THE SEMANTIC SIGNIFICANCE OF REFERENTIAL INTENTIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

In the following, which is divided into three sections, I discuss the role played by speaker intentions in determining the reference of demonstratives and definite descriptions. The general conclusion drawn is that while speaker intentions do indeed play some such role, that role is a limited one: other factors come into play in determining the reference of demonstratives and definite descriptions.

In the first of the three sections ("Three Views of Demonstrative Reference"), I examine contextual, intentional, and quasi-intentional views of demonstrative reference. According to the first, advocated by Wettstein, McGinn, et al., the demonstratum of a demonstrative expression is determined entirely by certain publicly accessible features of the context (such as ostensive gestures); intentions play no role at all. According to the second, recently advocated by Kaplan, intentions play a "criterial" role in the determination of the demonstratum; contextual features (such as ostensive gestures) are said to have no more than a pragmatic significance. According to the third, sketched briefly by Kaplan in the final pages of "Dthat," intentions play a role—albeit a limited one—in the securing of demonstrata. I argue that the third view is the only one of the three with any plausibility, and then go on to develop a version of the view that accommodates certain cases that the version sketched in "Dthat" is unable to accommodate.

In the second section ("The Maximal Salience Theory of Definite Descriptions"), I look at a certain theory of definite descriptions: the "maximal salience theory." According to this view, advocated by Lewis, McCawley, et al., an expression of the form "the F" denotes the most salient of the F's in the contextually delimited domain of discourse. An occurrence of "The F is G" is thus said to be true just in case the most salient of the F's in the domain of discourse is G. After motivating the maximal salience theory (by defending Lewis' claim that it circumvents a problem intractable for any Russellian approach to descriptions), I draw attention to certain counter-examples to that theory. I then present and respond to Lewis' recently revised version of the maximal
salience theory, which was devised in order to accommodate the counter-examples in question. I argue that the revised version - though it manages to accommodate the particular cases it was designed to accommodate - fails in the end, as it fails to take into consideration the semantic significance of referential intentions.

In the third and final section ("Demonstrating with Descriptions"), I look at Kaplan's attempt to extend his recently advocated intentional view of demonstrative reference, to the so-called "referential use" of definite descriptions. Kaplan suggests that referentially used expressions of the form "the $F$" be parsed as "that, the $F$," where the appositive description functions as a kind of demonstration, and is thus of merely pragmatic significance. The referential intention of the speaker is (according to Kaplan) what does the semantic work; it is the intention that secures the demonstratum. I concede that such a view has some initial plausibility when applied to cases where the description (the "demonstration") is only slightly off-target (that is, where the description only slightly misdescribes the intended referent). However, I go on to argue that the view has no plausibility when applied to cases where the description is very wide of the intended mark (where it radically misdescribes the intended referent). I then sketch two alternative accounts of referentially used descriptions, neither of which assigns a "criterial" (semantic) role to referential intentions. The proposed accounts are recommended on the grounds that they accommodate cases where the description radically misdescribes the intended referent, as well as cases where the description only slightly misdescribes that entity.

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THREE VIEWS OF DEMONSTRATIVE REFERENCE

1. Preliminaries

Over a dozen years ago, David Kaplan proposed an intuitively plausible view as to the role played by speaker intentions in determining demonstrata. According to this view, sketched briefly in the final pages of "Dthat" (Kaplan, 1979), intentions play a role - albeit a limited one - in such determination.

The intuitive plausibility of this "quasi-intentional" view of demonstrative reference was borne out by a consideration of two sorts of cases: cases where an accompanying demonstration seemed quite clearly to override a conflicting intention; and cases where it seemed necessary to invoke intentions in order to account for the fact that a particular object or individual - the intended demonstratum - was secured as the actual demonstratum. Cases of the first sort appeared to show that the role played by speaker intentions in demonstrative reference was, at most, a limited one, while cases of the second sort seemed to show that there was indeed some such role played by intentions.

With respect to cases of the first sort, Kaplan imagined a scenario in which he wrongly supposed himself to be pointing to a picture of Carnap (the intended demonstratum), while uttering "Dthat is a picture of one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century." We were to suppose
that Kaplan wasn't looking where he was pointing, and that he was actually pointing to a picture of Agnew. (The picture of Carnap had recently been replaced with one of Agnew, unbeknownst to Kaplan.) The intuition was that Kaplan had just said something about the picture of Agnew—despite his intention to say something about the picture of Carnap. For the intuition was that Kaplan’s utterance was false, and that it was false on account of the fact that the picture of Agnew did not picture "one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century." This was supposed, not implausibly, to lend credence to the view that the role played by speaker intentions in securing demonstrata was, at most, a limited one. For in the case in question, the intended demonstratum: the object the speaker intended to demonstrate, and say something of, failed to emerge as the actual demonstratum: the object the speaker actually succeeded in saying something of.

In order to show that intentions did indeed play some role in determining demonstrata, Kaplan went on to draw attention to two sorts of cases: cases where the demonstrative utterance was accompanied by a vague gesture in the general direction of the intended demonstratum; and cases where the demonstrative utterance was accompanied by a more focused demonstration. Both sorts of cases seemed to show that intentions occasionally needed to be invoked in order to explain demonstrative reference.
Let's look at the cases involving vague demonstrations first. Suppose, for instance, that I issue a vague demonstration — say, a casual wave of the hand — in the general direction of a particular dog (my intended demonstratum), while uttering "That is Fido." And suppose that, in so doing, I simultaneously gesture in the general direction of a host of other things: a clump of clover, a nearby pond, a neighbor's cat. Surely none of this is going to prevent the dog in question from emerging as the demonstratum of the demonstrative expression occurring in my utterance. For surely the truth or falsity of what I have said is going to depend upon whether or not the intended demonstratum is in fact Fido. (What I have said is not going to be rendered false on account of the fact that neither the clump of clover, the nearby pond, nor the neighbor's cat, is identical with Fido. Nor will what I have said be rendered "indeterminate" on account of the fact that my gesture was as much in the general direction of those other things, as it was in the general direction of the intended demonstratum.) One natural way to account for this phenomenon, would be to suppose that my intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the dog in question — as opposed to the clover, the pond, or the cat — has the effect of "disambiguating" my vague demonstration, and thus securing that dog as the demonstratum.

In fact, as Kaplan suggested in "Dthat," any case where a demonstrative utterance is accompanied by ostension — whether vague or focused — tends to support the view that intentions
play at least a limited role in determining demonstrata. For whenever you gesture at one thing, you simultaneously gesture at other things as well - from the "surveyor's point of view." Ostension thus appears to be invariably indeterminate: No gesture, by itself, can "pick out" a unique object or individual. Suppose, for instance, that while uttering "That is Fido," I point directly at a particular dog (my intended demonstratum). Now when I point at that dog, I also point (from the "surveyor's point of view") at his coat, at a section of his coat, perhaps at a flea on that coat, etc. Nevertheless, the intuition is surely that the dog in question - the intended demonstratum - emerges as the actual demonstratum. For it would certainly appear as though the truth or falsity of what I have said is going to depend upon the properties of that dog - and not upon those of his coat, a section of his coat, a flea on that coat, etc. And a natural way of accounting for this apparent fact, would be to suppose that my intention to demonstrate, and say something of, a particular dog - and not any of those other things - serves to "disambiguate" my gesture and thus fix that dog as the demonstratum of the demonstrative expression occurring in my utterance. Indeed, it is not easy to see how else one could account for the dog's emerging as the demonstratum. Thus, regardless of whether an accompanying demonstration is vague or focused, intentions would appear to be required in order to account for the fact that a particular object or individual -
the intended demonstratum - manages to get secured as the actual demonstratum.

At the very least, then, the view of demonstrative reference sketched in "Dthat" - according to which intentions play a limited role in such reference - has intuitive plausibility in its favor. Recently, however, there has been a marked tendency to reject such a view in favor of an "all or nothing" picture of the role played by intentions in determining demonstrata. There have been several philosophers, including Kaplan (1989) and Donnellan, who have argued that intentions play a "criterial" role in the determination of demonstrata: being the intended demonstratum is the "criterion" for emerging as the actual demonstratum. These Gricean-minded philosophers view accompanying demonstrations as playing no more than the pragmatic role of facilitating communication: of assisting the hearer in identifying the intended demonstratum. Because the import of demonstrations is viewed as merely pragmatic, a wayward demonstration can never (on the view in question) override a conflicting intention. If the speaker intends to demonstrate, and say something of \( x \), then even if he mistakenly demonstrates \( y \), \( x \) will nevertheless emerge as the actual demonstratum: the object or individual about which something has been said. Of course, in the event that the speaker demonstrates \( y \), the hearer might naturally take \( y \) to be the intended demonstratum. Thus, while failed communication may well be a consequence of wayward demonstration, failed reference can never be.
There have also been a number of philosophers who have taken the opposite view, arguing that intentions play no role whatsoever in the securing of demonstrata. Several of these Wittgensteinian-minded philosophers, including McGinn (1981) and Wettstein (1984), have contended that demonstrata are determined entirely by certain contextual (as opposed to "speaker internal") features of the demonstrative utterance. Different versions of the same basic view emerge as a result of disagreement over just what the relevant contextual features are. According to McGinn's version of the contextual view, the only contextual feature relevant to the determination of the demonstratum is the ostensive gesture. According to Wettstein's version of the contextual view, the relevant contextual features are certain publicly accessible "cues," exploited by the speaker in his attempt to communicate about a particular object or individual. Wettstein (like McGinn) regards accompanying demonstrations as playing a genuine semantic role in demonstrative reference. For such gestures constitute publicly accessible cues of the sort in question. However, Wettstein regards ostensive gestures as constituting just one of several types of semantically significant cues. Other such cues (discussed in section 2 below) have to do with relations obtaining between the words comprising the sentence uttered, and particular features of the context. But according to either version of the contextual view, if \( x \) is the object or individual indicated by
the relevant contextual features, then $x$ is the demonstratum—
even if $y$ is the intended demonstratum. That a demonstratum
may be secured despite the indeterminacy of ostension, is
accounted for (on Wettstein's view$^{13}$) by appealing—not to
speaker intentions—but to other (speaker external) features
of the context. (In section 2 below, we will see just what
these other features are supposed to be.)

In what follows, I intend to argue that the currently popular
"all or nothing" views concerning the role played by speaker
intentions in demonstrative reference are wrong, and that a
version of the quasi-intentional view proposed by Kaplan in
"Dthat," is more in line with the linguistic data. I do not
intend to provide a fully worked out theory of demonstrative
reference. What I do intend to do, is argue that—whatever
the details of the correct theory of demonstrative reference
turn out to be—that theory will be a quasi-intentional
theory of the sort sketched in "Dthat."

The format of this paper is as follows. In section 2, after
spelling out the details of the "contextual" view of
demonstrative reference, I consider the particular advantages
and disadvantages of that view. I then do the same for the
"intentional" view. And then, after briefly reviewing the
virtues of the quasi-intentional view of "Dthat," I draw
attention to a seeming difficulty with that view. The
difficulty involves the apparent inability of the view to
account for the fact that, in cases where a wayward
demonstration overrides a conflicting intention, a determinate proposition is nevertheless expressed. In section 3, I go on to sketch and argue for a modified version of the view proposed in "Dthat," in which intentions are assigned a limited role in demonstrative reference. (The modifications result from attempting to accommodate the phenomena discussed in the previous section.) And finally, in section 4, I conclude with a quick survey of what I take this paper to have established - and what remains (concerning demonstrative reference) to be established.

2. Currently Available Views of Demonstrative Reference

(a) The Contextual View

Common to any view of the sort which I have chosen to describe as "contextual," is the idea that speaker intentions have nothing whatsoever to do with the determination of demonstrata. According to any such view, demonstrata are determined entirely by certain publicly accessible features of the context. So far as I am aware, the most thoroughly developed and persuasively argued version of the contextual view, is that provided by Howard Wettstein in "How to Bridge the Gap Between Meaning and Reference" (1984). For this reason, I will focus my analysis of the view in question around Wettstein's particular version of that view.

Wettstein’s contextual view is formulated in response to a well-known difficulty concerning the reference of
demonstrative (and, more generally, indexical) expressions. Despite the "meager lexical meaning" of expressions like "this" and "that," tokens of such expressions nevertheless manage to achieve determinate reference. A question thus arises: What factor(s) conjoin with the lexical meanings of demonstratives to determine demonstrata? What (in other words) "bridges the gap" between the meaning and the reference of such expressions?

Before spelling out the details of his response to this query, Wettstein sketches a particular view of language, to which that response is designed to conform. The view is the well-known Wittgensteinian one, according to which language is properly regarded as a kind of social institution. Wettstein's solution to the problem of how to "bridge the gap" between the meaning and the reference of demonstrative expressions, coheres well with this Wittgensteinian picture of language. Wettstein argues that the "gap" in question is to be "bridged" by the "very features which make the reference available to the auditor." (Wettstein, 1984, p. 64) These features are appropriately labelled "cues." And the particular cues which fix the reference of a token demonstrative are those for which the speaker is "responsible, those that he, to all appearances, exploits..." in his attempt to communicate about a particular object or individual. For,

One who utters a demonstrative is responsible, from the point of view of the natural language institution, for making his reference available to his addressee, and so is responsible for the cues that a competent and
attentive addressee would take him to be exploiting. (Wettstein, 1984, pp. 72-73)

The particular cues which determine demonstrative reference - those which the speaker, "to all appearances, exploits" - include more than just accompanying demonstrations. Several such cues have to do with relations obtaining between the particular expressions comprising the sentence uttered, and particular features of the context of the utterance. Consider an utterance (unaccompanied by ostension) of "That dog belongs to me," made in a context containing either a single or most salient canine. In either case, the common noun "dog," conjoined with the uniqueness/maximal salience of a particular canine, would (according to Wettstein) provide a cue of the sort in question. For in the absence of any other helpful cues (such as a demonstration), it is natural to suppose that the speaker is relying, at least in part, on the common noun "dog" to convey to the hearer the identity of the intended demonstratum.

Wettstein also believes that the predicate contained in the sentence uttered, might constitute a semantically significant cue, given the appropriate contextual circumstances. To see this, consider an utterance (unaccompanied by ostension) of "That is my dog," made in a context containing a single canine, situated amongst a number of felines. And suppose that, at the time of the utterance, the dog is no more salient than any of the cats. In such a case, the predicate "is my dog," conjoined with the contextual uniqueness of a particular
canine, would (according to Wettstein) provide a cue which would contribute to determining that dog as the demonstratum. For given the absence of any other obvious cues which might enable the hearer to determine the identity of the intended demonstratum, it is natural to suppose that the speaker is indeed relying on the predicate to do so.

Given this rather wide range of semantically significant cues, Wettstein has little trouble accounting for demonstrative reference in the face of ostensive indeterminacy. He is able to do so without having to invoke speaker intentions: He simply invokes additional cues, which serve to "disambiguate" the ostensive act. To see how this might go, consider an utterance of "That is my dog," accompanied by an ostensive gesture in the direction of one of among several equally salient canines. The question is: How is it that the demonstrated dog, and not, e.g., his coat, gets secured as the demonstratum of the token occurrence of "that"? After all, in pointing to the dog, the speaker cannot but point to his coat as well. Furthermore, there is not, in this particular case, any common noun, attaching to the demonstrative, to assist in the disambiguation. According to Wettstein, the dog (and not his coat) gets secured as the demonstratum, because of the semantic significance of the predicate "is my dog." Since the predicate indicates that the speaker is speaking about the dog, and not, e.g., about the dog's coat, and since the absence of other helpful cues (apart from the indeterminate ostension) suggests that the speaker is
indeed relying on that provided by the predicate, the predicate is what fixes the dog (as opposed to, e.g., his coat) as the demonstratum.

So much for exegesis. Now let's look at what reasons there might be for favoring such a view. Perhaps the most obvious attraction of a contextual view like Wettstein's, is that - unlike the intentional view - it appears to have no difficulty accommodating cases where a wayward demonstration overrides a conflicting intention. Consider the Carnap/Agnew scenario described above. A straightforward application of the intentional view would yield the counter-intuitive claim that when Kaplan uttered "Dthat is a picture of one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century," while pointing at the picture of Agnew, he actually said something about the picture of Carnap (the intended demonstratum). A straightforward application of Wettstein's contextual view, on the other hand, would appear to yield the desired result: Kaplan said something about the picture of Agnew - the object indicated by the relevant cues - the most obvious of which was the pointing gesture. A less obvious, though no less significant cue, would be the predicate "is a picture..." For the predicate would serve to "disambiguate" the pointing gesture: to make it the case that the picture (of Agnew) and not (e.g.) the picture frame, or the glass protecting the picture, emerges as the demonstratum.
Aside from its ability to handle these rather complex cases, are there any other reasons for favoring a contextual account like Wettstein's? Well, in the absence of any counterexamples, such a view would be rendered superior to a quasi-intentional view on account of its greater simplicity. After all, if all cases of demonstrative reference can be explained solely in terms of certain publicly accessible cues, then why complicate the picture? Why suppose that intentions interact with such cues to determine demonstrative reference?

However, it is not difficult to find counterexamples to Wettstein's view, as it is not difficult to come up with cases where the actual demonstratum is the intended demonstratum — though not the object or individual indicated by the relevant cues. The most compelling cases of this sort occur in situations where the predicate — one of the cues "exploited" by the speaker — leads the hearer to misidentify the intended demonstratum. Consider a scenario involving two equally salient canines: Fido and Spot. And suppose that the speaker mistakes Spot for Fido. (Perhaps the two dogs look quite similar at a distance.) Suppose further that the speaker says to the addressee (Fido's owner, who can recognize her dog at any distance): "That's your dog Fido," intending to say something of the dog mistaken for Fido. Finally, suppose that no more than a vague nod in the general direction of the two canines accompanies the demonstrative utterance. (It would be natural to assume, then, that the speaker is relying, in large
part, on the predicate, "is your dog Fido," to convey the identity of the intended demonstratum.) Intuitively, the utterance was false, as the speaker seems quite clearly to have said falsely of Spot that he was the addressee's dog Fido. Yet Wettstein's view would have it that the utterance was true. For Wettstein's view would have it that Fido was the demonstratum of the demonstrative expression occurring in the utterance in question. After all, Fido - and not Spot - was the dog indicated by the relevant cues (which included, most notably, the predicate "is your dog Fido"). And so again, Wettstein's view predicts that the utterance in question was actually true. But that just doesn't seem right. The intuition that the utterance was false seems too strong to allow for such a possibility.

There are a number of ways in which someone favoring an approach like Wettstein's might respond to the foregoing. First, one might simply dismiss cases of the sort in question - cases where there is a divergence between the intended demonstratum and the entity indicated by the relevant cues - as "abnormal." One might further point out that the theory appears to have no difficulties handling the "normal" cases - cases where the intended demonstratum and the entity indicated by the relevant cues, converge. One might accordingly argue that the proponent of the contextual view has a right to dismiss (as potential data) the intuitions surrounding the "abnormal" cases, and to then legislate: to stipulate that, in cases of the sort in question, the entity indicated by the
relevant cues is indeed the demonstratum - despite what the intuitions surrounding such cases might appear to suggest. 17

Second, one might attempt to account for the intuitions surrounding the cases in question by invoking Kripke's speaker's reference/semantic reference distinction. Consider the Spot/Fido scenario described above. One might argue that, while it is certainly true that the speaker referred to Spot, and said of Spot, that he was the addressee's dog Fido, the semantic referent of "that," in the speaker's utterance of "That's your dog Fido," was in fact Fido. That the speaker referred to and said something false of Spot, is what generates the mistaken intuition that the actual utterance was false.

A third, more radical response, would involve modifying the contextual view by excluding the predicate as a semantic determinant. In this way, one would simply be eliminating the especially embarrassing cases by making appropriate changes in the theory. Were this sort of approach adopted, one could then say that, in the Spot/Fido scenario, the speaker's failure to convey the identity of the intended demonstratum by means of the appropriate cues (which would include an ostensive act as well as an appropriate demonstrative description) resulted in his failure to say anything determinate. The intuition that something determinate (and false) was in fact said, could then be accounted for by appealing, once again, to the speaker's reference/semantic reference distinction. Though there was no
semantic referent (the demonstrative was vacuous), there was a speaker's referent - an individual who was falsely claimed to be Fido.

