

Speaker's reference, semantic reference and public reference

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Abstract

Kripke (1977) views Donnellan's (1966) misdescription cases as cases where semantic reference and speaker's reference come apart. Such cases, however, are also cases where semantic reference conflicts with a distinct *species* of reference I call "public reference", i.e. the object that the cues publicly available at the time of utterance indicate is the speaker's referent of the utterance. This raises the question: do the misdescription cases trade on the distinction between semantic reference and speaker's reference, or the distinction between semantic reference and public reference? I argue that Kripke's own construal in terms of semantic reference and speaker's reference is at best incomplete, and probably wrong. I also explain the general importance of the notion of 'public reference'.

Keywords: Kripke, misdescription cases, descriptions

1. A misdescription case where speaker's reference is not manifest

In "Speaker's reference and semantic reference", Kripke (1977: 256) considers the following utterance, made after glancing at a teetotaller by a speaker who is under the impression that the teetotaller is drinking champagne:

(1) The man over there drinking champagne is happy tonight.

Kripke claims, *contra* Donnellan (1966)¹, that any inclination to think that the utterer of (1) has said something true of the teetotaller should not lead us to claim that definite descriptions are semantically ambiguous. Kripke draws a distinction between the semantic referent of a designator, i.e. the referent determined in virtue of the conventions of the language, and the speaker's referent of a designator, i.e. the object which the speaker wishes to talk about by using the designator (1977: 263-264). He argues that the phenomenon of someone trying to refer to some object, yet using terms that do not actually designate the object, is sufficient to account for the intuition that the speaker has, *in some sense*, "said something true" of the teetotaller (Kripke 1977: 267). This implies that there is no need to postulate a semantic ambiguity.

¹ It is, as Kripke (1977: 261-262) acknowledges, not obvious that Donnellan really thinks that there is a semantic ambiguity here, even though he does ultimately interpret Donnellan as making this claim.

I agree with the majority view that Kripke is correct that any intuition to the effect that the utterer of (1) has “said something true” is fully explained by the pragmatics of the situation. His construal of the pragmatics of the situation, however, is incomplete at best. Consider a situation – call it the “Donald case” – where Bob utters (1), but the following holds:

- (i) There is some happy teetotaler that Bob’s audience *would naturally take to be* the speaker’s referent of Bob’s utterance.
- (ii) There happens to be, as in Kripke’s (1977: 256) modification of Donnellan’s example, some unhappy person who is both “over there” and drinking champagne, but Bob is not trying to talk about him and no one would think Bob is trying to talk about him.
- (iii) Bob, who is having some sort of visual hallucination, is actually trying to talk about Donald, who is not present. Donald is happy, but not “over there” or drinking champagne. (Note that there is nothing in Bob’s behaviour that would indicate his compromised state of mind, and so (i) still holds.)

Kripke claims that, in typical misdescription cases, we have a substantial intuition that the speaker said something true concerning the speaker’s referent of his utterance (Kripke 1977: 256). In the above case, Donald is the speaker’s referent of Bob’s utterance (and the unhappy person drinking champagne is the semantic referent). I take it, however, that no one would be tempted to say that Bob has in any sense “said something true” about the speaker’s referent, i.e. Donald. This is so despite the above case being like the traditional cases in that semantic reference and speaker’s reference come apart. Rather, it seems that the happy teetotaler is somehow relevant to the above communicative interaction despite him being neither the semantic referent, nor the speaker’s referent, of Bob’s utterance.

Kripke, of course, does not commit to the idea that we have a substantial intuition that a speaker “said something true” of the speaker’s referent in all cases where the speaker’s referent is distinct from the semantic referent. It is, however, instructive to try and determine why our intuitive response to the Donald case seems to differ from our intuitive response to the typical cases. I will argue that, despite how it may appear, our intuitive responses do not differ; or, at least, that in both types of case our intuitions are responsive to the same theoretical entities. The Donald case serves to illuminate the traditional cases and shows that Kripke’s construal of the traditional cases is, at best, incomplete.

2. The public referent of a designator

Intuitively, the problem in the Donald case seems to be that Bob’s intention to say something about Donald is simply not *manifest* to his audience in the same way as in Donnellan’s traditional misdescription cases. It is incumbent upon a speaker to make his communicative intention manifest to his audience by tailoring his speech act so as to allow his audience to recover this intention from the publicly available evidence as to this intention². In the traditional cases the speaker manages, despite his error, to do so, while in the Donald case this does not happen. This idea allows us to define a distinct *species* of reference, call it “public reference”.

²This idea, of course, is not an unfamiliar one. It could, for instance, be motivated in terms of Grice’s Cooperative principle (Grice 1975) or in terms of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1985).

The *public referent* of a designator is the object that best fits all the relevant public evidence available at the time of utterance as to the speaker's referent of the designator.

