is to hold that, in the case of a referentially used description, the relevant common nouns are what Donnellan (1966: 233) calls “inessential”—“merely a device for getting one’s audience to pick out or think of the thing being spoken about, a device which may serve its function even if the [common noun is applied incorrectly].”

If so, though, then referential uses of descriptions are unstructured uses of complex designators. Remember again the contrast: A use of a complex designator is structured if and only if the token is used to designate that which (in the relevant context) satisfies the compositionally determined condition the term semantically expresses; a use of a complex designator is unstructured if and only if the token is used stipulatively to designate one specific entity, regardless of how well or ill the designatum fits the relevant compositionally determined condition. So, even if a designator has
meaningful sub-parts, if its designatum is not a function of the meanings of those proper parts, then it is being used in an unstructured way. That is the question of structure that is relevant to the central theses. On this second option, then, the central theses are still on safe ground because to the extent that we have here an instance of reference, we also and thereby have a designator that lacks structure, in the relevant sense.

Either way, our central theses are safe. At the level of expression types, descriptions are denoting expressions, not referring expressions. If a description is used in a structured way, then it is used attributively and expresses an object-independent proposition (i.e., \([\text{if } S \text{ then } D]\)). If a description is used to refer and to express an object-dependent proposition, then it is used in an unstructured way (i.e., \([\text{if } R \text{ then } U]\)).

Therefore, given the key refinements between speaker meaning and semantic meaning, and between structured and unstructured uses of designators, referential uses of denoting expressions pose no counter-example to our central connections between the stipulative relation of reference, the lack (or inertness) of proper parts, and the expression of object-dependent information.
6 Complex Referring Expressions

The arguments in Chapter 5 are intended to address one central class of putative counterexample to the central theses. Its core idea is that some of the things that seem to be structured referring expressions are better categorized as a certain fairly well-understood kind of use of a denoting expression. However, it is not part of my view that anything that appears to be a structured referring expression can or should be understood in this way. For example, in Chapter 1 I argued that Boolean referring expressions are complex designators that should not be understood as denoting expressions, and in Chapter 4 I argued that the same is true of molecular proper names. (Of course, I also explained at those junctures why both concessions are consistent with the central theses of the Russellian orthodoxy.)

However, in keeping with recent trends in the literature, I take the largest remaining challenge to be the case of complex demonstratives. The main argumentative burden of this chapter is to argue that, all things considered, complex demonstratives do not pose a serious problem for the central theses about reference and structure. While complex demonstratives are in my view referring expressions, they crucially turn out to lack structure (in the relevant sense).

The plan is as follows: In §6.1, I will describe the problem which complex demonstratives pose for the central theses of the Russellian orthodoxy and explain why I will not avail of one common way of alleviating this problem. The aim of §6.2 is to ward off the suggestion that complex demonstratives should be understood in a way that is inconsistent with the central theses. In §6.3, I sketch and motivate one particular account of complex demonstratives, on which they count as unstructured referring expressions. Finally, in §6.4, I will compare and contrast some varieties of complex designators.

6.1 THE CHALLENGE OF COMPLEX DEMONSTRATIVES

A complex demonstrative is a designator composed of a demonstrative expression conjoined with a nominal expression, which may be atomic or
molecular (e.g. ‘that cat’ or ‘this bald, happy, rich man’). The *prima facie* tension between complex demonstratives and the central theses is obvious—it seems that they are at once structured in the relevant sense, and that they ought to be classified as devices of semantic reference. Consider again:

[1] *That big duck with the green head* has an injured leg.

The italicized designator certainly has meaningful sub-parts, and the use of the sentence (in context) certainly seems to semantically express an object-dependent proposition.

Recently, complex demonstratives have gotten a lot of press and there are a variety of views on the market. In general, for those sympathetic to the central theses, there are two possible courses of action: either deny that complex demonstratives are referring expressions or explain why it is that they ought not to be classified as structured designators. There are proponents of the view that complex demonstratives are quantifiers, and so not referring expressions; and, to be sure, there are some considerable arguments in favor of this view that complex demonstratives and definite descriptions belong in the same semantic category. (Some of these will receive brief mention below in this section; some others will be come up in the discussion of dual-purpose NPs in §6.4.)

However, all things considered, my attitude toward quantificational analyses of complex demonstratives is akin to my attitude towards the explicit Russellian response to the problem of incomplete descriptions described in Chapter 5, §4—namely, while it would be awfully convenient for a defender of the central theses if it were true, I cannot accept it on its own grounds. There are two premises to my argument that complex demonstratives should be understood as devices of semantic reference, and hence are not satisfactorily understood as quantifiers. The first is that there are strong intuitive semantic grounds in favor of the thesis that demonstratives, whether complex or not, are referring expressions. The second is that the arguments that complex demonstratives must be understood as quantifiers have been successfully countered, and so do not attain their aim. Most of this section is dedicated to elaborating and developing the first reason, though I will also have a little to say about the second reason.


[1] *That big duck with the green head* has an injured leg.
[2] *The tallest person in this room* is wearing glasses.

Because of the satisfactual relation of denoting instanced by the italicized designator in [2], which individual is relevant to the truth-conditions semantically expressed by [2] varies according to circumstances. That is,
Complex Referring Expressions

regardless of whether the description is used referentially or attributably, I argue in Chapter 5 that a use of [2] (in context) semantically expresses an object-independent proposition.

In contrast, despite some evident similarities between complex demonstratives and definite descriptions, the italicized designator in [1] seems to instance a relational connection, not a satisfactional one. Crucially, if it were pointed out to me that:

(i) my intended referent’s head was not in fact green, but only mistakenly appeared to me to be green, though its leg is injured
(ii) there is nearby another big duck, who was really green-headed, and whose legs were completely healthy

I would not have the slightest inclination to think that I had said something false about this other duck. Again, this contrasts with [2]—if, unbeknownst to me, there was a taller person in the room who did not have glasses on when I utter [2], I would in this case be inclined to say that I have said something false of that person.

This kind of counterfactual consideration bolsters the intuition that [1] instances the relational semantic connection which is characteristic of reference and (in context) semantically expresses an object-dependent proposition. Initially, it might have been thought that the following are both candidates for the content expressed with my utterance of [1]:

\[ [1, OI] \; (\text{x: x is the salient big green-headed duck}) \; \text{x has an injured leg} \]
\[ [1, OD] \; \alpha \; \text{has an injured leg} \]

However, the above consideration at least strongly suggests that what is semantically expressed is [1, OD]. This is a considerable reason to count complex demonstratives as referring expressions.

Consider further an example discussed by Segal (2001: 550): “Suppose that I own a cat, Mina. We hear a commotion at the door. We think it’s Mina, but it’s another cat, Mog.” Here there are differences between Segal’s uttering the following:

\[ [3] \; \text{The cat wants to come in.} \]
\[ [4] \; \text{That cat wants to come in.} \]

My intuitions line up exactly with Segal’s on this case—i.e., [3] is a statement about Mina (that is, presumably, false; though it may be true by coincidence), but [4] is a statement about Mog. This is a nice illustration of the point that the designation in [3] is satisfactional, whereas the designation in [4] is relational. Kripkean considerations bolster this point, as again the possible-worlds truth-conditions differ among the two cases.
As I see it, complex demonstratives are among the very paradigm cases of devices of semantic reference (along with proper names, bare demonstratives, indexical pronouns, and nominal forms of kind terms). The characteristic role of a demonstrative, whether complex or not, is to single out a specific individual in the course of expressing an object-dependent proposition. This role is definitive of semantic reference, the necessary and sufficient condition for club membership. Despite the similarities between complex demonstratives and definite descriptions, then, I take Neale (1999: 72) to have articulated the fundamental difference between the two cases as follows:

. . . [I]t is part of the meaning of ‘that’ that the speaker has in mind some object or other that the hearer is meant to identify; it is part of the meaning of ‘the’ that the speaker may have such an object in mind.

In other words, ‘that’ is a device of semantic reference, whereas ‘the’ is well fitted for speaker-reference in addition to its literal quantificational role.

The referring/denoting contrast depends upon whether the semantic mechanism at work is relational or satisfactional. Definite descriptions can be used in either way, as we have seen. However, it is typical for complex demonstratives to instance the relational semantic mechanism, and much more difficult to understand them as designating satisfactionally. This is related to the fact that scope ambiguities are much harder to identify for the case of complex demonstratives, as compared to definite descriptions. To illustrate, consider first the following canonical examples of sentences that exhibit the distinctive scope ambiguity:

[5] The present King of France is not bald.
[6] The first human in space might have been American.
[7] Jones wants to marry the richest debutante in Dubuque.  

Now compare them with the following:

[5a] That man is not bald.
[6a] That duck might have been American.
[7a] Jones wants to marry that debutante.

These last three sentences just do not exhibit the same ambiguities. Even King (2001a, 2008), whose view that complex demonstratives are quantifier phrases motivates him to find the relevant ambiguities, concedes that they are much harder to find for complex demonstratives than for definite descriptions.

To be sure, I have not come close to engaging with King’s (2001a, 2008) efforts to motivate scope distinctions for complex demonstratives.
For present purposes, it suffices to underline the lengths to which King has to go toward that end, which I take as itself enough to show that there is a significant difference between definite descriptions and complex demonstratives on this front. When it comes to scope ambiguities in natural language, there are non-trivial differences between complex demonstratives and definite descriptions—which is exactly what one would expect if these expressions belong on different sides of the referring/denoting divide.

So, there are some strong grounds in favor of the claim that complex demonstratives are devices of semantic reference, which differ in significant ways from definite descriptions (regardless of how the descriptions are used). As I understand the referring/denoting divide, given the presence of relational (as opposed to satisfactional) designation and the semantic expression of object-dependent propositions, complex demonstratives should be understood as referring expressions.

What, then, of the arguments to the contrary? Again, there are proponents of the thesis that demonstratives must be classified as quantifiers. However, in my view their arguments have been successfully countered by considerations raised by Borg (2000), Dever (2001), Corazza (2003), Salmon (2006), Neale (2007, 2008), and Braun (2008). Given that, and given that there is not much promise for refinements of our central theses down this avenue—since, again, the view that complex demonstratives should be understood as quantificational is consistent with the central theses anyway—I will proceed on the assumption that complex demonstratives are devices of semantic reference.

Hence, it seems that the only option left open to me is to explain why it is that complex demonstratives ought not to be classified as structured designators (in the relevant sense). The aim of the next two sections is to do exactly that, drawing on and extending some important distinctions and morals already drawn. In particular, I will reinforce and extend an extremely significant point which began to emerge in Chapter 4 and was further developed in the latter parts of Chapter 5: Any complex designator that is used referentially (i.e., with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition) is used in an unstructured way.

### 6.2 MISDESCRIPTIONS AND TRUTH-CONDITIONS, REVISITED

There are a variety of theoretical accounts of the semantics of complex demonstratives which treat them as referring expressions, some of which are arguably in tension with the central theses (e.g., Braun (1994, 2008), Borg (2000)) since there is a clear sense in which such views treat complex demonstratives as structured. How, then, are complex demonstratives to be understood, such that they are referring expressions, and yet not inconsistent with the central theses?
For starters, the case of complex demonstratives forces a defender of the central theses to think more clearly about the connection between relational designation and the structured-unstructured distinction. We have already refined our understanding of this connection at a few junctures when it comes to various other sorts of dual-purpose NPs. A pertinent impending critical question is: What is the semantic relevance of the nominal material in the case of a sentence containing a complex demonstrative?

To illustrate, consider the following scenario: suppose we are at a picnic and, while you are momentarily distracted, I notice that a bird is lurking dangerously close your food. I say:

[1] That duck is after your sandwich!

Suppose further that the prospective sandwich-thief is in fact a seagull, not a duck. The question is: Is what is semantically expressed by [1] true? As in the case of referentially-used descriptions (discussed in Chapter 5, §5), all parties in this debate concede that there is something felicitous and something awry about such cases; but different theorists assign different weight to these conflicting intuitions. The majority of those who have addressed this question, answer no to it—typically in conjunction with the claim that the speaker might nonetheless pragmatically communicate something true. Still, there are those who answer yes—i.e., that what is semantically expressed may be true despite the nominal being strictly, literally inapt. Undoubtedly, many who have considered the question have dismissed it as inconsequential. However, in this section I will explore what hangs on these contrastive options, and connect this question to some substantive ones about the central theses.

The analogous question concerning the case of definite descriptions (discussed at Chapter 5, §5) has a more storied history, with some Donnellan-inspired philosophers tempted to argue that something true can be semantically expressed in such cases of misdescription, and to argue further from there that this constitutes a decisive counterexample to Russell’s (1905) account of the truth-conditions of ‘The F is G’. However, if there is consensus on this question, it is that the intuition that something true can be semantically expressed in such cases is not strong enough, and not common enough, to be decisive. (Cf. Neale (1990: §3.6) for discussion and references.) For similar reasons, I do not want to rest any important claims on intuitions about the truth-conditions of [1] above. What I will do instead is (akin to what I did in Chapter 5, §5) is consider whether either answer to this question, concerning the semantic relevance of the nominal material, is inconsistent with the central theses of the Russellian orthodoxy.

The kind of test case under discussion is that in which: (i) a speaker utters “This/that F is G” with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition, (ii) the relevant individual is G, and (iii) the relevant individual is not in fact an F. I will designate the view that what is semantically expressed
is false in such test cases as ‘the semantic treatment of the nominal’, and
the view that what is semantically expressed might still be true in such test
cases as ‘the pragmatic treatment of the nominal’.

The guiding idea behind the semantic treatment of the nominal is that
it is, in general, a necessary condition for semantically expressing a literal
truth with a sentence of the form ‘This/that F is G’ that the relevant object
in fact be an F, just as surely as that the relevant object be a G. I will
sketch one line of argument for the semantic treatment. To begin, we might
think of the literal meaning of a sentence as what the semantic module of
a competent speaker delivers upon processing a token of the sentence. It is
what competent speakers know about the sentence’s information content
and speech act potential, in absence of knowledge of the relevant features
of the context of utterance. It is generally conceded that literal meaning is
compositional, though there is considerable diversity as to exactly how the
literal meanings of the constituent atoms should be understood—i.e., as
Frege’s senses, Russell’s referents, Wittgenstein’s rules for use, Recanati’s
(2004a) semantic potentials, etc. Nonetheless, it is generally conceded that
it is intelligible to talk about a semantic module in this functional sense,
and that a correct theoretical description of it is a tractable, distinctive
component of a comprehensive account of linguistic communication.

The argument continues: It is crucial to distinguish, in rigorous theoreti-
cal work on language, between the work done by the semantic module and
the work done by extra-semantic, general-purpose knowledge and strate-
gies. (Here Davidson (1986) provides a convenient arch-enemy as he seeks to
“erase the boundary” between the semantic module and that blend of “wit,
luck, and wisdom” that constitutes “knowing our way around in the world
generally.”) To not pay careful heed to this distinction, the argument con-
tinues, is to open the flood-gates to a hoard of provocative conjectures (e.g.,
about metaphorical meanings, referential meanings, pragmatic meanings,
etc.) which are ultimately premised on fuzzy-headed confusions between
semantic and pragmatic considerations, and which constitute barriers to
furthering our theoretical understanding of linguistic communication.

Proponents of this line of argument hold that it is good solid methodol-
ogy to hold that: (i) the semantic module is a distinctive sub-component of
our linguistic competence, (ii) the semantic module delivers literal meanings,
and (iii) literal meanings determine (more or less precise, as the case may
be) conditions for literal truth. Thus, these test cases should be classified as
literally false. Like any complex phenomenon, linguistic communication will
only submit to a comprehensive theoretical explanation if we keep separate
its distinctive sub-components, and one canonical conception of one crucial
sub-component provides motivation for this answer to our focal question
about the semantic relevance of the nominal in a complex demonstrative.

One can concede the general force of the above line of argument, though,
without accepting this alleged entailment for our present test cases. An
intuition motivating the opposite verdict about the test cases—i.e., the
pragmatic treatment of the nominal—is the thought that the fundamental job of a device of semantic reference is to specify the subject of discourse in the course of expressing an object-dependent proposition. To the extent that a complex demonstrative can very well succeed in this, even if the nominal is not factually apt, there is some reason to prefer a pragmatic treatment of the nominal. I will next sketch a case for this pragmatic treatment.

A typical utterance of ‘This/that F is G’ should be factored into two proper parts: (i) the speaker’s primary communicative intention is to assert that this/that is G, and (ii) the nominal ‘F’ plays a role which Loar (1976, 1991) calls the ‘referential qualifier’.

In the case of [1], for example, the primary communicative intention prompting the utterance is to specify a certain salient prospective thief and warn the audience about its sinister intentions. The referential qualifier ‘duck’ is selected to aid the audience in identifying the relevant individual. (As Evans (1982: 312) puts it, the role of the nominal in a complex demonstrative is to “narrow down the range of possible interpretations of the [demonstrative].”)

Now, it is not implausible to hold that the referential qualifier in a complex demonstrative is ‘inessential’ in Donnellan’s (1966: 283) sense—i.e., it is “merely a device for getting one’s audience to pick out or think of the thing being spoken about, a device which may serve its function even if [it is applied inaccurately].” Proponents of the pragmatic treatment of the nominal see this as a case in which we ought to follow Kaplan’s (1975: 320) advice:

[S]ome or all of the [expressions] used in an utterance should not be considered part of the content of what is said but should rather be thought of as contextual factors which help us interpret the actual physical utterance as having a certain content . . .

The suggestion is that we take the referential qualifier to be off the semantic record; what is semantically expressed with a typical utterance of ‘That F is G’ is simply the proposition that that is G. Since the referential qualifier is inessential, off the semantic record, its literal inaptness need not entail that the utterance cannot semantically express a truth.

Getting back to the big picture, the important pending question is this: Do either of these contrastive views spell serious trouble for the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference? Let us take the semantic treatment first—i.e., the view that [1] semantically expresses something false in the imagined scenario. At this point in the dialectic, it seems that the proponent of the semantic treatment is committed to denying that complex demonstratives are referring expressions, in the sense of that term that has been defined and refined herein. They are committed to understanding the semantic connection between ‘that duck’ and its designatum as satisfactional, and hence to assigning object-independent truth-conditions to this type of sentence. That is, they run afoul of the considerations articulated in §6.1 above, concerning the differences in possible-worlds truth-conditions of the following contrastive pairs:
[1] That big duck with the green head has an injured leg.
[2] The tallest person in this room is wearing glasses.


If the test cases are understood as semantically expressing falsehoods (i.e., the semantic treatment of the nominal) despite the fact that a true object-dependent proposition (i.e., that $a$ is G) was intended to be communicated and successfully received, then the designator is treated as an object-independent denoting expression with no constitutive semantic link to the relevant object, via the speaker’s object-dependent referential intention.

