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Two-Dimensionalism: A Neo-Fregean Interpretation

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1. The Kripkean Puzzles

Saul Kripke's (1980) *Naming and Necessity* changed the assumptions defining the philosophical landscape of its times. A well-known case in point concerns Quine's presuppositions about quantificational modal logic. For Quine, the fact that use of this logical theory commits one to Aristotelian essentialism was enough to discredit any serious applications of it.¹ Unlike philosophers such as Carnap, Quine doubted that there was a distinctive class of necessary truths, but he shared with them the empiricist assumption that, if one exists, it coincides with the class of analytic and *a priori* truths: necessity has a linguistic foundation, if it has any at all, which for Carnap and other empiricists meant a foundation on convention.

Kripke proposed compelling examples and used them as a basis for providing clear-cut distinctions and forceful arguments. He distinguished between genuinely referential and descriptive denoting expressions. He argued that referential expressions like indexicals and demonstratives, proper names and natural kind terms are *de jure* rigid designators. This distinguishes them from other singular terms like definite descriptions, which might also behave *de facto* as rigid designators, but *de jure* are not so. By doing so he blunted the force of the only argument that Quine has provided against essentialism, based on the claim that no object instantiates *de re* essentially

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¹ According to Quine the commitment to Aristotelian essentialism does not lie in the fact that a proposition stating it is a theorem of the logical theory, but is rather of a pragmatic nature. See Burgess (1998) and Pérez-Otero and García-Carpintero (1998).

or contingently any property, but only relative to different ways of referring to it: even if the world's tallest mathematician is in fact the world's tallest cyclist, he is not *de re* necessarily rational or two-legged, but only *de dicto*, necessarily rational as the world's tallest mathematician, necessarily two-legged as the world's tallest cyclist. For this Quinean argument crucially depends on overlooking the distinction between *de jure* rigid designators and other designators. Relatedly, and also importantly, Kripke distinguished what we might call epistemic necessity from metaphysical necessity. Some truths, he argued, are *a priori*, but nonetheless contingent; some other truths are necessary, but nonetheless *a posteriori*.²

Although in this way Kripke undermined dogmatic rejections of essentialism based more on philosophical prejudice than on sound argument, he was nonetheless well aware of the main philosophical puzzle created by his proposals, which, beyond philosophical dogma, probably accounts for the traditional identification of the modalities throughout the history of the discipline. As rehearsed in the introduction to this volume, Kripkean views about referential expressions envisage *modal illusions*: truths that are in fact necessary appear to be contingent, including instances of the schema *if n exists, n is F*, with a rigid designator in the place of 'n' and a predicate signifying a hidden essential property of its referent in the place of 'F'. To use the standard illustration, let us replace 'F' in the schema with 'is-identical-to-Hesperus' and 'n' with 'Phosphorus':

- (1) If Phosphorus exists, Phosphorus is-identical-to-Hesperus

The existence of those modal illusions elicited by Kripke's compelling views about the metaphysics of modality is puzzling in view of the plausibility of another influential view that Kripke espoused, concerning this time the epistemology of modality: that a possible world "isn't a distant country that we are . . . viewing through a telescope . . . 'Possible worlds' are *stipulated*, not *discovered* by powerful telescopes" (Kripke 1980, 44); "things aren't 'found out' about a counterfactual situation, they are stipulated" (1980, 49).³ This suggests that we have reasonably reliable *a priori* access to possible worlds. For Kripke's remarks are made in the context of a criticism of Lewis's view that possible worlds are concrete, like the actual world of which we are part. His remarks thus appear to implicitly advocate alternative views such as Stalnaker's that possible worlds are properties that the only actual world might have. Views like these are typically defended on the basis that they provide for a more sensible epistemology of modality, allowing that we in general know the modal facts that we take ourselves to know.

Kripke's stated remarks are characteristically cautious; my own rendering, as the explicit claim that we have a reasonably reliable *a priori* access to modal facts, is much less so. But this interpretation appears to be closer to the text than, for instance, Soames' (2003, 356) deflationary reading, according to which Kripke is just saying in those passages that it is up to us to stipulate, or specify, which of the possible

² Soames (2003, 347–54) provides an excellent presentation of these issues.

³ See also the analogous remarks in Kripke's (1980) preface that possible worlds are "given" by descriptive stipulations, pp. 15–20.

states that the world genuinely could have been in that we are interested in, and wish to make claims about. This cannot be Kripke's point, because, as I have said, his claims are intended as an alternative to Lewis's realism about possible worlds; and the realist about possible worlds will also accept that we stipulate situations in Soames' understanding of *stipulation*.

This Kripkean puzzle does not merely arise in some isolated cases; on the contrary, a systematic pattern is predicted. To defend the core Kripkean views about *de re* modality requires thus a philosophical account of these systematically predicted illusions, consistent with modal knowledge. The promise of doing this is precisely what, in my view, makes 2-D accounts appealing. Here I would like to explore a neo-Fregean elaboration of the 2-D central idea that (in Kripke's terms) "an appropriate corresponding qualitative statement", different from the original, necessary one, which unlike this "might have been false", is somehow mixed up with it, thus engendering the illusion of its contingency. What makes the proposal neo-Fregean is that, instead of assuming an independently given epistemic conception of the modal realm on which primary intensions are built, the account derives it from a Fregean-like distinction between the sense and the reference of the expressions systematically responsible for the Kripkean cases.

On the view to be presented here, the availability of the core 2-D model for the necessary *a posteriori* is dependent on the account also applying to the other puzzling Kripkean category of the contingent *a priori*. To go back to the earlier examples given in the introduction to this volume, as Kripke notes, if one stipulates that a designator *N* is to be used to refer to an object introduced by a description *D* that thus fixes its reference, one can be said to know thereby *a priori* "in some sense" (1980, 63) the truth of the corresponding statement '*N* is *D* if *N* exists'; (2) provides the conventional example related to (1):

- (2) Phosphorus is whatever appears as shining brightly in the east just before sunrise, if it exists.

Here the model should explain how, although (2) signifies a contingent proposition, there is "an appropriate corresponding qualitative statement" which expresses a necessary one.