Note that, provided we adopt the popular view of communication according to which communication is a matter of a speaker conveying information to a hearer, a need for the notion of the 'public referent of a designator' arises naturally from any construal of communication. In any communicative interaction, there will be potential cues immanent to the situation that the speaker can employ in order to communicate. These potential cues will include the linguistic conventions of whatever public language speaker and hearer share (i.e. the cues that determine semantic reference), but will also include extra-conventional factors like objects that happen to be visually salient, information that the speaker and hearer can take to be common knowledge between them, and so on. Any rational speaker will try to tailor his speech act so that his communicative intention is recoverable from such (conventional and extra-conventional) cues, any rational hearer will know he is trying to do so, any rational speaker will know that any rational hearer will know that he is trying to do so, and so on. It is the role of such cues in communication – not merely Donnellan's misdescription cases – that motivates the introduction of the notion of the 'public referent', i.e. the object that best fits *all* publicly available cues³.

The issue concerning non-conventional cues used to communicate has received extensive discussion in the literature concerning bare demonstratives⁴. Note, however, that while authors writing on bare demonstratives have recognised the role played by extra-conventional evidence in facilitating communication, the issue addressed here is distinct. The issue in the demonstratives literature concerns whether such extra-conventional factors determine *semantic reference*. In the current discussion, however, the semantic reference of the designator in (1) is not at issue as it is straightforwardly determined by considering the linguistic conventions governing (1) and the facts concerning the situation⁵. I will not claim that such extra-conventional cues influence the semantic reference of (1); rather, I will claim that recognising the role played by such cues in facilitating communication forces us to recognise a *species* of reference (that is determined by both conventional and extra-conventional cues) and is distinct from both semantic reference and speaker's reference.

In typical acts of communication, the public referent, semantic referent and speaker's referent will coincide. It can, however, always turn out that the speaker has misjudged which object best fits the publicly available cues, and so public reference and speaker's reference can come apart⁶. Furthermore, semantic reference and public reference can come apart in at least three ways. First, public reference and semantic reference can come apart when the charitable interpretation of a speaker's words implies that the speaker chose a designator due to the false belief that the designator is applicable to the speaker's referent. In other words, cases where someone uses the designator "the richest man in the world", yet it seems obvious that he wishes to talk about Bill

³ Public reference is portrayed here as epistemic, i.e. an *assessment* as to speaker's reference. For this reason, it will generally be unique, though strange cases can be construed where the evidence does not yield a unique, best option.

⁴ See, for example, the exchange between Åkerman (2009) and Gauker (2008).

⁵ One could, of course, quibble about the phrase "over there", but this is a mere artefact of Kripke's example.

⁶ The hearer could similarly follow the cues incorrectly and take the wrong object to be the public referent of the utterance. Various *species* of error can be distinguished, i.e. where speaker or hearer has false beliefs as to the categories of reference distinguished here.

Gates, not (the somewhat wealthier) Carlos Slim. In such a case, the semantic referent of the utterance is Carlos Slim. The public referent, i.e. the person that a rational third party would, based on the public evidence, think that the person is trying to talk about, is Bill Gates. If the public evidence is reliable, i.e. if the person is actually trying to talk about Bill Gates, then Bill Gates is both the speaker's referent and the public referent of the utterance. We could, however, have a case where the public evidence is misleading. The speaker could wrongly believe that Warren Buffett is the richest man in the world and so, despite appearances to the contrary, be trying to talk about him. In such a case, Carlos Slim would be the semantic referent, Bill Gates the public referent, and Warren Buffett the speaker's referent of the utterance.

Secondly, public reference and semantic reference can come apart when the charitable interpretation of a speaker's words implies that he is using some linguistic convention in a non-standard way, for instance if he appears to have some mistaken⁷ linguistic belief. Consider, for instance, someone who uses the designator "most famous imaginary number", but it seems obvious that he wishes to talk about π and is merely using the term "imaginary number" incorrectly. This could, if the public evidence is reliable, be a case where public reference differs from semantic reference, but coincides with speaker's reference. Alternatively, we could imagine a case where the public evidence is misleading as the speaker is trying to talk about something else entirely. Suppose that the speaker actually has Euler's number in mind. If we assume that i is the most famous imaginary number, then i would be the semantic referent, π would be the public referent and e would be the speaker's referent of the utterance.

Thirdly, public reference and semantic reference can, at least on one understanding of such phenomena, come apart where linguistic conventions underdetermine what is communicated. If someone utters a phrase like "the tennis player who is ready"⁸, but does not specify what the person is supposed to be ready *for*, then arguably such an expression has no conventionally determined semantic referent. Yet the phrase may well have a public referent, i.e. the information publicly available at the time of utterance may seem to render a clear verdict concerning who the utterer wishes to talk about by uttering the phrase⁹. We could, once again, have a case where this public evidence is reliable, and so public reference and speaker's reference coincide. Or, alternatively, it could be the case that the public evidence is misleading and the speaker wishes to talk about someone else entirely. In such a case, the utterance has no semantic referent, but does have a public referent, distinct from its speaker's referent.