One difficulty with the first of the three proposals is that, by excluding the "abnormal" cases (cases where the intended demonstratum and the entity indicated by the relevant cues, diverge), the theory's range of application is significantly narrowed. The theory would have to be restated as (something like): In the "normal" cases (cases where there is a convergence between the intended demonstratum and the entity indicated by the relevant cues), the actual demonstratum will be the entity indicated by the relevant cues. One problem with this restricted version of the theory, is that it has the effect of robbing that theory of any advantage it might have had over the intentional theory. For the latter theory can also, by excluding certain "abnormal" cases (like the Carnap/Agnew case), account for all of the "normal" ones. Further, by excluding cases of the sort in question, the contextualist thereby excludes the Carnap/Agnew case - a case which appears to provide considerable evidence for his theory. More importantly, the cases excluded by the restricted version of the contextual theory - the "abnormal" ones, are the natural test cases for that theory (as well as for the intentional theory). For they represent cases where the intended demonstratum and the object or individual indicated by the relevant cues, diverge. In such cases, intuitions about which (if either) of these two entities is the actual
demonstratum, will constitute crucial data that both "all or nothing" views must somehow manage to accommodate. Thus, for the proponent of either "all or nothing" view to simply disregard the intuitions in question - on the grounds that the cases that generate them are "abnormal" - would be ad hoc. Hence, neither proponent is in any position to legislate here: to declare by fiat that the "abnormal" cases are to be analyzed in accordance with the theory in question - despite the intuitions surrounding such cases.1

The second proposal suggested above doesn't look much more promising. The difficulty here is that intuitions go directly against making the distinction in a way favorable to the Wettsteinian picture. Consider the utterance (described above) of "That's your dog Fido," where the demonstrative is used by the speaker to "pick out" a particular dog who, unbeknownst to the speaker, is not Fido, but his look-alike companion Spot. Spot, surely, is the speaker's referent - there's no doubt about that. This fact would indeed account for the intuition that something false seems to have been said; for the speaker referred to Spot, and said falsely of Spot, that he was the addressee's dog Fido. But to suppose that the semantic referent of the demonstrative was actually Fido, would be to suppose that, when the speaker uttered, "That's your dog Fido," what he said was - strictly speaking - true. But surely the intuitions go the other way here; surely the intuition is that, strictly speaking, the speaker's utterance was false.
And such intuitions would suggest that, the semantic referent - not just the speaker's referent - was Spot.\textsuperscript{17}

The third proposal faces difficulties as well. By excluding the predicate from the class of semantically significant cues, the proponent of the contextual view is going to wind up with countless cases of referential indeterminacy - where intuitively, there is none. For often, when one utters a sentence of the form "That is such-and-such," or "This is such-and-such," one is relying largely on the predicate to convey the identity of the intended demonstratum. If the predicate is not a semantic determinant, then the contextualist is going to have a difficult time accounting for the fact that determinate reference does seem to be achieved in many such cases. Consider utterances of sentences like "That's a nice tie" or "This is such a humid day." Surely, it is possible for the demonstrative expressions occurring in such utterances to achieve determinate reference. But it is hard to see just how the contextualist can account for this without appealing to the cue provided by the predicate.\textsuperscript{20} To attempt to account for this apparent referential determinacy in terms of speaker's reference (as suggested above) would be implausible. For utterances of the sort in question (utterances of sentences like "That's nice tie") are surely capable of expressing determinate propositions. But that would not be possible if the demonstratives in such utterances were without semantic referents.
(b) The Intentional View

So much for the contextual view of demonstrative reference. Now let's turn to the intentional view. The central idea behind any view of the sort that I have been describing as "intentional," is that the demonstratum of a demonstrative expression is determined entirely by the speaker's intention to demonstrate, and say something of, a particular object or individual. (This entity is sometimes described as the entity that the speaker - in some intuitive, unanalyzed, sense - "has in mind".21) According to any such view, if the speaker intends to demonstrate, and say something of $x$, then *ipso facto*, $x$ is the demonstratum - even if $y$ is the object indicated by certain publicly accessible "cues."

Kaplan, Donnellan, and Bertolet,22 all appear to adhere to something like this view. Bertolet, however, seems to want to restrict his remarks about demonstratives to speaker's reference, and Donnellan (apparently) has expressed his views on demonstratives only in personal correspondence (and not with the author of this paper). I will therefore direct my remarks in this section toward Kaplan's particular version of the intentional view.

Kaplan's recently adopted intentional view, which he discusses rather briefly in "Afterthoughts" (Kaplan, 1989), purports to account for the reference of a particular class of demonstratives - "perceptual demonstratives." Perceptual demonstratives are demonstratives employed in situations where
the intended demonstratum is a perceived object or individual
on which the speaker has "focused." The demonstratum of such
an expression is determined by what Kaplan refers to as the
"directing intention": the intention of the speaker to
demonstrate, and say something of, the "perceived" object or
individual on which he has "focused." If (e.g.) the speaker
utters "That is Fido," while harboring such an intention with
respect to a particular dog (a perceived dog on which he has
"focused''), then - and only then - will that dog emerge as the
demonstratum of the demonstrative expression occurring in that
utterance. The intention is said to be a "directing" one,
presumably because it is thought to direct - in some
teleological sense - the forthcoming act of demonstration. But
the act of demonstration itself is entirely without semantic
significance. Its only significance is pragmatic, its sole
function being the facilitation of communication. Kaplan sums
up his view as follows:

I am now inclined to regard the directing intention, at
least in the case of perceptual demonstratives, as
criterial, and to regard the demonstration as a mere
externalization of this inner intention. The external-
ization is an aid to communication, like speaking
more slowly and loudly, but is of no semantic
significance. (Kaplan, 1989, p. 582)

One of the most obvious attractions of a view like Kaplan's,
is that it provides a rather convincing analysis of those
cases which prove problematic for a contextual view like
Wettstein's. With respect to the Spot/Fido scenario described
above, the intentional view predicts what seems intuitively
clear: the utterance of "That's your dog Fido" was false on the grounds that the speaker said falsely of Spot that he was the addressee's dog Fido. Moreover, this prediction is based on the intuitively plausible claim that the demonstrative expression had Spot and not Fido as its demonstratum, because it was the former and not the latter that the speaker intended to speak of.

Apart from these particular advantages, are there any other reasons to favor the intentional view? In the absence of difficult cases, the intentional view would be preferable to the quasi-intentional view, on the grounds of its greater simplicity. There are, however, troubling cases for the intentional view. In particular, Kaplan's view appears to give an incorrect analysis of cases where the speaker's intention is overruled by a wayward demonstration. As we saw above, a straightforward application of the intentional view to the Carnap/Agnew scenario, yields the counter-intuitive claim that Kaplan said something about the picture of Carnap - and not about that of Agnew.

However, in fairness to Kaplan, it ought to be pointed out that his theory of "perceptual demonstratives" does not purport to account for cases like the Carnap/Agnew case. For in that case, the intended demonstratum (the picture of Carnap) is not a "perceived" object or individuated on which the speaker has "focused." Moreover, in a footnote, Kaplan describes the Carnap/Agnew case as "complex and atypical", as
it surely is. For surely in the "simple and typical" cases, one does perceive the object or individual that one demonstrates. Neither of these factors, however, is of much help to Kaplan. First, it is not difficult to come up with cases which Kaplan's theory does purport to account for, but cannot. Second, although the Carnap/Agnew case is indeed "complex and atypical," it does provide evidence for those competing theories of demonstrative reference which are able to accommodate it. Kaplan's theory thus loses some plausibility on account of its comparatively narrow range of application.

Let's take these two points in turn, beginning with the first. The particular counter-examples to Kaplan's view that I have in mind, have been discussed by me at length elsewhere. I will therefore be brief. Consider the following scenario. You realize that you have left your keys on a colleague's desk. You return to her office, and spot your keys on her desk (which happen to be alongside her keys). And then, while making a grab for your keys (on which you have "focused"), you come out with an utterance of "These are mine." However, when you look at the keys in your hand, you see that they are not yours - but your colleague's. Though you perceived and "focused" on your keys - the keys which you intended to demonstrate, and say something of - your demonstration was slightly off-target, resulting in the unexpected acquisition of your colleague's keys.
Kaplan’s "directing intention" view predicts that what you have said is true; for you said truly of your keys (the intended demonstrata) that they were your keys. However, surely your utterance was false — on the grounds that you said falsely of your colleague’s keys that they were yours. And surely your colleague would not have been out of line, had she responded to your assertion with an utterance of, "No, you’re wrong. Those keys belong to me." But if Kaplan’s view were correct, then such a response would have indicated that the speaker simply hadn’t understood what you actually said (on account of your slightly off-target demonstration). And on Kaplan’s view, it would have been appropriate for you to rejoin, while returning your colleague’s keys, with an utterance of: "Yes, these are your keys, but I never said they were mine."

What cases like the foregoing seem very clearly to show, is that, contrary to Kaplan’s "directing intention" view, ostensive gestures — at least in certain cases — are capable of overriding conflicting intentions. Such gestures would thus appear to be semantically significant. The semantic significance of ostensive gestures is also borne out by the Carnap/Agnew case. Again, it is true that this particular case does not, strictly speaking, constitute a counter-example to Kaplan’s view — as the intended demonstratum is not a perceived object or individual on which the speaker has "focused." But it clearly does cast doubt on a central idea
underpinning Kaplan's "directing intention" view - that ostensive gestures are entirely without semantic significance. Moreover, the fact that such gestures are sometimes semantically significant, when coupled with verbal demonstratives, surely tends to support the view that they are always, or at least generally, semantically significant, when coupled with such expressions. This brings us to the second of the two points raised above. Because the contextual and quasi-intentional views attribute semantic significance to ostensive gestures, they ought to have no difficulty accommodating cases of the sort in question: cases where it seems clear that such gestures do indeed contribute to the determination of the demonstratum. Their greater range of application thus gives them a clear advantage over the "directing intention" view of Kaplan.

Finally, because cases of the sort in question represent cases where there is a divergence between the intended demonstratum and the object or individual indicated by certain publicly accessible "cues," they constitute natural test cases for a view like Kaplan's - a view, according to which it is the intention, and not the "cues," that determines the reference of a demonstrative. Rather than being relegated to a footnote (where they are dismissed as "complex and atypical"), cases of this sort should receive especially close attention by the intentionalist.

(c) The Quasi-Intentional View of "Dthat"
At this point, it would appear that the only plausible view of demonstrative reference would be a quasi-intentional one: one according to which intentions play a limited role in determining demonstrata. For there appear to be cases where it is necessary to appeal to intentions in order to explain demonstrative reference — and yet there also appear to be cases where intentions are simply not sufficient (and perhaps not even necessary) to explain such reference. The natural (and logical) conclusion to draw is that a quasi-intentional view of demonstrative reference (of the sort proposed in "Dthat") is not unlikely to be a correct view of such reference.

However, despite its apparent ability to handle certain cases which prove difficult for the "all or nothing" views, the view proposed in "Dthat" is not without its problems. In fact, it is not all that clear that the view is equipped to deal adequately with cases where a wayward demonstration overrides a conflicting intention. Specifically, it is not clear that the view is able to account for the fact that, in such cases, a determinate proposition may be expressed. The determinacy of the proposition expressed poses a problem for the view in question, as it appears to be at odds with Kaplan’s remarks (in "Dthat") about the indeterminacy of ostension. Because ostension is (according to Kaplan) invariably indeterminate, an intention is needed to disambiguate any act of ostension. (For this reason, Kaplan is led to the view that intentions do
play some role in demonstrative reference.) But if the intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the picture of Carnap is overruled by the accompanying demonstration, it will presumably not figure in the determination of the demonstratum. But in that case, what intention (if any) serves to disambiguate the demonstration: to make it the case that it is a pointing at the picture of Agnew — and not, e.g., a pointing at the picture frame, the glass protecting the picture, a section of the picture, etc.? More generally, in cases of the sort in question — cases where the intended and actual demonstratum appear to diverge — what intention (if any) will serve to disambiguate the accompanying demonstration?

If the quasi-intentional view is to be considered a plausible theory of demonstrative reference, it must provide some way of dealing with this problem.

3. A Modified Quasi-Intentional View

There are several ways in which the proponent of a quasi-intentional view might respond to the foregoing. First, he might deny (contra Kaplan's position in "Dthat") that a determinate proposition is in fact expressed in cases where a wayward demonstration appears to override a conflicting intention. He might do so on the grounds that the demonstration remains ambiguous, due to the absence of an appropriate disambiguating intention. One would then need to account for the intuition that a determinate proposition was
in fact expressed - that proposition being (in the Carnap/Agnew case) that a certain picture of Agnew was a picture of one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century. Such an account could perhaps be provided by appealing to the fact that, in interpreting an utterance, there is a natural inclination to assume that conditions are "normal". In the case in question, this would involve assuming that Kaplan was aware of the fact that the picture he was pointing at was one of Agnew, and that he therefore had an appropriate "disambiguating" intention - an intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the picture of Agnew.22 The general view would then be that, in cases of the sort in question, there is no actual demonstratum - as there is no intention available to disambiguate the demonstration, thus securing a demonstratum.

Alternatively, one might argue that, in cases of the sort in question, a determinate proposition is in fact expressed. But one might go on to deny that the speaker's intentions have anything to do with what that proposition is. Specifically, one might claim that, in cases where the appropriate disambiguating intention is absent, the demonstratum is determined entirely by publicly accessible "cues" of the sort discussed by Wettstein. The determinate proposition expressed would then coincide with whatever proposition the attentive and linguistically competent hearer would take to have been expressed. With respect to the Carnap/Agnew case, the proposition expressed would be one to the effect that a
certain picture of Agnew pictured one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century. (And this, of course, is exactly the result one wants.) The basic idea would then be that, when no disambiguating intention is available, the contextual "cues" exploited by the speaker take on the entire burden of determining reference.

The main drawback of the first of these two proposals, is that it relies on external explanatory mechanisms to "explain away" intuitions contrary to what the theory itself would lead one to expect. The main drawback of the second proposal, is that it fails to unify those cases of demonstrative reference involving ostension. For it claims that intentions come into play only in the "normal" cases - cases where the speaker's intention is capable of disambiguating his demonstration. From the point of view of the theorist who is able to provide a unified account of demonstrative reference which accommodates cases of the sort in question without the assistance of external explanatory devices, both of the foregoing analyses would appear ad hoc.

There is, fortunately, just such an account: one which suffers from neither of the problems infecting the other two accounts. According to this third and, to my mind, more plausible analysis, Kaplan's pointing gesture is indeed disambiguated by one of his intentions - contrary to what might initially appear to be the case. This intention is not, however, the "primary" one: it is not the intention to demonstrate, and say
something of, the picture of Carnap. Rather, it is a "secondary" intention: an intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the picture in the general direction of the gesture - a picture which (unknownto Kaplan) is not the picture of Carnap. This intention is a "secondary" one, as it is derivative, being the natural outcome of conjoining the "primary" intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the picture of Carnap with the (mistaken) de dicto belief that the picture in the direction of the gesture, is that very picture. On this view, the picture of Agnew - and not the picture frame, the glass protecting the picture, etc. - gets secured as the demonstratum, because the secondary intention concerns the picture (in the range of the gesture) - and not any of those other things. The idea, more generally, would be as follows. In cases where the intended and actual demonstratum diverge, the demonstration is indeed disambiguated by an accompanying intention - only this intention will not be the "primary" one. Rather, it will be a "secondary" intention (to demonstrate the F in the direction of the demonstration) which results from conjoining the primary intention with certain belief(s) the speaker has about the object of the latter intention. (As we'll see below, the relevant beliefs will be those which connect the object of the primary intention, with the demonstrative act.)

The foregoing notions of "primary" and "secondary" intentions can be spelled out a bit more as follows. Associated with any demonstrative utterance will be a singular proposition.
(representing a certain de re belief) which the speaker intends to communicate by means of that utterance, and which is such that its successful communication will result in the speaker’s communicating precisely what he intends to communicate. When the demonstrative utterance is accompanied by an ostensive act, there will be an accompanying intention to demonstrate the "constituent" of the singular proposition. The intention to demonstrate this individual, and to predicate something of it (thereby expressing a singular proposition), is what I mean by the "primary" intention. Thus, consider the Carnap/Agnew case. Here, the primary intention would be the intention to demonstrate a certain picture of Carnap, and to say of that picture that it is a picture of one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century.24

Now the author of a demonstrative utterance will ordinarily have a host of beliefs concerning the object of his primary intention: the "constituent" of the singular proposition he intends to communicate. Certain of these beliefs will play a crucial semantic role in cases where the intended and actual demonstratum diverge. The relevant beliefs will be those which connect the intended demonstratum (the object of the primary intention) with the demonstrative act. In the Carnap/Agnew case, the relevant belief would be Kaplan’s (de dicto) belief that the picture in the direction of the gesture is \( x \): the intended demonstratum - the particular picture of Carnap he "has in mind." When conjoined with Kaplan’s primary intention - the result is a secondary intention: an intention to
demonstrate, and say something of the picture in the direction of the gesture. And this intention amounts (more concisely) to an intention to express a singular proposition of the form "x is a picture...", where "x" is instantiated by the picture in the direction of the demonstration - which, unbeknownst to Kaplan, happens to be a certain picture of Agnew. Because this secondary intention is predicated on Kaplan's mistaken belief that the picture pointed to is the picture he "has in mind," communication of the intended (secondary) proposition, will not result in Kaplan's communicating precisely what he intended to communicate. In fact, there is no reason to suppose that Kaplan even has the *de re* belief which the (secondary) proposition would ordinarily be taken to express: the belief that x is a picture of one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, where "x" is instantiated by the picture of Agnew pointed to. (Contrast the foregoing with the case of Kaplan's primary intention, where communication of the intended proposition - which has a certain picture of Carnap as a "constituent" - would result in Kaplan's communicating precisely what he intended to communicate.)

Kaplan's belief that the picture of Carnap - the picture he "has in mind" - is one and the same as the picture in whose direction he is gesturing, seems quite likely to be relevant to demonstrative reference. For its conjunction with Kaplan's primary intention, yields a secondary intention, which is able to do the job of disambiguating Kaplan's pointing gesture. In
this way, a demonstratum - the picture of Agnew - gets secured. And this, of course, accords with our intuition that a demonstratum is indeed secured, and that the demonstratum is a certain picture of Agnew. It further accords with the more specific intuition that the picture of Agnew gets secured as the demonstratum, because Kaplan intended to demonstrate the picture in the direction of his gesture - a picture which he failed to realize was not the object of his primary intention - the picture he "had in mind."

It is important to note that the secondary (disambiguating) intention needn't be the result of conjoining the primary intention with a *de dicto* belief about "the *F* in the range of the demonstration." The belief conjoined with the primary intention, is sometimes a *de re* belief about that *F*. To see this, suppose that Kaplan was looking where he was pointing, but wasn't looking carefully. Suppose further that he mistook the (perceived) picture of Agnew for the object of his primary intention: a certain picture of Carnap. In such a case, it would seem that the (secondary) disambiguating intention - the intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the picture in the range of the demonstration - would be the result of conjoining the primary intention with the *de re* belief, concerning the picture in the range of the demonstration, that it is the picture of Carnap that Kaplan "has in mind." In fact, it would seem that in all cases where the demonstratum is perceived by the speaker, the secondary (disambiguating) intention will be formed from conjoining the primary intention
with a *de re* belief about "the F in the range of the demonstration." (The perception of that entity would enable the speaker to form a *de re* belief about it.) Only in cases where the demonstratum is not perceived by the speaker, will the secondary (disambiguating) intention be derived from the conjunction of the primary intention and *de dicto* beliefs about "the F in the range of the demonstration." After all, in such cases, there would ordinarily be no reason to suspect that the speaker even has a *de re* belief, concerning the F in the range of the demonstration, that it is the F he has in mind. In the original Carnap/Agnew scenario, for instance, there seems no reason to suppose that Kaplan has a *de re* belief, concerning the picture in the range of the demonstration, that it is the picture he "has in mind." For this reason, it is natural to suppose that - in the original Carnap/Agnew scenario - the disambiguating intention is formed from a *de dicto* belief about "the picture in the range of the demonstration."