I will present my proposal as an elaboration of Stalnaker's (1978) 2-D framework—unfaithful to some of Stalnaker's crucial assumptions. My strategy will be to critically examine Stalnaker's recent scepticism about its explanatory credentials. Considering just two possible states of the world, the following matrix was used there to represent the proposition expressed by (2); *i* is the actual state of the world, and *j* an alternative state relative to which it is Mars that appears as shining brightly in the east just before sunrise, otherwise as close as possible to the actual state of the world:

A

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>
T		
F		

Worlds i and j were also used to illustrate the second way in which the truth-value of what we utter depends on the facts, emphasized by Stalnaker: if the facts had been different, what one says might have differed too. Given the astronomical facts as they are relative to j , if the stipulation fixing the reference of 'Phosphorus' in i still prevails in j , (2) expresses a different proposition, one about Mars; we can represent this second way in which the truth-value of what is expressed is determined by the facts by adding a second row:

B

	i	j
i	T	F
j	F	T

Now, this propositional concept for (2) includes a necessary diagonal proposition. Of course, this is so only because we have kept fixed an aspect of the facts determining the different contents that the very same utterance might have had, the reference-fixing description tied to 'Phosphorus'; but there is nothing in Stalnaker's metasemantic conception of a diagonal proposition as such requiring it. Taking into account a possible world k in which it is stipulated that 'Phosphorus' refers to the innermost planet in the Solar System, otherwise as close to the actual world as it could be, in particular such that in k Venus is the brightest heavenly body seen in the morning, we get:

C

	i	j	k
i	T	F	T
j	F	T	F
k	F	F	F

This poses a problem for 2-D alleged accounts of the contingent *a priori*, to which I will come back presently. But at this point I need to examine carefully Stalnaker's Gricean suggestions to account for the necessary *a posteriori*. The official Kripkean content of (1) is a necessary proposition with the following partial matrix:

D

	i	j
	T	T

Given the facts about j indicated above, a corresponding propositional concept would be partially represented by the following matrix:⁴

E

	i	j
i	T	T
j	F	F

This propositional concept does not offer a clear indication of how to modify the context set. According to E , what the speakers should do is: if the actual world is i , then keep both i and j in the context set; if it is j , then eliminate both i and j from the context set. Since the speakers do not know which of i or j is actual, they do not know how to proceed on the basis of E , and so asserting (1) would have no significant effect on the context set. This is why, on the basis of Gricean considerations, speakers are assumed to infer that the content asserted is not one of the horizontal propositions, but the diagonal proposition: “in these special cases, the horizontal propositions of the propositional concept do not themselves represent what is said: they represent what is said *according to the normal semantic rules* as they are in the relevant possible world. In such a case, the normal semantic rules are overridden”; rather, in cases such as these “one should identify what is said with the diagonal proposition of the propositional concept determined by the context” (Stalnaker 1999, 13–14).

The question I want to press now is this: what reason is there, given Stalnaker’s assumptions, to include the row corresponding to world j in the representation of such a context? What reason is there, in other words, to assume that it is compatible with the common ground that ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ have meanings such that (1) might convey a (necessarily) false proposition, like the one partially characterized in E for j ? For, without such a justification, the Gricean argument does not get started.

A natural response is as follows: “In a context where the hearer knows the full meanings of the terms used in an utterance (for example, if they know that ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ both refer to Venus), and where this knowledge is common ground between speaker and hearer, then the utterance will convey its original propositional content. But if the hearer does not know the meanings of the terms, then the utterance will convey a different content” (Chalmers (forthcoming), section 2.2 on Stalnaker’s views). But this cannot be a good reason in general, still less for someone with Millian views like Stalnaker. According to those views, the meaning of a proper name is simply its referent. To include worlds like j in the context set, the argument

⁴ This is not strictly speaking correct. Worlds i and j in A and B should be taken as centred around transworld counterparts of the relevant utterance of (2); while in C and E they must be centred around transworld counterparts of the relevant utterance of (1).

appeals to lack of knowledge of meaning, assuming that this will occur whenever the speaker does not know that the two names refer to the same entity. However, there can be informative true identity statements for any name; because of this, (1) is just a convenient illustration of a well-known pattern: as I have emphasized, there are systematic ways of producing statements creating the Kripkean modal illusions. Hence, the response we are considering in fact requires that speakers never know the meaning of the names they use, no matter how well acquainted they are with their referents. Given any proper name that a speaker uses, we can always produce examples such as (1) involving it. To deploy the Stalnakerian proposal, we would need propositional concepts including several rows, such as i and j in E . In order to appeal to the present justification, we should assume that speakers never know the meaning of the name.⁵

What Stalnaker says is not very helpful on this matter. A reason he provides to assume propositional concepts like E in these cases is simply that the diagonal proposition then obtained through the Gricean consideration is “an intuitively plausible candidate for the information that speakers intend to convey in such contexts” (1999, 13); “it is clear that the diagonal proposition is the one that the speaker means to communicate” (1978, 92). I take this to be so, but what is at stake is whether Stalnaker’s theoretical assumptions are compatible with this desired result. A second reason he provides is that “to construct a context . . . in which the proposition expressed is neither trivial nor assumed false, one must include possible worlds in which the sentence, interpreted in the standard way, expresses different propositions” (1978, 92). But this appears to be as question-begging as the previous point; for we know we must have propositional concepts with the structure of E to avoid the result that the proposition expressed is either trivial or assumed false, but the issue is whether our theoretical assumptions allow us to avoid it. My first concern in what follows is to provide a theoretical proposal that has the desired effects. As announced, it is part of a neo-Fregean view of reference, far removed from Stalnaker’s sympathies; I will not discuss any longer whether other theoretical accounts more accommodating of his views would allow for similar results, although I very much doubt it.

2. Stalnaker’s Challenge

Let us now go back to Stalnaker’s worries about 2-D accounts of the contingent *a priori* posed by the need to exclude worlds like k in C above, which he presents relative to his metasemantic account with his “ $7 + 5 = 12$ ” example:

Consider a context in which a person is uncertain about whether the intended meaning of a certain token of “ $7 + 5 = 12$ ” is the usual one, or one that uses a base 8 notation, with the same numerals for one through seven. In some possible worlds compatible with the beliefs of this person, the token expresses the falsehood that seven plus five is ten, and so the diagonal will be contingent. [. . .] So the metasemantic interpretation yields no account

⁵ For a different twist to this worry, see Soames (2005, 96–99).

or representation of *a priori* truth or knowledge, and does not depend on any notion of the *a priori*. (“Assertion revisited”, this volume, •••.)

Stalnaker considers the objection that, in determining the epistemological status of a statement, possible worlds like the one he envisages for ‘ $7 + 5 = 12$ ’ in the quoted text are irrelevant, on the basis of what I will henceforth call (for reasons to be explained presently) *the meaning-constitution point* that Stalnaker describes as “the familiar point that the necessity and *a priori* city of mathematical truths such as “ $7 + 5 = 12$ ” is not compromised by the undisputed fact that it is only contingently true (and known only *a posteriori*) that we use arithmetical notation as we do” (1999, 16).⁶ However, as he reminds us, “the two-dimensional apparatus was introduced for the purpose of representing (on the vertical dimension) variations in the propositions expressed” (1999, 16), and this poses a challenge for anybody wanting to defend the view that worlds like *k* in C are irrelevant when determining the epistemological status of a statement: “If we are to represent *a priori* truth by the necessity of the diagonal, we must either find grounds for excluding worlds [like *k*], or else find a different way of associating propositional concepts with utterance events” (1999, 16). We have seen before what, it will turn out, in fact is a related concern with respect to 2-D accounts of *a posteriori* necessities like (1); namely, that we lack a justification to posit propositional concepts like E.