In other words, consider these possible candidates for the content expressed by [1]:

1. [1, OI] (the x: x is the salient big green-headed duck) x has an injured leg
2. [1, OD] $a$ has an injured leg

It seems that proponents of the semantic treatment of the nominal are committed to the claim that something along the lines of [1, OI] specifies or characterizes what is semantically expressed. First, I find this to be unsatisfactory for the reasons given in the previous section—i.e., demonstratives, whether complex or not, instance relational designation, not satisfactional designation. Second, to the extent that it is committed to treating the complex demonstrative as a satisfactional, structured denoting expression, in this crucial respect, the semantic treatment of the nominal would not constitute a counterexample to the central theses anyway.

On the other hand, though, if the test cases are understood as semantically expressing a truth (i.e., the pragmatic treatment), then the central theses are still on safe ground, though for a different reason. On this sort of view, typically used complex demonstratives are clearly not used in a structured way, in the relevant sense. The reason is that even though they have independently meaningful proper parts, their designatum is not simply a function of the meanings of their proper parts. Unlike in the case of a structured use of a complex designator—say, an attributive use of a definite description—the designatum of a token of a complex demonstrative (e.g., ‘that duck’ or ‘this bald, happy, rich man’) is not simply that which satisfies the condition specified by the compositional procedure imposed by the semantic properties of its constituent bits. Something could count as the designatum of a demonstrative even if it does not satisfy the condition expressed, even if it is clearly distinct from the expression’s semantic reference; and that makes all the difference for the question of structure that is pertinent to the central theses. Rather, as in the case of molecular names or referentially used descriptions, there is a stipulative, relational connection.
at work with a typical use of a complex demonstrative, and the speaker’s intentions in the context of utterance have to be discerned in order to identify the designatum.

Therefore, on the pragmatic treatment of the nominal, typical referential uses of complex demonstratives should not be classified as structured uses. To the contrary, at the level of expression types, complex demonstratives should be viewed as composed of an unstructured demonstrative referring expression (i.e., ‘this’ or ‘that’) conjoined with one or more nominals. The device of semantic reference is the demonstrative ‘this’ or ‘that’; the nominals play the role which Kaplan (1975) characterizes as “contextual factors which help us interpret the actual physical utterance as having a certain content,” or which Loar (1976, 1991) calls a “referential qualifier.” Given that the referential qualifier is truth-conditionally inert, then complex demonstratives are typically used in an unstructured way. Hence, the pragmatic treatment of the nominal, too, is consistent with the Russelian orthodoxy.

The main conclusion of this section, then, is that complex demonstratives should not be taken to constitute a counterexample to the central theses about reference and structure. Contrary to initial appearances, they should not be understood as structured referring expressions. Any complex designator that is used referentially (i.e., with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition) is used in an unstructured way. More generally, any molecular designator is either used in a structured way (in the relevant sense) and so not used referentially, or else is used referentially but should not be classified as structured.

Furthermore, given that complex demonstratives are devices of semantic reference (as argued in §6.1), then there is reason to favor the pragmatic treatment of the nominals—i.e., it better fits with the semantic phenomenology, with the presence of relational as opposed to satisfactional designation. On this sort of view, then, complex demonstratives should be understood as molecular designators, which tend to be used in an unstructured way; the only device of semantic reference is the unstructured proper part ‘that/that’. The next order of business is to sketch such a theory of complex demonstratives.

6.3 FACTORING THE COMPONENTS OF A COMPLEX DEMONSTRATIVE

For a variety of reasons, I have gravitated toward the view that complex demonstratives break down into two distinct proper parts: an unstructured demonstrative (‘this’ or ‘that’) and a nominal, which may be either atomic or molecular and which plays the kind of guiding role which Loar (1976, 1991) calls ‘referential qualifier’. Crucially, the referential qualifier is ‘inessential’, in Donnellan’s (1966: 233) sense—i.e., it is “merely a device for
getting one’s audience to pick out or think of the thing being spoken about, a device which may serve its function even if [it is applied incorrectly].” To the extent that the nominal can perfectly well play this kind of role without being remotely precise\textsuperscript{13} or even factually accurate, then typical uses of complex demonstratives belong in the category of unstructured uses of complex designators.

One variety of approach to complex demonstratives, which accords with these core ideas, is the multiple-propositions approach. Multiple-proposition theorizing in the philosophy of language is a fairly recent and fairly diverse movement, whose central uniting strand is the rejection of the widespread implicit assumption that a simple indicative sentence (in context) semantically expresses at most one proposition.\textsuperscript{14} Varieties of multiple-proposition theory have been developed by at least Perry (1993, 2001), Richard (1993), Bach (1999), Neale (1999, 2001), Dever (2001), Corazza (2002, 2003), and Potts (2005, 2007).\textsuperscript{15} The guiding idea here is that the best way to handle certain cases which Frege (1892: 75) famously characterizes as involving “more thoughts than clauses”—e.g., “Even Alfred has arrived” or “She was poor but honest”—is to countenance that in such cases a simple indicative sentence (in context) semantically expresses more than one proposition. Crucially, these multiple propositions are not related as conjunctions, presuppositions, entailments, or any other such familiar truth-conditional relation.\textsuperscript{16}

Perhaps the paradigm case for multiple-proposition treatment is what Grice (1975) called ‘conventional implicatures’—cf. Bach (1999) and Neale (1999, 2001) for exploratory work, and Potts (2005, 2007) for detailed development. In a different direction, Perry (1993, 2001) develops the idea that multiple-proposition theorizing may hold the answer to certain problems having to do with indexicality and cognitive significance, which loomed large in the wake of the development of externalist theories of reference. Most relevant to current interests, though, is the notion that certain dual-purpose NPs, and in particular complex demonstratives, fall into this “more thoughts than clauses” semantic category. There is an essential duality of purpose about these kinds of expressions, and (unlike the case of a particularized conversational implicature, for example) it is a function of the semantic properties of the expression uttered, independent of any specific features of the context of utterance.

Multiple-proposition approaches to complex demonstratives are developed by Richard (1993), Neale (1999, 2001), Dever (2001), and Corazza (2002). (For reasons that will become clear, I will employ Corazza’s terms.) Consider again the case of:

[1] That duck is about to eat your sandwich!

On this view, an utterance of [1] semantically expresses the following two propositions:
The official proposition captures the speaker’s primary intentions in uttering [1]; the role of the background proposition is to aid the hearer in identifying the official proposition. The background proposition is akin to a subordinate clause, whose aim is to help the audience identify the topic of discourse. On Corazza’s view, the truth-conditions of an utterance of [1] are simply those of the official proposition (2002: 181–3). It is this last claim about truth-conditions (i.e., the claim that something true can be semantically expressed using a complex demonstrative even despite the inaptness of nominal) that distinguishes Corazza’s view from the other multiple-proposition approaches to complex demonstratives and holds the key to why complex demonstratives should not be classified as structured designators. Corazza’s view is distinctive among multiple-propositions approaches to complex demonstratives in endorsing the pragmatic treatment of the nominal, in the terms of §6.2 (i.e., an utterance of [1] can semantically express something true even if the relevant prospective-sandwich-thief is in fact a swan or a pigeon). As we have seen, that aspect is important, to the extent that one takes seriously the intuition that complex demonstratives instance relational, as opposed to satisfactual, designation. Indeed, when it comes to the central theses, herein lies the rub: for if the background propositions are truth-conditionally irrelevant then complex demonstratives are used in an unstructured way. So, one main aim of this section is to further motivate Corazza’s (2002) arguments for the view that sentences of the form ‘This/that F is G’ semantically expresses both the official proposition that ‘This/that is G’ and the truth-conditionally irrelevant background proposition that ‘This/that is F’. To start, here are two considerations that bolster the inessentiality of the referential qualifier. The first I call the substitutivity of referential qualifiers—i.e., in context, one can, in a very clear sense, communicate exactly the same thing by uttering either of, say:

[1] That sheep has an injured leg.

(That, is, provided that the speaker intends to refer to the same individual in both cases and is successful in making this intention manifest.) The second I call the truth-conditional irrelevance of referential qualifiers—i.e., in context, either [1] or [2] can be used to communicate something true even if the intended referent is in fact not a sheep (or a lamb), but yet the interlocutors take it to so be. Truth-conditional irrelevance entails substitutivity (but not vice versa); both rest on the underlying point that the primary communicative role of the referential qualifier is to help the audience identify the relevant object. Substitutivity is simply the claim that, in context, distinct candidates may do this equally well; truth-conditional irrelevance is that claim that what
is crucial is that the referential qualifier be taken as apt by the interlocutors, not that it be factually accurate. Both go some way to motivating the truth-conditional irrelevance of the background proposition—especially when considered in conjunction with the arguments about complex demonstratives, referring, and relational designation already developed in this chapter.

Next, consider the following exchange:

[A] What is ‘canary yellow’?
[B] (looking around) Aha! (pointing) That car is canary yellow.

It seems clear to me that [B] expresses a truth even if [B] happens to point at a boat or a tractor, as long as the official proposition (i.e., ‘That is canary yellow’) is true. The role of ‘car’ here is clearly subordinate to [B]’s primary intention, and so the factual inaccuracy of ‘car’ should hardly be understood to seriously impair what is expressed. The official proposition is successfully sent and received, and so the background proposition (i.e., ‘that is a car’) has done its job. The role of the background proposition is just to help the hearer identify the speaker’s primary intention, and the background proposition need not be true to fulfill this role.

Consider another example: Suppose [C] is a jungle-hiking guide and [D] is a city-dwelling novice under [C]’s charge. Out of nowhere, they are aggressively confronted by a huge snake. [C] says:

[C] Cover your eyes and walk backwards! This *naja nigricollis* is a venom-spitter!

The second sentence here lends further credence to Corazza’s view that the common nouns in a complex demonstrative (and so the background propositions) just play a secondary, supporting role. Clearly, [D] need not be at all familiar with the term ‘*naja nigricollis*’ in order for this utterance to attain its aim. It is the official proposition (i.e., ‘This is a venom-spitter’) that matters; the inertness of the chosen background proposition (i.e., ‘This is a *naja nigricollis*’) does nothing to derail the speech act.

A final case is borrowed from Borg (2000), who employs it toward quite a different end. Borg takes sentences like the following to pose a deep challenge to truth-conditional irrelevance:

[3] That doctor is no doctor!

Essentially, Borg’s challenge is this:

Premise 1: [3] is clearly a contradiction.
Premise 2: Any view that takes referential qualifiers to be inessential (or, alternatively, background propositions to be truth-conditionally irrelevant) does not classify [3] as a contradiction.
Conclusion: Therefore, any such view is inadequate.

My response is to concede premise 2 but reject premise 1. To the contrary, I take cases along the lines of [3] to be further evidence in favor of truth-conditional irrelevance. There is all the difference in the world between an utterance of [3]—in which the first occurrence of ‘doctor’ helps the interlocutor to identify the intended referent, and the second occurrence of ‘doctor’ (while expressing exactly the same semantic meaning) fulfills a different, more conventional predicate-role of categorizing or classifying—and an utterance of [4]:

[4] She is a doctor, and she, [that very same woman, simultaneously] is not a doctor.

Now, that’s a contradiction.

Given that there is quite a difference between what is semantically expressed by the rare but still significant construction ‘That F is not an F’ and the explicitly contradictory ‘P & ~P’, then, rather than counting against truth-conditional irrelevance, these cases provide further evidence in favor of the truth-conditional irrelevance of the background propositions. That is, if in general ‘That F is not an F’ does not mean or entail anything of the form ‘P & ~P’, this proves that the referential qualifier (i.e., the first ‘F’) and the conventional predicate (i.e., the second ‘F’) in an utterance containing a complex demonstrative are not both playing the same conventional, classificatory role. One way to account for that, which happily also accords with a variety of other data detailed above, is to endorse the truth-conditional irrelevance of the referential qualifier. (To be sure, I hardly expect that Borg will be convinced by this to rescind her view, but the important present point is that, contrary to Borg’s avowals, cases along the lines of [3] pose no compelling argument against pragmatic treatments of the nominal.)

So, to take stock: At least Richard (1993), Neale (1999, 2001), Dever (2001), and Corazza (2002) have developed multiple-proposition approaches to complex demonstratives (i.e., sentences of the form ‘This/that F is G’ semantically express more than one proposition). This kind of approach is in competition with a variety of other approaches to complex demonstratives, to be weighed against various semantic and pragmatic desiderata. A multiple-proposition approach to complex demonstratives is intrinsically plausible in that, like in the case of a conventional implicature, say, there is an essential duality of purpose about these kinds of utterance, and (unlike the case of a particularized conversational implicature, for example) the duality is a function of the semantic properties of the expression uttered, independent of any specific features of the context of utterance. Further, when one also takes the step of counting the background proposition as truth-conditionally irrelevant (i.e., the pragmatic treatment of the nominal)—a step that sets Corazza apart from other multiple-proposition approaches to complex demonstratives, and which I have provided further
independent motivation for throughout this chapter—then the *prima facie* tension that complex demonstratives pose for the central theses dissolves.

The main aim of this section, then, has been to sketch an independently motivated account of the semantics of complex demonstratives that is consistent with the central theses of the Russellian orthodoxy. Since typical uses of complex demonstratives instance relational designation, then the nominal is best suited for the pragmatic, not the semantic, treatment. (Alternatively, the referential qualifier should be understood as truth-conditionally irrelevant, and so the background proposition is semantically inert.) Hence, complex demonstratives should be understood as including a referring expression as a proper part. However, since the referential proper part (i.e., ‘this’ or ‘that’) is unstructured, complex demonstratives pose no threat to the Russellian orthodoxy. Given the truth-conditional irrelevance of the referential qualifier, then, typically used complex demonstratives should be understood as unstructured uses of complex designators.

6.4 THE VARIETIES OF COMPLEX DESIGNATORS

As pointed out at several points above, there are multiple varieties of dual-purpose NPs, designators that both single out and characterize. The next order of business is a more in-depth comparison of three important such expressions—i.e., definite descriptions, complex demonstratives, and molecular names (e.g., ‘Louis XIV’). Although ordinary names (e.g., ‘Willard van Orman Quine’) are complex designators, they are not dual-purpose in the above sense since they do not characterize. Boolean referring expressions (e.g., ‘bald, happy, rich men’) are also complex designators, but they have been set off as a special case (cf. Chapter 1, note 13), as opposed to another variety of dual-purpose NP.

For reasons given throughout Part III, at the level of expression-types, definite descriptions belong in the category of denoting expressions, while complex demonstratives and molecular names belong in the category of referring expressions. (This is why I favor the conjunction of a speaker’s meaning/semantic meaning approach to definite descriptions with a multiple-proposition view of complex demonstratives, as opposed to, say, Braun’s (1994) speaker’s meaning/semantic meaning approach to both phenomena, or Neale’s (1999) multiple-proposition approach to both phenomena. Descriptions are integrally linked to the expression of object-independent information, while demonstratives are intrinsically fitted for the expression of object-dependent information.) As for molecular names, some of them probably started their careers as denoting expressions, but have gradually made the transition over to referring expression. For example, I take expressions which started their careers as definite descriptions but have since grown capital letters, as Marcus puts it (e.g., ‘The Holy Roman Empire’), to be a sub-case of molecular name. The decisive factor is, again, whether or not the expression in question is typically used in an unstructured way. To the extent that it is, then it should be counted as a name.
Earlier (in Chapter 4, §2), I discussed some of the differences between uses of names and descriptions used referentially. (Structured semantic content still plays a role in the case of a referentially used description, even though it does not determine reference—i.e., the meanings of the constituent bits, such as in ‘the man drinking a martini’ or ‘Smith’s murderer’, are nonetheless crucially involved in the speech acts in which the terms are referentially used.) However, there are also similarities. In all of these cases of dual-purpose NPs (whether it be ‘the F’, ‘that F’, or ‘The F’), if they are used referentially, then there is a strong case to be made in favor of the truth-conditional irrelevance of the nominal ‘F’. The compositionally determined condition that is the description’s meaning plays a role in the speech act, but it is not criterial in determining the term’s referent (i.e., ‘her husband’ or ‘the man drinking the martini’ can be used to single out and make a statement about things that do not in fact fit the expression’s semantic meaning). Herein lies a clear sense in which a description used referentially is used in an unstructured way. With a referential use, the content of the proposition expressed is determined by the speaker’s intentions; it is constrained, but not determined, by the semantic properties of the expression. That is why misdescription does nothing to derail the speech act in these cases. A necessary condition for expressing something true despite misdescribing is that the description in question be used in an unstructured way. (Similar remarks apply to complex demonstratives, which again bolsters my contention that semantic structure lies at the very heart of the phenomenon of referring.)

Hence, despite the earlier mentioned differences at the level of expression-types between descriptions, demonstratives, and names, then, all three are commonly used to speaker-refer and to communicate object-dependent information. Crucially, in any such case of a complex designator that is used referentially (i.e., with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition), the designator is used in an unstructured way. So referential tokens of any of these types of complex designator should be classified as unstructured uses of complex designators. In all these cases, it is typical and decisive that speaker meaning and semantic meaning can diverge. Let us summarize these results in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Type of designator</th>
<th>Are referential uses structured or unstructured uses?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referential use of a description (e.g., ‘the champ’)</td>
<td>Denoting expression</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molecular name (e.g., ‘Louis XIV’)</td>
<td>Referring expression</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex demonstrative (e.g., ‘that duck’)</td>
<td>Referring expression</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ‘type’ question concerns the typical use of the designator: \textit{Qua} expression-type, is it integrally, semantically linked to the expression of object-dependent or object-independent information? The view defended herein is that definite descriptions are quantificational denoting expressions, but names and demonstratives are intrinsically object-dependent, referring expressions. The second ‘use’ question is tested by considering the counterfactual truth-conditions, particularly in cases of misdescription. The view defended herein is that all three belong in the same category, along this dimension. As will be further explained in Part IV, what is semantically expressed with a referential use of any expression is, at least in part, a function of the speaker’s intentions, as opposed to completely determined by the semantic properties of the expression uttered.

To round off this chapter, here is a catalogue of the varieties of complex designator:

\textit{Table 6.2 Varieties of Complex Designators}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Russellian orthodox bifurcation of designators</th>
<th>Referring expressions</th>
<th>Denoting expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varieties of complex designators</td>
<td>(i) molecular names</td>
<td>(i) definite descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Boolean referring expressions</td>
<td>(ii) indefinite descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) complex demonstratives</td>
<td>(iii) quantified NPs generally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The referring expressions are ranked in order of how strongly or consistently the members of the category instance the relevant paradigmatic properties. That is, for example, Booleans as a whole have a less strong claim to being consistently and wholly paradigmatic referring expressions than proper names. While this is due in no small part to the diversity of this category,\textsuperscript{23} still the underlying important general point motivating this separate category is that even if all the parts of a Boolean expression instance relational designation, nonetheless there is something satisfactional about the way in which the whole designates. As for complex demonstratives, it is undeniable that they are syntactically and semantically closer to definite descriptions than either of these others. Although, for the reasons given earlier, I think that they should be treated as referring expressions and not quantifiers, it should be conceded that they are much more akin to denoting expressions than are more paradigmatic referring expressions.