Such considerations suggest the following generalization concerning the particular class of "abnormal" cases in question: cases where the intended and actual demonstratum diverge. In cases where the speaker has a *de re* belief which would yield a disambiguating intention when conjoined with the primary intention, that is how the disambiguating intention will be derived. Only in cases where no such *de re* belief is available, will a *de dicto* belief conjoin with the primary intention to form the disambiguating intention. Such
considerations in turn suggest the following generalization. With respect to the class of cases where there is a divergence between the intended and actual demonstratum, the "normal" cases will be those in which the disambiguating intention is formed from a de re belief about "the F in the range of the demonstration." For it appears as though de dicto beliefs concerning "the F in the range of the demonstration" come into play only when no de re belief about that F is available.

Not only does the proposed quasi-intentional view account for these "abnormal" cases, it accounts equally well for the "normal" cases: cases where the intended and actual demonstratum converge. Let's look briefly at cases of the latter sort - which were discussed in some detail in the opening section of this paper. In the scenarios described in that section, the speaker accompanied her utterance of "That is Fido," with an ostensive gesture in the direction of the intended demonstratum: a particular dog. It seemed plausible to suppose that the speaker's intention to demonstrate the dog (in the direction of the gesture) disambiguated her demonstration, thus securing that dog as the demonstratum. And this analysis is, of course, in perfectly in line with the proposed view. For in the case in question, the disambiguating intention will be an intention to demonstrate the dog in the (general) direction of the gesture. In this particular case, however, the disambiguating intention would be the primary one: the intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the dog the speaker "has in mind" (Fido). For in the "normal"
cases - cases where the particular $F$ the speaker "has in mind" is in fact the $F$ in the range of the demonstration, the primary intention will suffice to disambiguate the demonstration. There will accordingly be no need to invoke secondary intentions.

It should be clear that the view sketched above is really nothing more than an elaboration of the view proposed by Kaplan in "Dthat." In that essay, Kaplan suggested that the demonstrata of token demonstratives (which were accompanied by demonstrations) were determined partly by the demonstrations, and partly by speaker intentions. The general idea seemed to be that the demonstrations would narrow the range of possible demonstrata, and the intentions would then "disambiguate" the demonstrations, thereby narrowing the range to just one. In this way, a demonstratum was determined. What the proposed view adds to Kaplan's view, is a characterization of the disambiguating intentions. It starts off by acknowledging the existence of a plurality of intentions (primary and secondary) associated with any demonstrative utterance accompanied by an ostensive gesture. It then singles out the disambiguating intention: the intention to demonstrate, and say something of the particular $F$ in the general direction of the demonstration. In this way, one is able to account for the fact that there can be a divergence between the intended demonstratum - the object of one's primary intention - and the actual demonstratum. In such cases, the demonstration is, as usual, disambiguated by an
intention to demonstrate and say something of the F in the general range of the demonstration. Only this intention will not be the primary intention - but a secondary intention, which arises from the conjunction of the primary intention, with certain (false) beliefs concerning the object of the latter intention. Only by acknowledging the existence of intentions other than the primary one, is the proponent of the quasi-intentional view able to adequately account for what happens when the actual and intended demonstratum diverge.

In concluding this discussion of the quasi-intentional view of demonstrative reference, I would like to address two objections that have recently been levelled against it. Of these objections is indirect, as it purports to be a defense of the intentional view. The defense runs as follows. Whenever contextual cues (demonstrations, in particular) appear to override the speaker’s intention, the conflict is not actually between the former and the latter; rather, it is between various intentions ascribable to the speaker. In the Carnap/Agnew case, the conflict is between the intention to refer to Carnap’s picture, and the intention to refer to the picture in the range of the demonstration (which, unbeknownst to Kaplan, is a certain picture of Agnew). The contextual cues play a significant role in determining the reference only to the extent that they are backed by some intention. Thus, without the intention to refer to the picture in the range of the demonstration, Kaplan’s pointing to that picture would have been without semantic significance. That is, it would not
have contributed to securing the picture of Agnew as the
demonstratum.

The second objection is more direct, casting doubt on the
proposed analysis by claiming that one of the central cases
motivating it - the Carnap/Agnew case - is "derivative." The
author of this objection argues as follows. Normally, the
speaker would have a perception of the demonstratum. In the
Carnap/Agnew case, this would of course be the picture of
Agnew. But this condition is not present in that particular
case. What then does this do to the example? Doesn't it make
the example derivative from the normal case where the
demonstratum is perceived (by the speaker)? And so wouldn't it
be plausible to suppose that the perception's content plays a
role in determining demonstrative reference - and that any
other mental states of the speaker are in fact semantically
irrelevant? After all, when the speaker sees the picture -
which is what happens in the "normal" case - he simply intends
to demonstrate what he sees.

Let me begin with the first of these two objections. My main
concern with this purported defense of the intentional view,
is that it strikes me as more of a defense of a quasi-
intentional view. After all, the former view states that
"contextual cues" are of pragmatic significance only, while
the author of the objection in question admits that such cues
have semantic significance - though only if they are backed by
some intention.
In fact, I am inclined to agree with the view in question. That is, I agree that when it appears as though contextual cues override the speaker's intention, this does in general reflect a conflict between various intentions of the speaker. Let's look at the Carnap/Agnew case again. Here, contextual cues (specifically, a pointing gesture) do appear to override Kaplan's primary (though not secondary) intention: his intention to demonstrate, and say something of, a certain picture of Carnap. And this does indeed reflect a conflict between intentions of Kaplan's: between his primary intention, and the disambiguating intention - the intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the picture in the range of the demonstration. For Kaplan's "wayward" pointing gesture does indeed reflect his intention to refer to the picture in the range of the demonstration - a picture which is not (unbeknownst to Kaplan) the object of his primary intention.

Moreover, I tend to agree that the pointing gesture would not be of semantic significance, unless it were backed by an intention. In fact, it seems clear that an outstretched arm, with index finger extended, would not even be a "demonstration" unless it were intended as a such: as a means of drawing the hearer's attention to some object/individual. (Without such an intention, the "gesture" would simply be an outstretched arm, with index finger extended.) Further, whenever there is such an intention: an intention to employ some gesture as a demonstration, there will also be a (more specific) intention to demonstrate some particular
object/individual. But none of this shows that contextual cues are semantically irrelevant — as the intentionalist claims. All that it shows is that such cues are semantically relevant only in so far as they are accompanied by certain intentions. And again, this is a view with which I agree.

Let me now turn to the second of the two objections. My response to this objection is three-fold. First, while it is certainly true that in the majority of cases involving a demonstrative act, the demonstratum is perceived by the speaker, this does not mean that perception has anything to do with the necessary and sufficient conditions for demonstrative reference. Indeed, I would have thought that the Carnap/Agnew case clearly showed that the speaker’s perception of some entity is not a necessary condition for that entity to emerge as the demonstratum. Moreover, it is easy to see the speaker’s perception of an entity is likewise not a sufficient condition for that entity’s emerging as the demonstratum. Suppose that while Kaplan was pointing to the picture behind him, he was staring at a picture in front of him. Clearly, that would not mean that the perceived picture was the demonstratum.

Second, there is a serious problem with any view of demonstrative reference which claims that, in the "normal" cases, the demonstratum — intended and actual — will simply be the entity perceived. For there is a sort of indeterminacy which infects perception as much as it does ostension.
Consider an utterance of "That is a beautiful coat" where the intended demonstratum is Fido’s freshly washed coat. Suppose that the speaker is currently perceiving the coat in question—and that the case is therefore a "normal" one. Well, in that case, the speaker is also perceiving Fido, parts of Fido (e.g., his tail), parts of the coat in question, etc. Now what makes it the case that the coat—and not any of those other perceived things—gets secured as the demonstratum? The proponent of the perceptual view in question would seem to be at a loss here. For what the considerations in question show, is that perceptual content, by itself, is not sufficient to "determine" an individual, and is therefore not sufficient to determine a demonstratum. And surely, a plausible alternative to the perceptual view, would be the view that the speaker’s intention to point to the coat is a determining factor: a factor which "conspires" with the gesture in Fido’s direction to determine a demonstratum: Fido’s coat. Whether or not Fido’s coat is being perceived by the speaker at the time of the utterance, would seem to be semantically irrelevant.

Third, while the Carnap/Agnew case is indeed "abnormal", this really does nothing to undercut the proposed view. For one of the chief advantages of that view is that it accommodates all of the cases—"normal" (where the demonstratum is perceived) as well as "abnormal" (where the demonstratum is not perceived). For in both sorts of cases, there will be an intention to demonstrate, and say something of, the particular F in the range of one’s gesture. And this intention can then
be invoked to account for the fact that in both sorts of cases, an entity may be secured as the demonstratum, despite the indeterminacy of ostension. In contrast, the perceptual view under consideration will, at best, account only for the securing of demonstrata in the "normal" cases - cases where the demonstratum is perceived. And yet the natural test cases for that view would, of course, be the "abnormal" ones: those in which the demonstratum was not perceived.

4. Concluding Remarks

In light of the foregoing, the general conclusion to draw seems clear: Whatever the details of the correct theory of demonstrative reference turn out to be, that theory will be a quasi-intentional one: one which attributes a limited role to intentions in the determination of demonstrata.

A more specific conclusion can be drawn as well: In certain cases, speaker intentions will play the role of "disambiguating" demonstrations, thereby securing demonstrata. This was, of course, the view sketched toward the end of "Dthat". However, the ways in which intentions "conspire" with demonstrations to determine demonstrata, appear to be more subtle and complex than suggested in "Dthat." For in order to account for referential determinacy in cases where the intended and actual demonstratum diverge, it appears necessary to invoke what I have referred to as "secondary" intentions: intentions derived from conjoining the "primary" intention, with certain beliefs the speaker has about the object of that
The cases motivating the proposed quasi-intentional view primarily involved scenarios where the demonstrative utterance contained a demonstrative pronoun, and was accompanied by an ostensive gesture. For it is cases of this particular sort that seem to best bring out the plausibility of the view that intentions play a role - albeit a limited one - in demonstrative reference. Little attention was given to cases where the demonstrative expression was a demonstrative description - like "that dog." Nor was much attention given to cases where the demonstrative utterance was unaccompanied by ostension. Clearly, any full-blown theory of demonstrative reference will have to deal with such cases. But whatever the correct analysis of such cases turns out to be, I think that the considerations adduced in this paper show that the analysis will have to cohere with a view that ascribes to intentions a limited role in at least some cases of demonstrative reference.

One final point. In light of the clear advantages that a quasi-intentional view would seem to have over an "all or nothing" type of view, one might wonder why the view proposed in "Dthat" never gained favor. One possible explanation for this has to do with the way in which philosophers seem to approach the problem of demonstrative reference. Often, it seems, philosophers approach the problem armed with a certain
ideology: a certain picture of what they suppose language to be. (Wettstein is explicit in taking this approach.) The data are then interpreted in accordance with this picture. Wittgensteinian-minded philosophers (such as Wettstein) are going to view "what is said" (by way of a demonstrative utterance) as, roughly, what the speaker would normally be interpreted as having said. In contrast, Gricean-minded philosophers are going to view "what is said" as, roughly, what the speaker intends to say (communicate). With these two simplistic pictures of language looming in the background, it is not difficult to predict the views of demonstrative reference that will emerge. The Wittgensteinians will develop a contextual view; the Griceans, an intentional view.

If, instead, one left one's ideologies aside, and focused on the pre-theoretical intuitions surrounding the natural test cases for the "all or nothing" views: cases involving a divergence between the intended demonstratum and the entity indicated by the relevant "cues," one might begin to appreciate the plausibility of the quasi-intentional view.32

NOTES

1 By "demonstratum," I mean the semantic referent of an expression traditionally classified as a demonstrative. I take such expressions to include "this," "that," their plural forms, as well as expressions of the form "this F," and "that F," together with their plural forms. The semantic referent of such an expression can be thought of as (roughly) the object or individual whose properties are relevant to the truth conditions (and value) of the utterance in which the demonstrative expression occurs. In an intuitive, pre-theoretical sense, the demonstratum is the object or individual which the demonstrative utterance is "about."
By "intended demonstratum," I mean the object or individual about which the speaker intends to say something, by means of a demonstrative utterance: an utterance containing a demonstrative expression. When the demonstrative utterance is accompanied by a demonstration, the intended demonstratum will be the object or individual the speaker intends to demonstrate, and say something of. However, as will become clear in section 3, the notion of "intended demonstratum" is ambiguous; for associated with any one demonstrative act, is a plurality of speaker intentions.

"Dthat" is Kaplan's word for the demonstrative use of "that." An expression is used "demonstratively," according to Kaplan, "when the speaker intends that the object for which the phrase stands be designated by an associated demonstration." (Kaplan, 1979, p. 389)

Although I follow Kaplan here in speaking of intentions as "disambiguating" demonstrations, I think there is some inaccuracy in this way of speaking. I think it would be more accurate to say that, until intentions are brought into the picture, the demonstratum remains "ambiguous" or "indeterminate", on account of the fact that the accompanying demonstration cannot, by itself, "pick out" a unique object or individual. By invoking intentions, one is able to "disambiguate" or "determine" the demonstratum.

Kaplan might have wished to have added a proviso specifying that the demonstrative expression be a demonstrative pronoun - like "this" or "that," as opposed to a demonstrative description - like "this cat" or "that dog." For where the demonstrative expression is a demonstrative description, it is not implausible to suppose that, at least in some such cases, the common noun might effect the desired "disambiguation". An appeal to intentions might not be required in such cases.

From the speaker's point of view, all that is pointed to is the intended demonstratum.

So far as I am aware, Donnellan has expressed his views on demonstrative reference only in personal correspondence - with, e.g., Howard Wettstein.

The locution is Kaplan's.

Both McGinn and Wettstein are highly critical of other non-intentional theories of demonstrative reference - including those which make such reference dependent on causal relations obtaining between the speaker and the demonstratum. These particular theories will not be discussed in this paper, as the criticisms of McGinn and Wettstein strike the author as decisive. For details, see McGinn (1981) and Wettstein (1984).

In those cases where no demonstration accompanies an utterance of "...that...," due to there being just one "in the immediate environment" (which would render ostension otiose), McGinn claims that "the location of the speaker's body is what serves as the para-linguistic determinant" of the demonstratum. (McGinn, 1981, p. 183) So far as I can make sense of this remark, it strikes me as obviously false. Suppose that my dog Fido has just been viciously attacked by my neighbor's dog Spot. The neighbor has just removed his ill-
behaved dog from the premises. I then say to my addressee, "That dog is the worst behaved dog that I have ever seen." Surely the fact that Fido is the only canine in the "immediate environment" is not going to make him the demonstratum of "that dog," as that expression occurred in my utterance. And surely the fact that Spot is by this time several hundred feet away, is not going to prevent him from emerging as the demonstratum. And yet that is precisely what McGinn's view would seem to predict.

For Wettstein, the relevant "public" is restricted to the audience.

My inclination would be to treat ostensive gestures as cues of this sort. For the verbal demonstrative, when coupled with a demonstration - a contextual feature - indicates to the hearer that the intended demonstratum is the object or individual designated by the gesture. For a similar view, see J.I. Biro: 1982, "Intention, Demonstration, and Reference", Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. XLIII, no. 1, pp. 35-41.

McGinn does not discuss the problem of ostensive indeterminacy in "The Mechanism of Reference." However, based on certain remarks made in personal correspondence with Wettstein (Wettstein, 1984, pp. 76-77) it is not difficult to predict what McGinn would say about this problem. McGinn, apparently, regards demonstrative pronouns like "this" and "that" as elliptical for demonstrative descriptions of the form "this F" or "that F." Thus, with respect to an utterance of "That is Fido," accompanied by a pointing gesture in the direction of a particular dog, McGinn would presumably say that the tacit common noun (presumably "dog") effects the "disambiguation": that is, makes it the case that the utterance is about the dog and not, e.g., about his coat. For some persuasive criticisms of the view that demonstrative pronouns abbreviate demonstrative descriptions, see Wettstein (1984) pp. 76-78.

Wettstein offers a number of compelling objections to McGinn's view in the final section of his paper. One objection, not mentioned by Wettstein, concerns the rather obvious fact that McGinn's view is applicable only in cases where the demonstratum is perceived (if at all) visually. How would McGinn deal with utterances of sentences like "That smell is awful," or "That noise is driving me crazy"? Where the demonstratum is perceived otherwise than visually, ostension is (at least generally) inappropriate, and McGinn's view is thus inapplicable. It would be of no use to claim that, in such cases, the location of the speaker's body will serve as the "para-linguistic determinant" of the demonstratum. For it is not clear that it makes any sense to specify exact locations of things like smells and sounds. Moreover, none of the views of demonstrative reference criticized by McGinn (including the "classical description theory" and the "causal-genetic theory") face this particular difficulty. Nor does the view of Wettstein, nor do the intentional/quasi-intentional views of Kaplan.
For another version of the same basic view, see Charles Travis' *The Uses of Sense* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989). Travis argues in favor of a contextual view, using as a criterion "what a reasonable judge would say". For another hearer-oriented theory of reference, see *Relevance*, by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986).

The range is even wider, according to Wettstein, who discusses other cues not discussed in this paper. Certain of these cues - described by Wettstein as "extra-contextual" - have to do with previous speaker/addressee encounters. Such cues are nevertheless "contextual" in the sense defined in section 2: accessible to the public - and, in particular, to the audience. For details, see Wettstein (1984) pp. 71-72.

I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

I take for granted here, and throughout the paper, the importance of pre-theoretical intuitions in determining "what is said". For an interesting discussion of this point, see François Recanati: 1989, "The Pragmatics of What is Said," *Mind & Language*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 295-329. See especially his discussion of the "Availability Principle".

Contrast the utterance of "That's your dog Fido," with an utterance of "Her husband is kind to her," where the speaker's referent in the latter case is the woman's kind lover - to whom she has been driven by her husband's cruelty. (The example is from Linsky.) In the latter case, there is a strong intuition to the effect that - strictly speaking - the utterance was false, though the speaker referred to, and said truly of the lover, that he was kind to the woman. But in the former case, there is no similarly strong intuition to the effect that - strictly speaking - the utterance was true (though the speaker said falsely of Spot that he was the addressee's dog Fido). Kripke's application of the speaker's referent/semantic referent distinction to the kind lover/cruel husband case, receives its plausibility largely from intuitions concerning what is "strictly speaking" said. But these same intuitions, when applied to the Spot/Fido case, support the view - contrary to the Wettsteinian picture - that both the speaker's and semantic referent was Spot. For in that case, the intuition is surely that - strictly speaking - the utterance was false.

With respect to an utterance (unaccompanied by ostension) of, e.g., "That's a nice tie," McGinn would presumably say that the demonstrative pronoun "that"abbreviates some demonstrative description - e.g. "that tie," and that the demonstratum of the latter will be whatever tie stands in the appropriate spatio-temporal relations to the speaker's body. For Wettstein's criticisms of this view, see Wettstein (1984) pp. 76-78.

See, for instance, Kaplan's remarks on the intended demonstratum in Kaplan (1979) p. 395.

For Bertotlet's views see his (1980) "Demonstratives and Intentions," *Philosophical Studies* 38, pp. 75-78. For Bertotlet's responses to criticisms of the views expressed in

23 "Demonstratives, Demonstrations, and Demonstrata" (forthcoming in Philosophical Studies); "Do Demonstrations Have Semantic Significance?" (forthcoming in Analysis);
"Demonstrating with Descriptions" (forthcoming in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research).

24 At least in those cases where the demonstrative expression is a demonstrative pronoun like "this" or "that" — as opposed to a demonstrative description like "this cat" or "that dog."

25 It's not clear that this account would do the job. For even after being apprised of the fact that conditions were not "normal": that Kaplan's intentions concerned a picture which was other than where he thought, the intuition that a determinate proposition was expressed (one concerning the picture of Agnew) remains.


27 More precisely, token demonstrative pronouns.

28 Both of these objections were provided by anonymous reviewers.

29 I am thus in disagreement with Wettstein here, who wants to claim that — even without any sort of intention to back it — an outstretched arm might have semantic significance. See Wettstein (1984) p. 72.