In what follows, I will be confronting this challenge. Let me henceforth call the singular propositions constituting what Stalnaker described as “what is said *according to the normal semantic rules*” by utterances of sentences such as (1) and (2) their *official contents*. The approach I will pursue will be to isolate an *a priori* component in the knowledge constituting understanding of the rigid designators contributing the relevant *res* to official contents. Diagonal propositions, I will suggest, model that *a priori* component. The concept of *apriority* thus modelled is one along the lines envisaged by Reichenbach (1920), according to which apriority in the relevant cases is a form of analyticity.

Contemporary epistemologists like Bealer (1999), Bonjour (1998), Burge (1993), or Peacocke (1993) have emphasized that sensible accounts of the *a priori* should be *moderate*, in allowing for the fallibility and defeasibility of what is taken to be *a priori* knowledge. In a defence of apriority in the face of the scientific rejection of Euclidean geometry, Reichenbach (1920) urged the severance of two elements in the Kantian conception of the *a priori*, *necessary and unrevisable truth, fixed for all time*, on the one hand, and *truth constitutive of the object of [a posteriori] knowledge*, on the other, arguing that only the former should be abandoned: “‘*A priori*’ means ‘before [a posteriori] knowledge,’ but not ‘for all time’ and not ‘independent of experience’” (1920, 105). The elucidation of the 2-D framework I would like to suggest in what follows agrees with him on both counts.

⁶ Kripke is reported to have made this point in the John Locke lectures on Reference and Existence: “One should not identify what people would have been able to say in hypothetical circumstances, if they had obtained, or what they would have said had the circumstances obtained, with what we can say of these circumstances, perhaps knowing that they don’t obtain.” (This quote might not accurately represent Kripke’s views.)

We have been discussing so far only examples involving proper names; it will help to consider related examples involving demonstratives, before going back to them:

- (3) If that morning heavenly body exists, that morning heavenly body is identical-to-that-evening-heavenly-body⁷

There are many controversial issues involving the semantics of indexicals in general and (complex) demonstratives in particular, but we do not need to go into them here; for present purposes, I will just take for granted an at least plausible position on some of them. It is a slight variation on Kaplan's (1989) views, strongly influenced by John Perry's work (1997, and references there), which I have defended in previous papers.⁸

To account for intuitions analogous to those motivating the Kripkean views about proper names, the view takes indexicals and demonstratives to be rigid designators; it is, of course, only contextualized, token-expressions that can be counted as designators at all in these cases, and thus references to linguistic items are to be henceforth understood as references to tokens. The contribution of a complex demonstrative like 'that morning heavenly body' in an utterance of (3) to the asserted content is according to the present view the same as the contribution of 'Phosphorus' in (1): the object referred-to.⁹ This distinguishes the complex demonstrative from the similar description 'the morning heavenly body'; although the latter might be referentially used *de facto* as a rigid designator, *de iure* its contribution is quantificational.¹⁰ On this view, matrix *E* should provide a partial representation of the propositional concept corresponding to (3) as good as it is for (1).¹¹

It is however clear that in this case there is descriptive information concerning the referent of the complex demonstrative that any competent speaker would obtain from the utterance of (3). On the view I am outlining, this information is not part of the asserted content, but belongs in a different proposition, which is not asserted but presupposed, a conventional implicature.¹² Stalnaker's primary notion of *presupposition* is that of an attitude of speakers in particular contexts. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that, like meaning, referring, asking, implying and so on, presupposing is something that both speakers and the words they use can be said to do, and he contemplates thereby a notion of pragmatic *sentence* presupposition, a presuppositional *requirement*: "Sentence *S* presupposes that *P* if and only if the use of *S* would be inappropriate in a context in which the speaker was not presupposing that *P*" (1999, 7). He had already made it clear in "Assertion" that "the context on which an assertion has its *essential* effect is not defined by what is presupposed before the

⁷ We are supposed to imagine (3) uttered with the factually required time-lag.

⁸ See García-Carpintero (1998 and 2000).

⁹ In the following discussion, I will ignore presuppositional effects created by the use of 'exists' in (3) and related utterances.

¹⁰ Note, however, that some writers, including King (2001), have argued for an alternative quantificational account of complex demonstratives. I cannot properly go into this here.

¹¹ For reasons already given (see fn. 5), this must be taken *cum grano salis*.

¹² Dever (2001) defends a multi-propositional view of complex demonstratives, on which the descriptive proposition is not presupposed, but plays a different logical role. My view is also close in relevant respects to Glanzberg & Siegel's (forthcoming).

speaker begins to speak, but will include any information which the speaker assumes his audience can infer from the performance of the speech act” (1999, 86); this of course applies to the present case.

In a nutshell, the proposal is that the relevant presupposition corresponding to the complex demonstrative in (3) is, if we make it explicit, that *that token of ‘that morning heavenly body’ refers to whatever morning heavenly body is most salient when it is uttered* (where “that token of ‘that morning heavenly body’” is intended to refer to the token of that expression in the relevant utterance of (3)).¹³ If this proposal is correct, it provides a response to Stalnaker’s challenge in the quotation at the beginning of this section. Applied to the present case, the challenge ultimately asks us to justify that a corresponding alleged instance of the contingent *a priori*, an utterance of (4) in (*mutatis mutandis*) the envisaged context for (3) expresses a necessary diagonal proposition (analogous to the one represented by *B* for (2)):

- (4) That morning heavenly body is whatever morning heavenly body is most salient when that very token of ‘that morning heavenly body’ is uttered, if it exists.

For (4) to have a necessarily true diagonal, in each world in the envisaged context for (3) and (4) “that morning heavenly body” refers to the most salient heavenly body visible in the morning in that world; and so worlds (analogous to *k* in *C*) where, say, “that morning heavenly body” refers to Vincent van Gogh’s left ear are excluded.

According to the view I am outlining, the *official* contribution to contents of a complex demonstrative is, like that of a proper name, a typically extra-linguistic and extra-mental object. These objects might well have hidden essential properties, which they will keep in every possible world compatible with those contents; as in the case of proper names, (3) ascribes to the demonstrative’s referent a hidden essential property of this kind, *being identical to that heavenly body*, and this is why it expresses a necessary singular proposition. On the other hand, the properties used to fix reference to those objects might well be contingent, and this is how the official content (the horizontal) of (4) will be a contingent proposition.