In contrast, the denoting expressions are ranked in reverse order of quintessence. For reasons described in Chapter 5, definite descriptions stand out amongst quantifiers as those most suited for referential uses since they semantically specify exactly one individual. Indefinites can also be used referentially, in Donnellan’s (1966) sense, even though they typically lack the
implication of uniqueness, totality, or salience carried by ‘the’. Finally, as Neale (1990) and Bach (2004) discuss, virtually any quantified noun phrase can be used referentially. This point is important in that it clearly shows that such facts about speaker reference do not yet support much in the way of semantic conclusions about what ought to be classified as a referring expression. However, all parties concede that definite descriptions are used referentially much more commonly than any other sort of quantifier.
Part IV

Conclusions
7 Summary, Overview, and General Morals

The aim of this final chapter is to summarize, underline, and extend the grounds in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. Part of this will involve recap and overview, but some novel connections and directions should also emerge. In §7.1, I consolidate some of the important refinements made to the central theses over the course of Parts II and III, and tie off a couple of loose threads. The aim of §7.2 is to situate these theses with respect to certain historical developments. In §7.3, I underline the general theoretical grounds in favor of the central theses, and in §7.4 I draw out some morals.

7.1 REFINING THE CENTRAL THESES

The aim of this section is to draw out why the mass of considerations examined thus far should be seen as bolstering the central Russellian theses [R iff U] and [D iff S]. Succeeding sections pick up from here and draw on all the available ingredients to assemble a case against the very ideas of either an unstructured denoting expression or a structured referring expression in natural language.

I will frame this present discussion by first addressing a strand left dangling in Chapter 1, §2—though certainly discussed, at least indirectly, at various points in the interim—namely, are the referring/denoting and structured/unstructured distinctions exclusive and exhaustive?

To begin, let us review the precise contours of these two distinctions. The relevant notion of ‘reference’ is a conventional or stipulative relation between a designator and what it is used to designate; utterances of sentences whose subject-expressions are used to refer express object-dependent propositions. Denoting, in contrast, is a distinct sort of connection that holds between certain kinds of designators and that, if anything, which satisfies the condition the designator semantically expresses; utterances of sentences whose subject-expressions are denoting expressions semantically express object-independent propositions. As for ‘structure’, that has to do with whether meaningful sub-parts are operative in determining
the designatum. While atomic designators (e.g., ‘I’ or ‘gold’) can only be unstructured, one refinement that is crucial in warding off certain prima facie counterexamples to the central theses is that molecular designators (e.g., ‘the United Nations’) can be used in either structured or unstructured ways. A use of a designator is structured if and only if the token is used to designate that which (in the relevant context) satisfies the compositionally determined condition the term semantically expresses; a use of a designator is unstructured if and only if the token is used stipulatively to designate one specific entity, and the condition its proper parts semantically compose is not criterial in determining its designatum.

The next thing to say about this question is that, given the development of the two key refinements (i.e., speaker’s reference vs. semantic reference, and structured vs. unstructured uses of complex designators), the arguments in Parts II and III show that it is highly plausible to hold that the following turn out to be two different modes of presentation of the same underlying distinction: (i) referring vs. denoting expressions and (ii) unstructured vs. structured designators. A use of a designator speaker-refers if and only if it is used in an unstructured way; a type of designator is a device of semantic reference if and only if that sort of use is what it is generally tailored for. To the extent that [R iff U] and [D iff S] are established, then, our two distinctions boil down to one: unstructured-referring designators vs. structured-denoting designators. So, then, is this one fault line within the set of designators both exclusive and exhaustive?

Clearly, the easier half of this question is the ‘exclusive’ clause.1 By definition, no use of a designator could be both structured and unstructured, as that would involve satisfying blatantly incompatible constraints—i.e., meaningful proper parts would have to be at once both operative and inert in determining the designatum.2 It also seems rather clear, though less blatantly so, that the referring/denoting distinction is exclusive—i.e., that no token of a designator could both refer and denote.3 In any case, given the grounds for thinking that there is just one distinction here, between unstructured-referring expressions and structured-denoting expressions, we need not even address that question separately at this point.

As for whether this distinction is exhaustive, that is a difficult question to give a conclusive, knock-down answer to. At this point, it is not unreasonable for me to hold that the burden of proof is on the other side. I have given considerable support for the claim that the unstructured-referring/structured-denoting bifurcation exhausts the category of designators, and I have addressed the main prima facie counters.4 As has come up at a couple of junctures before (in Chapters 1 and 4), some might think that unstructured indexicals (e.g., ‘I’ or ‘she’) pose a counterexample to the exhaustiveness clause, as they are typically used to express object-dependent propositions but might seem to involve the designation via satisfaction-of-a-semantically-imposed-condition that is characteristic of denoting expressions. However, there are at least two strong reasons against the idea that unstructured
indexicals denote. First, it would run afoul of the considerable Kaplan (1977) and Perry (1993) case for thinking that the semantic meaning (e.g., character, role, etc.) of an indexical does not determine its reference across contexts of evaluation. (In short, unstructured indexicals designate relationally, not satisfactionally.5) Second, even apart from that point, which is only starkly evident when we distinguish the context of utterance from the context of evaluation, there is a distinct and deeper point pressed by Bach (2000, 2006), Schiffer (2003), and Neale (2005, 2007), among others6: namely, the semantic meaning of an indexical does not, in general, suffice to determine a specific designatum, even in context. The semantic meaning of an unstructured indexical constrains but does not determine the designatum; in this respect, indexicals are rather unlike denoting expressions (e.g., ‘any even number’ or ‘the present King of France’).

To illustrate, even if there are six women in the room, I can still semantically express and successfully communicate an object-dependent proposition about one of them in particular by uttering, ‘She is tall’. (Here I am imagining a discourse-initial use of ‘she’, where it is contextually evident which person I am speaking about—not an anaphor that picks up on previous discourse.) The semantic meaning of ‘she’ tells my interlocutors that (assuming I am speaking literally) no males or inanimate objects are my intended referent, but it does not determine a designatum. Indeed, ‘I’ is the only indexical for which this problem does not arise—even the other guaranteed-to-refer indexicals such as ‘here’ and ‘now’ are cases in which the semantic meaning constrains but does not determine a specific designatum.7 (For example, the reference of ‘now’ must be a period of time that includes the (contextually salient8) present, but still it could be an instant, a human generation, a geological era, etc.)

I will dwell for a moment on the general significance of this point, and then use it to tie up some important loose ends. Despite the evidence (reviewed above in Chapter 4, §4), to the effect that indexicals differ from proper names in having a clear, stable, context-independent role or character, nonetheless the fact that this role or character only constrains reference—as opposed to determining reference—puts indexical pronouns squarely in the same category as proper names when it comes to our central questions about reference and structure. Ultimately, ‘she’ and ‘this’ are unstructured referring expressions, just as surely as ‘Betty’; in each case it is the speaker’s stipulative object-dependent referential intention that grounds the connection between the token uttered and its reference. It is that, and not any semantic properties of the designator per se, which puts the specific object into the object-dependent proposition. As we have seen, unstructured uses of complex designators belong in this same category for exactly this reason.

Most significantly, though, I am now in a position to cash a check I wrote in Chapter 1, as to whether my two criteria for reference (i.e., on the one hand, reference as a conventional, stipulative relation distinct
from denoting, and, on the other hand, reference as the semantic relation involved in the expression of object-dependent information) could possibly be distinct. Minding this distinction between determining reference and constraining reference, it is clear that any case of speaker-reference is essentially going to involve a specific, object-dependent referential intention. This is true not only of referential uses of complex designators (e.g., ‘the champ’ or ‘that big green-headed duck’) or proper names (e.g., ‘Dave says hi’), but also of indexical pronouns (e.g., ‘She is tall’).

Any utterance that expresses object-dependent information will have to involve the conventional, stipulative relation of reference. Ultimately, that object-dependent referential intention is what determines a specific designatum, regardless of which type of designator is employed; this shows that defining reference in terms of either the expression of object-dependent information or a certain sort of conventional, stipulative semantic relation will come to the same thing in the end. Object-dependent information is semantically expressed if and only if the conventional, stipulative relation of reference (grounded in an object-dependent referential intention) is instanced.9

Coming back to the central theme of the present section: despite the fact that indexicals may provide a prima facie plausible instance of both (i) expressions that both refer and denote and (ii) the expression of object-dependent information without the presence of the conventional, stipulative relation characteristic of, say, naming conventions, neither of these appearances withstands scrutiny. Going forward, I henceforth assume that the distinction between unstructured referring expressions and structured denoting expressions is both exclusive and exhaustive of the category of designators in natural language. As a consequence, it is redundant to separate out two central theses [R iff U] and [D iff S]. Henceforth, I will just speak of the central thesis of the Russellian orthodoxy, [R iff U].

7.2 SURVEY OF THE GROUNDS IN FAVOR OF THE RUSSELLIAN ORTHODOXY

The central thesis of the Russellian orthodoxy asserts an integral connection between the conventional, stipulative relation of reference, the expression of object-dependent information, and the lack (or inertness) of meaningful proper parts; alternatively, it asserts an integral connection between an expression’s having meaningful proper parts and its being semantically suited for the expression of object-independent information. As we have seen, this central thesis underlies and grounds various important points in the theory of reference—from core central concepts, such as rigid designation, to specific accounts of the semantics of several controversial sorts of expression (including proper names, demonstratives, and definite descriptions).
In Chapter 1, §2, I cited excerpts from Russell (1911) and Kaplan (1968) as expressions of a core impetus for the central theses. Specifically, Russell's contrast of 'Scott' vs. 'the author of Waverley' and Kaplan's contrast of the German expressions 'neun' vs. 'die Zahl der Planeten' illustrate why unstructured designators have no choice but to refer, and only structured designators could denote.) These passages motivate the two paradigm categories of unstructured referring expressions and structured denoting expressions, but are strictly speaking silent on whether that division exhausts the category of designators. (I know of no place where Russell explicitly argues against the very idea of structured referring expressions or unstructured denoting expressions, and at least some of the things Russell (1905–1919) says about ordinary proper names might be thought to be in tension with my central thesis. Similarly, at least some elements of Kaplan’s (1975, 1977, 1989) meandering discussions of ‘dthat’ might be interpreted in ways that are inconsistent with the central thesis.)

The next places to look for motivation for the central thesis are Neale (1993, 2008) and Dever (2001). Although I find motivation for the central thesis in such diverse works as Mill (1843), Frege (1879), Russell (1905), Kripke (1972), and Kaplan (1977)¹⁰, still (as far as I know) Neale (1993) is the first to formulate the thesis and Dever (2001) is among the only subsequent attempts to explicitly defend and advance it.

For the most part, this present work is confined to the terrain of philosophical logic, developing what I think of as a Rawlsian reflective equilibrium case in favor of the central thesis about reference and structure—i.e., independent motivation for those general theoretical principles creates a preference for accounts of various semantic phenomena that accords with those general principles, and, at the same time, the intrinsic merits of the accounts of these target semantic phenomena detailed herein lends further credence to these general theoretical principles.¹¹ However, as mentioned in the Introduction, some very different lines of thought, drawn from diverse corners of the sprawling interdisciplinary corpus of theoretical work on language, can be seen as converging toward this conception of the connection between reference and structure.

Consider, for example, Neale’s (1993: §8; 2008: 390–1) general motivation for this bifurcation of the set of NPs in natural language based on considerations about the cognitive and linguistic needs of (finite, fallible) agents like us, who have evolved in (contingent, complex, dynamic) environments like ours. Such considerations underscore the inevitability of both unstructured referring expressions to track the states and doings of specific objects throughout any (actual of counterfactual) contingent alterations of accidental properties, as well as of structured, denoting expressions which single out whatever happens to satisfy such and such qualitative characteristics. With respect to the most controversial aspects of the central thesis, discussed in Part III, note especially Neale’s (1993: 102) arguments that:
... a language containing [structured referring expressions] would not be a natural language. Even if such expressions could be introduced, given our interests they would not survive, they would disappear through lack of use.12

Such general, functional considerations suggest that unstructured referring expressions and structured denoting expressions are all we need, or would have occasion to use. Generally, then, in addition to the considerable intrinsic merits of the various accounts of rigidity, naming, descriptions, and demonstratives (among other things) detailed herein, the Russellian orthodoxy is, from another direction, also motivated by reflection on what it means for a “linguistic system” which evolved to meet the needs of agents like us to “allow for the possibility of substantial exchanges of information about a dynamic and contingent world” (Neale 1993: 104).

I also mentioned in the Introduction that the central thesis is a case of mutual illumination between work in theoretical syntax, in the formal semantics of natural language, and in philosophical logic. To give a bit of a better sense of what I have in mind here, I will borrow a fairly detailed exposition from Dever (2001: 272–4):13

[[R iff U]]14 can be seen as the convergence of two (not always wholly distinct) lines of thought. One line of thought runs through work in the formal semantics of natural language. Work in carving out a distinctive class of quantifier phrases in natural language, once Frege (1879) had laid the appropriate technical foundations, began with Russell’s (1905) suggestion that definite descriptions, previously taken to be semantically equivalent to names, ought to be treated on a par with quantified terms of the ‘every F’ and ‘some F’ format, proceeded through the development of generalized quantifier theory in Montowski . . . and Lindstrom . . . and reached maturity in Barwise and Cooper . . . and subsequent work in that tradition. As the Russellian analysis of definite descriptions gained increasing acceptance (due at least in part to its increasingly successful embedding in a broader theory of generalized and restricted quantifiers in natural language [footnote omitted]) there developed a tendency to see the sense-like characteristics attributed, following Frege (1892), to singular terms as an over-generalization from the case of definite descriptions—where those sense-like characteristics could now be seen not as a consequence a bivalent sense/reference-based semantics, but rather as the natural consequences of the predicative material which serves as a genuine syntactic and semantic component of the definite description. [footnote omitted] Thus Kripke [1972] initiates a series of rebellions against the regime of Sinn, in which first proper names (by Kripke), then demonstratives and indexicals (by Kaplan
Summary, Overview, and General Morals 119

(1977)), and finally pronouns (by Evans . . .) and subsequent work) are held not to require (or admit) sense-like semantic features—and thus are held apart from the mass of quantified terms—and in which the distinctive features of genuine singular terms [e.g., [R iff U]] are isolated.

As formal semantic investigation into the behaviors of both generalized quantifiers and singular terms were furthering the view . . . that there exists a fundamental divide in the functioning of natural language terms, a second (more purely philosophical) line of thought was tending toward the same conclusion. This line of thought—running through Strawson (1959, 1974), Evans (1973), Peacocke . . ., Follesdal . . ., and Neale (1993)—suggests that evolutionary constraints on the development of language imposed by our needs as linguistic agents necessitate a division between singular and quantified (or broadly descriptive) terms. Our limited epistemic position as finite beings—which generally precludes us from knowing all the past, present, future, and possible properties of objects—means that we cannot reliably track objects over time and possibilia using descriptive methods of identification. Thus we need a class of terms in the language which pick out objects not by virtue of contingent and transitory properties of those objects, but simply by serving as tags for those objects—thus a class of singular terms. At the same time, given the rigidity of the singular terms, our need to make contingent statements about the world requires that there be a class of (predicative) terms in the language which do pick out objects descriptively and thus do change their extensions/denotations over times and possibilia. [footnote omitted] Thus, consideration of the way language would have to develop to serve our needs also pushes us toward [[R iff U]].

This is a clear and insightful statement of some of the convergent, overlapping, compelling reasons in favor of the central thesis. My sense is that the Neale-Dever case and my own arguments within philosophical logic are mutually reinforcing when it comes to underlining and grounding the deeply important role that the relevant concept of structure plays in semantic theorizing about natural language.

7.3 OVERVIEW AND RECAP

Strawson (1950: §4) distinguishes between and discusses “two kinds (among many others) of linguistic conventions or rules: rules for referring, and rules for attributing or ascribing.” This is a central, canonical fissure in philosophical logic, dating back beyond Aristotle’s Categories, and connected to such perennial philosophical distinctions as those “between particular and
universal, between substance and quality.” His penetrating observations include the following:

The requirement for the correct application of an expression in its ascriptive use to a certain thing is simply that the thing should be of a certain kind, have certain characteristics. The requirement for the correct application of an expression in its referring use to a certain thing is something over and above any requirement derived from such ascriptive meaning as the expression might have; it is, namely, the requirement that the thing should be in a certain relation to the speaker and to the context of utterance (1950: 336).

Here Strawson anticipates some of the distinctions that are central to much subsequent work on reference, such as Bach’s (1987) distinction between relational and satisfactional designation and the distinction between structured and unstructured uses of expressions. (Of course, Strawson is insistent that “the distinction I am trying to draw is primarily one between different roles or parts that expressions might play in language, and not primarily one between different groups of expressions” (1950: 337), but—as always, given careful attention to the pragmatics-semantics interface—these points can equivalently be made by sorting types of expression into their typical uses.)

At this most general level of philosophical logic, Russell’s (1905) distinctive claim is that denoting expressions belong in an intermediate category, between referring and ascribing. In particular, definite descriptions are Strawsonian hybrids, expressions that combine some of the distinctive properties of referring with some of the distinctive properties of ascribing. When used literally, definite descriptions both single out and characterize; they do something like referring via doing something like ascribing. So, Russell’s seminal contribution to philosophical logic, in this respect, is that the referring/ascribing bifurcation articulated by Strawson must be amended to include the intermediate category of denoting. Although denoting expressions can be used referentially, it would obscure important distinctions to assimilate them onto either side of the referring/ascribing bifurcation. So, Strawson’s (1950) bifurcation of linguistic functions into referring vs. ascribing provides a useful way to view Russell’s (1905) distinctive contribution to philosophical logic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.1</th>
<th>Russell’s Distinctive Contribution to Philosophical Logic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strawson’s bifurcation</strong></td>
<td>Referring uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Russell’s contribution</strong></td>
<td>Referring expressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuing further along from this insight, Parts II and III of the present work have refined and further reinforced the Russell’s categorization of designators, as shown in Table 7.2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of designator</th>
<th>Referring expression</th>
<th>Denoting expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semantic structure</strong></td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semantic mechanism</strong></td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Satisfactional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposition semantically expressed</strong></td>
<td>Object-dependent</td>
<td>Object-independent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To recap the highlights and stress what is newly added to the case within this present work: In Chapter 1, I took it as axiomatic that if the semantic relation of reference is instanced in an utterance, then the utterance expresses object-dependent information. Since then, I have attempted to weave together the case that if by ‘reference’ we mean ‘speaker-reference’, then this constitutive link between reference and object-dependent information is bi-conditional. If the speaker uses an expression referentially—i.e., with an object-dependent referential intention—then the speaker expresses object-dependent information, and if the speaker has expressed object-dependent information with an utterance, that is sufficient grounds on which to conclude that the conventional, stipulative relation of speaker-reference is instanced. (For the important sub-case of complex designators, one important relevant claim established in Chapters 4 through 6 is that any complex designator that is used referentially (i.e., with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition) is used in an unstructured way.)