30 For compelling arguments in favor of the view that the speaker’s perception of the demonstratum is semantically irrelevant, see McGinn (1981) pp. 160-163.

31 Any such theory would also have to deal with the phenomenon of "deferred ostension." In cases of this sort, one object is demonstrated as a means of securing the reference of some other object — where the latter, in contrast to the former, is (typically) not in the perceptual field. What makes such a process possible is the existence of some uniquely identifiable relation obtaining between the demonstrated object and what I have called the "demonstratum" — the semantic referent of the demonstrative expression. For instance, consider a scenario where the speaker, pointing at a book, says "She's great." In such a case, it is possible that the speaker is demonstrating the book as a way of referring to its author. (The uniquely identifiable relation obtaining between the book and its author, is the relation that makes the deferred ostension possible here.)

It is not difficult to see that this phenomenon coheres well with the proposed quasi-intentional view of demonstrative reference. Consider the case just mentioned. What makes the book the demonstrated object is the gesture — which is in the direction of the book — in conjunction with the speaker’s intention to demonstrate the book (as opposed to, e.g., the book’s jacket). Because the demonstratum will be determined in part by what the demonstrated object is, it will likewise be determined (in part) by the gesture, in conjunction with a
disambiguating intention. (And of course, the securing of the author as the demonstratum will depend as well upon the speaker's intention to demonstrate the book as a means of indirectly demonstrating its author - as opposed to, e.g., its publisher.) For an interesting discussion of deferred ostension, see section IV of Geoffrey Nunberg's (1979) "The Non-Uniqueness of Semantic Solutions," *Linguistics and Philosophy* 3, pp. 143-184.

I would like to thank two anonymous *Synthese* reviewers for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

REFERENCES


THE MAXIMAL SALIENCE THEORY OF DEFINITE DESCRIPTIONS

Those who oppose the position I have expressed must hold that it is possible to be correct in identifying, as the referent of an expression whose referent is conventionally underdetermined, an object other than the object the speaker intended to refer to. Yet it must be acknowledged that the only question the hearer can intelligently ask himself in attempting to disambiguate the reference is 'Which one does the speaker intend?'

Gareth Evans (1982)

1. Preliminaries

It has been over a dozen years since the maximal salience theory of definite descriptions was first proposed. According to this theory, adumbrated in David Lewis' 1973 Counterfactuals, and subsequently developed by both Lewis and James McCawley, an occurrence of "the F" denotes the most salient of the F's in the domain of discourse. A (token) sentence of the form "The F is G" will thus come out true just in case the most salient F (in the domain of discourse) is G. So far as I know, there has been no published response to this theory. I find this lack of response especially surprising in view of the recent trend toward Russellian (quantificational) approaches to definite descriptions. For the maximal salience theory of definite descriptions was developed in response to a particular problem thought to be intractable for any Russellian approach to such expressions.

I would like to open up the way for discussion of the maximal salience theory (MST) by looking carefully and critically at that theory - and, in particular, at the version of the theory
shared by Lewis and McCawley. My discussion of the theory falls into eight sections. In section 2, I lay out the background of the theory, by discussing the particular problem it was designed to avoid. In section 3, I present and illustrate the theory, and in section 4, I say a few words on its behalf, and attempt to defend it against a recent objection. (The objection is that the theory blatantly conflates the pragmatic/semantic distinction, and is thus without any initial plausibility.) In section 5, I go on to discuss what I take to be genuine difficulties with MST. And then in section 6, I present Lewis' recently modified version of MST - which was designed to accommodate the difficulties discussed in section 5. In section 7, I draw attention to various problems with Lewis' revised version of MST and then in section 8, I discuss some possible responses to these difficulties. And finally, in section 9, I conclude with a few brief arguments for the claim that, whatever the correct semantic account of definite descriptions turns out to be, that account will most probably assign a significant role to referential intentions.

2. Background

Consider the following two sentences:

(1) The dog isn't barking, but some other dog is.
(2) The dog got into a fight with another dog.

As Lewis and McCawley have pointed out, occurrences of sentences like (1) and (2) could be true. Such sentences would
thus appear to constitute counter-examples to Russell’s theory of descriptions. For according the latter, sentences of the form "The $F$ is $G$" are to be analyzed as (roughly): "There is exactly one $F$ and whatever is $F$ is $G$." Thus, on Russell’s theory, the analysis of either sentence would be contradictory, affirming both that there is exactly one dog, and that there is another dog as well. Yet it is difficult to see how the occurrence of some sentence receiving a contradictory analysis, could be true.$^{10}$

It might initially be supposed that the problem at hand could be dealt with simply by assuming that "the dog" in an occurrence of a sentence like (1) or (2) was elliptical for some "complete" description (a description that uniquely denotes). In that case, a Russellian analysis of the "completed" sentence would not be contradictory, and would thus be consistent with the possibility that occurrences of such sentences might be true. Suppose, for instance, that "the dog" in an occurrence of (1) or (2) was taken as elliptical for (the uniquely denoting) "the dog now staring at me." In that case, the Russellian expansions of the (completed) sentences would affirm that there was exactly one dog now staring at me, and another dog as well. The contradiction thus vanishes; the (token) sentences might therefore be true.

But such a move is simply not available to the Russellian. For as has been argued convincingly by Howard Wettstein$,^{11}$ there are often numerous possible ways of completing an "incomplete"
definite description (a description which fails to uniquely denote), with no principled way of adjudicating between them. How, for instance, is one to choose between descriptions like "the dog now staring at me" and "the dog now living at 15 Lawrence Street" - if the two descriptions are co-denoting (both denoting the intended dog)? It would be of no use to argue that any one of the possible completions would do the job - so long as it uniquely described the intended object/individual. For a different completion would of course yield a different sentence - and hence a different Russellian analysis. But that is at odds with the intuition that sentences like (1) and (2) above are capable of expressing determinate "propositions." For if (individual) occurrences of such sentences do indeed express determinate propositions, they can have but one (Russellian) analysis.

One might initially suppose that one need only ask the speaker which completion (of the numerous possible completions) he has in mind. But suppose (as is surely possible) that the speaker simply has no particular completion in mind. This would suggest that there is perhaps no principled way of determining the "correct" completion of an incomplete description, and thus no principled way of determining the "correct" Russellian analysis of the sentence containing that description. The problem for the Russellian thus remains: In analyzing sentences containing incomplete descriptions (descriptions like "the dog") how is one to choose from among (non-
equivalent) co-denoting descriptions like "the dog now staring at me" and "the dog now living at 15 Lawrence Street"?

It has recently been suggested by Stephen Neale\textsuperscript{13} that the problem of adjudicating between non-equivalent, co-denoting descriptions, can be solved simply by supposing that the "correct" description will result from completing the incomplete description with purely non-descriptive (i.e., referential or indexical) material. Wettstein's criticism is flawed, according to Neale, because he assumes that the incomplete description must be completed with descriptive material.

By way of illustration, Neale offers several examples of incomplete descriptions completed with non-descriptive material. Following Soames,\textsuperscript{14} he points out that completing an incomplete description with referential material is natural for descriptions like "the mayor" or "the murderer," "where an additional argument place can be made available for a particular individual specified by the context of the utterance." Neale accordingly suggests that the foregoing be completed as: "the mayor of a"/"the murderer of b," where "a" and "b" are referring expressions — either ordinary names (like "Guilford" or "Smith") or demonstratives (like "this town" or "this man"). Since the material used to complete the descriptions is referential, rather than descriptive, the individuals themselves (rather than certain "concepts") enter into the proposition expressed by the sentence uttered. Thus,
while a particular occurrence of "the mayor," might be completed as (e.g.) either "the mayor of Guilford" or "the mayor of this town," that does not actually mean that there is more than one possible completion to choose from. For both expressions pick out the same town - which enters into the proposition expressed - and thus contribute precisely the same semantic content to that proposition. There is thus no real choice to be made: the two descriptions are in effect equivalent.  

But now consider a description like "the table," as it occurs in an utterance of a sentence like "The table is covered with books." Neale admits that with respect to such descriptions "there is no natural argument position to be made available." He then suggests that these descriptions be completed with indexical material sensitive to the "contextual coordinates" of the utterance. A completion of "the table" sensitive to the spatial coordinate of a particular utterance of "The table is covered with books," might yield "the table over there" or "the table over here." In such a case, the actual location of the table would enter into the proposition expressed by the utterance in question.

Neale apparently believes that by stipulating that incomplete descriptions be completed with purely non-descriptive material, one avoids "the problem raised by nonequivalent codenoting descriptions." The assumption appears to be that by adhering to such a stipulation, the number of possible
completions of an incomplete description will (in effect) be narrowed down to just one. In this way, the problem of having to choose from among a host of possible completions is eliminated.

There are two major problems with Neale's proposed solution to the problem of adjudicating between non-equivalent, co-denoting descriptions. To begin with, the proposal is glaringly *ad hoc*. The *only* reason Neale provides for ruling out completions containing *descriptive* material is that, by so doing, the problem at hand dissolves. For again, Neale appears to believe that, if the only completions allowed are those containing referential/indexical material, there will in effect be but *one* possible completion - and thus no choice to be made. Now Neale is surely correct in thinking that the Russellian who adopts the approach in question is "under no obligation to treat the ellipsed material as free of referring expressions and indexicals." One cannot, after all, simply declare that the ellipsed material must be descriptive in nature. But neither can the Russellian simply declare that the ellipsed material must be referential/indexical in nature. But that is precisely what Neale appears to do.

Neale might respond by arguing that completions containing purely referential/indexical material are more intuitively plausible than completions containing descriptive material. He might accordingly argue that he is not actually *stipulating* that the completions be non-descriptive in nature. Rather, he
is drawing attention to the fact that such completions are more natural than descriptive ones, and hence more likely to be "correct."

It may indeed be the case that referential/indexical completions are occasionally more natural than descriptive ones, but it is easy to see that they are not always more natural. Consider the following scenario. You're taking an afternoon drive with a friend, when a dog appears on the road from out of nowhere. You hit the dog, and subsequently take him/her to the local vet. Later in the day you get a call from the vet, who informs you that the dog is going to be all right. You then call your friend and say "The dog is going to be OK." Surely a natural way of completing the description would be as "the dog I hit this afternoon." Though this completion contains referential and indexical elements, it is not entirely description-free, as demanded by Neale's account. (There is a descriptive element in the verb "hit.") Moreover, there seems to be no natural way of completing the description with purely referential/indexical elements. Thus, Neale's proposal that the completions of incomplete descriptions contain description-free material does indeed seem to be ad hoc. For in at least some cases, the most natural completions do contain at least some descriptive material. To give one more example, consider a scenario where you and a friend are looking at "Most Wanted" posters in the post office. Suppose that there are three such posters: one featuring a murderer, one a thief, and one an arsonist. You say to your friend, "The
murderer looks like Dilligan." A natural way of completing the description would be as: "The murderer in the picture over there." Again, while this completion contains some referential/indexical elements, it is also partly descriptive (in its reference to "the picture"). But it is surely no less natural than (e.g.) "the murderer over there," where the indexical expression picks out the location of the picture. And so again, it looks as though Neale's proposal that incomplete descriptions be completed with description-free material is indeed ad hoc.

A second, and far more serious, difficulty with Neale's proposal is that it simply will not do the job that it is designed to do. For it is not difficult to see that, even if completions of incomplete descriptions are stipulated to be non-descriptive, the problem of adjudicating between non-equivalent, co-denoting descriptions remains. To see this, consider a Donnellian courtroom scenario involving Jones - on trial for murdering Smith. Suppose further that Jones is in fact guilty as charged. And finally, suppose that someone in the courtroom, observing Jones' outrageous behavior on the witness stand, comes out with an utterance of "The murderer is insane." There are at least two ways of completing the description with purely referential/indexical material - neither of which seems any more plausible than the other. There is: "the murderer of Jones," where the referential expression ("Jones") picks out Jones; and there is "the murderer over there," where the indexical expression ("over
there") picks out the location of the murderer. Neale's proposed ad hoc solution to the problem of adjudicating between non-equivalent, co-denoting descriptions, thus fails. For while these two descriptions are in fact co-denoting, they are non-equivalent as well: their semantic contribution to the proposition expressed would be different. One would contribute the murder victim - the other, the location of the murderer. But Neale, unfortunately, does not tell us how to choose between such non-equivalent (albeit co-denoting) descriptions.

Ironically, by introducing the possibility of completing incomplete descriptions with purely referential/indexical material, Neale shows that the problem facing the Russellian is perhaps even more daunting than previously thought. For not only are there descriptive completions to choose from - there are (purely) referential/indexical ones to choose from as well.

The problem for the Russellian thus remains: How is one to account for the apparent fact that occurrences of sentences like (1) and (2) above could be true?19

3. The Theory

(a) An Alternative to Russell's Theory

In response to the problem posed by sentences like (1) and (2) above - sentences which, though intuitively non-contradictory - have Russellian expansions which are contradictory, Lewis and McCawley have proposed a "maximal salience" theory of
definite descriptions. Because Lewis' presentation of the theory is more thorough than McCawley's, the focus here will be on the former. According to Lewis (who formulates the theory in terms of token sentences) an occurrence of "the $F$" denotes some object/individual $x$ "if and only if $x$ is the most salient $F$ in the domain of discourse, according to some contextually determined salience ranking." An occurrence of "The $F$ is $G$" will thus be true just in case the most salient $F$ (in the domain of discourse) is $G$. Thus, on the view in question, a particular occurrence of (1) would be true just in case the most salient dog was not barking, while some other less salient dog was. Similarly, a particular occurrence of (2) would be true just in case the most salient dog got into a fight with some other less salient dog. Since such scenarios are easily imaginable, Lewis' theory accounts for the intuition that occurrences of sentences like (1) and (2) could be true. That theory would thus appear to be one up on Russell's theory of descriptions, which assigns to such sentences a contradictory analysis.2

(b) Salience

The central notion here is, of course, the notion of "salience." Although neither Lewis nor McCawley ever give a precise characterization of this notion, Lewis does offer a number of isolated comments on the matter. It is in "General Semantics"22 that the notion (described there as "prominence")
is first mentioned in connection with definite descriptions. There, Lewis writes:

...consider the sentence 'The door is open'. This does not mean [contra Russell] that the one and only door that now exists is open; nor does it mean that the one and only door near the place of utterance, pointed at, or mentioned in previous discourse, is open. Rather it means that the one and only door among the objects that are somehow prominent on the occasion is open. An object may be prominent because it is nearby, or pointed at, or mentioned; but none of this is a necessary condition of contextual prominence.  

(Lewis later came to realize that an utterance of "The $F$ is $G$" might be appropriate even in contexts where there was more than one "prominent" $F$. This led him to adopt the view that such an utterance meant that there was a most salient/prominent $F$ that was $G$.)

Later, in Counterfactuals, we get a more psychological characterization of the notion of "salience":

When $i$ is a thing with a point of view — say a person or an animal — then some things are more salient than others from the point of view of $i$. They loom larger in his mental life; they are more important to him; they come more readily to the center of his attention. Right now, as I sit writing this, my typewriter is more salient to me than my left shoe; that is more salient than the kitchen clock in the house where I grew up; that is more salient than the fourteenth brick from the right in the seventh row from the top in the garden wall outside my window; but all of these things are salient to me to some extent, in contrast to the countless things that are outside my ken altogether. (I am speaking of how salient these things were before I started to think up examples of things that were not very salient...).
And finally, in "Scorekeeping in a Language Game," we get a brief description of the sorts of conditions that are capable of bringing about shifts in salience. Lewis writes:

There are various ways for something to gain salience. Some have to do with the course of conversation, others do not. Imagine yourself with me as I write these words. In the room is a cat, Bruce, who has been making himself very salient by dashing madly about. He is the only cat in the room, or in sight, or in earshot. I start to speak to you:

The cat is in the carton. The cat will never meet our other cat, because our other cat lives in New Zealand. Our New Zealand cat lives with the Cresswells. And there he'll stay, because Miriam would be sad if the cat went away.

At first, "the cat" denotes Bruce, he being the most salient cat for reasons having nothing to do with the course of conversation. If I want to talk about Albert, our New Zealand cat, I have to say "our other cat" or "our New Zealand cat." But as I talk more and more about Albert, and not any more about Bruce, I raise Albert's salience by conversational means. Finally, in the last sentence of my monologue, I am in a position to say "the cat" and thereby denote not Bruce but rather the newly-most-salient cat Albert.

Lewis goes on to point out (in "Scorekeeping") that the salience of a particular object/individual may be raised by means of a sentence containing an indefinite description. He writes:

I may say "A cat is on the lawn" under circumstances in which it is apparent to all parties that there is some one particular cat that is responsible for the truth of what I say, and for my saying it...What I said was an existential quantification; hence, strictly speaking, it involves no reference to any particular cat. Nevertheless, it raises the salience of the cat that made me say it. Hence, this newly-most-salient cat may be denoted by ["the cat"] in subsequent dialogue...
Although Lewis' characterization of "salience" is not as precise as it might be (we are never given anything like necessary and sufficient conditions), enough is said to enable us to set up scenarios where a certain $F$ is quite clearly the "most salient" $F$ in the domain of discourse. And that is sufficient for the primary purpose of this paper, which is to show that MST will simply not work as a semantic theory of definite descriptions; that (more specifically) it will be necessary to invoke referential intentions.

(c) A "Rule of Accommodation"

After spelling out his theory of definite descriptions (in "Scorekeeping"), Lewis goes on to discuss a certain "rule" which, he claims, "governs the kinematics of salience." This so-called "rule of accommodation for comparative salience" is formulated as follows:

If at time $t$ something is said that requires, if it is to be acceptable [true, non-trivial, warranted, etc.] that $x$ be more salient than $y$; and if, just before $t$, $x$ is no more salient than $y$; then - ceteris paribus and within certain limits - at $t$, $x$ becomes more salient than $y$.

We then get a few illustrations of the rule:

Suppose my monologue has left Albert more salient than Bruce; but the next thing I say is "The cat is going to pounce on you!" If Albert remains the most salient cat, then what I say is patently false: Albert cannot pounce all the way from New Zealand to Princeton. What I have said requires for its acceptability that "the cat" denote Bruce, and hence that Bruce be once again more salient than Albert. If what I say requires that, then straightaway it is so. By saying what I did, I have made Bruce more salient than Albert. If next I say, "The cat prefers moist food," that is true if Bruce prefers moist
food, even if Albert doesn't...The same thing would happen if instead I had said "The cat is out of the carton" or "The cat has gone upstairs." Again what I say is unacceptable unless the salience ranking shifts so that Bruce rises above Albert, and hence so that "the cat" once again denotes Bruce. The difference is in the type of unacceptability that would ensue without the shift. It is trivially true and hence not worth saying that Albert is out of the carton...It may be true or it may be false that Albert has gone upstairs in the Cresswell's house in New Zealand. But I have no way of knowing, so I have no business saying that he has. 29

It is important to note that Lewis does not claim that the rule of accommodation comes into play whenever the presumed acceptability of some (token) sentence requires that a certain F (other than that most salient just before t) be the denotation of "the F." For the rule claims that salience will shift in the manner described, "ceteris paribus and within certain limits." Lewis, unfortunately, does not spell out the significance of this clause. However, it is not difficult to imagine the sorts of exceptions that he might have in mind here. Sometimes what we actually intend to say (to communicate) is "unacceptable" in Lewis' sense of that locution: false, trivial, and/or unwarranted. Oftentimes, we are not aware of the unacceptability of what we intend to say; though sometimes (no doubt) we are. In such cases - cases where what we intend to say is "unacceptable" - it seems quite plausible to suppose that Lewis' rule does not operate. Consider, for instance, the following scenario. Lewis' friend Bob is in a room with Lewis' two cats - Bruce and Albert. Bruce, having recently been the topic of conversation, is the most salient cat just before t - at which time (t) Bob comes
out with an utterance of "The cat spends most of his time in New Zealand." Suppose that the rule of accommodation comes into play here. That would presumably mean that Albert would become the most salient cat at \( t \) - and hence the denotation of "the cat," as that expression occurs in Bob's utterance. For the acceptability - in particular, the truth - of the sentence uttered, would require that Albert (and not Bruce) be the denotation of the description (and hence the most salient cat at \( t \)). But suppose that Bob intended to refer to Bruce - the cat most salient just before \( t \) - and to say of Bruce that he spends most of his time in New Zealand. Having such intentions is surely possible, for it is surely possible that Bob has confused the two cats - believing that Albert is the "Princeton cat" and Bruce the "New Zealand cat." (And then, of course, there is the possibility that Bob is simply lying.) In such a case, it would seem clear that the sentence uttered would be false - and false on the grounds that Bruce does not spend most of his time in New Zealand.