But what reasons do we have to count the diagonal proposition for (4) as necessary, in view of Stalnaker’s challenge? Is it not obvious that there are possible worlds in which the relevant utterance of (4) is made relative to a language in which the determiner ‘that’ in the complex demonstrative is interpreted in the way that we interpret ‘every’, everything else (including the meanings of the other expressions in the utterance) being as close as possible to actuality? Should we not we consider worlds like these as part of the context, even if, relative to this sort of world, what the utterance of (4) says is false, and so a world like this has the same effect on the modal status of the diagonal as *k* in *C*? The view I am advancing is that, in this particular case, we can appeal to a surrogate of the *meaning-constitution point* that for rigid

¹³ It must be assumed that speakers competent by ordinary standards are able to somehow grasp this implicitly, without having explicitly articulated concepts of, say, *reference*, *salience*, or the type-token distinction. This raises additional concerns about the present proposal for interpreting the 2-D framework that I am not in a position to address here.

designators Kripke put as follows: “When I say that a designator is rigid, and designates the same thing in all possible worlds, I mean that, as used in *our* language, it stands for that thing, when *we* talk about counterfactual situations. I don’t mean, of course, that there mightn’t be counterfactual situations in which in the other possible world people actually spoke a different language” (Kripke 1980, 77).

The main idea for the 2-D treatment of those examples of apriority that the Kripkean discussion highlights was, according to Stalnaker, that an “*a priori* truth is a statement that, while perhaps not expressing a necessary proposition, expresses a truth in every context” (“Assertion”, 83). If this is so, in considering a possible world as actual, in order to determine the modal status of the relevant diagonal proposition, we should still be considering only the different propositions that expressions as used in *our* language could have meant. We should allow for variations in the referent of the complex demonstrative; but a situation like the previous counterpart of *k*, in which the complex demonstrative is not used at all as the demonstrative ‘that’, is not one in which the expression belongs in our language. Variations in the contribution that the complex demonstrative, as used in the actual world, makes to the asserted official content are allowed; variations in the descriptive condition that the referent is presupposed to satisfy, semantically derived from the linguistic meaning of the constituent NP and the simple demonstrative, are not.

The question is, of course, whether there is any justification for this invidious treatment of different semantic properties that the complex demonstrative has, as used in our language, in addition to our desire to ensure that (4) eventually expresses a necessary diagonal proposition. What I will be arguing in the following section is that the association of the complex demonstrative with a descriptive condition is constitutive of its meaning in a way that its association with its referent is not. This is why I am referring to Stalnaker’s “familiar point” as the *meaning-constitution* point. I will defend that, in addition to providing a plausible justification that utterances like (4) express a necessary diagonal, the proposal gives an acceptable account of the nature of the *a priori* knowledge that the diagonal models. Last, but not least, the proposal will offer an immediate justification for considering propositional concepts with the structure of E for utterances of sentences like (1) and (3), thus allowing for the Stalnakerian account that the diagonal proposition, not the official content, is expressed in those cases, for which we could not find any proper rationale in Stalnaker’s texts.

3. Constitutive Properties of Referential Expressions

Competent speakers will in principle be able to understand the official singular contingent proposition asserted in uttering (4). This understanding constitutes a piece of knowledge, and thus a justified belief. However, it is not merely speakers’ linguistic competence that is involved in the justification of beliefs such as the one about the singular content signified by (4).¹⁴ My main argument for this has two parts. First

¹⁴ This claim coincides to a good extent, I think, with Soames’ (2003, ch. 16) main point.

(A), in the particular case of the utterance of (4) that I am considering, the concurrence of a veridical perceptual experience of Venus will also be a substantive feature of that justification, well beyond what linguistic competence provides. Secondly (B), and more in general, the existence of the sort of relation with objects that those cases illustrate is in general a substantive part of the justification of every particular act of understanding singular contents about material objects like those we are considering, which similarly transcends linguistic competence.¹⁵

The 2-D treatment of cases of the contingent *a priori* such as (2) and (4) for which I will be arguing is in fact close to Donnellan's (1979). He claims that knowledge constituting understanding of singular propositions, like the official contents of (1)–(4), cannot be *a priori*; according to him, therefore, the Kripkean *a priori* knowledge of the truth of (2) and (4) cannot have those official contents as its objects. He makes a case for this in part by characterizing metalinguistic contents that, he suggests, more plausibly play the role of contents that are known *a priori*. I agree with Jeshion's (2001) objections to this part of his argument; she argues that the examples in which it is clear that speakers merely grasp metalinguistic information are manifestly unlike the ones that concern us, while in the case of analogous examples it is unclear that speakers grasp merely metalinguistic information. However, I think that the two-dimensional candidates for the relevant contents improve on Donnellan's, and can withstand the corresponding objections.

Like Jeshion, I also like a further aspect of Donnellan's discussion, namely, that it does not rely on the assumption that understanding singular contents always *requires* the presence of a non-conceptual relation of acquaintance (through perception, as in the examples so far, memory or testimony) with the singular elements. I would like to allow, with Donnellan and Jeshion, that competent speakers may grasp the *prima facie* singular contents expressed by utterances of sentences like (6), where the reference of the demonstrative is fixed relative to descriptive information provided by the previous discourse, (5) here:

- (5) There is a single planet causing perturbations in Uranus's orbit
- (6) That planet causes perturbations in Uranus's orbit, if it exists

Therefore, I cannot appeal in general merely to considerations such as A before for the substantive, beyond-the-linguistic character of competent understanding of the official singular contents expressed by utterances like (1)–(4); for point A is that (perceptual) acquaintance is part of what is required in order to properly understand them, but I am agreeing that this does not apply in cases like (6). Jeshion's (2002a) proposals improve our still poor understanding of what it is to grasp singular contents; according to her, what makes an attitude singular is not necessarily acquaintance, but its role in cognition; "What distinguishes *de re* thought is its structural or organizational role in thought" (2002a, 67).

¹⁵ I say 'substantive' instead of 'empirical' because I want to allow for singular attitudes about abstract objects, like numbers and fictional characters, and, although I will not elaborate on this here, I want my considerations to apply *mutatis mutandis* to them.

Nevertheless, her account grants that there is something correct in views requiring acquaintance, in that they at least characterize the paradigm cases of *de re* contents: “Although I have argued that acquaintance is not necessary for *de re* belief, I have not argued that acquaintance is not in some way significant to an understanding of *de re* belief. *De re* beliefs via acquaintance are developmentally primary. Also, I would hypothesize that acquaintanceless *de re* belief is impossible without *de re* belief with acquaintance. And, no doubt, it is (direct) acquaintance that suggests the idea of a belief being directly about an object” (2002a, 70). My more general consideration B for the substantive nature of understanding singular contents will take its lead from this concession.

Singular contents, I am assuming, are *object-individuated*: different objects determine different singular contents. Some writers, notoriously including Evans and McDowell, take singular contents to be also *object-dependent*. Many philosophers find this view, as apparently understood by Evans and McDowell, unnecessarily strong. (5) and (6) are of course the equivalents involving complex demonstratives of similar cases concerning the proper name ‘Neptune’, under the usual assumptions about Leverrier’s descriptive fixation of its reference. If we substitute ‘Mercury’ for ‘Uranus’ in them, we get similarly corresponding cases involving complex demonstratives of notorious actual examples of reference-failure with the proper name ‘Vulcan’, (7) and (8) below. Many writers find understandably implausible the view that, after the replacement, we move from utterances expressing official singular contents to utterances that do not express such contents.