Given the important refinements introduced in Chapter 2, there are two very different referring vs. denoting questions one could ask about an expression. First, one could ask of an expression-token whether or not it is used with an object-dependent referential intention. This is the question of speaker-reference; virtually any expression could be so-used (including many different sorts of denoting expression—e.g., ‘three thugs’, ‘a squirrel I saw yesterday’, ‘the President of the United States’). Second, one could ask of an expression-type whether or not it is typically, literally used with an object-dependent referential intention. This is the question of semantic reference.

Building on the work of many others, I have given reasons to think that no structured denoting expression meets this criterion for semantic reference. Regardless of the statistical frequency of their being used with an object-dependent referential intention, no denoting expression should be understood as a device of semantic reference, because they all semantically express a compositionally determined condition whose conventional
semantic role is to determine their designata. (To quote Neale (1993: 104), “. . . as soon as one invokes a constructive or compositional procedure for determining the semantical value of an expression, one is no longer engaged in trying to establish reference.”) Further, I have argued that this semantic-level distinction between structured-denoting and unstructured-referring designators is the fundamental fault-line in the category of designators. It is both exclusive and exhaustive, and it underlies and grounds such important notions as rigid designation and reference by name.

At a bit more length, in Chapter 3, I argued that all unstructured designators are rigid designators on the ground that the question of nonrigidity only gets a foothold in the case of a structured denoting expression. That is, all (but not only) unstructured designators are rigid because only (but not all) denoting expressions are nonrigid. This is deeply relevant to the central theses, given the evident connections between rigidity and reference (i.e., all referring expressions are rigid designators, the modal phenomenon of rigidity falls right out of the semantic phenomenon of referring to and expressing object-dependent information about specific individuals). Again, I am not claiming that the following two premises formally entail anything:

- [P1] All referring expressions are rigid designators.
- [P2] All unstructured designators are rigid designators.

Rather, the point of Chapter 3 is just that this intrinsic connection between rigidity and structure is one considerable piece of evidence in favor of [R iff U]. Given that all referring expressions are rigid designators and that all unstructured expressions are rigid designators is a reason to think that there is an intrinsic connection between the conventional, stipulative relation of reference, the expression of object-dependent information, and the lacking (or inertness) of meaningful proper parts.

In Chapter 4, I adduced arguments for a tight intrinsic connection between the notions ‘proper name’ and ‘unstructured designator’. A key premise connecting these arguments back to the central thesis is the familiar observation that proper names are paradigmatic referring expressions. I think that this familiar observation is fundamentally right, and that the conception of naming sketched in Chapter 4 is consonant with and grounds it. Again, as above, my claim is definitely not that the following two premises formally entail anything:

- [P1] Proper names are referring expressions.
- [P2] To use a designator as a name is to use it in an unstructured way.

Rather, again, this is a further brush-stroke on the canvas. This is further reason to think that there is an intrinsic connection between structure and reference, between the conventional, stipulative relation that holds between certain primitive expressions and their designata, the expression
Summary, Overview, and General Morals

of object-dependent information, and the lacking (or inertness) of meaningful proper parts. If a designator is used as a name, then it is used in an unstructured way; and if a designator is used in an unstructured way, then the proposition expressed by the utterance in which it figures must be object-dependent. Therefore the notions proper name, unstructured designator, and referring expression are tightly linked. (In the other direction, if the proposition expressed with an utterance is object-independent, then the sentence uttered must include a structured designator.)

Thus, Part II develops two independent subarguments in favor of the central thesis of the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference. Neither is decisive. Nonetheless, insofar as the phenomena of rigid designation and proper names lie at the core or reference, then if the notion of structure lies at the core of both rigidity and naming, this is strong evidence in favor of the Russellian orthodoxy.

The goals of Part III are largely defensive—i.e., to explain why some of the strongest prima facie counterexamples to the central theses should not, at the end of the day, be classified as counterexamples. Given careful handling of the two central refinements introduced in Chapter 2 (i.e., speaker’s reference vs. semantic reference, and structured vs. unstructured uses of complex designators), the most plausible accounts of such contested semantic phenomena as referential uses of descriptions and complex demonstratives, all things considered, are not in tension with \( \text{[R iff U]} \). Further, even though the primary goals of Part III are defensive, nonetheless, lots of original work emerges in the course of these chapters—e.g., about relevant distinctions between types of uses of complex designators and about the ways in which Kripkean modal considerations bolster Russellian theses in the theory of reference. In particular, again, the arguments of Chapters 4 through 6 show that any complex designator that is used referentially (i.e., with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition) is used in an unstructured way.

As for my claim that this distinction between unstructured referring expressions and structured denoting expressions underlies and grounds various important points in the theory of reference, it is surely not a contingent accident that all unstructured designators are rigid, or that an expression is used as a name only if it is used in an unstructured way. Rather, it has become gradually appreciated that structure lies at the core of these (and other) central notions in the theory of reference; in this respect, the aim of the present work is to divine and defend what a number of philosophical works have been more or less implicitly tending toward. Specific semantic phenomena and general theoretical principles fall into reflective equilibrium. The intrinsic merits of accounts of such phenomena as rigidity, naming, referential uses of denoting expressions, and complex demonstratives which accord with \( \text{[R iff U]} \) create strong evidence in favor of that thesis; at the same time, the more support for that thesis that gets excavated, the greater preference there is in favor of explanations of other phenomena.
that accord with the thesis. The overall result is a simple comprehensive lens that can help to clarify a wide range of semantic phenomena.

To round off this section, I will now take the four constituent elements of the central thesis one by one, and explain the grounds that have been assembled in their favor.

(i) &quot;If R then U&quot; That a designator is used to speaker-refer is sufficient for its being used in an unstructured way. To satisfy the antecedent, the expression has to be used with an object-dependent referential intention. That is enough to preclude the possibility of the expression being used in a structured way because structured uses essentially involve compositional, satisfactional procedures or conditions whose role it is to determine the designatum. In short, reference is a conventional, stipulative relation—meaningful proper parts need not apply. A use of a designator instances speaker’s reference if and only if it is used as such; a designator is a device of semantic reference if and only if its literal role is to be used as such.

This is one of the places at which Kripke should be seen as bolstering Russellian themes in the theory of reference. Counterfactual considerations make it clear that reference is different in kind from (satisfactional, structured) designation via compositionally determined conditions. The operation of such compositional procedures or conditions entail object-independence for they entail that there is a condition semantically expressed, which may or may not be satisfied by the same designatum over time and across possible worlds.

(ii) &quot;If U then R&quot; That a designator is used in an unstructured way is sufficient for its being used to refer. To satisfy the antecedent, there can be no compositional or satisfactional procedure at work determining the designata. Therefore, it seems that the only two options for an unstructured designator are that it be insignificant gibberish or that its designatum be determined via the conventional, stipulative relation of reference. So, given that an unstructured designator is semantically significant—whether it lacks structure, at the level of expression type, or whether it is a complex designator that is being used in an unstructured way—it must be used to refer (as opposed to denote).

(iii) &quot;If D then S&quot; That a designator is a denoting expression is sufficient for its being suited to be used in a structured way. To satisfy the antecedent, there must be a designatum-determining condition semantically expressed by the designator. It is far from evident that any unstructured designators semantically express reference-determining conditions.15 (There may be a condition semantically associated with ‘John’ or ‘she’, but even so it is unlike a denoting expression in that it is not compositionally determined, and it does not suffice to determine the designatum.) This conditional seems to follow trivially from Russell’s (1905) representative list of denoting expressions; the only plausible lines of counterexample involve vicarious structure, or some
such claim as that indexical pronouns denote. However, in Chapter 3, §3(ii), I showed why even if there exist any vicariously structured expressions in natural language, vicarious structure is still structure in the sense that is relevant to the central thesis. And the suggestion that indexicals denote is countered in §7.1.

(iv) [If S then D] That a designator is used in a structured way is sufficient proof that the expression denotes as opposed to refers. To satisfy the antecedent, meaningful proper parts must be at work determining the designatum. Therefore, no structured designator instances the stipulative, conventional relation of reference. (Again, Kripke’s counterfactual test plays a crucial role here as it helps to detect the tell-tale potential variances in possible-worlds truth-condition, which only arise for the cases of structured denoting expressions.)

Given that the referring/denoting distinction exhausts the category of designators, any expression that satisfies the antecedent of this conditional also and thereby satisfies the consequent. Again, as discussed at several points throughout Parts II and III, this point will hold of any complex designators which are used in a structured way. They designate satisfactorily, not relationally, and hence should be understood as denoting and not as referring.

7.4 SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS FOR THE THEORY OF REFERENCE

Semantics is (among other things) in the business of cataloguing the context-independent communicative properties of linguistic expressions. This essentially involves some degree of abstraction—i.e., the semantic properties of an expression are a generalization drawn from the communicative properties of the individual tokens of that expression-type. One important pillar of the general theory of speech acts, which was first systematically analyzed by Grice, is the recognition that the literal semantic meaning of an expression is often just a sub-part of what a speaker is using the expression to communicate. (Cf. especially Chapter 5, §2.) An important corollary of Grice’s factorization is that an expression might even come to be used most frequently in a way that is distinct from, though related to, its literal semantic meaning. (For example, the most common use of ‘Who do you think you are?’ is probably to assert an object-dependent proposition, even though its literal semantic meaning is a related question; tokens of ‘Elvis’ and ‘Einstein’ may be currently used more commonly in rude and ironic ways, to assert that some contextually salient individual is tacky or dumb, than they are used literally to refer to Elvis Presley and Albert Einstein; tokens of some definite descriptions (e.g., ‘the Pope’, ‘the champ’) may well be used referentially more commonly than their literal semantic attributive uses; etc.) This corollary of Grice’s factorization—i.e., the importance of the notion of a pragmatic regularity—shows that the relation
between speaker meaning and literal meaning (or between speaker-reference and semantic reference) is not simply statistical. Literal semantic meaning is not simply a matter of what an expression is most commonly used to convey or communicate.\textsuperscript{16}

Rather, the crucial diagnostic question, for delineating the literal semantic meaning of an expression, is this: What holds constant across the entire spectrum of significant uses of this expression? What are its context-independent semantic properties? It is this consideration that keeps the literal semantic meaning of a question as interrogative, regardless of how often the question is used rhetorically; it is this consideration that keeps Elvis Presley and Albert Einstein in the picture, as they are implicated in every ironic utterance of ‘Check out Elvis over there’ or ‘Way to go, Einstein!’ The same holds for referential uses of denoting expressions, a point which Bach (2004) makes solidly and thoroughly: Even in non-literal referential uses of a denoting expression, the expression’s compositionally determined semantic meaning is operative. (It does not determine the designatum, of course, but still it is operative.) In general, if one has identified a communicative property of a token of an expression that is not held in common by all tokens of that type, that is a strong reason to conclude that the phenomenon in question is pragmatic; and if one has identified a communicative property which holds in common for all tokens of the type, then that is a strong reason to conclude that the phenomenon in question is semantic.

So, given that we have digested the morals of Grice’s factorization for the theory of reference, then: Which types of designator should be classified as devices of semantic reference? This list will include as \textit{ab initio} members, unstructured nominal forms of general terms and proper names. Next come unstructured demonstratives and indexicals, or what Perry (2001) and Neale (2008) call “perspectival referring expressions.”\textsuperscript{17} Boolean referring expressions and molecular names also belong on this list, but they are in a fairly clear sense derivative. Likewise for complex demonstratives, I take very seriously the intuition that ‘that duck’ is integrally linked to the expression of object-dependent information, and that the presence of an object-dependent referential link is common across all tokens of that expression-type; but, on balance, I favor the view that the only device of semantic reference here is the bare demonstrative ‘that’. And so consider Table 7.3:

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Atomic non-perspectival} & Proper names \\
& Natural kind terms \\
\hline
\textbf{Atomic perspectival} & Demonstratives \\
& Indexical pronouns \\
\hline
\textbf{Complex non-perspectival} & Molecular names \\
& Boolean referring expressions \\
\hline
\textbf{Complex perspectival} & Complex demonstratives\textsuperscript{18} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Devices of Semantic Reference}
\end{table}
Crucially, no denoting expressions appear on this list of devices of semantic reference—even though referential uses of denoting expressions in general, and definite descriptions in particular, play an ineliminable role in communication. Regardless of the statistical frequency of their being used with an object-dependent referential intention, because they semantically express a compositionally determined condition whose conventional semantic role is to determine their designata, no structured denoting expression is a device of semantic reference. Rather, it is tailored for the sort of designation that Russell calls ‘denoting’, and that semantic property is implicated whether the expression is used referentially or attributively.

As for speaker reference, tokens of virtually any expression could be a device of speaker-reference, as long as it is used with the right intentions. Crucially, though, any complex expression that meets this condition—including especially any denoting expression—is thereby used in an unstructured way. As has been thoroughly argued, any complex designator that is used referentially (i.e., with the intention to express an object-dependent proposition) is used in an unstructured way.

I conclude that Neale’s (1993) Russellian conjecture [T1] (“Every meaningful noun phrase (NP) in natural language is either a semantically unstructured, rigid referring expression (singular term) or else is a semantically structured restricted quantifier”) is essentially right: A speech act instances the relation of reference if and only if it contains a designator that is used in an unstructured way. A designator should be classified as a device of semantic reference if and only if it is tailored for this kind of stipulative, unstructured designation. Paradigm cases of devices of semantic reference are atomic, i.e., lacking in meaningful sub-parts (e.g., ‘I’, ‘Jones’, or ‘gold’), but even those that are molecular (e.g., ‘January 24, 2001’, ‘the United Nations’, ‘Louis XIV’, or ‘that duck’) should be understood as consistent with the central thesis.

Therefore, the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference is upheld: There is a deep connection between the expression of object-dependent information and the lack (or inoperativeness) of meaningful sub-parts and a deep connection between the expression of object-independent information and the operativeness of meaningful sub-parts. As we have seen, these connections underlie and ground various important points in the theory of reference. There are very strong grounds—coming from various different sub-fields of the sprawling interdisciplinary study of language—on which to hold that any natural language designator should ultimately be understood as either a structured denoting expression or an unstructured denoting expression, tertium non datur.
Notes

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. Dever (2001) also subsequently defends a version of Neale’s [T1]—which Dever calls “the dilemma hypothesis.” Other works which explicitly motivate this kind of exclusive and exhaustive bifurcation of natural language NPs include Higginbotham & May (1981), May (1991), and Larson & Segal (1995).

2. To anticipate briefly, this project relies heavily on work by Kripke (1971, 1972, 1977) and Kaplan (1968, 1975, 1977), which further develops the Russellian orthodoxy, as well as on subsequent extensions and clarifications developed by especially Evans (1982), Bach (1987), Neale (1990), and Recanati (1993). The goal is to make explicit, and to justify, some implicit principles at the core of this literature.

3. Neale (2008: 390–1) claims that “there is something deeply confused” about arguing directly for [T1]. (He makes a similar claim at (1993: 90–1).) While he holds that [T1] can be “motivated” by both empirical fact and conceptual theorizing, and that it is worthwhile to articulate the “inspiration, intuition, or rationale behind” [T1], still he seems to hold that any attempt to establish [T1] by direct argument would involve confusing conceptual claims with empirical hypotheses. (Here cf. especially Neale (2008: §§12–14).)

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. The technical terms introduced in these general opening remarks will be defined in Part I and refined throughout the book. A short list of classics fundamentally concerned with the contours of this singular/general distinction includes Frege (1879), Russell (1905), Strawson (1950), Kripke (1972), Kaplan (1977), and Evans (1982).

2. What I call “Kripke’s (1972) loose and intuitive sense of the term” is basically that a designator is (more or less) any expression that can serve as the subject of a sentence. The issues to be discussed herein primarily concern the paradigm cases of proper names, demonstrative and indexical pronouns, nominal forms of general terms, and denoting expressions (especially including definite and indefinite descriptions). Since we so often ineliminably use designators—in our thought and talk, to single out individuals—some such notion as ‘designator’ is indispensable for posing various questions about meaning and reference.

   I qualify above with ‘more or less’ because some might insist that non-paradigm cases like gerunds (e.g., ‘Swimming is good exercise’) or infinitives (e.g., ‘To err is human’) should not be classified as designators. I do not see
that any substantive semantic issue hangs on the question of whether gerunds or infinitives ought to be classified as designators.

Over the range of the paradigm cases with which this essay is concerned, Kripke’s ‘designator’ is more or less the philosophical logic equivalent to the linguists’ ‘NP’. Some of the claims made by Neale and others, which are discussed in Part I, are made in terms of ‘NPs’, not ‘designators’. As this is an essay in philosophical logic, I will stick with ‘designator’.

3. Again, this is very preliminary; the relevant notion of ‘structure’ will be greatly refined below.

4. I qualify with ‘typically’ to leave open the possibility that such words as ‘help’ or ‘yes’ can be counted as sentences.

5. To cite a few examples: (i) whereas ‘20 is not F’ is the negation of ‘20 is F’, ‘Every even number is not F’ is not the negation of ‘Every even number is F’ (rather, ‘Not every even number is F’ is); (ii) whereas ‘20 is F’ and ‘20 is not F’ cannot simultaneously be true, ‘An even number is F’ and ‘An even number is not F’ can; and (iii) whereas the conjunction of ‘20 is F’ and ‘20 is G’ entails that something is both F and G, the conjunction of ‘An even number is F’ and ‘An even number is G’ does not.

6. This list constitutes a departure from Russell. (For instance, Russell (1911) argues that one can only refer to the sense data and universals with which one is acquainted.) While I follow Russell in giving central importance to the referring/denoting distinction, I (along with everyone else) reject Russell’s strict notion of acquaintance as a necessary condition for reference.

7. Russell’s term ‘denoting’ will seem a bit dated, especially to linguists. (Cf. Kaplan (2005: 940): “Linguists call these phrases determiner phrases because of their syntactic structure; they are constructed from determiners. Russell called them denoting phrases because of their semantical property; they are phrases that denote.”) The present work is an essay in philosophical logic—which partly involves Russellian exegesis—so I will stick with Russell’s term. Suppose I met exactly one man yesterday on the road to Sligo, and called him ‘Alf’. Denoting is the relation that obtains between, on the one hand, Alf, and, on the other hand, such expressions as ‘a man I met yesterday on the road to Sligo’ or ‘the man I met yesterday on the road to Sligo’.

8. As I am using the terms ‘object-dependent’ and ‘object-independent’, they mark a contrast that holds in common for any tenable view of the nature of propositions—be it neo-Fregean, neo-Russellian, the Lewis-Stalnaker view of propositions as unstructured sets of worlds, etc. ‘I am fond of dogs’ expresses an object-dependent proposition, in that the proposition expressed is essentially about a certain, specific individual. In contrast, ‘Some cats are fond of dogs’ expresses an object-independent proposition, in that the proposition expressed essentially concerns only certain concepts and not any specific individuals—i.e., the content of the proposition stays constant across situations in which distinct cats, or indeed no cats, are fond of dogs. A proposition is object-dependent iff its truth-condition essentially involves a specific individual, and it is object-independent iff its truth-condition does not essentially involve any specific individual.