Thus, perhaps the "ceteris paribus and within certain limits" clause is to be interpreted along the following lines. The rule in question comes into play, provided that the intended \( F \) and the \( F \) raised to salience in accordance with the rule, converge. Given this proviso, Lewis could then grant that "the cat" in Bob's utterance of "The cat spends most of his time in New Zealand," might in fact denote Bruce - the intended cat. This would then enable Lewis to account for the intuition that the sentence uttered was false because Bruce spends most of
his time in Princeton (not New Zealand) - and not true because Albert spends most of his time in New Zealand.

(d) Forecasting Difficulties for MST

If the foregoing does in fact represent Lewis' rationale behind including the proviso in question, difficulties immediately arise for MST. For if, on certain occasions, intentions appear to come into play in determining reference, it is natural to suppose that they might come into play on other occasions as well. For instance, consider cases where the intended $F$ and the $F$ specified by Lewis' rule of accommodation, converge. Recall the example in which Lewis (while in Princeton) says "The cat is going to pounce on you!" in the midst of a monologue which has left Albert - the New Zealand cat - maximally salient. Lewis suggests, plausibly, that the sentence will be true on the grounds that Bruce (the denotation of the description) is about to pounce on the addressee. Now how exactly is it that Bruce gets secured as the denotation? Lewis suggests that Bruce emerges as the denotation, as he has become (in accordance with the rule in question) the most salient cat at $t$. However, it is surely not implausible to suppose that Bruce is the denotation because he is the cat that the speaker intended to denote by means of the description. This view receives further plausibility from the fact that in certain cases (just discussed) where the intended $F$ and the $F$ most salient according to the rule (sans proviso)
diverge, it is the former that apparently emerges as the denotation of the description.

Such considerations might naturally lead to the following line of thought. If referential intentions play a semantic role in cases where Lewis' rule is applicable, perhaps they play such a role in cases where the rule is inapplicable. Specifically, perhaps speaker intentions come into play in cases where the presumed acceptability of the sentence uttered does not require any sort of shifts in salience. The test cases for this sort of view would of course involve cases where the intended F and the F specified by MST, diverge. Below, I will suggest that such test cases do indeed favor an intentional view of definite descriptions over a maximal salience view of the sort suggested by Lewis.

(e) Some Slight Modifications

Before saying anything more about MST, I would like to propose two slight modifications of that theory (one ontological, one terminological) - and then go on to focus on this modified version.

Lewis talks of token sentences containing definite descriptions: these are the entities to which he ascribes truth conditions/values. He also talks in terms of "denotation," where the denotation of a definite description is the entity whose properties are relevant to the truth value of the token sentence in which the description occurs. I would
like to talk instead of (assertive) *utterances* and in terms of (Kripkean) "semantic reference." Nothing crucial will hinge on these modifications; though speaking of "semantic reference" will enable me (later on) to make a natural contrast between such reference and "speaker's reference."

My preference for talk of utterances (or of "what is literally said") is purely aesthetic. To me, talking of utterances/what is said, as being true or false, sounds more natural than talking this way of (token) sentences. However, I regard the truth conditions of a a particular *utterance* of "The F is G" as being *identical* to those of that very *token* of the *sentence*. Thus, nothing crucial will hinge on this change in ontology. (If the alleged semantic identity fails to jibe with the reader's intuitions, my notion of "utterance" may be viewed as a technical one.) Additionally, I regard the expressions "denotation" and "semantic referent" as *synonymous*: both designate the entity whose properties are relevant to the truth value of the token sentence/utterance containing a definite description. Thus, nothing crucial will hinge on this change in terminology.

Accordingly, in what follows, when I refer to MST, I will be referring to the view according to which the *semantic referent* of an occurrence of "the F" is the most salient F in the domain of discourse; and according to which an *utterance* of "The F is G" will be true just in case the most salient F in the domain of discourse is G.
4. Motivating MST

From the point of view of the advocates of MST, one of the chief advantages of that theory is that it avoids a problem that appears to be unavoidable for the Russellian. In particular, it is able to account for the apparent fact that utterances of sentences like (1) and (2) could be true:

(1) The dog is not barking, but some other dog is.
(2) The dog got into a fight with another dog.

(As argued above, the Russellian appears to be unable to account for this fact.) MST is thus able to circumvent a particular problem faced by what is perhaps the most widely held theory of descriptions (at least among philosophers) - Russell's. Surely this fact alone provides some ground for taking MST seriously as a semantic theory of descriptions.

However, it has recently been claimed that, "as a semantic account of definite descriptions," MST has no initial plausibility. The argument for this claim runs as follows:

...salience is relevant to pragmatics, not semantics. This is because salience is a property that speakers exploit to make themselves understood without being explicit and which hearers exploit to understand speakers, each doing so on the supposition that this is what the other is trying to do. The phenomenon is not specific to uses of definite descriptions or even to reference, but...is quite general, indeed pervasive. That is why MST as a semantic account of definite descriptions, has no initial plausibility.

I agree with the foregoing in so far as I agree that salience is indeed exploited in the manner suggested, and that it is
therefore relevant to pragmatics. But the fact that salience is exploited in this manner does not show it is irrelevant to semantics. Specifically, the considerations in question do not show that the salience of an entity has no bearing on whether or not that entity emerges as the semantic referent (the "denotation") of a referring expression (like a description, name, or pronoun). In fact, I can think of at least one philosopher (Howard Wettstein) who has argued persuasively and at length, that the semantic referent of an indexical/demonstrative expression will be the entity indicated by certain publicly accessible "cues" exploited by the speaker in an attempt to communicate about a certain object or individual. In a end-note to "How to Bridge the Gap Between Meaning and Reference," Wettstein makes the plausible suggestion that this view may well be on par with a salience view of the sort developed by Lewis, where the entity determined by the relevant "cues" is the most "salient" entity relative to the utterance in which the referring expression occurs.

Wettstein's salience view, like Lewis', may well be mistaken. However, surely the latter (like the former) is not without some initial plausibility. After all, it does provide an intuitively plausible analysis of a certain class of sentences that Russell's theory just doesn't seem to be able to accommodate. Moreover, MST would surely be embraced by many philosophers who buy into a Wittgensteinian view of language, according to which language is properly regarded as
a kind of social (and hence public) institution. And finally, the case of definite descriptions seems rather different from those of certain other so-called "referring" expressions — like ordinary names and certain pronouns. For it seems plausible to suppose that an expression of the form "the F" has a certain "sense" — a sense which Russellians want to claim involves uniqueness. Yet there seems to be no less initial plausibility in the claim that the "sense" in question involves — not uniqueness — but (maximal) salience.

5. Difficulties with MST

Despite its ability to circumvent a particular problem faced by the Russellian approach to definite descriptions, MST faces serious problems. To get an idea of what some of these problems are, consider the following two sentences.

(3) George plays bocce with the man every week.
(4) The plumber fixed the faucet this morning.

Consider, first, an utterance of (3). The problem here is that it would seem as though George might be the most salient man (in the domain of discourse) and yet not the (semantic) referent of "the man." Suppose, for instance, that George, who is currently engaged in a game of bocce with a (single) man and several women, is the topic of conversation. Suppose further that (3) is uttered in response to a query of "How often does George play bocce with those people?" Now if George is the most salient man, then in uttering (3), one would be saying, according to MST, that George plays bocce with himself
every week. And yet it would seem as though one could utter (3) under the specified conditions, while saying something entirely different, *viz*, that George plays bocce every week with *the man he's currently playing with*. Indeed (under the conditions described), such would surely be the most natural interpretation of the utterance.

Similar considerations would seem to hold with respect to an utterance of (4). Suppose that the utterer of (4) is in fact a plumber himself, who happens to be sharing a place with the addressee and who, for rather vague "political" reasons, refuses to do the house plumbing. Suppose further that the house plumber is the bocci-playing George. It would seem then, that the speaker might well be the most salient plumber (in the domain of discourse) - and yet not the (semantic) referent of "the plumber" - who is most plausibly the house plumber George. It is quite possible, after all, that the speaker's utterance was preceded by a brief description of *his* day making *him* the topic of conversation - and hence the most salient of the plumbers in the domain of discourse. And there's no reason to suppose that the house plumber (George) has come up at all in conversation in the recent past. Moreover, the speaker is *right there* in front of the addressee, making himself salient by his speaking - whereas George is nowhere in sight. And yet surely when the speaker comes out with an utterance of "The plumber fixed the faucet this morning," he might well be making a claim about a plumber other than himself, *viz*, about George.
It might initially be supposed that the foregoing examples could be handled by Lewis’ "rule of accommodation for comparative salience." So let’s look at the two examples once again, this time in light of Lewis’ rule. Recall that the rule in effect stipulates that shifts in salience take place on the assumption that the utterance is "acceptable." Lewis claims that three aspects of acceptability are: truth, non-triviality, and warrantedness. But he acknowledges that there may well be other aspects of acceptability. Bearing this in mind, let’s proceed to analyze the utterances in accordance with Lewis’ rule. Consider first an utterance of (3): "George plays bocce with the man every week." Now one might argue that, according to the rule in question, the presumed acceptability of the utterance would prohibit George from emerging as the referent of "the man." For any such reading of the utterance would make that utterance unacceptable on syntactic grounds. For syntactical rules (specifically, Chomsky’s "condition C") prohibit "the man" (a referring expression) from being bound by "George." Moreover, the presumed truth and warrantedness of the utterance would require that the man currently playing bocce with George be the referent of "the man," and hence the most salient man. (After all, it is presumably false that George plays bocce with himself every week, though true that he plays with the other man every week. And there is, moreover, presumably no reason to suppose that the speaker has any grounds for
supposing that things are otherwise.) In short, because the presumed acceptability of the utterance requires that the man playing bocce with George — and not George — be the referent of "the man," that individual becomes (in accordance with Lewis' rule) the most salient man, and hence the referent of the description.

Now consider an utterance of (4): "The plumber fixed the faucet this morning." One might attempt to employ Lewis' rule here by arguing as follows. The presumed acceptability of the utterance prohibits the speaker from being the referent of "the plumber." For any such reading of the utterance would render that utterance unacceptable on (broadly) pragmatic grounds. For unless one is being arch, one ordinarily uses the pronoun "I" to refer to oneself. Moreover, the presumed truth and warrantedness of the utterance would require that the house plumber George be the referent of "the plumber" and hence the most salient plumber. (I am assuming here that George, the house plumber, did indeed fix the faucet on the morning in question, and that the speaker knows this.) In short, because the presumed acceptability of the utterance requires that George — and not the speaker — be the referent of "the plumber," that individual becomes (in accordance with Lewis' rule) the most salient plumber, and hence the referent of the description.

Despite the initial plausibility of the foregoing analyses, it seems to me that there is going to be a serious problem with
any attempt to analyze examples like the foregoing in terms of any sort of "rule of accommodation." And it seems to me, moreover, that an attempt (such as the foregoing) to provide such an analysis, points to a serious problem within MST itself.

The basic problem here concerns the fact that Lewis' rule purports to be one of "accommodation." The idea behind this characterization is that "allowances" must be made for cases where "the F" is used to refer to an F other than that most salient just before t (t being the time of the utterance). "Allowances" are thought to be required in such cases, because "good conversational practice" requires that the speaker not make things unnecessarily difficult for the audience. But by using "the F" to refer to an F other than that most salient just before t, the speaker might do just that. For in such cases, the audience might need to do some "quick thinking" in order to figure out which F was being referred to. (The audience presumably does this by assuming that the utterance is acceptable, and by then determining which F the description would have to refer to, to ensure such acceptability.) Ordinarily - that is, in cases where "the F" is being used properly (cases where the speaker adheres to "good conversational practice") there is no problem: the expression refers to the most salient F just before (and hence at) t. And so, in such cases, the attentive and linguistically competent audience ought to have no trouble identifying the intended referent.
The problem with the foregoing approach - an approach which underpins Lewis' rule - is that it is often bad conversational practice to use "the F" to refer to the most salient F just before t, and it is often good conversational practice to do otherwise. To see this, consider again an utterance of sentence (4): "The plumber fixed the faucet this morning."

Suppose, as above, that the speaker (a plumber) does not ordinarily do the house plumbing - a task undertaken by George. Suppose further, that the speaker wishes to inform his addressee that he (the speaker) fixed the faucet that morning. Surely, it would (under the specified conditions) be bad conversational practice to convey this bit of information via an utterance of the sentence in question. For surely the utterance would mislead the audience into believing that the house plumber George fixed the faucet. (What the speaker ought to have said, given such communicative intentions, was "I fixed the faucet this morning.") Moreover, one could hardly accuse the speaker of engaging in anything but the best of conversational practices, were he to have uttered the sentence in question as a way of conveying that the house plumber (George) fixed the faucet that morning. But it is in the former case - where the speaker uses the definite description to refer to the plumber most salient just before t - that good conversational practices are eschewed; and it is in the latter case - where the speaker uses the definite description to refer to some plumber who is not the most salient plumber just
before t - that such practices are *embraced*. But to accept the analysis of the latter use provided by Lewis' "rule of accommodation," would, in effect, be to suppose that good conversational practices are being eschewed in the latter case.

What the preceding considerations suggest is that the proper use of expressions of the form "the F" sometimes requires that such expressions be used to refer to F's *other than* those most salient just before t. Doubt thus appears to be cast on MST, according to which the reference of an expression of the form in question is determined by maximal salience at t. For if such an expression is in fact used *properly*, there would be no reason to suppose that "allowances" would have to be made in order to ensure successful reference. But precisely such a supposition is made by Lewis' "rule of accommodation," when that rule is applied to utterances of the sort described above. For these reasons, the proposed analyses of such utterances in accordance with Lewis' "rule of accommodation," are implausible. There is thus no reason to suppose that the reference of the descriptions occurring in those utterances is secured via shifts in salience of the sort specified by Lewis' rule. The problem for MST thus remains: How is that theory to account for the reference of the descriptions occurring in utterances of sentences like (3) and (4) above?

6. A Modified Version of MST
In response to the difficulties posed by utterances of sentences like (3) and (4) above, Lewis has suggested the following revised version of MST:

An expression of the form "the F" denotes the most salient of the F’s not most appropriately denoted in some other way.

It is not difficult to see that the foregoing does indeed get around the problems posed by utterances of the sort in question. For instance, consider again an utterance of (3): "George plays bocce with the man every week." As we saw, it would be inappropriate to use "the man" to refer to George here - though quite appropriate to use that expression to refer to the man with whom George is currently playing bocce. (Were the intention to say that George plays bocce with/by himself every week - George would be most appropriately be denoted via "himself." ) And, in accordance with Lewis’ proposed revision, the man in question is quite plausibly the most salient of the men (in the domain of discourse) not most appropriately denoted in some other way. For in the scenario envisioned, there are just two men playing bocce: George and the other man.

Similar considerations would seem to hold with respect to an utterance of sentence (4): "The plumber fixed the faucet this morning." As we saw, it would be inappropriate for the speaker to use the description to refer to himself. (He would have been most appropriately denoted via "I." ) Yet it would be perfectly appropriate to use the description to refer to the
plumber who usually does the house plumbing - George. And it is surely plausible to suppose that George is the most salient of the plumbers (in the domain of discourse) not most appropriately denoted in some other way.

There is another advantage that accrues to Lewis' modified version of MST. This modified version is able to accommodate a phenomenon that Lewis refers to obliquely (and parenthetically) in "Scorekeeping." After spelling out and illustrating his version of MST, Lewis writes:

...I shall ignore the possibility that something might be highly salient in one of its guises, but less salient in another. Possibly we really need to appeal to a salience ranking not of individuals but rather of individuals-in-guises...

Lewis has since explained just what sorts of cases he had in mind here. He had in mind "secret-identity" cases. As an example (provided by Lewis), consider the case of Superman - who, unbeknownst to Lois Lane, is a reporter. Suppose that Superman is now very salient - more so than anyone Lois knows to be a reporter. He is thus the most salient reporter - yet he is not the individual denoted by "the reporter" when Lois utters that description. Not unless in his guise as Clark Kent, he is the most salient reporter.

Modified MST can easily accommodate such cases. Because Lois Lane does not believe that the individual she has come to know as Superman is a reporter, it would be inappropriate for her to use "the reporter" to refer to Superman when he is in his
Superman guise – even if he is (unbeknownst to Lois) the most salient of the reporters. For in such a guise he would not be "the most salient of the reporters not most appropriately denoted in some other way." He would (under such conditions) be most appropriately denoted (by Lois) in some other way – via (e.g.) "Superman." However, were Superman in his Clark Kent guise, it might well be appropriate for Lois to denote him via "the reporter" – assuming, of course, that she believes that the individual she has come to know as Clark Kent is a reporter. For in that particular guise, Superman might well be the most salient of the reporters not most appropriately denoted in some other way.40 41

It looks, then, as though modified MST provides a rather promising semantic account of expressions of the form "the F." We have just seen that it accommodates a class of cases that the original version of the theory was unable to accommodate. And, of course, modified MST would have no problem accounting for those cases where the referent of "the F" appears to be the most salient of the F’s (in the domain of discourse). For in such cases, the referent – the most salient of the F’s – will of course be the most salient of the F’s not most appropriately denoted in some other way.

However, it has thus far been assumed – either explicitly or implicitly – that the entity specified by modified MST is also the intended referent. It has been assumed, that is, that the two converge. Now Lewis’ (revised) theory makes no mention of
referential intentions; it thus seems plausible to suppose that he believes that they are semantically irrelevant - that they have no bearing on what gets secured as the referent of a definite description. For he appears to believe that what makes some entity the referent of an occurrence of "the F" is simply its being the most salient of the F’s not most appropriately denoted in some other way. But because the cases thus far considered have involved a convergence of the intended referent and the most salient of the F’s not most appropriately denoted in some other way, such cases fail to indicate whether it is the intention (to refer to a particular F) or the maximal salience (of a particular F) that is doing the semantic work. For all such cases indicate to the contrary, it is possible that the referent of an occurrence of "the F" is determined (at least in some cases) by the speaker’s intention to refer to a particular F. It would thus be consistent with such cases to suppose that the reference of definite descriptions - most plausibly "incomplete descriptions" - is (at least in part) a matter of intentions. Although such a view may turn out to be mistaken, it does have some intuitive plausibility in its favor, and it is, moreover, consistent with the data thus far considered in evaluating Lewis’ modified MST.

In order to adjudicate between the two views: the intentional view and modified MST, we need to look at what happens when the intended F and the most salient of the F’s not most appropriately denoted in some other way, diverge. Intuitions
about which, if either, entity emerges as the (semantic) referent, will provide data enabling us to adjudicate between the two views. Such cases will be considered in the next section.