- (7) There is a single planet causing perturbations in Mercury’s orbit
- (8) That planet causes perturbations in Mercury’s orbit, if it exists

Now, *dependence* can be explained in terms of essence; in those terms, a natural understanding of object-dependence, compatible with what Evans and McDowell assume in putting forward their views, is that the object(s) a singular content is about is (are) part of its constitutive essence.¹⁶ There is, however, a weaker notion of dependence, which provides for a more plausible view, consistent with Jeshion’s remarks on the dependence of acquaintanceless singular attitudes on acquaintance-based ones. On this view, while no actual relation to a particular object is part of the essence of particular singular contents, it is nevertheless part of their constitutive nature that they belong in a class of contents, some of which do involve acquaintance relations. Such a weaker notion of object-dependence for singular contents would allow cases of failure of reference like (8) to signify them.

This weaker notion of object-dependence will help to sustain an already familiar line of resistance to the McKinsey-style reasoning purporting to show the incompatibility of externalism and self-knowledge, clearly articulated by McLaughlin and Tye (1998, 367–71). I can know in a privileged way the thought that I am expressing when I put forward, say, (4). This is an object-dependent thought, in that it *aims* to be object-individuated. There are successful and unsuccessful varieties

¹⁶ See Fine (1995) for the relation between *dependence* and *essence*, and for more on the distinction between *generic* and *specific* dependence that I am about to appeal.

of such object-dependent thoughts. Given that the thought I am entertaining is successfully object-dependent, it follows from philosophical considerations that that heavenly body exists; and I am in a position to appreciate that this is the case. On the other hand, only empirical methods can justify my thought that that heavenly body exists. But there is nothing problematic in this package of thoughts; for it is only empirical methods that can justify my thinking that my thought belongs in the successful class. No amount of pure reflection and philosophical reasoning can achieve that feat.

I am now in a position to elaborate on part (A) of the argument, that is, that in the case of the utterance of (4) being considered, the concurrence of a veridical perceptual experience of Venus will also be a substantive feature of that justification, well beyond linguistic competence. Contemporary writers on the *a priori*, particularly Burge (1993), have made us sensitive to the distinction between perception (or other empirical justificatory methods) playing a merely *enabling* role, versus its playing a substantive justificatory role.¹⁷ The distinction is subtle, and of no clear application in many cases (which is why ultimately I prefer the more positive Reichenbachian characterization of the *a priori* here taken to be articulated by the 2-D framework, to the more negative traditional one as non-empirical justification). Burge takes a justification to be *a priori* just in case “its justificational force is in no way constituted or enhanced by reference to or reliance on the specifics of some range of sense experiences or perceptual beliefs” (1993, 458). Is the justificational force of my justification for grasping the object-dependent thought expressed by, say, (4) so enhanced?

Now, consider: the thought I am thinking when I entertain (4) is different whether or not it is successfully object-dependent, for object-dependent thoughts are object-individuated. Whether or not it is successful crucially depends (in the present case) on whether or not I do actually perceive a heavenly body, as opposed to merely having some perceptual experiences. When I take the thought I am entertaining at face value, I assume it to be of the successful variety; this is part of what is meant by the idea that object-dependent thoughts, even in our weak characterization, *aim* at objects. Now, suppose that the relevant perception merely plays an enabling role, as opposed to a justificatory one, in this assumption of mine that I am entertaining a thought of the successful variety. In that case, I do not think we can stop the McKinsey-style derivation of my privileged, almost-*a priori* access to the claim that that heavenly body exists, and we should conclude, incorrectly I assume, that I am justified in thinking that it exists merely by a combination of reflection and philosophical methods.

Let us now move to part B of the argument, for the substantive character of understanding in acquaintanceless cases. Singular contents can be grasped in the absence of acquaintance with the relevant objects, as in (5)–(8). However, assuming Jeshion’s concession, those cases only exist against the background of others that do involve acquaintance. Now, in cases involving acquaintance, it is as we have seen a crucial feature of the justification constitutive of our understanding singular contents that our evidence (the relevant perceptual experiences, in cases (1)–(4)) does put us *en rapport*

¹⁷ For present purposes, I will not distinguish between *justification* and *entitlement*.

with objects; and this is—I have argued—a substantive, indeed empirical element going beyond mere linguistic competence: this was part A of the argument. Hence, in pure descriptive cases like (5)–(8) it is part of our *total evidence* justifying understanding the one acquired through empirical justification in cases involving acquaintance. I take this to be a similarly substantive justifying assumption. That this empirical collateral information plays a justifying role, and not merely an enabling one, can be established on the basis of the very same considerations developed in the previous paragraphs for the acquaintance cases. Acquaintanceless cases presuppose acquaintance cases; the total evidence constituting the justification for understanding in the former cases includes the one supporting cases of the latter variety.

I appreciate that these are relatively abstract considerations; to fill them up in sufficiently convincing detail, however, would require a better grasp of the nature of *de re* attitudes than I am in a position to provide here. I will try to make up for this with a few brief impressionistic remarks. On the present view, the official content *asserted* by means of (6) is a singular proposition, as much as it is in the case of (1)–(4); the descriptive material that my view also posits is part of a *presupposed* content. This fits the facts regarding our intuitions about their possible world truth-conditions that defenders of singular propositions have emphasized, to wit, intuitions indicating that it is how things are with the objects themselves, whether or not they fit the descriptive material, that is relevant for the truth of what is said relative to different possible circumstances. It also fits the facts regarding the propriety of *de re* reports of the relevant asserted contents, reports that satisfy the two well-known Quinean criteria of openness to correct applications of the logical laws of substitutivity• and existential generalization. Although the distinction between *de re* reports and *de re* attitudes—our true present subject—will never be sufficiently emphasized, there certainly must be some weak connection between the latter and the former of the kind suggested here.

• Q1

What is it that those two sets of intuitions point to? Whenever he tries to characterize *de re* attitudes, Evans (1982, 146) offers suggestions such as this: “a subject who has a demonstrative Idea of an object has an *unmediated* disposition to treat information from that object as germane to the truth or falsity of thoughts involving that Idea.” Imagine the following case. I am visiting an exhibition in a medieval cloister; I am carrying a heavy bag, and to unburden myself during the visit I put it inside a big porcelain vase in a corner. In fact there are perceptually indistinguishable vases of this kind in each corner in the cloister. Some time later, I judge, in front of one such vase: *this vase contains my bag*. It may well be that nothing of a purely general character that I can have access to in my full conscious state (nothing *descriptive*, in a properly extended sense of the notion) would allow me to distinguish one of the vases from the other three; no aspect of my present perceptual experience would help, or of my recollections of my wanderings around the cloister.