9. This last claim might be in tension with some views concerning referential uses of descriptions, but in Chapter 5 I will argue that it is justified.

10. The relational/satisfactory distinction is closely echoed by Strawson (1950: §4), in his discussion of the distinction between the “rules for referring” and the “rules for attributing or ascribing.” I take it to be especially significant that this archenemy of the Russellian orthodoxy also articulates such a bifurcation of semantic mechanisms.
11. The force of comparing the possible-worlds truth-conditions of [3] vs. [4] illustrates the way in which the modal-savvy developments in the theory of reference spearheaded by Kripke serve to bolster the case in favor of what I am calling the Russellian orthodoxy in the theory of reference (even though they cause enormous trouble for Russell’s descriptive analysis of ordinary names). This point will be developed at various junctures below.

12. As things are set out to this point, these claims are terribly vague. Both claims will be further developed later on, and are defended in Part IV.

13. There is one sort of structured referring expression that I want to identify here, to distinguish it from the other, weightier sorts of prima facie counterexamples to the above theses. I call them ‘Boolean referring expressions’. Although they are in a fairly clear sense both structured and referring, I do not take them to be significant counterexamples to [R iff U] or [D iff S].

I will use an example from LaPorte (2000: note 12) to illustrate. Concede for present purposes that unstructured general terms such as ‘bald’, ‘happy’, and ‘human’ are referring expressions. If so, then the complex expression ‘bald, happy humans’ is what I call a Boolean referring expression. The term ‘Boolean’ is appropriate because ‘bald, happy humans’ is basically the molecular output of a Boolean operation on three atomic referring expressions (i.e., in this case the operation is simply a function from n kinds to their intersection). This is why I do not take Boolean referring expressions to be counterexamples to [R iff U]—each of the basic parts coheres with [R iff U], and the whole is composed in a clear and transparent way from these parts. As will come up later, I take such expressions as complex numerals (e.g., ‘3, 627’), as well as what King (2001b) calls ‘day designators’ (e.g., ‘January 24, 2002’), to be other sorts of Boolean referring expressions.

The central point for present purposes is that Boolean referring expressions are rather unlike the other prima facie counterexamples to the central theses. For example, ‘the world heavyweight champ’ involves a very different sort of compositional harmony of expressions from different syntactic and semantic categories. Later, I will explain why even the likes of ‘Willard van Orman Quine’ cannot be taken to be a Boolean referring expression. These latter points account for why conceding the category of Boolean referring expressions does not trivialize the central theses.


15. Donnellan (1977) seems to endorse exactly this possibility.

16. This might be in tension with Russell’s idea, cited earlier, that there is a sense in which ordinary names are unstructured denoting expressions. However, one point of Russell scholarship that is unanimously conceded is that there are some deep tensions between various aspects of Russell’s philosophy of language, at least during the period 1903–1918. (Some relevant elaborations of these remarks may be found in the discussions of ‘vicarious structure’ in Ch.3, §3, and of Russell’s views on names in Ch.4, §s1-2.)

(1995) for other motivations for this kind of exclusive and exhaustive bifurcation of the set of NPs in natural language.

For the most part, this present work will stick to philosophical logic, though I will briefly touch on these confluent strands in Part IV.

18. Neale's (1993) version of this claim, which he calls [T1], is: “Every meaningful noun phrase (NP) in natural language is either a semantically unstructured, rigid referring expression (singular term) or else is a semantically structured restricted quantifier.” Dever’s (2001) version, which he calls the Dilemma Hypotheses, is: “Every term in natural language is either referential or quantificational.” (‘Term’ here means “any syntactic expression which can appear as the subject of a sentence or the object of a verb” [p.271].) And while the Dilemma Hypothesis does not itself make any mention of structure, Dever (pp.271–2) clearly avows that referring expressions are syntactically simple while quantificational terms are syntactically complex.

19. For example, some might think that indexical pronouns (e.g., ‘she’) or complex demonstratives (e.g., ‘that big green-headed duck’) are instances of both referring and denoting expressions, as understood herein. Alternatively, some might think that these are cases of neither referring nor denoting expressions. (Cf. Perry (2001) for discussion of some of these possibilities.) For another sort of example, it might seem that descriptive names (cf., e.g., Kripke (1972) on ‘Neptune’), or the sub-type of molecular name which Corazza (2003) calls “description names” (e.g., ‘the Holy Virgin’), might provide examples of expressions that both refer and denote (in some pertinent senses of those terms). These seemingly recalcitrant cases will be directly sorted out in Part IV.

Note that denoting expressions may contain referring expressions as a proper part—e.g., ‘the tallest person in Texas’, ‘a sister of Jane’s’. Following Neale (1990, 1993, 2004, 2008), I take it that such cases should not be understood as counterexamples to the exclusiveness of the referring/denoting distinction (any more than they should be understood as posing special problems for the orthodox Russellian approach to denoting expressions, to be developed in Chapter 5).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Cf., e.g., Recanati (2004a), Szabo (ed., 2005), Borg (2007) for an overview of this terrain.

2. Recanati (2004a) presses the case that the old-school notion of literal meaning does not play a psychologically realized role in various sorts of communicative interactions; but, as Bach (2007) urges, that does not undermine its cogency or worth in a rational reconstruction or theoretical description of semantic competence.

3. Note that this work is confined to the relatively simpler case of singular reference. For a good recent discussion of some of the distinctive complications of plural reference, cf. Yi (2005). While this is only a tangential matter that comes up once or twice in the entire book, note that propositions about plural subjects can nonetheless count as object-dependent (in the sense defined in Chapter 1, note 8)—e.g., ‘Russell and Whitehead are British’ or ‘They do not like celery’. Cf. Neale (2008: 400-2) for discussion of why the former example poses no significant counterexample to the central theses. (In the terms introduced in Chapter 1, note 13, such conjunctions of unstructured referring expressions might be taken to be basic cases of Boolean referring expressions.)

4. Note that descriptivists do not disagree with this claim that denoting is distinct from referring. Descriptivists hold that referring expressions are (in
some sense or other) semantically equivalent to denoting expressions, not that there are no differences at all between denoting and referring. This is obvious in the case of Russell, who spent much effort articulating this distinction, but is also most certainly true of Frege. Consider, for example, the oft-cited second footnote from Frege (1892a), which concerns the way in which opinions may differ as to the sense of a name like ‘Aristotle’. There is no analogous difference of opinion as to the sense of a denoting expression like ‘the number of planets’ or ‘a squirrel I saw yesterday’. It is relatively clear what condition an utterance of a denoting expression semantically expresses; in contrast, exactly what is semantically expressed with an utterance of a referring expression is highly contentious. (Cf. Frege’s (1918) ‘Dr. Lauben’ example for elaboration, and Sullivan (2003a) for discussion.)


6. Exactly how to characterize the propositions expressed in such cases is of course an important question for a semantic theory. A wide range of options are left open on this point to those who espouse the Russellian orthodox views about reference and structure developed herein. For example, sentences containing empty names might be taken to express ‘gappy propositions’ (cf. Salmon (1998)); or we might appeal to Meinongian non-actual objects to serve as the intended referents in such cases. As will become clearer in Chapter 4, the central theses are compatible with either of these takes on the semantic content of empty names, as with various others.

7. Following Kripke (1973), I hold that [4] is much more like [3] than like [1]; but, again, that is beside the present point. Commitment to the Russellian orthodoxy about reference and structure does not commit one to any specific thesis about fictional discourse.

8. This line of thought is developed by Neale (1993). He, in turn, cites Strawson (1959, 1974) as a formative influence for it.

9. More generally, I take common ironic uses of certain famous names to be paradigm instances of this phenomenon of speaker’s reference (as distinct from semantic reference)—e.g., “Way to go, Einstein,” “Check out Elvis over there,” “Finally, Socrates deigned to enlighten us with his brilliant opinions.” This is a departure from at least some of Kripke’s (1977) claims, as he sometimes suggests that it is essential to the cases of semantic/speaker reference divergence that the speaker and audience share a factual misconception as to the semantic reference. Ironic uses involve a certain kind of shared pretense, as opposed to a shared misconception. However, given what Kripke (1977: note 22) says about humoring the lunatic who thinks he is Napoleon, as well as about Donnellan’s (1966) non-standard cases in which a speaker uses “The King” to refer to someone who all participants in the conversation believe to be a usurper, it seems that Kripke would not be resistant to this extension of his conception of speaker’s reference. In any case, as I will use Kripke’s term “speaker reference,” a factual misconception is not essential.

10. It is perhaps worth noting that, subsequent to expressing the above reservations, Neale (2008: 377–8) clearly agrees with this present claim.

11. To illustrate briefly: In Chapter 4 I will argue that qua expression-types, proper names, are devices of semantic reference, because they are tailored for the expression of object-dependent information; however, proper names admit of a variety of other sorts of non-typical uses. In Chapter 5 I will argue that, in contrast, tokens of a denoting-expression type (e.g., ‘three thugs’, ‘a squirrel I saw yesterday’, ‘the Queen of England’) can be used referentially (i.e., with the intention of expressing object-dependent information) while still the expression-type is not a device of semantic reference. The important point for now is not that these claims are true, but merely that they are
consistent with Neale’s Gricean refinement that a plausible theory of interpretation has to derive semantic reference from speaker’s reference in terms of regularities over intentions. (One crucially important notion, on this front, is that of a pragmatic regularity—cf. especially Chapter 5, §2 and Chapter 7, §4 for discussion.)

12. Note that in the terms in Chapter 1, §1, structured uses of complex designators are instances of satisfactual designation, while unstructured uses are relational.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Part of the reason why it is the longest is simply because it was the first. Some general objections and ancillary points are addressed in this chapter because they first arise here, not because they apply only to the issue of rigid designation.


3. This token-relative qualification is required because some uses of pronouns are rigid designators, but different tokens of them rigidly designate different things. (Given that different people can have the same name, a similar point holds of proper names.) I will omit this qualification, for brevity, in contexts in which it is not necessary in order to avoid confusion.

I say that rigid designation has been in the air at least since the development of quantified modal logics because, in a sense, the notion of rigidity is as old as the notion of a de re modal attribution. The very intelligibility of de re modal claims (such as that Kripke might have been a marine biologist or that he might have delivered the first Naming and Necessity lecture one day earlier than he actually did) depends on the rigidity of such terms as ‘Kripke’ and ‘he’. (That is, such claims attribute something to a particular individual only if the subject terms track their actual referent throughout counterfactual situations.) And we’d surely need some good arguments to be convinced that such claims are unintelligible, because, among other things, (i) people think and talk in this way all the time, and (ii) it seems reasonably clear what they are thinking and talking about (i.e., how actual objects would have fared in different circumstances or would endure alterations to their accidental properties).

4. See, for instance, Kripke (1972: 128, 136, 140). He gives a representative list of terms that “have a greater kinship with proper names than is generally realized,” which includes “various species names, whether they are count nouns, such as ‘cat’, ‘tiger’, ‘chunk of gold’, or mass nouns, such as ‘gold’, ‘water’, ‘iron pyrites’. . . certain terms for natural phenomena, such as ‘heat’, ‘light’, ‘sound’, ‘lightening’, and . . . corresponding adjectives—‘hot’, ‘loud’, ‘red’” (1972: 134). It is not evident how exhaustive of the set of rigid general terms Kripke takes this list to be.


6. First and foremost, the notion of rigidity has been thought to have various important implications in the philosophy of language and mind. Further,
since rigid designation is associated with Kripke-Putnam views about certain sorts of kinds and kind terms, the notion has made a splash in several debates within metaphysics, the philosophy of science, and epistemology. Even more generally, though, the impact of the concept of rigidity quickly spilled over beyond the bounds of metaphysics and epistemology—to cite two instances, Brink (1989: Ch. 4) argues that moral terms such as ‘good’ and ‘just’ are rigid designators and draws out some consequences, and Carney (1982) provides similar arguments concerning aesthetic terms such as ‘art’ and ‘beauty’.

7. Of course, there are thought experiments in which linguistic conventions are varied in this kind of way—cf., e.g., Burge (1979). However, what is at stake in those cases is not the modal status of a proposition, but rather the effects that varying communal conventions will have on reference and content. If one fails to distinguish these two kinds of thought experiments, then it is trivial to derive the impressive-sounding conclusion that all is contingent. (Cf., e.g., Quine (1951: 36): “The statement ‘Brutus killed Caesar’ would be false if the world had been different in certain ways, but it would also be false if ‘killed’ had the sense of ‘begat’.”)

8. Those who have expressed affinity for this sort of view include Donnellan (1973, 1983), Kaplan (1973, 1989), Salmon (1982, 2003), Linsky (1984, 2006), LaPorte (2000), Marti (2004), and Neale (2008). In addition to ‘kind’, the terms ‘property’, ‘attribute’, ‘intension’, and ‘universal’ also occur in this literature. With respect to the question of rigidity, these terms are put to (more or less) the same work.


10. Putnam is an influential early source of this idea—consider, for instance, “. . . we may express Kripke’s theory and mine by saying that the term ‘water’ is rigid” (1975: 231). Schwartz (2002: 266), Soames (2002: 249, 260), and Gomez-Torrente (2006: 228) provide clear recent examples. It is interesting, in this light, that Schwartz (2002) and Soames (2002) are ultimately drawn toward the conclusion that the very idea of a rigid general term is hopelessly obscure, and not terribly useful anyway. One of my aims here is to demonstrate that, to a large extent, their problems result from confusions. (At a bit more length: The aim of §3.3 is to argue that there is a perfectly coherent notion of general-term-rigidity which lines up closely with Kripke’s original conception of singular-term-rigidity, and the aim of §3.4 is to explain how the above conception of rigidity helps to make it clear that various demands for certain sorts of usefulness have involved conflating rigidity with other distinct issues.) The notion of general term rigidity is no more and no less useful that the notion of singular term rigidity.

One further, related note: Another motivation which I have encountered for this idea that the very idea of a rigid general term is hopelessly obscure is that rigidity makes clear sense for proper names because their designata are concrete, but lacks a clear sense for general terms because their designata are abstract. I take it that the distinction between the rigid ‘nine’ vs. the nonrigid ‘the number of positions in baseball’, or the rigid ‘Friday’ vs. the nonrigid ‘the day of the week when we have fish for supper’, suffices to show that this motivation is misguided. There are relatively uncontentious rigid designators of non-concrete objects, and so the problem cannot simply be that kinds are abstract.

11. Formal polyadic predicates (such as identity, or ‘. . . is in between . . . and . . .’) need not involve a general term.

12. Many semantic debates (for instance, that between individualism and externalism about content) presuppose something along these lines; the debates
Notes

cconcern precisely how to characterize the relevant criteria, or what roles which kinds of criteria can play in determining reference, etc. This does, though, presuppose a degree of determinateness about meaning that some might find contentious. However, in this respect, I am well within the confines of the relevant debates about the question of rigidity.

13. There are many different kinds of kinds: commonly discussed varieties include natural (e.g., ‘tiger’), artificial (‘pencil’), social (‘bachelor’), non-actual (‘unicorn’), and impossible (‘round square’). So, obviously, not all kinds are on a par, metaphysically speaking. Given some specific interest or research program, some kinds count as more fundamental than others. I will not stray into the matter of carving up and ranking different types of kinds. As I aim to show, it is important to keep the metaphysical work of taxonomizing kinds separate from the semantic question of rigidity.

   Note that this criterion only explicitly applies to simple general terms—e.g., ‘horse’. *Per se*, it does not yet say anything about such complex expressions such as ‘is a horse’ or ‘the concept horse’. These complex expressions are not themselves designators of kinds, but are rather semantically structured expressions, one proper part of which (i.e., the term ‘horse’) designates a kind. I come back to such complex expressions in §3.5.


15. Here I assume that names are rigid designators. I take this claim to be eminently defensible (cf. note 3 above, and Chapter 4: *passim*), but I will not rehearse the arguments here. I am, however, concerned to show that the claim that an expression is a rigid designator is rather innocuous. In my experience, those who claim to be opposed to rigid designation prove themselves to be opposed to something entirely distinct—such as, say, the Millian view of the content of a name, or Kripke-Putnam realism about kinds—when they give their reasons.

16. My claim is not that there is no way to capture this distinction using the machinery of intensional semantics. For example, these types of terms can be assigned different sorts of functions—terms that refer to kinds, like ‘gold’ or ‘bachelor’, could be viewed as first-order functions from objects to truth-values, whereas terms that denote kinds, like ‘the element most highly prized by local jewelers’ or ‘the marital status of Prince William in 2009’, are more appropriately characterized as higher-order functions from contexts to first-order functions. (Salmon (2003) and Marti (2004) experiment briefly with this idea; it is developed in more serious depth by Linsky (2006).) It is undeniable that the possible-worlds extensions of these types of general term differ, in much the same way that ‘Cicero’ differs from that of a nonrigid description—i.e., there is a clear sense in which the likes of ‘gold’ or ‘bachelor’ have a univocal extension (i.e., it constantly designates a single kind of thing) across possible worlds while the likes of ‘the element most highly prized by local jewelers’ or ‘the marital status of Prince William in 2009’ do not (i.e., the complex condition expressed picks out different kinds in different contexts). Again, though, the point is that these phenomena are effects, the cause of which is the distinction between referring and denoting, and possible-worlds semantics is blind to that distinction *per se*.

17. Precedent for this point is provided by arguments by Kaplan (1986) and Stalnaker (1997) for the claim that the rigidity of proper names is compatible with a wide variety of views on individual essence. Similarly, and for exactly the same reasons, the rigidity of kind terms is compatible with a wide variety of views on the metaphysics of kinds.
18. This is one of the junctures, alluded to in Chapter 2, §1(iii), at which my guiding assumption of the metaphysical indifference of semantics gets bolstered.

19. An example of the nonrigid-Platonist combination is one who thinks that, say, the term ‘heat’ is semantically equivalent to the nonrigid description ‘the cause of the sensation of warmth’, but in any context, the term ‘heat’ denotes a real objective kind (over and above its instances). An example of a rigid-nominalist combination is one who thinks that, say, ‘bachelor’ makes exactly the same contribution to truth-conditions across contexts of evaluation, but that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the kind bachelor.

20. This point will be revisited in §3.4; cf. Sullivan (2005) for more thorough discussion of these issues.

21. Cf. Kaplan’s (1989: 571) vivid metaphor: When evaluating the possible-worlds truth-condition of a proposition expressed by a sentence whose subject-term is a referring expression, “. . . the [designatum] is loaded into the proposition . . . before the proposition begins its round-the-worlds journey . . . .”

22. It is not part of my view to deny that there are many deep and important differences between natural kind terms and other sorts of kind terms (or, for that matter, affinities between some sorts of non-natural kind terms and descriptions); what I am denying here is that rigidity is the place to look for an explanation of these differences. (In general, that two types of designator are both rigid is compatible with there being all manner of important semantic differences between them, as the cases of ‘I’, ‘this’, ‘Cicero’, ‘tiger’, ‘gold’, ‘the successor of 2’, and ‘the actual Prime Minister of Canada in 1999’ suffice to show.)