7. Problems with Modified MST

Before looking at cases involving a divergence of the sort described above, a point concerning "salience" needs to be clarified. According to (modified) MST, the sort of salience relevant to fixing the referent of some (token) description, is what might be termed "shared salience": salience from the point of view of speaker and audience. Thus, in the context of Lewis' (modified) theory, to say, for instance, that a certain $F$ is "the most salient of the $F$'s" (in the domain of discourse) is to imply that this particular $F$ is maximally salient from the point of view of the speaker as well as the audience. Lewis suggests that this is indeed his view, when he proposes that "the $F$" means "the $F$ most salient to us" (where "us" refers to speaker and audience). 44

What I would like to turn to now are cases where there appears to be a divergence between the particular $F$ the speaker intends to refer to, and the most salient of the $F$'s not most appropriately denoted in some other way. (It will be important to bear in mind here that the "salience" in question is supposed to be shared salience.) The sorts of cases I have in mind are those where there is clearly an intended $F$ - but apparently nothing that could be accurately described as "the
most salient of the F's not most appropriately denoted in some other way." Consider an utterance of sentence (5): "The schnauzer got into a fight with Fido." Now suppose that the particular schnauzer that the speaker intends to refer to (Witz), is not the schnauzer the addressee takes him to be referring to (Strupp). (This would presumably involve a case where the audience's salience ranking is not what the speaker takes it to be.) Suppose further that the intended schnauzer (Witz) did in fact get into a fight with Fido. Intuitively, the utterance was true: what the speaker literally said was true, and was true because a certain schnauzer (Witz) did in fact get into a fight with Fido. That the addressee was unable to correctly identify the intended referent, would not appear to prohibit the utterance from coming out true. Witz, then, would appear to be the semantic referent of "the schnauzer" - since what makes the utterance true, is (apparently) a certain fact about Witz. But is Witz the "most salient of the schnauzers not most appropriately denoted in some other way"? (That, of course, is what modified MST would predict.) Not if the salience in question is thought of as shared salience. After all, the addressee has identified Strupp as the intended referent - which would suggest that - from his/her point of view, Strupp is that dog. On the other hand, since Witz is the intended dog, it is plausible to suppose that he is - from the point of view of the speaker - the most salient of the schnauzers not just appropriately denoted in some other way. (Because forming an intention to refer to a certain F would
naturally increase the salience of that $F$ from the *speaker's* point of view, it is difficult, if not impossible, to come up with cases where the intended referent would be one entity, and the most salient of the $F$'s from the *speaker's* point of view, another entity. Perhaps, then, whenever the two diverge, the scenario will be one in which there is simply no entity answering to the latter description.\footnote{This is the case when the speaker intends the description to refer to a particular entity, but the entity does not exist.}

It would, incidentally, be of no use to attempt to invoke an (appropriately modified) version of Lewis' "rule of accommodation" here. For it is quite possible that, were the description in question to denote Strupp (not Witz), the utterance would still be "acceptable": true, warranted, non-trivial. After all, perhaps Strupp (like Witz) *did* get into a fight with Fido - and perhaps the speaker has some grounds for supposing this to be so. There is accordingly no reason to suppose that the comparative salience of the two dogs must shift in such a way as to make Witz the semantic referent of the description.

What cases such as the foregoing appear to suggest, is that the intention to refer to a particular $F$ via an utterance of "the $F$" is - at least on certain occasions - a factor in determining the semantic referent of that expression. Shared salience would seem to be (semantically) irrelevant. And while it is plausible to suppose that the referent of such an expression will be the most salient $F$ from the point of view of the *speaker*, this is perhaps only because where the speaker
has an intention to refer to some entity, that entity will naturally become salient from the speaker's point of view. Salience from the audience's point of view, would likewise appear to be of no semantic significance - not even derivatively. Rather, such salience would appear to be of no more than pragmatic significance. For if the intended $F$ is the $F$ most salient from the point of view of the addressee, the latter will be in a position to identify that entity as the intended referent, and to thus correctly interpret the speaker's utterance.

8. Some Responses

There are several ways in which a proponent of modified MST might respond to the foregoing. Recently, Lewis has suggested the following approach. Suppose that "the $F$" does in fact mean (something like) "the $F$ most salient to us" (where "us" designates speaker and audience). Now in the normal, presupposed sort of case, there is a certain $F$ that is most salient to both speaker and audience - and this is common knowledge between them. And, in such cases, the $F$ in question will be the denotation of "the $F$." (Lewis here sets aside cases of maximally salient $F$'s most appropriately denoted in some other way. I will follow suit in the discussion that follows.) However, what happens when the case is abnormal - when the audience's salience ranking is not what the speaker takes it to be? Does it follow that the description is without a denotation? It doesn't seem so (according to Lewis). After
all, a description may denote what it doesn’t quite describe, provided the denotation comes "close enough, and closer than any alternative," to satisfying the description. For instance, it is not implausible to suppose that "the king of Iraq" denotes Hussein even though he is, strictly, speaking, not a "king." Lewis acknowledges that this is apt to be a messy business, with indeterminacy about what does and does not come "close enough.") Thus, if the presupposition of shared salience breaks down, several possibilities arise. Perhaps "the F" denotes (in a not fully indeterminate way) the F most salient to the speaker; or the F the speaker wrongly thinks is most salient to the audience; or (perhaps) the F most salient to the audience but not to the speaker.

My response to any such approach is two-fold. First, it seems to me more natural to account for cases of the sort in question — cases where the description does not quite describe the intended referent, in terms of the familiar Kripkean speaker’s reference/semantic reference distinction. Consider, for instance, an utterance of "The king of Iraq is a dangerous man," where the description is used to refer to Hussein — whom the speaker wrongly believes to be a king. In that case, it seems plausible to suppose that while the speaker may have referred to Hussein, the description was itself without a referent. One could then account for the intuition that, in uttering the sentence in question, something true was (in some sense) said, though, strictly speaking, the utterance was not true. For while the speaker referred to Hussein, and said
something true of him, the definite description was without a semantic referent, and the utterance was therefore not true. For reasons of this sort, it seems to me rather implausible to suppose that "the F" might refer to something that was not the F most salient to us - assuming that the expression means "the F most salient to us." This would not, however, prevent the speaker from referring (via "the F") to some entity not properly described as "the most salient of the F's not most appropriately denoted in some other way."

Second, even supposing that it is true that a description might denote what it doesn't quite describe, it wouldn't follow that "the F" could ever denote something not most salient to the speaker and audience - on the assumption that it means "the F most salient to us." For if this sort of situation were possible - then, as Lewis suggests, it would occur only when the description comes "close enough and closer than any alternative" to describing its alleged referent. But if this alleged referent is not maximally salient from the point of view of speaker and audience - then could it actually come "close enough, and closer than any alternative" to satisfying the description? I don't think so. Consider an utterance of "The man standing closest to Mary and Jane is Fred." Now suppose that while Fred is the man standing closest to Mary - Bob is the man standing closest to Jane. Is there any reason to suppose that Fred - rather than Bob - is the denotation (the semantic referent) of the description? I don't think so. After all, the description misdescribes Fred to
precisely the same extent that it misdescribes Bob. Now consider an utterance of "The man is Fred." Suppose that the man most salient to the speaker (the intended man) is Fred; while the man most salient to the audience, is Bill. (These are the sorts of cases in question.) Here again, there seems to be no reason to suppose that "the man" - assuming it means "the man most salient to us" - denotes one man rather than the other. For so interpreted, the description comes just as close to (accurately) describing Bill as it does to describing Fred.

Thus, even supposing (with Lewis) that a description can on occasion denote what it doesn't quite describe, it does not follow that (if modified MST is correct) an occurrence of "the F" can ever denote anything other than an F which is maximally salient from the point of view of both speaker and audience. For as indicated above, where there is an absence of shared salience, there is no entity that "the F" will come "closer than any alternative" to describing. Specifically, if one F is maximally salient from the point of view of the speaker - while another F is maximally salient from the point of view of the audience - an occurrence of "the F" ("the F most salient to us") will describe the one just as accurately as it describes the other. It will accordingly denote neither.

Another recent attempt to defend modified MST involves an appeal to the speaker reference/semantic reference distinction invoked above. The general idea can be spelled out as follows. Consider again an utterance of "The schnauzer got into a fight

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with Fido." Suppose (as described above) that while the intended referent (Witz) is, from the point of view of the speaker, the most salient of the schnauzers, Strupp is the most salient such dog from the point of view of the audience. It was suggested (by the author) that the semantic referent of the description was the intended referent - contrary to what modified MST would seem to predict. According MST, it would seem (contra Lewis) that the description should be without a denotation, and the utterance therefore not true. For there is an absence of shared salience - something allegedly essential to the meaning of "the F." Now here's the proposed defense of modified MST. One way to account for the intuitions surrounding cases of the sort in question would be to suppose that, while the speaker's referent is a certain F, there is in fact no semantic referent - just as modified MST would appear to predict. For the description accurately describes nothing (due to an absence of shared salience). Thus, that an utterance of sentence (5), made under the specified conditions, would seem to be true just in case Witz got into a fight with Fido, is easily accounted for: The speaker referred to, and said truly of Witz, that he got into a fight with Fido. But again, since the description was without a semantic referent, the utterance itself (what was literally said) was not actually true.

Although this sort of move may have some initial plausibility, there are also some serious problems with it. If correct, then it follows that the truth value of an utterance of "The F is
"G" will depend, in part, upon whether or not the addressee is able to correctly identify the intended referent. And such an entailment seems rather implausible. Consider once again an utterance of (5): "The schnauzer got into a fight with Fido." Suppose, as above, that the addressee misidentifies the intended referent as Strupp. This would mean that Strupp was the most salient schnauzer from the point of view of the addressee. But since the intended referent is Witz, that schnauzer is most plausibly the most salient schnauzer from the point of view of the speaker. There is thus an absence of shared salience, and accordingly (on the view under consideration) no semantic referent. What the speaker said (if he "said" anything at all) was not true. But now suppose that the addressee was able to correctly identify the intended referent as Witz. That would mean that Witz was the schnauzer most salient from the point of view of speaker and audience. It would then follow (on the view under consideration) that what the speaker said was true - assuming that Witz did in fact get into a fight with Fido. But it seems implausible to suppose that the truth value of an utterance of "The F is G" is going to depend (in the end) on whether or not the audience is in a position to identify the intended F. After all, in the case where the addressee misidentifies the intended F, we are apt to say that he simply didn't understand what the speaker actually said. We certainly are not apt to say that the speaker's utterance was untrue, as the addressee didn't know which F the speaker was talking about. Considerations of
this sort are captured in Evans' remark that, "...the only question the hearer can intelligently ask himself in attempting to disambiguate the reference [of an expression whose referent is conventionally underdetermined] is 'Which one does the speaker intend?'"\textsuperscript{52}

One final attempt to defend modified MST against cases of the sort in question might involve an appeal to an analysis of the sort proposed by Lewis in \textit{Counterfactuals}. There, Lewis spoke of sentences of the form "The $F$ is $G$" as being true or false at $i$ - where $i$ was an entity with a "point of view."\textsuperscript{53}

Specifically, he claimed that such a sentence would be true at $i$ just in case the most salient $F$ at (from the point of view of) $i$, was $G$. Perhaps this sort of approach could be extended to \textit{utterances} of such sentences - with $i$ being the \textit{speaker}. Thus, perhaps we could say that an \textit{utterance} of "The $F$ is $G$" will be true just in case the most salient $F$ at $i$ (the speaker) is $G$.

In order to adjudicate between the foregoing, and a view which claims that the \textit{intention} to refer to a particular $F$, is (at least in some cases) what determines the referent of an occurrence of "the $F$," one needs to look at cases where the most salient $F$ at $i$ and the intended $F$, \textit{diverge}. But are there any such cases? Initially, it might be thought that there are not. After all, if the speaker has an intention to refer to a certain $F$, isn't it plausible to suppose that that $F$ - being the object of the speaker's referential intention - will be
the most salient $F$ at $i$? Recall Lewis' claim (in *Counterfactuals*) that entities are salient at $i$ in so far as they "loom larger in his mental life; they are more important to him; they come more readily to the center of his attention." However, even with this explicitly psychological notion of salience, it seems at least possible that there might be a divergence of the sort in question. Consider once again, an utterance of (5): "The schnauzer got into a fight with Fido." Suppose, as above, that it is the speaker's intention to refer to Witz. But suppose that the utterance is made rather absent-mindedly, and that the speaker's thoughts are of another schnauzer - Strupp - whom she is now observing through the window as he growls menacingly at the convalescing Fido. The intuitions here are surely that the utterance concerned Witz - despite the fact that more of the speaker's mental energy was taken up with thoughts of Strupp. Though the speaker was thinking (primarily) of Strupp, she was speaking of Witz.

If the foregoing does in fact represent a case where there is a divergence between the intended $F$ and the $F$ maximally salient at $i$, then intuitions would seem to favor a view which regards intentions (rather than salience) as semantically relevant to the reference of descriptions. But suppose, if only for the sake of argument, that there simply cannot be cases where the intended $F$ and the maximally salient $F$ at $i$ diverge. Even then, I think an argument could be given for favoring the intentional view over the maximal salience view.
The basic idea is this. With respect to an utterance of "The \( F \) is \( G \)," the speaker's referential intention has a certain "explanatory priority" over the maximal salience of the intended referent. Thus, it would make sense to state a theory of the reference of definite descriptions in terms of speaker’s intentions - rather than in terms of maximal salience (at \( i \)). The reason for supposing that the intention has an explanatory priority here, is that a particular \( F \) will might well become a maximally salient \( F \), as a result of the speaker’s forming a referential intention concerning that \( F \). For prior to an utterance of "The \( F \) is \( G \)," several \( F \)'s might conceivably be tied for maximal salience. The speaker then forms an intention to refer to (and say something of) one of these equally salient \( F \)'s. And it seems plausible to suppose that what breaks the tie is the referential intention. Yet the reverse does not happen: it is never the case that a particular \( F \) will become the intended \( F \) simply as a result of its being the maximally salient \( F \) (at \( i \)). For the speaker will always have to option of referring to some other \( F \) - or of saying nothing at all.\(^5\)

9. Conclusions

Considerations such as the foregoing suggest (though by no means prove) that, in at least some situations, what makes a particular \( F \) the semantic referent of an occurrence of "the \( F \)" is its being the \( F \) the speaker intends to refer to. However, is not difficult to find further support for this view. Recall
cases of the sort that Lewis claimed operated in accordance with his "rule of accommodation." Recall in particular the utterance of "The cat is going to pounce on you." Lewis suggested that description referred to the cat in the room (rather than the cat in New Zealand) because the presumed acceptability (truth, warrantedness) of the utterance required that the former be the denotation of the description. The proposed analysis was at least in accordance with the intuition that the cat in the room was indeed the denotation. But it seemed at least as plausible to suggest that the cat in the room emerged as the denotation of the description—because that was the cat that the speaker intended to denote by means of the description. Further support for the latter interpretation comes from a consideration of utterances which are in fact unacceptable. Recall Bob's utterance of "The cat spends most of his time in New Zealand." The problem was that Bob believed wrongly—that the intended cat (also the cat most salient just before t) was Lewis' New Zealand cat. And surely we would thus wish to say that Bob's utterance was false—and that the intended cat was the semantic referent of the description. But if we apply Lewis' rule to the case in question (as the facts of the case demand that we do), then Bob's utterance comes out true—with the New Zealand cat emerging as the semantic referent. And that, surely, is not what we want.

It was suggested earlier that Lewis might attempt to get around difficulties of the foregoing sort by claiming that the
rule operates only on under certain "normal conditions" (hence the "ceteris paribus and within certain limits" proviso). He might then claim that "normal conditions" would not obtain unless the intended F and the most salient of the F's most appropriately denoted in some other way, converge. The problem with any such move is clear. To assume, to stipulate, that the two entities are in fact one and the same - that they converge - is, in effect, to rule out any possibility of adjudicating between quite different types of theory. For if such convergence is assumed, then there is simply no way of telling whether it is the intention or the maximal salience that is doing the semantic work: that is securing a certain entity as the semantic referent of the description. But when we look at cases where there at least appears to be a divergence of the sort in question, it looks as though referential intentions - and not maximal salience - are what matters semantically.\(^{\text{55}}\)\(^{\text{56}}\)


\(^{\text{5}}\) For a formalized version of MST, see Manfred Pinkal's (1979) "How to Refer with Vague Descriptions" in Semantics from Different Points of View, Bauerle et al., eds. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

\(^{\text{6}}\) The objection in question was provided by an anonymous reviewer.
Personal correspondence (September 24, 1990). All future reference to personal correspondence with Lewis concerns that transacted on September 24, 1990.

I construe "referential intentions" as communicative in nature. Thus, if the speaker intends to refer to a certain object/individual, while uttering some sentence or other, he intends to communicate something about that entity.

"Scorekeeping," p. 241; "Actions and Events," p. 188.

McCawley makes the further observation ("Actions and Events," p. 188) that "The dog likes all dogs" will, on Russell's view, be truth conditionally equivalent to "The dog likes itself."


Perhaps there are exceptions to this. Consider, for instance, pairs sentences identical save that where one contains the referring expression a, the other contains (in the same place) the referring expression b. Suppose that a and b are co-referential. In that case, the propositions expressed by the sentences (uttered in identical contexts), will be identical. I suppose that means they would have identical "analyses." These considerations apply to descriptions like "the mayor of Guilford" and "the mayor of this town," discussed below.


McCawley makes the further observation ("Actions and Events," p. 188) that "The dog likes all dogs" will, on Russell's view, be truth conditionally equivalent to "The dog likes itself."

Scores, pp. 93-102.


Descriptions, pp. 93-102.


Neale does not explicitly address this particular worry (the worry involving completions containing co-referring expressions). I am thus speculating here in giving what I assume would be his reply to that worry.


ibid, p. 101.

For further difficulties with Russell's theory of descriptions, see my "Russell's Anticipation of Donnellan's Distinction" (forthcoming in Australasian Journal of Philosophy).


It might be thought that there is a rather obvious difficulty with MST: it fails to provide a plausible analysis for utterances containing "complete" descriptions - descriptions like "the result of dividing four by two." Like McCawley, I don't think this poses any real problem for MST. McCawley suggests plausibly ("Actions and Events," p. 189, note 30) that such descriptions, which for Russell, were presumably paradigm cases of such expressions - are in fact "abnormal" cases. (Which seems to make a lot of sense - think of how rarely such expressions occur in natural language.) Perhaps the advocate of MST could regard the definite article in such cases as semantically otiose, functioning as no more than a grammatical-place holder. (For another option, see "Actions and Events," p. 189, note 30.)


*Counterfactuals*, p. 113.


ibid, p. 241.

ibid, p. 243.

ibid, p. 240.

ibid, p. 242.

Of course, one is not always free to talk of utterances of sentences. One cannot, for instance, do this in the case of the (written) sentences composing a letter. Here, one would perhaps need to talk more generally and loosely of "what is said" via such sentences.


The objection here is from an anonymous reviewer.

Wettstein's paper appears in *Synthese* 58, pp. 63-84.

For problems with Wettstein's view, see my "Three Views of Demonstrative Reference" (forthcoming in *Synthese").

The particular problems discussed in this paper are, no doubt, only some of the problems infecting MST. The problems focused on here are chosen because they seem to point to the semantic significance of referential intentions.


Moreover, it seems intuitively unlikely that an utterance of "George plays bocci with the man every week" (made under the specified conditions) would have the effect of raising the man's salience over George's - which is what Lewis' rule predicts. The utterance would plausibly raise the man's salience to some degree, though again, there is no reason to suppose that it would be raised above George's.

Personal correspondence.

There is thus no reason to appeal to a salience ranking of "individuals-in-guises" - rather than of individuals.

McCawley's particular version of MST would appear to be able to accommodate these particular sorts of cases. For he claims ("Actions and Events," p. 189) that "what is relevant to the assignment of a referent to the \(X\) is not the truth of various propositions \(X(a)\) but rather their status as mutual knowledge." When Superman is in his Superman guise, the (singular) proposition "a (Superman) is a reporter" does not represent "mutual knowledge." For Lois Lane does not know the proposition to be true - and, in fact, no doubt believes it to be false.
Exceptions for Lewis might involve cases of the sort discussed in section 3(d) above. Intentions would most plausibly come into play in cases where the description was "incomplete." In cases where the description is "complete," the semantic content of the description is by itself sufficient to determine a referent. There is thus no need to bring referential intentions into the picture here, in order to account for the securing of a referent.

Personal correspondence.

These cases are discussed above in section 8.

Personal correspondence.

Although the example is Lewis', the proposed analysis (also Lewis') seems at odds with MST: the view that "the F" denotes the most salient of the F's (in the domain of discourse). For here we have the suggestion that "the king of Iraq" might denote a non-king.