Now, judgments are constitutively normative acts. Part of Evans’ idea, as I understand it, is that whether or not my judgment meets its constitutive norms depends on how things are with the vase I am in fact perceiving, independently of my capacity to descriptively select it from the others. If, in order to be correct, a judgment must just be true, then it is whether or not that specific vase in fact contains my bag that determines whether or not it is correct. If the relevant norms of judgment are

evidence-constrained (if, say, the thinker must *know* the content), then it is whether or not I know, about that vase, that it contains my bag that is relevant. Be this as it may, it is objects themselves, beyond any purely general descriptive means we may have resource to in order to have some grip on them, that are relevant to determine whether the constitutive features of *de re* attitudes are met.

Hence, if they do not exist (as they may well not, for all we can tell “from the inside”, if the attitudes at stake involve sufficiently difficult epistemic achievements—not just in the case of material objects, but also of some abstract objects), those constitutive features cannot be met. In order to be justified that we are enjoying successful cases of these attitudes, we thus need justification that we are properly related to objects. In the case of material objects, in paradigm cases acquaintance relations (perception, memory, testimony) provide the required justification. We have agreed that those are only paradigm cases, and that discourse can also help entertain successful *de re* attitudes. However, in those cases the justification for entertaining *de re* attitudes towards material objects of the very kind that we have gained through acquaintance in previous cases is also playing an indirect justificatory role.

Cases of failure of reference like (8) suggest a final, additional consideration favouring the 2-D version of Donnellan’s take on the contingent *a priori*. Someone who, like Jeshion, wants to defend that it is the very official singular content expressed by (2), (4) and (6) that is both contingent *and a priori* faces a problem. On the 2-D view, what is known *a priori* is not the official object-dependent content; hence, (8) does not pose any problem: there is still a *truth* to be known *a priori*. If it is a *priori knowledge* of that utterance that is claimed, as opposed to merely *a priori defeasible justification*, the defender of the contrasting view that the official object-dependent content is known *a priori* will have to envisage true but gappy propositions. This would require a semantics that is technically attainable, but theoretically in need of a justification that is not at all easy to provide.¹⁸ Alternatively, it can be argued that, although acceptance of (8) was *justified a priori*, empirical findings have shown that it is not true. The problem now is that, although there are clear examples of the empirical defeasibility of *a priori* beliefs, it is defeasibility by, say, the testimony of relevant

¹⁸ See Lehmann (2002) for a useful discussion of different kinds of free logics, and the problem they confront to justify the truth-conditions they ascribe to referential sentences. Semantics for free logics should justify the non-validity of rules like, say, existential generalization, and at the same time the truth of sentences like (8), or instances of excluded middle involving non-referring terms. A bivalent proposal like Burge’s (1974) achieves this by stipulating that all atomic sentences are false; however, as Lehmann notes (2002, 226), Burge’s justification for the stipulation presupposes bivalence, which is at stake once we envisage non-referring terms. Non-bivalent supervaluationist semantics are among the most popular, but they confront a similar problem. Lehmann rightly criticizes a proposal by Bencivenga based on a “counterfactual theory of truth”: “Why should truth, which is ordinarily regarded as *correspondence to fact*, be reckoned in terms of what is *contrary to fact*? Why should we reckon that ‘Pegasus is Pegasus’ is true because it *would be true* if, *contrary to fact*, ‘Pegasus’ did refer?” (2002, 233), concluding, “If supervaluations make sense in free logic, I believe we do not yet know why” (2002, 233). I believe that 2-D accounts, as interpreted here, are in a position to provide the required semantic justification for supervaluationist semantics for free-logics; I hope to elaborate on this elsewhere.

experts that those examples are based on; defeasibility by straightforward empirical findings like those establishing the non-existence of Vulcan is a much more doubtful matter.¹⁹

These considerations support the view that we should allow for variations in the referent of our complex demonstratives when considering possible worlds as actual, in building up the rows in the relevant propositional concepts. This is all we need to justify considering propositional concepts such as E for the case of instances of the necessary *a posteriori* like (3), thereby having the starting point we need for the Gricean considerations that Stalnaker appeals to so as to understand why the diagonal and not the official content is communicated in those cases; and it also gives us all we need to account for the illusion of possibility along the lines envisaged by Kripke. Nevertheless, the speaker's full justification for understanding the official contents will obviously draw on his linguistic competence. The present proposal is that, in the case of the justification for understanding (3)'s official content, this consists in part in the piece of knowledge that the diagonal proposition for (4) captures. On this view, this is a necessary proposition, on the basis of the meaning-constitution point. We are justified in excluding worlds like *k* in propositional concept *C* as irrelevant, because in those worlds essential semantic properties of the utterances—properties constituting competent understanding—are not kept fixed.²⁰

4. The *Locality* and *Context-Dependence* of Apriority

Stalnaker contrasts the metasemantic interpretation of diagonal propositions with another one, which he describes as *semantic*; but he insists that they are complementary in some applications, and my previous cases involving demonstratives might well count among them. The distinction between semantic and metasemantic interpretations of diagonal propositions parallels another distinction he makes, among semantic theories, between *descriptive* and *foundational*: “A descriptive semantic theory is a theory that says what the semantics for the language is without saying what it is about the practice of using that language that explains why that semantics is the right one. A descriptive-semantic theory assigns *semantic values* to the expressions of the language, and explains how the semantic values of the complex expressions are a function of the semantic values of their parts.” Foundational theories, in contrast, answer questions “about what the facts are that give expressions their semantic values, or more generally, about what makes it the case that the language spoken by a particular individual or community has a particular descriptive semantics” (1997, 535).

The variations in content represented by the horizontal propositions in a propositional concept depend on a metasemantic interpretation on variations in facts studied by foundational theories, such as for instance causal relations between uses of expressions and things in the world; in a semantic interpretation, they rather correspond

¹⁹ Jeshion (2002b) provides a good discussion.

²⁰ Discussions with Jim Pryor have helped me to considerably improve a previous version of this section.

to differences determined by facts (other than contents themselves) investigated by descriptive theories, like Kaplan's characters or the kind of reference-fixing descriptive presupposition expressed by (4). In some cases, the semantic interpretation can support applications of the 2-D framework so as to provide the explanatory benefits advertised of it, chief among them that of accounting for the Kripkean phenomena. This notwithstanding, he would presumably point out, in a critical vein, that the "notion of *a priori* that this identification yields is at best a very local and context-dependent one" (this volume, •••, fn. 10).