23. This distinction is characterized as follows, at Chapter 1, note 8: A proposition is object-dependent if and only if its truth-condition essentially involves a specific individual, and object-independent if and only if its truth-condition does not essentially involve any specific individual.

24. Russell might be counted as an adherent of this take on reference, structure, and kind terms—in the paragraph subsequent to the discussion of ‘Scott’ vs. ‘the author of Waverly’ cited in Chapter 1, §2, he says: “The relation of ‘Scott’ to Scott is that ‘Scott’ means Scott, just as the relation of ‘author’ to the concept that is so-called is that ‘author’ means this concept.” (1911: 219)

25. Contrasting views of exactly what is designated by an expression like ‘our most precious resource’ are discussed by LaPorte (2000), Soames (2002), Salmon (2003), Marti (2004), Devitt (2005), and Linksy (2006). I address this issue in §3.3(ii), in the discussion of Soames’ (2002: 261ff ) objection based on ‘the color of a cloudless sky at noon’.

26. Notoriously, Lewis is a renegade when it comes to standard Kripkean modal intuitions and theses. He is, at best, lukewarm on the thesis that proper names are rigid designators (1986: 256), and he explicitly argues against the rigidity of some general terms that are widely held to be rigid (for instance, ‘heat’ (1983: 44), ‘pain’ (1994: 304)). (Cf. Sullivan (2005) for discussion of the interrelations between Lewis’ semantic views and his metaphysical views.)

27. This objection is due to an anonymous referee.

28. On Kaplan’s view, ‘is a horse’ is a syntactically complex application of the grammatical formative ‘is a’ to the general term ‘horse’, which results in a semantically structured rigid designator. ‘Bald, happy humans’ rigidly designates the intersection of three rigid kind terms (whose extension will of course vary across counterfactual situations).

29. One last parting shot: anyone who makes the claim that an unstructured general term is nonrigid thereby takes on the onus to come up with a nonrigid description to which the term is equivalent (i.e., to specify the nonrigid condition that determines the term’s designatum). Kripke has shown that that will not be an easy task.
30. Again see Lewis (1994) for illustration—Lewis makes much of the distinction between the rigid expression ‘the property of being in pain’ and the (nonrigid) term ‘pain’.

31. This idea is explored by Sidelle (1992) and LaPorte (2000).

32. Schwartz (2002) insists that the sort of considerations raised in this present section are explained by the harmless truism that words retain their conventional meaning when applied to counterfactual situations, and so do not support a complex, cumbersome, contentious thesis that general terms are rigid designators. Recall that it used to be objected that the thesis that proper names are rigid is needlessly complex, cumbersome, and contentious, but, as discussed above, that objection has been fairly conclusively laid to rest, shown to rest on conflations. I am in the process of assembling the case that the same holds true of the thesis that unstructured general terms are rigid—i.e., properly understood, there is nothing complex or cumbersome about it, and it seems contentious only because the issue has been clouded by irrelevant demands.

33. As mentioned above in note 8, many theorists have, via various avenues, arrived at this conclusion. My aim here is to uncover fresh grounds for the view, which have to do with the importance of the concept of structure.

34. General terms can be co-extensive (in any given context) but differ in their satisfaction conditions (and hence truth-conditions); for any given extension, there is no limit to the number of truth-conditionally distinct general terms that designate it; and so on.


38. See, for instance, Schwartz (2002): “Clearly there is an important difference between natural kind terms like ‘gold’ and nominal kind terms like ‘bachelor’—and isn't this difference based on the rigidity of the one and the non-rigidity of the other?” (p. 266); “If there are no necessary a posteriori propositions with ‘bachelor’, ‘hunter’, ‘soda’, then their supposed rigidity offers nothing new or interesting at all and extending rigidity to them illuminates nothing” (p. 271). Devitt (2005) explicitly agrees with Schwartz’s demands that the concept of rigidity must satisfy certain demands, and adds to the list some of his own demands. (Devitt's key demand has to do with refuting the view that certain general terms (especially natural kind terms) are synonymous with descriptions. Even if we impose this demand on the concept of rigidity, Linsky (2006) explains why the demand is met anyway, on the sort of view defended here.).

39. So there is nothing revolutionary about the notion of rigidity, per se; rather, the phenomena of rigidity helped to show up something suspect about some of the previously received views on reference, and that was revolutionary. Rigidity is not a monumental conclusion, but rather a central premise in a monumental argument. (Note how informally the premise of rigidity is established, not by elaborate arguments but rather simply by appeal to intuitions about the possible-worlds truth-conditions of certain statements (such as ‘Aristotle was fond of dogs’, ‘Your pants are on fire’, ‘This is water’, etc.).)

40. As is clear in Kaplan (1968: especially §8), the notion of rigidity is also absolutely crucial for assessing Quine’s objections to quantified modal logic.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. This claim that proper names are referring expressions, though definitely the most prevalent view, is not entirely without dissenters. (Cf., e.g., Burge (1973).) I will not pause to engage with this question here, though I will briefly address some of the anti-orthodox arguments below at §4.3(i). The general force of the present chapter is to add to the reasons in favor of the prevalent view.

2. Classic works in these debates include Mill (1843), Frege (1892a), Russell (1911), and Kripke (1972). For an update on the enduring entrenched debate, compare Salmon (1986) and Soames (2002, 2005a) with Segal (2001) and Bach (2002).

3. For discussion of these first two complications, see Kaplan (1990), Mercier (1999), Sullivan (2003a, 2003b). As for the third, Stalnaker (1997: 543) presses this point as it is manifest within the contemporary orthodox causal theories of reference: “Causal connections are ubiquitous . . . there are a great many individuals causally implicated in [any] use of [any] name . . . A proper causal theory of reference would have to specify just what sort of causal connection is necessary and sufficient for reference, and that is a notoriously difficult demand.” This point would have to be worded differently for different theories of reference (i.e., descriptivist, teleological, etc.), but I think it is fair to say that no theory of reference currently on offer avoids or solves it.

4. Other germane passages include the discussion of ‘Bismarck’ (and the “direct use” which the name “always wishes to have”) at (1911: 215), and the discussion of ‘Scot’ at (1911: 218).

5. On Russell’s view, using a term as a name is a sufficient condition for expressing an object-dependent proposition—“. . .if one thing has two names, you make exactly the same assertion whichever of the two names you use, provided they are really names and not truncated descriptions” (1918: 245). This issue will be revisited below.

6. Cf. Kripke’s (1971: 159, 1972: 102) discussions of the necessary a posteriori status of the statement ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’, in which he is prone to invoke such conditions as “If we . . . really use ‘Phosphorus’ as the name of a planet . . .”

7. It has been objected that this allegation ignores Kripke’s discussion of the notion of de jure rigidity (1980: note 21), but it must be conceded that Kripke’s discussion there is brief and undeveloped.

8. Kripke (2005: 1007) briefly discusses the connection between naming and structure. As Kripke reads Almog (1986), Almog holds that Russell stipulated that names had to be unstructured, but that Kripke was unsympathetic to this idea. In contrast, Kripke (2005) counters both the claim that Russell adheres to any such stipulation and the claim that Kripke (1972) had no sympathy for such a connection between naming and structure. (With respect to the latter claim, Kripke (2005: 1007) says: “See my [1972] discussions of ‘The United Nations’, Voltaire’s ‘Holy Roman Empire’, and Mill’s ‘Dartmouth’, which may appear to have parts that contribute to the semantics of the whole, but do not.”) This line of thought will be discussed extensively in §4.2.

9. “. . .being used as descriptions . . . is a way in which names are frequently used in practice, and there will, as a rule, be nothing in the phraseology to show whether they are being used in this way or as names.”

10. By ‘without serious competition’ I mean, first and foremost, that no syntactic criteria for proper namehood comes close to being satisfactory. There are some more or less reliable syntactic clues for identifying proper names—for
instance, in English, proper names are capitalized, and they are free standing NPs (i.e., unlike common nouns, no determiner is required to complement a proper name in order to form an NP). However, neither of these criteria will stand up to much cross-linguistic data. The phenomenon of capitalization is drastically unsystematic, even if we restrict our attention to just English, French, and German, and there are many languages (e.g., Catalan) in which proper names do take determiners. Another criterion with some currency is that proper names are distinct in that they can only occur in the subject-position, not as a predicate. Even granting that this is a syntactic criterion, it is probably better suited to demarcating the broader class of singular terms, as opposed to just proper names, and is almost certainly subject to counterexample anyway—as Frege (1892b: 49) points out, Trieste is no Vienna. On the evidence, I hold that there is no syntactic condition that is either necessary or sufficient for proper namehood; even further, as I will presently explain, tokens of virtually any expression could be used as a name.

The suitability of pragmatic criteria for identifying proper names is extensively discussed in this essay passim. Whether an expression-type should be classified as a proper name is a semantic question, but any expression could be used as a name.

11. ‘Varied’ in that, among other things, this list cuts across the entrenched debates over the semantics of names. Two clarifications: First, strictly speaking, given the phenomenon of empty names, the Mill excerpt should be amended to “. . . are intended to be attached . . . “. Second, note that not every use of a name requires and explicit stipulation. Most tokens of names would involve what Kaplan (1989: 602) characterizes as “. . . the typical consumer’s attitude of compliance . . .” (i.e., implicit deference to a previous stipulation, and attendant naming practice). Cf. Kaplan (1989: 599–603).

12. It might not be a sufficient condition, for reasons that will be discussed in §4.4 below.

13. Another example: the Progressive Conservative Party was one of the most powerful political parties in Canada throughout the 20th century; they last governed Canada from 1984–1993. Like most Canadians of my generation (as well as preceding generations), I used the term ‘Progressive Conservative’ as a name, and so it never occurred to me that the term is oxymoronic until I heard a foreigner making a joke about it. (I was a competent participant in the relevant naming convention long before I understood what either ‘progressive’ or ‘conservative’ meant.)

14. Cf. Bach’s (2004: 217–8) discussion of what is right and what is wrong about Donnellan’s (1966) claim that the particular content of a referentially used description is “inessential” to what is said. What is right about Donnellan’s claim is that there is a clear sense in which a distinct description could have been used to say the same thing; what is potentially misleading about Donnellan’s claim is any semblance that this entails that the compositionally determined condition expressed by the description is completely irrelevant.

15. Recall the quotes from Russell and Kaplan, cited in Chapter 1, §2: “. . . A man’s name is what he is called, but however much Scott had been called the author of Waverley, that would not have made him be the author; it was necessary for him actually to write Waverley, which was a fact having nothing to do with names.” (Russell 1911: 218); “To wonder what number is named by the German die Zahl der Planeten may betray astronomical ignorance, but to wonder what number is named by the German Neun can only indicate linguistic incompetence.” (Kaplan 1968: 194).

The present point is that this contrast holds just as surely between, say, ‘Willard van Orman Quine’ vs. ‘Ohio’s most accomplished philosopher’.
Unlike the latter, the former does not express a compositionally determined identifying condition.

16. For example, at the end of Chapter 5, §3, I will show that this counterfactual test can also be used to determine whether a use of a definite description is referential or attributive, and in Chapter 6, §2, I will apply it to the issue of referential vs. quantificational analyses of complex demonstratives.

17. ‘Relatively’ because there is of course the problem of homonymy alluded to in §4.1. Even given that, ‘he’ is of course much more promiscuous than ‘John’.

18. Of course, it is possible to change one’s name. The present point is that this is quite a different sort of thing than the transition, within a given context, from being appropriately singled out via ‘you’ to being appropriately singled out via ‘she’ or ‘he’.

19. The allusion is to a quote from Kaplan (1975) cited in §4.1. According to Perry (2001) and Neale (2008), while semantics of a proper name specifies a referent that is constant across distinct uses, in contrast, the semantics of an indexical referring expression specifies a relation between speaker and referent that is constant across distinct uses.

20. Compare: You walk into a room in which there are two people you’ve never met, and: (a) one says to the other, ‘I am very proud of you’, vs. (b) one says to the other, ‘Sally is very proud of Sam’. In virtue of being a competent speaker of English, you can identify the proposition expressed in (a). In the case of (b), though, linguistic competence does not suffice.

21. These basic differences between proper names and indexicals explains why I side with Kaplan (1977: 558–63) and against Recanati (1993: Ch.8) on the question of whether indexicality can provide the solution to the problem of homonymy for proper names.

22. For instance, consider a student of literature who has become convinced that Bacon wrote all of the works that are today attributed to Shakespeare, and that Shakespeare was actually an untalented, opportunistic theatre owner who fraudulently claimed to be their author. On an exam she encounters the question: ‘Discuss Shakespeare’s use of irony in *Measure for Measure.*’ She would not take the question literally, and answer that Shakespeare wouldn’t recognize irony if it bit him on the toe. Instead, she would rather take the name descriptively—i.e., ‘Shakespeare’ designates the author of . . . . Following Donnellan (1966), we could think of this as an attributive use of a name.

23. To my ears, there is quite a difference between [3] and the object-level, more typical:

> [4] David Kaplan joined our club this week.

Whereas [3] expresses an object-independent proposition that an individual named ‘David Kaplan’ joined the club, [4] expresses an object-dependent proposition. There is a very clear sense in which the name is used in [4] but mentioned in [3].

24. Analogously, just as the existence of the referential uses of descriptions *per se* does not refute Russell’s (1905) theory (Chapter 5 contains extensive discussion of this point), so too the existence of non-referential uses of names does not refute the above view of the nature of naming. To the contrary, these non-standard uses provide a means to further hone the view. That is, the above view admits of some regulative usefulness here: if what you have seems to be a name but is not used in an unstructured way, then something non-literal is going on.

For example: Someone says to me, ‘Way to go, Einstein’. I think: ‘This person has just called me ‘Einstein’. That is not my name, this person knows it is not my name, and yet this person appears to be acting in accord with Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principle. An implicature is afoot. Perhaps this
person is drawing attention to the stupidity of my recent action by comparing me, in a mocking way, with the celebrated genius.' Or take our literature student from note 22. Upon reading the exam question, she may at first consider the dim-witted theatre owner. Clearly, given the context, it would be uncooperative for the professor to be asking her opinion about this imposter, and it would be uncooperative (to say the least) for her to expound her views about this imposter. Therefore, she drops the standard, literal interpretation of the sentence, and searches for the most relevant alternative. In the context, that problem has an obvious solution. This exam question concerns the author of the plays covered in the course, and so ‘Shakespeare’ should be read attributively to designate whoever authored the relevant plays. (Note that the above elucidations are intended to be illustrative—I am not claiming that implicatures are explicitly derived in this kind of way (nor did Grice).)

25. Analogously, even if the term ‘Paris’ evokes different images for different speakers, nonetheless these speakers can still use the term to refer to the very same thing. Clearly, different tokens of ‘Paris’ can be semantically equivalent, despite such subjective differences. The same could be said of tokens of distinct co-referential names. (This is just to marry Frege’s (1884: 140) advice that the subject matter of semantics is objective, not subjective, with the Donnellan (1970)/Kripke (1972) point that virtually any link between a name and a bit of descriptive information should be classified as subjective, not objective.)

26. ‘Not inevitable’ in that of course the view developed above is compatible with many of the varieties of approach to propositional attitudes that aim to accommodate Frege’s intuitions about their truth-conditions.

27. This idea was explored by Kripke (1979), and subsequently developed, in different ways, by Stalnaker (1984), Salmon (1986), and Fodor (1998), among others.

28. For instance, in some contexts, ‘he’ and ‘John’ can be interchanged without affecting the content of what is communicated, while in others not; in some contexts, ‘John’ and ‘the guy in the corner’ can be interchanged without affecting the content of what is communicated, and in others not.


30. For further discussion, see Bach (2010), Recanati (2010).

NOTES TO THE INTERLUDE

1. Cf. the opening paragraphs of Evans (1982: Introduction) for subtle discussion of this general consideration.


NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Note again the point from Chapter 2, §1(i), concerning the importance of this distinction between semantic meaning and speaker’s meaning to all
points on the literalist-contextualist spectrum. To illustrate a bit further, consider Recanati’s (2004a: 3) contention that the fundamental contrast is between the literalists’ claim that “we may legitimately describe truth-conditional content to natural language sentences, quite independently of what the speaker who utters the sentence means” and the contextualists’ claim that “speech acts are the primary bearers of content.” I take it that the distinction between speaker’s meaning and semantic meaning is obviously crucial for both of these positions. (Cf. Recanati (2004b: 16) for another statement of the importance of this distinction from someone who is opposed to the view concerning definite descriptions sketched in this present chapter.)

2. Of course, vagueness, ambiguity, and context-sensitivity abound; and, in practice, it can be difficult for a hearer to discern exactly the speaker’s communicative intentions. Nonetheless, as Frege (1892b: 46) puts the point:

“Nowadays people seem inclined to exaggerate the scope of the statement that different linguistic expressions are never completely equivalent, that a word can never be exactly translated into another language. One might perhaps go even further, and say that the same word is never taken in quite the same way even by [those] who share a language. I will not inquire as to the measure of truth in these statements; I would only emphasize that nevertheless different expressions quite often have something in common, which I call the [semantic meaning] or, in the special case of sentences, the thought. In other words, we must not fail to recognize that the same [semantic meaning], the same thought, may be variously expressed . . . It is possible for one sentence to give no more and no less information than another; and for all the multiplicity of languages, mankind has a common stock of thoughts.”

(I have replaced Frege’s ‘sense’ with ‘semantic meaning’; I do not mean to imply that these are exact synonyms, but just that in the present context what Frege says of ‘sense’ holds true of what I am calling ‘semantic meaning’.)

3. Again, for present purposes, I should stay orthogonal to the literalist-contextualist debates as much as possible. Literalists and contextualists are prone to give quite different accounts of what exactly is semantically expressed with a use of such a sentence. I have tried to state the matter somewhere around the halfway point of the continuum.

4. Note that this is a distinct phenomenon from what is often called an ‘inverted commas’ use of a name, such as when one humors a delusional man who thinks he is Napoleon by referring to him as such. As discussed in Chapter 2, both kinds of use fit fairly well within the category of what Kripke (1977) calls ‘speaker reference’ (provided that we explicitly reject Kripke’s occasional suggestion that it is essential to the cases of speaker/semantic reference divergence that the speaker and audience share a factual misconception as to the semantic reference). However, the inverted commas cases are more clearly meta-linguistic; the name is not used but mentioned.

5. Though it is, of course, contentious exactly what role such regularities can play in a theoretical account of linguistic behavior. See Chomsky (1988) for one classic skeptical statement on this issue. Note, crucially, that Chomsky does not deny the existence of conventional regularities; rather, he rejects certain specific ways of understanding, and theoretically employing, such regularities.

6. However, certain pertinent strands within this general terrain do demand further development over the course of the next two sections.

7. As Borg (2007: 348) puts it, contextualists take the above considerations to prove that “pragmatic effects are endemic throughout the literal, truth-evaluable content expressed by sentences”, or that “pragmatics infects semantic content in a substantial way”.