One might think that this possibility: "the F" refers to the F the speaker believes is the F most salient from the audience's point of view, will work for the normal cases - not just the particular abnormal cases in question. I think that such a view (suggested to me by Robert Stalnaker) is correct. For I think that the referent of such an expression will be the F the speaker intends to refer to via an utterance of "...the F..." and I think that any such F will at least generally be the F the speaker believes is the F most salient from the point of view of the addressee. After all, suppose that the speaker did not believe that a certain F - F1 - was the F most salient from the audience's point of view. Suppose that he thought this to be true of another F - F2. In that case, how could he hope to draw the attention of the audience to F1 via an utterance of "...the F..."? However, there (I believe) are reasons for stating the view in terms of intentions, rather than in terms of speaker’s beliefs about the audience’s state of mind. One reason is this. At least sometimes, the speaker’s belief concerning the audience’s salience ranking (of F’s) can be explained in terms of referential intentions - but not vice versa. For instance, suppose that there are a number of equally salient dogs in the domain of discourse - and that the speaker intends to refer to one of these - x. He realizes, at some level, that he needs to use a description that will enable the audience to identify x as the intended referent. Suppose that he decides on "the dog with the red collar." He must accordingly believe that x is - from the audience’s point of view - the most salient dog with a red collar. And it is plausible to suppose that this belief was formed during the process of deciding which description to use to refer to x. Thus, the speaker’s referential intention might sometimes be invoked in order to explain the existence of the speaker’s belief about the audience’s salience ranking. Having such intentions provides a reason for generating such beliefs. But it is surely not plausible to suppose that the speaker’s intention could be explained by an appeal to his beliefs concerning the audience’s salience ranking. Having
such beliefs does not provide a reason for referring to some entity.

47 Exceptions might occur in cases where there is no $F$ most salient to the addressee - though there is some $F$ most salient to the speaker. Then, I suppose, one might claim that the latter comes closer than any other $F$ to satisfying "the $F$ most salient to us."

50 This defense was provided by an anonymous reviewer.

51 Contrast with an utterance of (e.g.) "The song you know best is Irish." (The example is from Lewis, in personal correspondence.) Now if the addressee misidentifies the intended referent as the song he does in fact know best, then we would not say that the addressee misunderstood what the speaker actually said - but only what he intended to say.)

52 Advocates of MST would presumably want to claim that an occurrence of (e.g.) "the schnauzer" is not "conventionally underdetermined" - at least not if there is a maximally salient schnauzer (in the domain of discourse). For according to MST (at least Lewis' version) "the $F$" means "the most salient $F$." Thus, such an expression would not be conventionally underdetermined with respect to a context in which there was a maximally salient $F$.

53 Counterfactuals, pp. 111-117.

54 A similar argument is given for preferring an intentional view of definite descriptions over a view stated in terms of the speaker's beliefs about the audience's salience ranking. See note 47 for details.

55 I would hesitate to conclude, however, that having an intention to refer to a particular $F$ via an utterance of "the $F$" is always sufficient to determine a semantic referent - even when the description is "incomplete." After all, there may be syntactic constraints operating. Consider an utterance of sentence (3) above: "George plays bocci with the man every week." Even if - for some odd reason - the speaker intended to refer to George via "the man," that would not make George the semantic referent of the description. Syntactic constraints rule out such a possibility.

56 I would like to thank David Lewis, Robert Stalnaker, and several anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.
1. Preliminaries

According to David Kaplan's new view on the demonstration/demonstratum relation, it is the "directing intention" - and not the accompanying demonstration - that determines the demonstratum of a perceptual demonstrative: a demonstrative used to "pick out" an object or individual in the perceptual field. (That the demonstration determines the demonstratum is Kaplan's old view on the relation in question.) This "directing intention" refers to the speaker's intention to demonstrate a perceived object or individual on which he has focused. The intention is said to be a directing one, as it is thought to direct (in a teleological sense) the forthcoming demonstration. The demonstratum of the demonstrative expression will be the object or individual toward which the speaker has this directing intention. The demonstration itself will play no role at all in fixing the demonstratum. Its only role (according to Kaplan) is the pragmatic one of facilitating communication: of making it clear to the audience which object or individual is being spoken about.

Thus, if I intend to demonstrate Fred (the perceived individual on whom I have focused) while uttering "That man is Fred," then ipso facto, Fred gets secured as the demonstratum of "that man." That would be so even if my accompanying demonstration (a pointing gesture, suppose) were somewhat off-
target, resulting in the unwitting demonstration of the nearby Bill. In such a case, communication might well be compromised: the audience might wrongly take Bill to be the man about whom I was speaking. But Fred – being the intended demonstratum – would nevertheless emerge as the actual demonstratum. Or so says the proponent of the directing intention theory of perceptual demonstratives.

One of the benefits of this directing intention view is (according to Kaplan) that it "offers a new perspective on one of Donnellan’s most compelling cases of referential use." Kaplan illustrates this alleged benefit by appealing to the now classic scenario in which a man drinking water from a martini glass is referred to as "the man drinking a martini." (The speaker believes falsely that the liquid in the man’s glass is gin.) Kaplan’s analysis goes something like this. A referentially used "the man drinking a martini" is to be parsed as "that, the man drinking a martini," where the appositive description is to be taken as a kind of "demonstration" – a way of effecting communication which is without semantic significance. The hidden demonstrative pronoun "that" is to be taken as the actual demonstrative – the expression with a corresponding demonstratum – viz, the man the speaker intends to demonstrate by way of the definite description. Thus, if the speaker intends to demonstrate the man in question, then that man is the demonstratum of the hidden "that," even if the description (the demonstration) doesn’t quite fit – even if (in terms more suitable to
ostensive gestures) the "demonstration" is slightly "off-target." Kaplan sums up the case in question as follows:

...the speaker had a demonstrative intention and, constrained by the conventions of polite behavior, substituted a description for the usual pointing. The slight misdescription has no more effect on the determination of the referent of a tacit perceptual demonstrative than would a slight error in aim have on the determination of the referent of a vocalized demonstrative accompanied by pointing. In both cases, the referent is properly determined by the perceptual intention. In neither case is anything semantical at stake in the description or the pointing. All that is at stake is the accuracy of communicating what is said.⁵ (emphasis mine⁶)

In what follows, I will be concerned with Kaplan's general analysis of perceptual demonstratives, as well as with his demonstrative analysis of referentially used descriptions.⁷ In section 2, I will spell out one of the chief advantages of Kaplan's analysis of perceptual demonstratives - an advantage which extends to his demonstrative analysis of referentially used descriptions. I will then, in section 3, draw attention to a difficulty which infects both analyses: the analysis of perceptual demonstratives, as well as the analysis of referentially used descriptions. In section 4, I will propose two (distinct) alternative treatments of perceptual demonstratives/referentially used descriptions. The proposed treatments will be recommended on the grounds that they accommodate the phenomena which support, as well as the phenomena which undermine, Kaplan's pair of analyses. In section 5, I will briefly summarize the pros and cons of each of the three views in question. I will then argue, in section
that if either of the proposed alternatives is correct, then Kaplan's appositive analysis of referentially used descriptions must be wrong. I will then suggest that a demonstrative analysis of referentially used descriptions of the sort proposed by Kaplan in "Dthat," is more in line with the linguistic data. And finally, I will conclude in section 7 with a brief discussion of the continuing debate between the Russellians and the Referentialists - the latter of whom claim that Russell's theory is unable to accommodate the referential use of definite descriptions. The discussion will involve a brief comparison of the proposed treatment of referentially used descriptions, with other possible treatments of such expressions.

2. An Advantage of Kaplan's New View

One of the chief advantages of Kaplan's general view of perceptual demonstratives, is that it accounts for the intuition that a slightly off-target demonstration (whether effected by ostension or description) is not going to prevent the intended demonstratum from emerging as the actual demonstratum. Suppose I utter "That man is Fred," while pointing (unwittingly) to a mosquito several inches from Fred's left ear. Suppose further that Fred is standing among a group of other men, though he is clearly the man closest to the place designated by the pointing gesture. The fact that the demonstration is slightly off-target, is apparently not going to prevent the intended demonstratum from being secured
as the actual demonstratum. For the utterance will, it seems, be true just in case the individual I intended to point to (a particular man) is in fact Fred. Similarly, suppose I utter "The man drinking a martini is Bill," using the description to demonstrate a man who (unbeknownst to me) is actually drinking water from a martini glass. Suppose further that there are no other men in the range of perception who are drinking martinis, or beverages that might conceivably be mistaken for martinis. Intuitively, the fact that the demonstration (the description) was not quite accurate, is not going to prevent the utterance from coming out true. For intuitively, the utterance will be true just in case the intended demonstratum (the man drinking water from a martini glass) is in fact Bill.

Kaplan's intentional view of perceptual demonstratives has the advantage of being able to accommodate the intuitions surrounding the cases described above. For on that view, the demonstration is not what determines the demonstratum - the intention is. The demonstration (whether a gesture or a description) is without semantic significance; it has only the pragmatic function of enabling the audience to identify the intended (and hence actual) demonstratum. Thus, if the demonstration is a bit off-target, that will not prevent the intended demonstratum from emerging as the actual demonstratum. At most, it will compromise communication. That such a view is in fact correct, is precisely what cases of the sort described above seem to show.
3. A Disadvantage of Kaplan’s New View

The most obvious difficulty with Kaplan’s directing intention analysis of perceptual demonstratives, is that it doesn’t account for intuitions associated with cases where the demonstration (whether effected by ostension or description) is way off the intended mark. Part of the intuitive plausibility attaching to Kaplan’s new view of perceptual demonstratives derives from his exclusive consideration of cases where the demonstration is only slightly off the mark. Once we begin to look at cases where the demonstration is way off-target, the untenability of Kaplan’s directing intention view becomes clear.

Let’s begin by looking at cases where the demonstration is effected by means of ostension. As I have discussed such cases at length in “Three Views of Demonstrative Reference,” I will be brief. Suppose that you are presented with two candy bars – a Hershey bar and a Mr. Goodbar. You are asked to choose one of them. You have a strong preference for the Mr. Goodbar (which comes in a yellow wrapper), and so opt for that one. You then ‘focus’ on the bar in the yellow wrapper, which you intend to grab. You then act on this intention, making a grab for the desired bar. But your aim isn’t so good, and you say, just as you mistakenly pick up the bar in the brown wrapper (the Hershey bar), “I’ll take this one.” Now what have you just said? Surely, you have just said – contrary to your
intentions - that you will take the *Hershey* bar: the bar you have *demonstrated* by means of your gesture. But Kaplan's view would seem to predict otherwise. For according to that view, the actual demonstratum is in all cases the *intended* demonstratum: the perceived object or individual on which the speaker has "focused", and which he *intends* to demonstrate. And so that view would seem to predict that you said - just as you intended to - that you will take the Mr. Goodbar. Of course, the audience would no doubt assume that you said you would take the Hershey bar. But (on Kaplan's view) any such assumption would simply reflect a *misunderstanding* on the part of the audience, due to a breakdown in communication. In the case in question, the demonstration simply failed to fulfill its pragmatic function: to facilitate communication by indicating which object/individual was being talked about.

One might be inclined to defend Kaplan's view here by fiddling a bit with the notion of "intended demonstratum". Suppose we think of the intended demonstratum roughly as follows. The intended demonstratum will be the entity about which the speaker intends to say something in uttering "...D...," where "D" is some demonstrative expression. When the speaker utters "I'll take this one," in the scenario described above, he intends to say something of the candy bar *in his hand*, the Hershey bar; he intends to say of it, that he'll take it. The difficulty is, he wrongly believes that candy bar to be the Mr. Goodbar. But since the intended demonstratum - the object about which the speaker *intended* to say something via an
utterance of "I'll take this one" - turns out to be the demonstrated bar, Kaplan's intentional view of perceptual demonstratives makes the correct prediction: What was actually said concerned the demonstrated bar - the Hershey bar.

There are, I think, a number of difficulties with this proposed defense of Kaplan's position, but I'll restrict my comments to what I take to be the most serious of these. As I understand Kaplan's "directing intention" position, the intention that determines the demonstratum is supposed to be an intention formed antecedently to the issuing of the demonstration. (This is so regardless of whether the demonstration is an ostensive gesture or a referential utterance of some description.) That is, the speaker forms a certain demonstrative intention; as a result (or partial result) of this intention, a demonstration is issued. The demonstratum of the verbal demonstrative will then be the object of the intention which resulted in the demonstration. In the case in question, this intention clearly concerned the Mr. Goodbar; it was the intention to demonstrate that bar, that resulted in the grabbing gesture, which amounted to an unwitting demonstration of the Hershey bar. Kaplan’s view does, then, make the wrong prediction. The difficulty with the defense sketched above, is that it disregards a crucial aspect of Kaplan's "directing intention." Specifically, it fails to take into consideration the idea that the intention that determines the demonstratum is formed antecedently to the issuing of the demonstration.
So much for cases involving wide of the mark ostensive gestures. Now let’s consider cases where a wide of the mark demonstration is effected by means of a referentially used description. Consider a party scenario involving you, your companion, and several other couples. You and your companion have focused attention on a particular (man/woman) couple. You then focus your attention exclusively on the man - whom you have mistaken for a woman. (You have also managed to mistake the woman for a man). This person, the man you have mistaken for a woman, reminds you of Tracy Ulman, and so you turn to your companion and say to him, "The woman looks just like Tracy Ulman," all the while intending to say of the man that he looks like Tracy Ulman.

Now my intuitions (which I take to be widely shared) are that you have just said, literally, that the woman (of the couple in question) looks like Tracy Ulman - despite your intentions to say this about the man. Admittedly, the intuitions here are not as strong as they are in the case involving ostension described above. There, it seemed absolutely clear that what the speaker actually said, concerned the hershey bar - the object demonstrated, rather than Mr. Goodbar - the object the speaker intended to demonstrate. Somehow, the intuitions surrounding the case in question appear somewhat less clear; it is not quite as clear that the speaker, in uttering "The woman...," using the description to refer to the man, did indeed say something about the woman.
But this difference in the relative strength of the intuitions in question, is easily accounted for. An account can be provided in terms of Kripke’s speaker’s reference/semantic reference distinction. In the case now in question, there is a clear divergence between the semantic referent of "the woman" - the entity whose properties are relevant to the truth-value of the utterance - and the speaker’s referent associated with the referential utterance of that description. The semantic referent is (according to Kripke) determined by certain linguistic conventions; the speaker’s referent is the entity the speaker believes satisfies the conditions for being the semantic referent. Thus, the former is the woman, the latter is the man. For the linguistic conventions in question presumably dictate that "the woman" will refer to a woman, and the speaker falsely believes that the man is a woman. The intuition that what was literally said concerned the woman, is a bit weak simply because the speaker did in fact refer to the man via "the woman." Moreover, we could perhaps even say that the speaker said of the man that he looked just like Tracy Ulman. However, because the semantic referent was the woman, what was literally said, concerned her, not the man.

But in the case involving the way off-target gesture, the divergence between the speaker’s referent and the semantic referent is not nearly so clear-cut. What seems clear, is that the semantic referent of "this one," in the utterance of "I’ll take this one," is the demonstrated candy bar. After all, what
the speaker literally said was concerned the Hershey bar. What is not so clear is the identity of the speaker’s referent. What is the speaker’s referent in this case? Kripke characterizes the speaker’s referent as (roughly) the object/individual the speaker believes fulfills the conditions for being the semantic referent - the latter of which is determined by certain linguistic conventions. Now presumably, the linguistic conventions are such that the semantic referent of "this one," will be the demonstrated one. And so the speaker’s referent will be the entity the speaker believes is the demonstrated one. The difficulty is that the speaker believes that the bar he has grabbed is the demonstrated bar. But he also believes this of the intended demonstratum - the object of his "directing intention." For he believes (falsely) that the intended demonstratum (the Mr. Goodbar) is the bar he has grabbed. There is thus no clear and obvious divergence here between speaker’s reference and semantic reference. It shouldn’t be particularly surprising then, that there is little temptation to suppose that what the speaker (literally) said concerned the intended demonstratum: an object he failed to demonstrate. For it is not obvious that there is any clear sense in which the speaker referred to that object, and said of it that he would take it. And so it is not obvious that speaker’s reference and semantic reference diverge here. No wonder then, that there is little or no doubt that what the speaker said concerned the demonstrated bar.
Back now to the particular case in question: the case of the referentially used "the woman." As I’ve been suggesting, in uttering "The woman...," using the description to refer to the man of a particular man/woman couple, what the speaker literally says concerns the woman - not the man. Suppose now that we adopt Kaplan’s view that the referentially used description is actually a disguised demonstrative pronoun, with the description itself playing the role of the demonstration. If the demonstration is of merely pragmatic significance, with the intention doing all of the semantic work, that would mean that the man - and not the woman - emerges as the demonstratum of the demonstrative expression. But that, surely, is not the desired result. For it would seem implausible to suppose that despite clearly demonstrating the woman with the referentially used description, the man was nevertheless secured as the demonstratum of the disguised demonstrative pronoun, and that you (the speaker) accordingly said precisely what you intended to say - which was something about the man. After all, you "pointed" directly at the woman via your utterance of "The woman looks just like Tracy Ulman." It would seem odd in the extreme to blame your companion’s natural assumption that you had just said something about a particular woman, on the putative fact that he simply failed to understand what you had actually said - due to your wide of the mark demonstration. But that is precisely what the proponent of the "directing intention" view is going to be forced to say. For you focused your attention on the man - the
individual you intended to demonstrate - and it was your intention to demonstrate that individual, that resulted in your demonstration: your referential utterance of "the woman."

The conclusion to draw from the foregoing considerations is clear: Kaplan’s "directing intention" theory of perceptual demonstratives is vitiated by its failure to accommodate cases where the demonstration is more than just slightly off-target. It is time to pursue some alternative approach.

4. Two Alternative Approaches

In view of the phenomena discussed in sections 2 and 3 above, one might be inclined to reason as follows. Suppose we choose to adopt Kaplan’s general view that referentially used descriptions ought to be treated as disguised demonstratives, with the descriptions functioning as demonstrations. In that case, there is no difficulty accounting for the various examples discussed above. One need only adopt the view that demonstrations are semantically significant - whether they are effected by ostension or by description. Specifically, no object/individual gets secured as the demonstratum of a perceptual demonstrative, unless it is the object/individual actually demonstrated.17 In the candy bar scenario, the demonstratum of "this one" in the speaker’s utterance of "I’ll take this one," is the candy bar actually demonstrated - not the one that the speaker intended to demonstrate. Similarly, in the party scenario, the demonstratum of the hidden demonstrative pronoun associated with the referentially used...
"the woman," is the individual actually demonstrated by means of the description - the woman, not the man (the intended demonstratum).

The same treatment (one might suppose) could be applied to those cases where the demonstration is only slightly off-target. In the case where the speaker points to a mosquito several inches from Fred's left ear while uttering "That man is Fred," nothing gets secured as the demonstratum. For no man has been demonstrated by the gesture. ("That man" can only have a demonstrated man as its demonstratum.) Thus, while the speaker intended to demonstrate a particular man, and to say of that man that he was Fred, he actually failed to do so - due to the off-target character of his demonstration. The intuition that the speaker did in fact succeed in saying of a certain man, that he was Fred, is easily accounted for. Because the demonstration was only slightly off-target (perhaps imperceptibly so), we make the charitable - but false - assumption that the demonstration actually hit the intended mark, and that the speaker thus said just what he intended to say. Similar considerations could perhaps be applied to the case involving the water-imbibing man mistakenly described as "the man drinking a martini." Here, the demonstration (the description) fails to demonstrate anything; for there is no man, in the perceptual field, who is drinking a martini. Thus, nothing gets secured as the demonstratum, and no determinate statement is made. The intuition that the speaker did in fact succeed in saying something about the man drinking water, is
(as above) easily accounted for. Because the demonstration was only slightly off-target (perhaps imperceptibly so), we make the charitable - but false - assumption that the demonstration hit its intended mark, and that the speaker accordingly said precisely what he intended to say.\(^{19}\)

An alternative, and perhaps more plausible approach, might begin with the same basic assumptions of the preceding approach. Referentially used descriptions are disguised demonstratives, with the description functioning as a kind of demonstration. Moreover, demonstrations are semantically significant: nothing is secured as the demonstratum unless it is the object/individual demonstrated. However, in order for some object/individual \(x\) to be demonstrated, the demonstration needn't hit \(x\) dead-center. It need only be close enough to *clearly discriminate* \(x\) from other objects/individuals in the perceptual field.