It is easy to see why he thinks so. Let us start with context-dependence. Consider for illustration a case in which, instead of (3), the speaker uses a simple demonstrative, as in an utterance of (9), relying on what he takes to be the perceptual experiences of his audience to play also the role of the NP that is in (3) a constituent of the complex demonstrative:

- (9) If that exists, that is-identical-to-that-evening-heavenly-body

Given that the case is one in which it is taken for granted that the referent of the simple demonstrative is in part fixed by a perceptual experience, presenting it as the brightest morning heavenly body, considerations analogous to those contemplated regarding (4) support ascribing a necessary diagonal proposition to a relevant imaginary utterance of (10):

- (10) That is whatever morning heavenly body is demonstrated when that very token of 'that' is uttered, if it exists

Worlds in which the referent of 'that' in (10) is not fixed on the basis of the relevant perceptual experience are of course possible; they are compatible with the knowledge of an otherwise perfectly competent speaker present in the context of the utterance, inattentive to the perceptual circumstances of the case. But those worlds should not count to establish the propositional concept, because not all legitimate presuppositions determining the contribution of the simple demonstrative are in place. It is variations in the referent of the demonstrative when uttered in different circumstances, *keeping fixed what is taken for granted about it* that we are suggesting the diagonal propositions represent. Relative to the context we are considering, then, an account along these lines might count (10) as expressing *a priori* knowledge. There are contexts, however, relative to which it would not express knowledge of that kind, for instance those in which we take into account the presuppositions of the inattentive speaker we just mentioned. This shows that the account, as Stalnaker says, provides a context-dependent notion of *a priori* truth and knowledge.

The case of proper names illustrates the *locality* that Stalnaker ascribes to an account of *a priori* knowledge along the present lines, assuming as he and Kaplan do a Millian view of them. For, in that case, co-referential names like (tokens of) 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' have a constant character, and therefore only the metasemantic interpretation would account for variations in the meaning of the name, so as to allow for worlds like *j* in propositional concept *E* above, and thereby contingent diagonal propositions. Hence, assuming the Millian view, the semantic

interpretation can only be invoked locally, in cases like (3)–(10) above; there is no reason to expect a generally valid account of apriority.

However, the Millian view can be contested, and the latter concern at least can thus be discounted. Following Lewis (1983), several philosophers have advanced views according to which the reference of (tokens of) proper names is fixed in part by descriptive metalinguistic information, which speakers know on the basis of their linguistic competence.²¹ On some view along these lines, a proper utterance of (11) would express a necessary diagonal proposition, which would constitute knowledge deriving from the semantic competence of speakers confronted, for instance, with related utterances of (1):

- (11) Phosphorus is whoever or whatever is saliently called ‘Phosphorus’ when that token of ‘Phosphorus’ was uttered, if it exists

The other source of Stalnaker’s scepticism about the present account of the treatment of the *a priori* in the 2D-framework would still remain: on this metalinguistic view of proper names, the diagonal proposition expressed by (2) would also count as contingent in some contexts (those in which the relevant reference-fixing information associated with ‘Phosphorus’ is not common knowledge), and thus it too represents a merely contextual case of *a priori* knowledge similar to the one previously illustrated by means of (10).

I would like to say something to alleviate these doubts. The traditional main concern of epistemologists appears to have been to devise conceptually reductive analyses of the concept of knowledge. Partly due to its lack of success, Williamson (2000) and others have raised serious worries about this enterprise. But even if we still see some point in it, it is clear that there are further tasks for the epistemologist, like making distinctions among kinds of justifications relevant for a clear-headed appraisal of justificatory force. As Wittgenstein’s metaphors in *On Certainty* suggest, any sensible distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* justifications will be a contextual one, one such that what in a context counts as a proposition justified *a priori*, in another is one justified only *a posteriori* (as (2) and (10) illustrate on the suggested view). But, first, this by itself does not invalidate the significance of the distinction. And, more important, the account highlights propositions whose status as *a priori* knowledge is sufficiently stable across ordinary contexts, as (4) and (11) illustrate among the examples discussed so far; on the present view, the traditional alleged examples of the *a priori* will of course belong in this second group.

In their contribution to this volume (Chapter 3), Byrne and Pryor object to a 2-D proposal like this, along lines to which Millians like Stalnaker would be sympathetic; they make their points concerning Chalmers’ views, but I take it that they would think that they also apply to my own. Concerning this latter point about the apriority of (11), they make two objections. The first is that “the metalinguistic proposal imposes unreasonable demands on understanding a word”. I already granted

²¹ Macià’s (2005) proposal includes a nuanced version of this sort of view, which I take to be compatible with the claims I make here.

that there is a burden here for the defender of the account to discharge.²² However, I cannot see that there is any relevant difference between the burden imposed by the claim of apriority concerning (4), and that concerning (11). Any theoretical elaboration of what it is to understand complex demonstratives will be very far away from what competent speakers by ordinary standards know.²³ The point is that it is at least sufficiently reasonable for the purposes of the present discussion that there should be some aspect of the competence of ordinary speakers (their *personal-level* competence) that is captured by the necessity of the diagonal proposition for (4); the claim is that (11) captures a corresponding aspect, however difficult it is to characterize it in a philosophically satisfactory way.

Byrne and Pryor's second objection is, as I understand it, the one that Frege famously makes in the first paragraph of "On Sense and Reference", in a criticism of metalinguistic accounts of the cognitive significance of identity statements: if we find (1) informative, it is because it gives us astronomical information, not just the information that two names corefer. But I can deal with this on the basis of the previous considerations about the contextuality of *a priori* knowledge. The diagonals of statements like (11) merely capture the most stable aspects of the competence of speakers; there are others, like that captured by the diagonal for (2), and the diagonal for the corresponding statement involving 'Hesperus'. Taking that into account in characterizing the *a posteriori* diagonal for (1), we explain why acceptance of it provides not just uninteresting metalinguistic information, but also astronomical information.

Stalnaker's scepticism about the explanatory potential of the 2-D framework regarding the problems for which it was originally devised is thus unnecessarily defeatist, even granting most of his theoretical assumptions as I think have done. An undeniable difference between the present view and Stalnaker's lies in the rejection of Millianism. However, this does not suffice to equate it with what Stalnaker calls the *generalized Kaplan paradigm*, which "treats a much wider range of expressions as context-dependent: almost all descriptive expressions of the language will have a variable character. While in the original Kaplan theory, it was the content determined that was the thought expressed in the use of an expression, in the generalized theory, it is the character (or the A-intension, or diagonal, that it determines) that is the cognitive value of what is expressed." Although the present proposal agrees with the generalized Kaplan paradigm on the former issue (almost all descriptive expressions of the language will have a variable character), it does not need to agree with it on the latter (it is the character that is the cognitive value); this is where the merely presuppositional role given to the descriptive reference-fixing information matters.

²² See above, fn. 13.

²³ The same applies to simple demonstratives, of course; in fact, I have avoided them for strategic reasons, because they impose more recalcitrant problems. It is theoretically very difficult to reject that speakers have, as part of their competence, the descriptive knowledge of the referent required on the present account for the necessity of the diagonal for (4). It is easier to reject any proposal concerning the corresponding descriptive aspects of understanding simple demonstratives, like the one I would be prepared to make.