8. To cite one example, Cappelan & Lepore (2005: x) give for a nice clear statement of one central line of argument against contextualism: “The common thread that runs throughout our criticism of contextualism is that it fails to account for how we communicate across contexts. People with different background beliefs, goals, audiences, perceptual inputs, etc. can understand each other. They can agree or disagree. They can say, assert, claim, state, investigate, or make fun of the very same claim. No theory of communication is adequate unless it explains how this is possible. Contextualists cannot provide such an explanation.”


10. See Neale (1993: 99–101) for discussion and references.


12. Another example: “Who do you think you are?” This question is, as a matter of fact, virtually never used literally—the exception perhaps being a therapist talking to a patient with multiple personality disorder. There is a prevalent pragmatic regularity to use this question rhetorically, to implicate that the addressee is being unduly audacious.

13. Here I depart from Grice’s terminology, by employing the following terms to characterize Grice’s factorization:

   WHAT IS COMMUNICATED with a use of a sentence (in context) is a function of two factors—(i) WHAT IS SEMANTICALLY EXPRESSED, and (ii) WHAT IS PRAGMATICALLY IMPLICATED

   Along with many others nowadays, I find ‘WHAT IS SAID’ to be hopelessly vague and ambiguous—while Grice was exceedingly consistent in his usage of the expression, unfortunately one finds it subsequently used in different ways by different theorists. I will also make no use of the notion of ‘conventional meaning’, as one key notion focused on below is of a kind of pragmatic implication that is systematic and regular, and so ‘conventional’ in some senses of the term.

14. A case in point is Strawson’s (1952) argument that ‘and’ is ambiguous, based on the consideration that ‘P and Q’ (in context) sometimes communicates temporal order, sometimes communicates a causal relation, sometimes communicates neither such relation, etc. In effect, Grice’s factorization demonstrates why it is that this kind of argument is hopelessly incomplete—one has to address the alternative of a difference in pragmatic implications, in order to shore up the gap between premises and conclusion.

   Other instances of what Grice does here for the case of ‘and’ include Grice’s (1975) discussion of the indefinite article ‘a’. For example, there is a communicative difference between ‘X walked into a house’ and ‘X was sitting in a car all morning’, in that the former implicates that the house was not X’s own, but the latter carries no such implication. However, according to Grice, this difference should be explained pragmatically, as a generalized conversational implicature, rather than by positing a semantic ambiguity in the indefinite article. As we will see in the next section, Kripke’s (1977) argues that similar points about ‘the’ defuse Strawson’s (1950) and Donnellan’s (1966) challenge to Russell’s theory of descriptions.

15. Note too that these considerations also cut in the opposite direction. Just as communicative differences between two expressions E1 and E2 does not yet entail that they belong in distinct semantic categories, so too the fact that there is, over a broad range of paradigm cases, communicative parity between two expressions E1 and E2 does not yet entail that they are
semantically equivalent. An alternative explanation of this latter case—which may amount to a better explanation, all things considered—is that one of the expressions in question is subject to a pragmatic regularity, and so is widely used in a non-literal way. (Later on I will argue that this point applies to some of Schiffer’s (1995, 2005) challenges to Russell’s theory of descriptions, and in Chapter 6 I will argue that it also applies to some of King’s (2001, 2008) challenges to a referential account of complex demonstratives.)

16. The seminal source for those grounds is of course Russell (1905, 1919, 1959). See note 24 for further relevant references. See May (1987: 128) for a statement of the syntactic grounds for classifying definite descriptions as quantifiers, and consider Lepore (2004: 43): “The definite article ‘the’ behaves grammatically and in at least some cases uncontroversially semantically like standard quantifier expressions, so much so that it is hard to see how a semantic theory . . . could proceed systematically were we to deny definite descriptions quantificational status.”

17. Compare Russell’s (1919) discussion of the distinctions between utterances of “I met Jones” vs. “I met a man”, even in a context in which both are made true by the very same event of having met Jones.

18. The canonical view is that [1] and [2] differ in that [2] entails, but [1] does not, that I only met one man yesterday on the road to Sligo. For present purposes, I will persist with this assumption, but see Szabo (2005) for critical discussion. It is more typical for linguists to talk of ‘salience’ rather than ‘uniqueness’ when it comes to the distinctive difference between ‘the F’ and ‘an F’ (cf., e.g., Fernandez (2009)). As we will see, this is indicative of the way in which the old Russellian problem of uniqueness has been merged into more current interpretive problems (such as quantifier domain restriction).

19. Strictly speaking, formulae along the lines of [2*] first appear in Russell and Whitehead (1910); this simplifies the complex, meta-linguistic rendering of the truth-conditions of ‘The F is G’ given by Russell (1905). Following Neale (1990: Ch.2), it is now common to treat definite descriptions as restricted quantifiers, and thus the LF of [2] is to be represented:

\[ [2**] (\text{x: } Fx) \text{ x is G} \]

This move brings with it at least two important refinements. First, the domain over which a restricted quantifier ranges is not the entire universe, but rather some more or less specific contextually salient set. Second, this move delivers an LF of description sentences, which is less of a drastic departure from their grammatical form. Most specifically, like [2], [2**] includes just one quantifier—thereby avoiding [2*]’s disadvantage of positing two separate quantifiers to capture the semantics of the univocal ‘the’.

In any case, though, what matters most for present concerns is not the best representation of the LF of [2], but rather the core point that [2]’s truth-conditions are object-independent (i.e., if [2] were uttered in two different contexts about two different men, both utterances would semantically express exactly the same proposition).

20. The standard Russellian response is sketched by Grice (1969: 143)—as Grice puts it, despite admitting of both ‘identificatory’ and ‘non-identificatory’ uses, “descriptive phrases have no relevant systematic duplicity of meaning; their meaning is given by a Russellian account.” Kripke (1977) then develops this line of thought into a powerful counter-argument against anti-Russellians—in his (1977: 263) words, the phenomenon of referential uses “shows nothing against a Russellian or other unitary account”, and so treating referential uses via “a general theory of speech acts” is, all things considered, preferable to positing a “semantic ambiguity” in the definite article. Neale (1990) and Bach (2004) add important amplifications and
further developments. See Neale (2004) for more thorough discussions of the development of the view.

21. Several commentators have pointed out that ‘semantic reference’ is an unfortunate choice of words for Kripke (1977), in that, on a Russellian view, definite descriptions have no semantic reference. Strictly speaking, a Russellian who discusses descriptions should either speak in terms of ‘speaker’s reference vs. semantic denotation’, or else just stick to the more general terms ‘speaker’s meaning vs. semantic meaning’.

22. For example, even if the description is used referentially—and even if the relevant compositionally determined condition does not in fact apply to the intended designatum—still the context-independent semantic properties of, say, ‘the man drinking the martini’ play an ineliminable role in characterizing what is communicated with an use of a sentence containing it. This point is defended by Bach (2004, 2006, 2007).

23. Cf. the discussion of semantic underdetermination and quantifier domain restriction, in §4.1 in Chapter 4. This point will come up again shortly, in the discussion of incomplete descriptions.

24. This particular strand of the dialectic has been thoroughly developed, over the last decade, by Bach (2004, 2007) vs. Devitt (2004, 2007). Both parties concede that referential uses of definite descriptions cannot be easily accounted for on the model of Gricean conversational implicatures, either particularized or generalized. (This is one of the reasons why Neale (2004: 173) disavows the “standard, wooden, Gricean” account of referential uses.) The question then becomes whether there is an alternative pragmatic explanation of how an object-dependent proposition can be communicated while a distinct object-independent proposition is semantically expressed. I find Bach’s (2004, 2007) account on this latter question compelling, though Devitt remains unconvinced.

In support of Bach, and against Devitt, I think it is important to bear in mind that, once we get beyond straightforward paradigm cases of conversational implicature (e.g., Grice’s (1975) letter of reference), crisp, clean Gricean derivations are exceedingly hard to come by. Further, this factor is predicted by the Gricean picture, rather than disparaged (cf. the discussion of “indeterminacy” in the last paragraph of Grice (1975)). Furthermore, Devitt’s thesis that ‘the’ is semantically ambiguous invites a number of difficult objections (in addition to all of the reasons in favor of the Russellian alternative already catalogued). For example, why stop at two disambiguations of ‘the’? Why not posit a third sense to cover generic uses (e.g., ‘The whale is a mammal’), a fourth sense to cover uses which designate offices or roles as opposed to individuals (e.g., ‘The Prime Minister of Canada has much more executive autonomy than the President of the US’), and so on? Devitt needs a principled answer to this question, and it is far from clear how that should go. Second, Devitt’s (2004: 287) truth-conditions for referential uses are extremely counterintuitive in certain mistaken cases. Where Devitt thinks that the man in a red hat who he saw stole the encyclopedia, whilst actually a distinct man who also happens to be wearing a red hat was the thief, Devitt would take his referential utterance of “A man in a red hat stole the encyclopedia” to semantically express a falsehood. Surely we should be wary of any view that has this questionable consequence. Finally, Devitt (2004: 294) is forced to contradict the consensus view that the phenomenon of incomplete descriptions should receive a uniform treatment, whether the incomplete description is used referentially or attributively. (There is more extensive discussion of incompleteness in the next section; and cf. Neale (2000) for explanation of what I here call ‘the consensus view’.) I take this is be another unwelcome
consequence, the cumulative force of which adds to the tide of considerations against the tenets from which it stems.

25. For perspicuity, I will not unpack the truth-conditional contribution of ‘only’.

26. This sort of application of the counterfactual test strongly suggests to me that Donnellan’s referential-attributive distinction is exclusive (though not necessarily exhaustive). Kripke (1977) suggests without elaboration that it is not exclusive, though it is hard at this point hard to see exactly what sort of case he has in mind. Someone who said something essentially vague, between [5, OD] and [5, OI]? That just seems to be fuzzy thinking resulting in an infelicitous speech act, rather than a counterexample to the exclusiveness of the distinction. Can someone really have meant BOTH [5, OI] and [5, OD], with a felicitous use of [5]? I think not.

I have encountered the presumption that Donnellan (1966) has an example which shows that the distinction is not exhaustive, but, to the contrary, the relevant example is in support of the weaker claim that one can have a specific denotation in mind, but nonetheless still use the description attributively. If this is what Kripke has in mind, then I think it is misclassified as a counterexample to exclusivity. In any case, I think that this kind of application of the Kripke’s counterfactual test strongly suggests that the distinction is in fact exclusive.

27. I should also explicitly point out that it is no part of my view that the Russelians have worked out satisfactory answers to every pertinent question in the area. See, for example, Neale’s (2008: §19) discussion of the problems which quantified noun phrases (including definite descriptions) in non-subject positions pose for virtually any known compositional approach to semantics.

28. The argument from anaphora is suggested by Strawson (1950) and further developed by several others. (Cf. Neale (1990: Ch.5) for discussion and references.) The argument from nesting is developed by Smiley (1981).

29. Further, Kripke (1977) registers a vague worry that Russell’s theory “probably . . . ultimately fails” (p. 277) because of the problem of incompleteness. (Note though that in that passage Kripke seems to be assuming that the Russellian is committed to what I below characterize as the ‘explicit Russelian strategy’ for handling incompleteness.) This problem is also a main motivation for Neale’s (2004, 2008) Gödelian-completion account of definite descriptions—which, not coincidentally, is also explicitly consistent with the central theses.

Neale’s (2004, 2008) Gödelian-completion account of definite descriptions has not received much critical attention in the literature, and I will also not engage very deeply with it. Schiffer (2005) and Buchanan & Ostertag (2005) allege that Neale’s (2004) completions are not appropriate candidates to serve as the meaning of the target definite descriptions on the grounds of sheer psychological implausibility. Devitt (2007) alleges that Neale (2004) has sold the farm anyway, conceding all that is essential to the Donnellan-style ambiguity-theorists’ case. For my part, I just find Neale’s cure to be harder to swallow than the original malaise that it was developed to solve. (It is relevant here that I think that Bach (2004) nails the argument from convention, on the grounds described in the previous section, while Neale evidently does not.) So, in general, as compared to the Russell-Grice line to which Neale himself is such an important contributor, I hold that Neale’s (2004, 2008) theory is, in its unintuitiveness and complexity, incommensurate with the force of the anti-Russellian charges.

30. Contra Devitt’s (2004) desire to get from problems with the explicit strategy to positive reasons in favor of a Donnellan-style ambiguity-theory, see Neale (2008: note 72): “For reasons that are obscure, the mere fact that
there is often nothing to choose between alternative completions of ‘the’ has been taken by some . . . philosophers to constitute a barrier to a unitary quantificational account of ‘the’ . . . That there must be something deeply misguided in the reasoning behind this claim is clear from the fact that the existence of alternative completions of Φ between which there is nothing to choose is not specific to cases in which the determiner combining with ‘the’ is ‘the’: the phenomenon extends to cases involving uses of ‘every’ Φ, ‘no Φ’, ‘some Φ’ . . . etc., but this hardly constitutes evidence that these expressions are not quantificational!"

31. Note that I am using “implicit” in a more general and informal sense than some authors do. I do not take the implicit strategy to be, or to entail, any particular formal syntactic or semantic move. For example, Barwise and Perry (1983) develop a specific version of the implicit strategy, according to which utterances are implicitly restricted to situations; but Soames’s (1986) ‘The Russian voted for the Russian’ is commonly taken to be a devastating objection to that strategy. Certainly, all must concede that relation of domain to reference in natural language is vastly more complex than is envisaged by a simple situation theory. For another example, Bach (2004: 221) and Neale (2008: note 73) seem to take the implicit strategy to involve the ad hoc postulation of variables in logical form, so that the domain be clearly restricted. Both are wary of any such move—cf. Bach (2000: passim, 2006: 243–6), Neale (2005: 196–204, 2007: 77–83). As we will see in Chapter 7, §1, in the discussion of constraining vs. determining reference, I am in sympathy with Bach and Neale on this front.

However, even despite the fact that Bach clearly takes himself to be rejecting both the explicit and implicit approaches—“Russell’s theory does not have to treat uses of incomplete descriptions as either elliptical for complete ones or as containing implicit but semantically relevant restrictions on their domains” (2004: 221)—I take Bach’s (2004, 2007) approach to semantic underdetermination and the semantics-pragmatics interface to be a paradigm case of the implicit strategy. (Again, as I understand it, the difference has to do with Bach’s interpretation (see above) of the “implicit but semantically relevant” constraint. As I am using the term “implicit,” it imposes no such specific semantic constraint.) As Bach puts it: incomplete definite descriptions involve a familiar and quite general sort of “implicit narrowing of things under consideration or relevant to the conversation” (2004: 223)—as distinct from involving some variety of ellipsis, as the explicit strategy has it.

32. Here I am echoing Neale’s (2004: 173) remarks about the argument from convention.

33. As Bach puts it: “It does not matter that the description is incomplete, because the speaker does not intend the description by itself to provide the hearer with the full basis for identifying the [designatum]” (2004: 221).

34. Cf. Buchanan & Ostertag (2005) for another account of why the problem of incompleteness should not be thought of as devastating for the Russellian orthodoxy.

35. ‘Dual-purpose NPs’ are defined above as expressions that both designate and characterize. Examples include definite descriptions and complex demonstratives.

36. The discussions that are most pertinent to explaining and defending of this claim occur at Chapter 2, §2; Chapter 4, §2; and Chapter 5, §§1-2.

37. It is down this path that we run into the similarities with complex demonstratives and molecular names that I allude to above and will further develop in Chapter 6, §4.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 6


3. There is clearly an intuition of psychological parity here across a broad range of paradigm cases, between “that F is G” vs. “the F is G.” However, Segal has nicely isolated a case in which parity is lacking. As I return to below, the intuition of parity may be best explained via the notion of a pragmatic regularity.

4. Here compare Neale’s (2008: 421) contrasting of ‘That man is a fool’ vs. ‘The actual man I am demonstrating is a fool’, which Neale also takes to show a critical disparity between demonstratives and descriptions.

5. [5] is from Russell (1905), [6] from Evans (1979), and [7] from Kripke (1977). The ambiguities in question are rendered as follows:

5(i): \( \neg (\exists x (\forall y (y \leftrightarrow y=x) \& Fx)) \) vs. 5(ii): \( \exists x (\forall y (y \leftrightarrow y=x) \& \neg Fx) \)

6(i): \( \Diamond (\exists x (\forall y (y \leftrightarrow y=x) \& Fx)) \) vs. 6(ii): \( \exists x (\forall y (y \leftrightarrow y=x) \& \Diamond Fx) \)

7(i): Jones wants to marry whichever x such that: \( \forall y (y \leftrightarrow y=x) \) vs. 7(ii) \( \exists y (\forall y (y \leftrightarrow y=x) \& Jones wants to marry x). \)

6. Cf. Salmon (2006), Neale (2007, 2008), Braun (2008) for serious attempts to do so, all of which are consistent with the claim that complex demonstratives are referring expressions.

7. At just a bit more length, King (2001a, 2008) alleges that there are two main sorts of counterexample to the claim that complex demonstratives are devices of semantic reference: NDNS uses (short for ‘no demonstration, no speaker reference’) such as “That student who scored 100% must be a genius,” and QI uses (short for ‘quantifying in’), such as “Every parent dreads that day when their oldest child gets their driver’s license.” First off, I share the fairly prevalent intuition that especially the NDNS cases are mere stylistic variant of the definite description, and hence could be understood as a pragmatic regularity. (Note too that, as both Evans (1982) and Neale (1993) point out, there is dialectic variance with respect to the grammaticality of such constructions, which I take to bolster the intuition that the phenomenon in question concerns speech acts and not semantics.) As for the QI cases, see especially Salmon (2006a, 2006b) and Braun (2008) for critical discussions of some of the questionable assumptions underlying King’s claim that they are incompatible with the thesis that complex demonstratives are devices of semantic reference.

Note also the thorny question of what a proponent of the quantificational approach to complex demonstratives is to say about the relation between the simple ‘that/that’ and the complex ‘this/that F’—the former being the very paradigm of a device of semantic reference. All the options seem to have much to be said against them, as Borg (2000) demonstrates.

8. On both of these views, only the characters are structured, and not the contents. Borg argues that this is the only sense of ‘structure’ that makes the claim that all directly referential terms are unstructured significant and defensible. I am not here interested in defending theses about direct reference, for reasons explained in Chapter 2, §2(ii). However, to the extent that there is a compositional procedure specifying the referent of a complex demonstrative—i.e., that such views are committed to the semantic treatment of the nominal, in the sense defined below—I take these views to hold that complex demonstratives are structured, in the sense that is at issue here.

10. Cf., e.g., Schiffer (1981) and Corazza (2002) for categorical endorsements of this claim, and Larson & Segal (1995: 218) for a tentative endorsement of it. (For what it is worth: according to Neale (2008: 421), Schiffer still holds this view.) As I will explain below, Kaplan (1975) and Loar (1976, 1991) articulate what I take to be motivations for this yes answer, but as far as I can tell neither of them explicitly endorses it.