Such a view would make the same predictions as the preceding view, with respect to those cases where the demonstration is way off-target, clearly discriminating something *other than* the intended demonstratum. But it would make different predictions with respect to those cases where the demonstration is only slightly off-target. For if a demonstration is only slightly off-target, it might still succeed in *clearly discriminating* the intended demonstratum from other objects/individuals in the perceptual field. Such a view thus has the advantage of preserving Kaplan's intuitions.
(which I share) that a slightly off-target demonstration will not prevent the intended demonstratum from emerging as the actual demonstratum.

Let's now apply this view directly to the four examples discussed in sections 2 and 3 above. In the candy bar scenario, the grabbing of the Hershey bar (while uttering "this one") clearly discriminates that candy bar from the other objects in the perceptual field (in particular, from the Mr. Goodbar). Thus, it is the Hershey bar that emerges as the demonstratum of "this one." Similarly, in the party scenario, the referentially used "the woman" clearly discriminates the woman of a certain couple from the other objects/individuals in the perceptual field (in particular, from the man of the couple). Thus, it is the woman who emerges as the demonstratum of the disguised demonstrative pronoun. In the case where the speaker utters "That man is Fred," while pointing (unwittingly) at a mosquito a few inches from Fred's left ear, the demonstration clearly discriminates Fred from the other men in the perceptual environment. Thus, Fred emerges as the demonstratum, despite the slightly off-target character of the demonstration. For Fred is the only man "within range" of the demonstration. And finally, in the "man drinking a martini" scenario, the intended demonstratum emerges as the actual demonstratum. For the demonstration - the description - though slightly off-target, succeeds in clearly discriminating the intended demonstratum from other individuals in the perceptual field. For no other individuals in that field are men who are
drinking anything that looks as though it might possibly be a martini: No other individuals are "within range" of the demonstration.

It is important to note that whether a slightly off-target demonstration succeeds in clearly discriminating the intended demonstratum from other entities in the perceptual field, is going to depend crucially upon certain potentially rather complex contextual factors. Consider again the utterance of "That man is Fred," where the speaker unwittingly points to a mosquito close to Fred's ear. Suppose now that the mosquito pointed to is as close to Bill's ear as it is to Fred's. In that case, the demonstration would not succeed in clearly discriminating Fred - or Bill - from other men in the perceptual field. Thus, the demonstrative would emerge without a demonstratum. The intuition that something was nevertheless said could then be accounted for by appealing to Kripke's speaker's reference/semantic reference distinction. Though the speaker referred to the man via the demonstrative "that man," and said of him, that he was Fred, the expression was without a referent. For there was no demonstrated man (only a demonstrated mosquito). Thus, strictly speaking, no determinate statement was made. Similar considerations would seem to hold with respect to an utterance of "The man drinking a martini is Bill," where the description is used to demonstrate a man who (unbeknownst to the speaker) happens to be drinking water. Suppose now that next to the man in question, there is another man - a man whom the speaker
assumes is drinking water, but who is in fact drinking a martini. Suppose further, that this man is the only man in the perceptual field who is drinking a martini. In that case, the demonstratum of the hidden demonstrative pronoun associated with the referentially used description, would be the martini drinker. For the demonstration - the description - clearly discriminates that man from other men in the perceptual field. Because the description accurately and uniquely describes the martini-drinker, the latter is hit dead-center by the former. As in the previous case, the intuition that the speaker said something about the intended referent can be accounted for by means of Kripke’s distinction. The speaker referred to the water-drinker, and said of him that he was Bill; the expression referred to the gin-drinker. Thus, the statement made will be true just in case the gin-drinker is Bill.

5. Choosing A View

Thus far we have considered three analyses of perceptual demonstratives. Each of these was coupled with a demonstrative analysis of referentially used descriptions. Now which of the three (if any) is the correct view? Kaplan’s view, as we have seen, cannot possibly be correct; for it fails to account for what happens when a demonstration is wide of its intended mark. The first of the two alternatives discussed in section 4 is more plausible than Kaplan’s view. For it makes the right predictions in scenarios involving wide of the mark demonstrations. However, its analysis of scenarios involving
slightly off-target demonstrations seems (to me at least) somewhat less convincing, though not entirely implausible. The second alternative discussed in section 4 strikes me as the most plausible of the three. For it accommodates intuitions surrounding scenarios involving demonstrations which are way off-target; it also accommodates intuitions surrounding scenarios involving demonstrations which are only slightly off-target. In particular, it accounts for the intuition that a slightly off-target demonstration is not necessarily going to prevent the intended demonstratum from emerging as the actual demonstratum.

However, as stated, the second alternative is quite sketchy. Filling it out would require saying more about the conditions given which a demonstration "clearly discriminates" some entity from other objects/individuals in the perceptual field. No doubt, the task will not be an easy one. Several initially plausible analyses of the conditions in question can be readily dismissed. For instance, one might suppose that a demonstration clearly discriminates some entity (some $F$ in the case of an utterance of "...that $F$...") just in case the place it designates is closer to that entity (that $F$) than it is to any other ($F$). But this won't work. Suppose, for instance, that I point between Fred and Bill while uttering "That man is Fred." Suppose further that my pointing gesture is an inch or so closer to Fred than to Bill. If the two men are yards apart, Fred will obviously not be clearly discriminated from the other men in the perceptual field (in particular, from...
Bill). Similar considerations would seem to apply to demonstrations effected by description. Consider a scenario involving two tall women: one five foot nine and one five foot nine and a quarter. Now consider a referential utterance of "The very tall woman is Johanna." I suppose that the description "the very tall woman" might be "closer to" the taller of the two women (Johanna, suppose); but surely the description is not going to clearly discriminate Johanna from her shorter companion. Thus, it seems unlikely that the relevant notion of "clear discrimination" can be spelled out in the manner suggested above.

Another initially plausible account of the conditions for "clear discrimination" might proceed as follows. One entity is "clearly discriminated" from another by means of a demonstration, just in case a linguistically competent public observer would have no difficulty in identifying that entity as the intended demonstratum, on the basis of the demonstration. But this sort of account won't work either. Just consider the case (discussed above) of a referential utterance of "The man drinking a martini is Bill." Suppose that the intended demonstratum is drinking water from a martini glass. But suppose that there is another man, in the perceptual field, who is drinking a martini. And suppose further that he is the only such man. I suggested above that the man drinking the martini will be the entity clearly discriminated by the description, since that description accurately and uniquely describes him. But however
linguistically competent the hypothetical public observer may be, he may not know that the man drinking water is not drinking a martini. Thus, he may be unable to (wrongly) identify the man clearly discriminated by the description as the intended referent. In that case, the relevant notion of "clear discrimination" cannot be spelled out in terms of how the linguistically competent public observer would interpret the demonstrative utterance.

The difficulty of finding a satisfactory specification of the conditions in question, might drive some to opt for the view that a demonstration must be "right on target" in order to determine a demonstratum. I, however, find the idea that "clear discrimination" is sufficient to determine a demonstratum, intuitively plausible. I therefore think that idea is worth developing. For now, however, I would just like to present the view as a plausible (if underdeveloped) alternative to Kaplan's considerably less plausible treatment perceptual demonstratives.

But there is, of course, no need to choose from among the three views in question. After all, one might wish to reject Kaplan's suggestion that referentially used descriptions be treated as disguised perceptual demonstratives. Other approaches (e.g. a Russellian approach) are, of course, available. I, however, find Kaplan's suggestion intuitively plausible, and thus worthy of consideration. What I do not
find plausible is the idea that descriptive demonstrations are without semantic significance.

6. Descriptions as Disguised Demonstratives

If either of the two analyses of perceptual demonstratives proposed in section 4 is correct: if, that is, demonstrations are — contra Kaplan — semantically significant in their capacity to determine demonstrata, then doubt is cast on Kaplan’s appositional analysis of referentially used descriptions. According to that analysis, the demonstration is in apposition to the demonstrative pronoun. "Such a term appears to duplicate the demonstrative syntactically, but its semantic contribution is to a subordinate, side remark." Consider Kaplan’s proposed parsing of a referentially used "the man drinking a martini." Such an expression gets parsed as: "that, the man drinking a martini." The appositive description is no more than a "subordinate, side remark." It has no bearing on the reference of the preceding demonstrative pronoun. The latter has its reference determined (according to Kaplan) by the intention of the speaker. The difficulty here should be clear by now. Suppose we adopt the view that the referentially used description really contains a hidden demonstrative pronoun. In that case, "that" appears to refer, if at all, to the demonstrated object/individual, and the description (uttered in a particular context) is what effects the demonstration. It therefore appears to be semantically
crucial: It has a bearing on what gets secured as the demonstratum of the hidden demonstrative pronoun.

A not implausible analysis of referentially used descriptions might thus proceed along the lines suggested in "Dthat." There, Kaplan suggests that a referentially used "the F" should perhaps be analyzed as: that ["the F"], where the description is to be interpreted as the semantically significant "demonstration" which fixes the demonstratum of the demonstrative pronoun. (For the sake of simplicity, Kaplan considers only cases where the intended demonstratum is the unique F; he does not consider cases where the descriptive demonstration is off-center.)

Both of the alternatives proposed in section 4, are consistent with the foregoing proposal. For both treat referentially used descriptions as semantically significant demonstrations: as demonstrations which in some way or other fix the demonstrata of the hidden demonstrative pronouns they accompany. But the precise role played by these semantically significant demonstrations will depend upon which of the two alternatives is adopted. If the first of the two (which might be called the "rigid" view) is adopted, then the description will secure x as the demonstratum, just in case x is the only entity in the perceptual field, accurately described as an F. If the second of the two alternatives (which might be called the "non-rigid" view) is adopted, then the description will secure x as the demonstratum just in case it is accurate enough a description...
to clearly discriminate \( x \) from the other entities in the perceptual environment.

7. Concluding Remarks

Suppose that the general picture sketched above is adopted. Suppose, that is, the referentially used descriptions are treated as disguised demonstratives, with the descriptions functioning as a semantically significant demonstrations. What place would such a proposal have in the debate between the Russellians and the Referentialists - the latter of whom challenge the claim that Russell’s theory can accommodate the referential use?

Obviously, the proposed position is anti-Russellian, in so far as it constitutes a non-Russellian treatment of referentially used descriptions. However, its resemblance to standard non-Russellian analyses, is more superficial than might at first appear. Consider, for instance, Donnellan’s proposed analysis of referentially used descriptions. 24 Donnellan’s suggestion seems to be that - contrary to what the Russellians claim - the statement made (the proposition literally expressed) by a referential utterance of "The \( F \) is \( G \)" is of the logical form: \( x \) is \( G \), where "\( x \)" is the entity the speaker intends to refer to via "the \( F \)" - the entity which the speaker "has in mind."

The proposed view is similar to Donnellan’s in so far as it claims (in effect) that the logical form of the statement made by a referential utterance of "The \( F \) is \( G \)" is: \( x \) is \( G \).

However, unlike the standard Donnellian account, "\( x \)" is not
determined by the intentions/beliefs of the speaker. On the contrary, it is determined, in part, by certain "linguistic conventions" - the same sort of linguistic conventions that determine what Kripke calls the "semantic referent" of an expression. Just how these linguistic conventions determine the demonstratum, will, of course, depend upon which of the two versions of the general view is adopted. If the "rigid" view is adopted, then the determination is fairly straightforward. The demonstratum associated with a referentially used "the F" will be the entity (if any) in the perceptual environment accurately and uniquely described by "the F." One could thus say that the demonstratum will be the Russellian "denotation" of "the F," where the domain of discourse is restricted to the objects/individuals in the perceptual environment. If the "non-rigid" view is adopted, the determination of the demonstratum will be less straightforward. The demonstratum will be the entity (if any) in the perceptual environment that the description succeeds in clearly discriminating from other entities in that environment. On this view, a demonstratum may be obtained even if nothing in the perceptual environment is accurately and uniquely described by the demonstration. That the demonstration be accurate enough to effect a clear discrimination is all that matters.

The proposed analysis appears to be slightly more akin to a modified version of Donnellan's account - an account which a number of referentialists have adopted. According to this
account, the proposition expressed by a referential utterance of "The $F$ is $G$" will be of the logical form: $x$ is $G$, where "$x$" is the intended referent - and is also an $F$. If the intended referent is not an $F$, the result is reference failure, with the outcome that no determinate statement is made. On this modified version of Donnellan's view, the semantic content of the description is significant in determining the referent of the description. For it says that no non-$F$ can be the (semantic) referent of "the $F$." In this way, it resembles the "rigid" version of the proposed treatment of referentially used descriptions. But again, there is a crucial difference. For the proposed view does not allow any role for intentions in determining the identity of the referent. In this way, the analysis is similar to the standard Russellian one.

No doubt the debate as to which of these various views is nearest the truth, will continue for a long while. However, it seems that some of the difficulties which infect Kaplan's new view on referentially used descriptions, infect both Donnellan's account, and the more popular modified version of that account. Donnellan's account is going to make the same predictions as Kaplan's, when it comes to the statement made by a referential utterance of "The $F$ is $G$." For Donnellan's account (as I understand it) claims that the referent of "the $F$" will be the intended referent: the entity the speaker has "in mind." It will thus make what appear to be the wrong predictions, in those cases where the description grossly misdescribes the intended referent. Consider the case
(discussed above) of the referential utterance of "The woman looks just like Tracy Ulman." If the description is used to refer to the man of the man/woman couple in the perceptual environment, then Donnellan's view claims that the statement made will be true just in case the man looks just like Tracy Ulman. But intuitively, the truth-value of the statement will depend upon the properties of the woman—not upon those of the man.

The account given by the modified version of Donnellan's view seems somewhat more plausible. It claims that, though the speaker intended to make a statement about the man in question, no determinate statement was made, since the description failed to accurately describe the intended referent. It seems to me, however, that the proposed view (in either of the two versions) gives the most likely analysis. It claims that, though the speaker intended to make a statement about the man, he actually made a statement about the woman, a statement the truth of which will depend upon the properties of that woman.

What about a standard Russellian analysis of the case in question? Because the description is incomplete, let's suppose that the domain of quantification is contextually delimited to the entities in the perceptual environment. In that case, the statement made (the proposition literally expressed) by the utterance in question will be (roughly): There is exactly one woman and whoever is a woman looks just like Tracy Ulman.
(where the domain of quantification is understood as contextually restricted). The intuition that a singular (rather than general) proposition was expressed, could then be accommodated by invoking the Gricean distinction between the proposition literally expressed and the proposition meant. Though the proposition meant (the proposition the speaker intended to communicate) was a singular one, the proposition literally expressed is just as specified by Russell's theory.

The foregoing analysis has several things in its favor. It predicts that the truth-value of what was actually said, will depend upon the properties of a particular woman. It also predicts a divergence between what was literally said, and what was meant, where the latter is a singular proposition having a particular man as one of its "constituents." So far, these predictions seem accurate. However, what seems questionable is the idea that the proposition literally expressed is a general, rather than singular proposition. The implausibility of this idea will be more apparent in a case where the description is an accurate description of the intended referent. Suppose that in uttering "The woman looks just like Tracy Ulman," you intended to say something of the woman of the couple in question - a woman who you recognized as a woman. Now the Russellian is going to predict a divergence here between what is literally expressed and what is meant. What is literally expressed will be a certain general proposition (specified above); what is meant will be a singular proposition, with a particular woman as one of its
constituents. But it seems to me that, in this particular case, there is no divergence between what is literally said and what is meant: Intuitively, the speaker said precisely what he meant. This is just what the proposed view of referentially used descriptions predicts: the proposition literally expressed, as well as the proposition meant, is a singular proposition with a particular woman as a constituent.

No doubt the Russellian would be able to muster up some sort of response to the foregoing, but I don’t wish now to get into a full-blown discussion of whether a Russellian account can handle all of the relevant linguistic data. 'For the point of this paper was not to take to stand on the dispute between the Russellians and the Referentialists. Rather it was to argue that, if one adopts the general view that referentially used descriptions are disguised perceptual demonstratives (a view which I find intuitively plausible), then one must treat the descriptive demonstrations as semantically significant. Such a view could then be regarded as an application of the more general, and quite plausible view, that the ostensive gestures which often accompany verbal demonstratives are (contra Kaplan) semantically significant.27

2 See Demonstratives in Themes from Kaplan, pp. 481-563.
3 Themes from Kaplan, p. 582.
4 ibid., p. 583.
5 ibid., p. 584.
6 As will become clear in section 3, Kaplan’s failure to consider demonstrations which are more than just slightly off-
target, lends his view in air intuitive plausibility which it simply doesn’t merit.

7 Kaplan recognizes that his proposed demonstrative analysis of referentially used descriptions will be unable to accommodate all cases of referential use. The proposed account is designed to accommodate only those cases where the intended referent is located within the perceptual field of the speaker and audience.


9 The importance of this supposition will become clear in section 4 below.

10 See note 9 above.

11 Intuitions seem to vary here. Those who feel that the truth of the utterance would require that the description be completely accurate, might prefer the first of the two alternatives to Kaplan’s position proposed in section IV below. Or, they might prefer to reject Kaplan’s suggestion that referentially used descriptions be treated as disguised demonstratives, and opt for a Russelian treatment of such expressions. However, for reasons I have discussed in "Incomplete Descriptions" (forthcoming), I do not feel that a Russelian account will work for (incomplete) referentially used descriptions.


13 Forthcoming in Synthese.

14 The opening lines of the passage quoted on page 3 above, strongly suggest that this interpretation is the correct one.

15 A discussion of this distinction can be found in Kripke’s "Speaker’s Reference and Semantic Reference," reprinted in Martinich, pp. 248-267.

16 As suggested above (section 4) the determination of the semantic referent by the relevant linguistic conventions needn’t be straightforward in the way that Kripke assumes. In particular, it is not implausible to suppose that the semantic referent of a referentially used "the F" may, on occasion, be a non-F. See section 4 for details.

17 I am assuming here, and throughout the paper, that the utterances containing explicit demonstratives are accompanied by ostensive gestures. Of course, demonstrata can be secured in certain situations without the assistance of such gestures. For a discussion of such cases, see my "Do Demonstrations Have Semantic Significance?" (forthcoming in Analysis).

18 Alternatively, the intuition in question could be explained by means of Kripke’s speaker’s reference/semantic reference distinction; or perhaps in terms of the Gricean distinction between the proposition meant and the proposition literally expressed. In particular, one could say that while the speaker referred to the man and said of him, that he was Fred, the expression "that man" was without a referent. Similarly, one might say that while the proposition meant concerned the man,
no determinate proposition was literally expressed (due to the absence of a demonstratum.)
19 As indicated in note 15 above, alternative explanations for such intuitions are available.
20 Where the verbal demonstrative is of the form "that F," the job of any accompanying demonstration will simply be to clearly discriminate the intended demonstratum from other F's in the perceptual field.
21 If a demonstration manages to zero directly in on some particular entity, then it will, of course, succeed in clearly discriminating that entity from other entities in the surrounding perceptual environment. And it will do so regardless of whether the entity in question is the intended demonstratum.
22 As indicated above (note 11), some may disagree with this evaluation - especially with regard to cases where the demonstration is effected by description.
23 Themes from Kaplan, p. 582 (note 35).
24 Donnellan's views on the matter can be found in "Reference and Definite Descriptions," Philosophical Review, 75 (1966), pp. 281-304. These views are developed in more detail in a follow-up paper, "Speaker Reference, Descriptions, and Anaphora," in Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language, French, Uehling, and Wettstein, eds. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), pp. 28-44.
25 In "Dthat" (Martinich, pp. 326-327), Kaplan allowed intentions to play a "disambiguating" role in cases where the demonstrative expression was accompanied by an ostensive gesture. (No attempt was made to extend this view to cases where the demonstration was effected by a referentially used description.) Kaplan's view here may have some plausibility when the demonstrative expression is a demonstrative pronoun (e.g., "this," "that") - but not, I think, in those cases where the demonstrative expression is a demonstrative description (e.g., "this dog," "that dog"). In such cases, the demonstratum will plausibly be the F (if any) which is clearly discriminated by the accompanying demonstration from any others F's in the perceptual environment. Intentions needn't, it seems, be brought into the picture at all in such cases.
26 As I argue in "Incomplete Descriptions," there are serious problems with any Russellian account of incomplete descriptions which invokes the idea of a contextually delimited domain of quantification.
27 I would like to thank three anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.