Consequently, the present proposal does not espouse an asymmetry like the one that Stalnaker mentions here:

One important difference between the two theories is the contrasting roles of the two-dimensional intensions (character, in Kaplan's semantics, propositional concepts in the assertion theory) in the explanation for the fact that an utterance has the content that it has. [...] Character precedes content in the order of explanation of the fact that the utterance has the content that it has. But the order is the reverse in the case of the explanation of why an utterance conveys the information that a diagonal proposition represents. [...] We explain why the utterance determines the propositional concept that it determines in terms of the content that it has, or would normally have, according to the semantics of the relevant alternative possible worlds. Content (in the various alternative worlds) precedes propositional concept in the order of explanation. The second part of the explanation invokes reinterpretation by diagonalization, but since the diagonal proposition is determined by the propositional concept, the main work of explaining why the utterance conveys the particular content that it conveys is done when we have explained why the utterance determines the propositional concept that it determines.

I agree with Stalnaker (1999, 2) that "it matters what is explained in terms of what"; precisely because of that, I would like to insist that the explanatory priorities he devises in the quoted text are consistent with the present account. What I aim for is an elaboration of the Kripkean suggestions to deal with the epistemological puzzles posed by his views about modality, compatible with my allegiance to them. According to these views, the truth-conditions with respect to possible worlds of the singular claims we make, and their modal status, depend on the objects involved and their objective natures, not on the qualitative ways through which we in the actual world fix reference to them. This is also so on the weaker form of object-dependence for singular contents that I earlier committed myself to.

My disagreement with Stalnaker lies in the fact that he, like other Millians, envisages an asymmetry between indexicals and proper names that I find unwarranted. As far as I can tell, rejecting that asymmetry is compatible with accepting the explanatory priority that Stalnaker wants for singular contents. Notice that, although he develops the argument in the quoted text for an identity statement involving proper names, nothing in the argument itself requires it; the very considerations he appeals to apply also to identities involving indexicals. The argument does not therefore support the Millian asymmetry that distinguishes Stalnaker's view from the one advanced here.

5. Utterance Problems

On the interpretation so far developed, the main aspiration of the 2-D framework is to reconcile the appealing Kripkean metaphysical and semantic views, which envisage substantive *de re* necessities, with the equally intuitive Kripkean views on the epistemology of modality, which in their turn require an explanation for the ensuing illusion that such substantive necessities are contingent. The suggested approach to

attain this goal has been to isolate an *a priori* component in the understanding of the expressions contributing the relevant *res*; diagonal propositions model that component. The concept of *apriority* thus modelled is one along the lines envisaged by Reichenbach, according to which apriority in the relevant cases is a form of analyticity. Given that, as we emphasized at the outset, Kripke's examples are not isolated cases, for the proposal to work it should be established that the distinction between the two sorts of contents can be made in all relevant cases. In particular, one should confront the notorious application by Kripke of his embryonic 2-D suggestions to the mind-body problem, an issue that I am not in a position to discuss here.

Even more ambitious goals for the 2-D framework are embraced by David Chalmers in his contribution to this volume: as he metaphorically puts it, to restore a golden triangle between meaning, reason, and modality allegedly unravelled by Kripke. Less metaphorically, this requires, according to Chalmers, for the two-dimensionalist to sustain a *Core Thesis*, that “for any sentence *S*, *S* is *a priori* iff *S* has a necessary 1-intension”. In contrast with my proposal, here apriority is understood along the lines of earlier philosophical traditions, as an idealized form of knowledge constitutively independent (in some philosophically pertinent sense) of experience. Chalmers classifies different interpretations of 2-D ideas into two main contrasting views, the *contextual* and the *epistemic* understanding of the framework: “the contextual understanding uses the first dimension to capture *context-dependence*. The epistemic understanding uses the first dimension to capture *epistemic dependence*.” He persuasively argues that the contextual understanding, in any of the different versions he considers, cannot validate the Core Thesis.

How does my proposal fit into Chalmers' taxonomy? If we just attend to his descriptive labels, and the characterization quoted before, it appears not to fully fit, in that *prima facie* it has both contextual and epistemic elements. On the one hand, it makes the semantic features constituting the first dimension dependent on epistemic matters, to wit, those constitutive aspects of understanding I have highlighted before. On the other, in cases like those I have been discussing, it certainly uses the first dimension to capture context-dependence. From the viewpoint developed here, it is only to be expected that the present view does not fully fit into Chalmers' scheme. On the view of context-dependence previously outlined, the reference of context-dependent expressions is constitutively fixed relative to relations involving the relevant tokens; thus, while the identity of the referent itself may well change from accessible epistemic possibility to accessible epistemic possibility, in each of them the referent (if any) stands in the relevant relation to the very same token. If this *token-reflexive* view is correct, thus, any satisfactory epistemic interpretation of the 2-D framework will end up incorporating some features of contextual interpretations.

If this is so, the well-known examples (“utterance problems”, concerning examples such as ‘language exists’, ‘someone is uttering’, ‘I think’ and so on) that Chalmers invokes against contextual interpretations—previously mentioned by Evans, Kaplan and others to similar effects—raise serious questions about the epistemic plausibility

of the token-reflexive view. Here I only have space to encourage the reader to take the 2-D framework seriously when thinking about these examples. Just for illustration, consider the ‘language exists’ example. Many philosophers would be prepared to take the languages to which generic reference is made here as natural kinds, whose essence might be hidden in the very same sense that the essence of water is. If this is so, there is no problem in ascribing a contingent horizontal content to the claim. The problem, of course, is whether a contingent diagonal, or rather a necessary one, corresponds to the sentence; this is the only issue really at stake.

Concerning this point, I will just make a methodological claim here: this is a delicate theoretical issue, one that we cannot sensibly assume ourselves to be in a position to decide just by appealing to intuition. Philosophical clarification must be provided concerning the knowledge that one must have in order to be able to entertain thoughts about language; and then it must be decided whether or not it is to be expected that any (relevant) thinker does have that knowledge. It is not implausible that an account of the *a priori* along Reichenbachian lines ends up deciding these theoretical issues in such a way that the claims at stake should have necessary diagonals. A view like this cannot be dismissed merely by claiming that the intuitions that one has (on this highly theoretical issue) go against the view.

In his paper, Chalmers says that on the epistemic understanding of the framework (albeit not on the contextual understanding) “there is an intuition . . . that ‘I am not uttering now’ is not false *a priori*, so that there are epistemic possibilities in which it is true”. This is precisely the kind of claim that I want to resist. The concepts of *apriority* and *epistemic possibility* are philosophical, highly theoretical ones. I do not dispute that, after long exposure to philosophical discussions, one can develop the sort of intuitions whose existence Chalmers asserts. The question is what methodological relevance appeal to them has in philosophical discussions such as this. I would say, the same as that of intuitions of highly skilled linguists about the grammaticality of very complex sentences, on which the correctness of grammatical theories crucially turn, about which, when questioned, ordinary speakers simply stare blankly: namely, none. Whether or not a philosophically useful concept of apriority will make claims like ‘there is thinking going on’ (with diagonals essentially equivalent to that for the claim whose denial Chalmers contemplates) *a priori* is up for grabs: it is not the sort of issue to be decided by an appeal to intuition.

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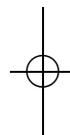
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Queries in Chapter 7

Q1. Please clarify if the term 'sustitutivity' is fine.