Kripke (1977) might be added to this list too. In contrast to his firm intuition that something false is semantically expressed in the case of referentially-used misdescriptions (p.269), Kripke holds that a complex demonstrative can refer to “an object to which the descriptive adjectives in the construction do not apply (for example, “that scoundrel” may be used to refer to someone who is not, in fact, a scoundrel) and it is not clear that the distinction between speaker’s reference and semantic reference should be invoked to explain this” (p. 271).

11. There are of course non-typical uses of complex demonstratives, as of (more or less) any kind of expression. An example is conversational repair, such as is instanced by the second step in the following conversation:

A: That cake is for dessert.
B: No, that torte is for dessert.

Such cases by no means undermine the general point that there are two sub-parts to what is expressed with a use of a sentence containing a complex demonstrative; they rather show that there are exceptions to the above-described typical relation between the two parts. Here B’s primary communicative intention is to assert that that is a torte, not that that is for dessert.

12. Some have argued that the pragmatic treatment of the nominal runs into insurmountable problems with compositionality (‘F’ clearly makes a compositional contribution to the semantic value of ‘that F”—cf. Borg (2000: 239)) or semantic innocence (i.e., ‘F’ makes the same contribution to ‘that F’ that it does to, say, ‘an F”—cf. Dever (2001: 277)). I take those arguments to have been successfully countered by the formal accounts developed in Corazza (2002) and Glanzberg & Siegel (2006: §2). (A different sort of problem for the pragmatic treatment is discussed in note 20 in this chapter.)

13. The question of the (lack of) preciseness of the nominal is not extensively discussed in this chapter, but its importance is developed in Chapter 7, §1 (in the course of a discussion of indexical pronouns). Everything said there about the distinction between constraining and determining reference also applies to vague complex demonstratives (e.g., ‘that guy over there’, said in a crowded room, unaccompanied by an explicit pointing). While the semantic properties of the expression used clearly impose constraints on what counts as the referent, they often fall well short of sufficing to single out any specific individual. As we will explore in the next chapter, this point is rather significant for some general issues in the theory of reference.


15. The philosophers’ notion of MP phenomena is closely related to what some linguists call ‘multidimensional semantic content’. (Cf. Potts (2005: pp. 10, 44) for references to seminal discussions of multidimensional semantic content in the linguistics literature.)

17. Hence, the best illustrative analogue for Corazza’s take on complex demonstratives would be a non-restrictive relative clause. Here compare Kaplan’s (2004) characteristically effective variant of Frege’s (1892a) example:

[Frege] Napoleon, who recognized the danger to his right flank, himself led his guards against the enemy position.

[Kaplan] Napoleon, who was my uncle, himself led his guards against the enemy position.

Despite the inaptness of the subordinate clause in [Kaplan], given the truth of the main (or official) clause, there is no strong intuition that [Kaplan] as a whole should be counted as false. To this extent, the non-restrictive relative clause is off the official semantic record. (This is illustrative of the kinds of reasons why multiple-proposition cases cannot be treated as conjunctions, presuppositions, or entailments.)

18. Richard (1993), for example, defends a version of the semantic treatment of the nominal. Neale (1999, 2001) and Dever (2001), in contrast, hold that the official truth-conditions are contextually variable—i.e., there are contexts of which the semantic treatment is appropriate, and contexts of which the pragmatics treatment is appropriate (presumably as dictated by the speaker’s communicative intentions).

19. The following example is a slightly modified version of an encounter I read about in the Globe and Mail’s “Worst Travel Stories of the Year 2005.”

20. Note that in the terms of Glanzberg & Siegel (2006: §2), the view developed in this section counts as a weak inertness view, as opposed to a strong inertness view. (‘Inertness views’, in their terminology, all agree on the pragmatic treatment of the nominal, but strong vs. weak varieties disagree as to the communicative relevance of the nominal.) Even though the nominal material is on my view off the official semantic record, it is still definitely communicatively relevant. Glanzberg & Siegel raise some vexing questions for weak inertness views, about specifying suitable constraints on referential qualifiers (e.g., ‘sheep’ and ‘lamb’ are substitutable, but what about ‘sheep’ and ‘typewriter’?). Why not, exactly?) I suspect that conclusively answering those questions would be exactly as difficult as solving the problem of quantifier domain restriction. In any case, I see no reason to accept that weak inertness views presuppose that we could easily, or even possibly, define equivalence classes of nominals.

21. A closely related difference between a referential use of a description and the use of a complex designator as a name is that there is a stipulative, conventional link at work in the latter, but not the former. Referential uses of descriptions are localized and heavily dependent on particular features of the context of utterance, whereas in the case of a use of a complex expression as a name there is a more permanent and context-independent convention at work.

No doubt, some of the links in the relevant chain of transmission, in cases like ‘the Holy Roman Empire’ or ‘Dances with Wolves’, could be classified as referential uses of descriptions. Crucially, though, all cannot. At most links in the chain, one finds the deferential attitude typical of consumers and the attendant relational (as opposed to satisfactional) designation.

22. In this respect, referential uses are just like in a case of ‘Dave says hi’ where there are several ‘Dave’s in the mutual dialect of the interlocutors. (Cf. Chapter 4, note 3.) The general importance of this distinction between determining reference and constraining reference is elaborated in Chapter 7, §1.

23. There will obviously be lots of different sorts of Boolean referring expressions, as just the cases of ‘December 12, 1902’ and ‘33,276’ suffice to illustrate. Day designators are ordered triples, in which each parameter admits a distinct and limited set of values, whereas Arabic numerals are ordered
n-tiples for any non-negative integer \( n \), where each parameter admits of the same ten values. While even these are considerably more complex than ‘bald, happy humans’, I take it that the compositional rules involved in determining their reference are rather straightforward.

In any case, the key points are this: (i) it is no part of my view that Booleanians are completely homogenous, from all (syntactic, semantic, pragmatic) points of view, and (ii) countenancing this circumscribed (though diverse) category of structured referring expressions does not trivialize the central theses, for the reasons described in Chapter 1, note 13, and reinforced at several points since.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Neale’s (2004, 2008) Gödelian completions of definite descriptions might be thought to complicate the exclusivity of this divide. (Cf. Chapter 5, note 29, for some discussion.) He calls them “hybrids” in that they are denoting expressions which essentially include referring expressions as a proper part. However, as Neale himself discusses in several places (1990, 1993, 2004, 2008), that there are denoting expressions that contain referring expressions is itself no barrier to either a unitary Russellian analysis of ‘the’ or to the central theses.

2. This intuitive claim is given further support by what I am calling “Kripke’s counterfactual test,” first described in Chapter 4. Compare the discussion of whether Donnellan’s referential/attributive distinction is exclusive at the end of Chapter 5, §3, and see note 3 below for further illustration.

3. It might seem that descriptive names (cf., e.g., Kripke (1972) on ‘Neptune’) or the sub-type of molecular name which Corazza (2002a) calls “description names” (e.g., ‘the Holy Virgin’) might provide counterexamples to this. That is, it is not implausible that such expressions simultaneously both refer and denote. However, when we run the counterfactual test, the speaker is going to have to come down on either side of the referring/denoting fence, when it comes to truth-conditions across counterfactual situations.

4. The only argument of which I am aware that is explicitly against the exhaustiveness of (more or less) this distinction occurs in King (2001b), who argues that day designators (e.g., January 24, 2002) are neither quantificational denoting expressions nor rigid referring expressions. I disagree with King’s arguments at several points. For starters, his argument that month designators (e.g., ‘January’) are count nouns rather than proper names (pp. 291–2) is rather weak, as all of the evidence he amasses (e.g., ‘I spent many Januarys at Squaw Valley’ and ‘It was a pleasant July’) also holds true of ordinary proper names (e.g., ‘Every Nathan I have previously met was a jerk, but he is a nice Nathan’). Secondly, King’s argument that day designators are nonrigid runs afoul of many of the points developed in Chapter 3. It is based largely on the historical contingencies of our time-measuring and calendar conventions, and on the metaphysical complications attendant on the fact that the earth’s rotation is not uniform (cf., e.g., p. 296, p. 323). If the arguments of Chapter 3 are cogent, then it is mistaken to think that either of these kinds of considerations is relevant to the question of rigidity.

On my view, day designators are Boolean referring expressions (as discussed in Chapter 1, §2, and Chapter 6, §4). Given the complications elaborated by King, it is difficult to individuate exactly what it is that they designate. But vague boundaries are no barrier to rigidity—as the cases of ‘the Sahara’ or even ‘tiger’ suffice to demonstrate.
5. Here it suffices to compare ‘She is tall’ with ‘The woman currently addressing us is tall’ across different contexts of evaluation.


7. Even this claim about ‘I’ presupposes a minimal degree of determinacy about personal identity that some might consider controversial. If it is not obviously true that I am the same determinate entity over even brief intervals of time, then this problem arises for ‘I’ as well.

8. This qualification is required to handle cases like, say, in the course of a history lecture, ‘Now Napoleon faces a difficult decision’.

9. Again, it is important to bear in mind that the social, externalist mechanisms underlying a public language provide the means for this object-dependent connection to be deferential and mediated—e.g., ‘Aristotle was a Greek philosopher’ or ‘Molybdenum is commonly used in sailboat masts’. (More on this point below in note 17.)

10. At a bit more length: Mill (1843) was perhaps the first to articulate (at least a variant of) the idea that certain paradigmatic referring expressions lack structure, with claims such as the following: “Proper names are attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on . . . any attribute of the object” (p. 20). Frege and Russell then both did essential groundbreaking work toward defining the semantic properties characteristic of what I call ‘denoting’ expressions, and Russell explored the contours of the relevant notion of referring (though, often, in a way which involved what most nowadays would consider to be conflations of semantic and epistemic issues). Kripke’s work on rigid designation and its implications for the semantics of referring expressions throughout the 1960s and 70s was the next major leap forward on this front. Kaplan’s work during the same period comes close, in importance and influence, in terms of pushing the boundaries of our understanding of the phenomenon of reference.

11. Although Neale does not speak of “reflective equilibrium,” the general idea seems to be at play in his work. Consider, for example, his motivations for the central theses at (2008: 391), based on: “(i) antecedently attractive accounts of the semantics of proper names, demonstrative and indexical pronouns, and definite descriptions, and (ii) certain properties natural languages might be expected to have if they are to serve the most basic purposes to which we put them.”

12. Again, this line of argument is extended in Neale (2008). I will come back to it in §7.4.


14. Here and throughout I replace Dever’s ‘Dilemma Hypothesis’ with my term [R iff U]. Therefore, while this excerpt does reflect conclusions that Dever’s work has helped me to draw, it may not exactly reflect Dever’s views—insofar as my central thesis makes a stronger claim than his Dilemma Hypothesis.

Also I should record the following qualifications from Dever (2001: 274): “[This excerpt] obviously presents an ideologically biased reading of the philosophical history, and I do not mean to suggest that other stories cannot be told around other or even the same works. . . . I do not mean to suggest that the fact of this historical convergence is evidence for the Dilemma Hypothesis, or even that the works mentioned provide an adequate defense of that hypothesis.”

16. It is this important moral of Grice’s factorization which I take to ultimately foil the argument from convention for a semantically relevant referential interpretation of definite descriptions, discussed in Chapter 5. Just as the issue of whether ‘Why are you so lazy?’ or ‘Who do you think you are?’ ought to be semantically classified as interrogatives is blind to how frequently they are used rhetorically as opposed to literally, the statistical issue of how often expressions of the form ‘the F’ are used referentially does not per se suffice to support any semantic conclusions. The notion of pragmatic regularity can in some cases afford a plausible account of multiplicity of uses, which, all things considered, is preferable to positing a semantic ambiguity.

17. The point of ‘perspectival’ is to distinguish them from non-perspectival cases of proper names and natural kind terms. While a non-perspectival referring expression semantically specifies a referent that is constant across distinct uses, in contrast, the semantics of a perspectival referring expression specifies a relation between speaker and referent that is constant across distinct uses.

18. There are grounds to not put complex demonstratives in this table at all, as my view is that the only device of semantic reference is the bare, atomic demonstrative (e.g., ‘this’ or ‘that’). Still, there are also contrastive grounds for classifying the expression type as unique and distinctive complex, perspectival referring expressions.

Note also that one crucial difference between perspectival and non-perspectival referring expressions is that the notion of deference plays an important role in determining reference only in the non-perspectival cases. This is somewhat orthogonal to present concerns, though I have discussed it at some length in other work (2003a, 2003b, 2010). It is a central and significant pillar of the causal-historical theory of reference that deferential speakers can designate relationally, not just satisfactionally.

19. In any case where one intends to single out an individual whose name is not mutually known among present interlocutors and whose relation to the speaker is not amenable to any conventional perspectival referring expression, a referential uses of a denoting expression is inevitable. As explained above (and particularly in Chapter 5), this phenomenon is perfectly consistent with the Russellian orthodoxy.

20. Cf. especially Chapter 3, §3; Chapter 4, §2; Chapter 5, §5; and Chapter 6, §2.
———. (2002) “Giorgione was So-Called Because of His Name.” *Nous*, 36, 73–103.
156 Bibliography


———. (1892a) “On Sense and Reference.” In Geach and Black (transl.), Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Frege (pp. 56–78). Oxford: Blackwell, 1972.


Bibliography


Quine, W.V. (1951) "Two Dogmas of Empiricism." *Philosophical Review*, 60, 20–43.


----- (2004b) "Descriptions and Situations." In Bezuidenhuit and Reimer (eds.), *Descriptions and Beyond* (pp. 15–40). Oxford: Oxford University Press.


----- (1911) "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description." In *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* (pp. 209–32). Allen & Unwin, 1918.


----- (1959) "Mr. Strawson on Referring." *Mind*, 66, 385–89.


Bibliography

Index

B
Bach, Kent, 11, 16, 18, 63, 66, 83, 103, 110, 115, 120, 126, 129n2, 132n2, 139n2, 140n14, 142n30, 144n9, 144n11, 145n20, 146n22, 146n24, 147n29, 148n31, 148n33, 150n14

Boolean referring expressions, 57–58, 93, 107, 109, 126, 131n13, 132n3, 151–52n23

C
complex demonstratives, xiv, 4, 13, 25, 132, 71–73, 90, 93–110, 126, 132n19, 145n15, 148nn35–37, 151n17, 154n18
contextualism (semantic), 16–17, 77–78, 142n1
counterfactual test, 59–61, 85, 93–102, 123–24, 131n11, 141n16, 147n26, 149n4, 152n2, 153n5

d
definite descriptions, 4, 13, 25, 30, 71–73, 81–92, 98, 107–10, 116, 118, 126, 133n11, 149n5, 151n21, 152n1, 154n16
Dever, Josh, 2, 117–19, 129n1, 131n17, 132n18, 150n12, 151n18, 153nn13–14
direct reference, 18
Donnellan, Keith, 12, 40, 53, 63, 82–83, 91, 98, 100, 102, 109, 131n15, 133n9, 134n2, 134n5, 134n5, 135n8, 140n14, 141n22, 142n25, 144n14, 147n26, 152n2, 153n15
dual-purpose NPs, 73, 90, 94, 98, 107–9, 148n35, 151n21

e
empty names, 19–20, 133n6
Evans, Gareth, 52, 56, 88, 100, 119, 129nn1–2, 142n1, 149n5, 153n6

F
Frege, Gottlob, 2, 10, 37, 39, 47–48, 64, 99, 103, 117–18, 129n1, 133n4, 139n2, 140n10, 142nn25–26, 143n2, 151n17, 153n10

g
general proposition. See object-independent truth-conditions
general terms, 30–50, 134–35n5–10
Grice, H. Paul, 21, 77, 80–1, 86, 103, 125–26, 133n11, 141n24, 144nn13–14, 145n20, 146n24, 154n16

I
indexicals, 13, 61–62, 114–16, 118, 126, 132n19, 150n13, 153nn5–8, 154n17

K
Kaplan, David, xiii, 3, 5, 12–14, 18, 27, 36, 38, 44, 46, 48, 52,
Index

66, 100, 102, 117–18, 129n2, 130n7, 134n2, 135n8, 136n14, 136n17, 137n21, 137n28, 138n40, 139n3, 140n15, 141nn19–21, 142n29, 150n10, 151n17, 153n10, 153n15

King, Jeff, 96, 131n13, 142nn3–4, 145n15, 149n1, 149n7, 152n4

Kripke, Saul, xiii, 3, 9, 12, 13, 21–22, 27–50, 53–54, 59–61, 63–68, 77, 83, 95, 117–18, 124, 129–30nn1–2, 131n11, 133n7, 133n9, 134nn2–4, 135n10, 137n29, 139n2, 139nn6–8, 142nn25–29, 143n4, 144n14, 145n20, 146n21, 147n26, 147n29, 149n5, 150n10, 152nn2–3, 153n10, 153n15

L

literalism (semantic), 16–17, 77–78, 142n1

Lewis, David, 37, 39–41, 131n14, 137n26, 138n30

N


O


P

plural reference, 31–32, 132n3

pragmatic regularity, 4, 77, 79–81, 84–85, 125, 133n11, 144n15, 154n16

pronouns. See indexicals


proposition, 10–11, 18, 23–25, 35–36, 71, 82–85, 91, 94–97, 102–6, 130n8, 133n6, 150nn13–16

Putnam, Hilary, 12, 134n2, 135n10, 136n15, 153n15

R

Recanati, Francois, 17, 44, 88, 99, 129n2, 132nn1–2, 141n21, 142n30, 143n1, 144n9


rigid designator, xiii, 4, 24, 29–50, 51–68, 116, 122, 134n3, 135n10, 136n15, 153n10

Russell, Bertrand, xiii, 1–5, 10, 12–13, 19, 27, 32, 34, 37, 39–40, 47–8, 53–54, 64–65, 68, 81, 87, 90, 98–99, 117–21, 124, 129n1, 130nn6–7, 131n16, 132n4, 137n24, 139n5, 139nn8–9, 140n15, 141n24, 145nn19–20, 147n29, 149n5, 153n10

Russellian orthodoxy, 3–5, 13–15, 18, 23–25, 29, 44–45, 49–50,
S
Salmon, Nathan, 31, 41, 97, 133n6, 134n5, 135n8, 136n16, 137n25, 138n41, 139n2, 142n27, 149nn6–7
satisfactional designation, 11–12, 23, 48–50, 63, 81–85, 94–97, 107–10, 115, 120, 130n10, 134n12, 147n26
semantics, 4–5, 16–17, 19–20, 75–81, 87–89, 99–100, 125–26, 148n31, 150n13
singular proposition. See object-dependent truth-conditions

Soames, Scott, xiii, 37, 41–2, 45–46, 134n5, 135n9, 137n25, 138n41, 139n2, 153n15
Stalnaker, Robert, 46, 136n17, 142n27
Strawson, Peter, 54–55, 82, 87, 119–20, 129n1, 130n10, 133n8, 144n14, 147n28, 153n6

U

V
vicarious structure, 39–41