All theorists, of course, do not agree that a phrase like "the tennis player who is ready" should be taken to have no semantic referent. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will not commit to any position concerning the semantic reference of devices like demonstratives, definite descriptions that may be said to contain unarticulated constituents, and so on, or commit myself to any specific construal of the distinction between semantics and pragmatics. Such issues are orthogonal to present concerns, as shown by the fact that theorists can be in perfect agreement

⁷ Naturally, non-standard usage need not reflect a mistake. I elaborate on this point at the end of the paper.

⁸ Theorists who argue that sentences like "Bob is ready" do not express full propositions with determinate truth-conditions include, among others, Bach (1994) and Carston (2008).

⁹ Underdetermination cases should be taken to include cases of purely pragmatic communication, i.e. where no linguistic conventions whatsoever are involved in determining which object a communicative action is about. If my friend is standing at a bar and asks if I would like a beer by drawing my gaze to a beer and giving me a questioning look, then the notion of 'semantic reference' simply does not apply to the situation. Yet the beer can be the public referent of my friend's communicative action as he made it evident that he wished to communicate something about the beer to me. See Carston (2008: 61-63).

concerning the public reference of an utterance, yet fundamentally at odds about how to understand the semantic reference of an utterance. Consider the example above: one theorist may claim that the utterance of the phrase “the tennis player who is ready” has no semantic referent, another may claim that it does have a semantic referent as the speaker’s intention co-determines semantic reference, while another may claim that it does have a semantic referent as some individual is contextually salient and this fact co-determines semantic reference. Yet all three can agree on the identity of the public referent, i.e. the object that best fits all the relevant public evidence available as to the speaker’s referent of the designator. This is so, despite the fact that different semantic theories held by different theorists may lead them to differ on whether public reference and semantic reference coincide in a specific case. Inasmuch as such differences are due to different semantic theories, this is irrelevant to the nature and viability of a theory of public reference. Such disputes do not serve to undermine the viability and utility of the notion of ‘public reference’, provided that the theorist believes that there are at least some linguistic devices that can be used to communicate speaker’s reference, and that can be uttered in circumstances that include some non-semantic contextual clues as to the speaker’s intention. As long as this is the case, then semantic reference and public reference are distinct in theory and can come apart in practice. I know of no theorist that violates such a constraint.

Public reference is determined by *all* the publicly available evidence as to the speaker’s referent of an utterance. Such public evidence straightforwardly includes semantic factors like linguistic conventions. Beyond this, theorists will differ about which of the factors determining public reference *also* serve to determine semantic reference, but such a dispute need not imply any dispute about the nature of public reference. We have a somewhat parallel situation with speaker’s reference: some theorists may incorporate elements of speaker intention into their semantic theory, while others may not. This could lead to it being the case that these theorists differ about whether, in some specific case, speaker’s reference and semantic reference coincide. Yet such disagreement, inasmuch as it concerns semantics, is orthogonal to issues concerning the nature and viability of a theory of speaker’s reference.

The Donald case and the three types of cases outlined above indicate that we should recognise speaker’s reference, semantic reference and public reference as three distinct *species* of reference. I do not mean to suggest that all three are somehow ontologically basic, i.e. not analysable in terms of one of the others. As my definition of “public reference” indicates, I take public reference to be a kind of *assessment* as to speaker’s reference and hence a notion that is parasitic on the more basic notion of ‘speaker’s reference’¹⁰. In fact, I am sympathetic to arguments that semantic reference is a similarly parasitic notion¹¹. My use of “*species* of reference” is supposed to indicate no more than that all three notions are essential to analysing the process of communication, that each determines an object in a unique way, and that each must be defined in terms of the notion of ‘reference’.

¹⁰ Of course, someone who rejects the notion of speaker’s reference can still agree that there is some relation, definable in terms of reference and which includes non-semantic publicly available criteria, that holds between Bob’s utterance and the happy teetotaller and can usefully be called ‘public reference’, but claim that it need not be construed in terms of speaker’s reference.

¹¹ Gail Stine (1978: 324) and Mark Sainsbury (2014) have defended such views.

3. Kripke's analysis is, at best, incomplete

In Kripke's traditional case, the teetotaller is both the speaker's referent and the public referent of the utterance. Hence, the traditional case is a case where speaker's reference clashes with semantic reference, but also a case where public reference clashes with semantic reference. This raises the question: which distinction captures "what is really going on" in such cases? I will construe this question as: which *species* of reference is it that causes our intuition that the utterer of (1) in the traditional case "said something true" of the teetotaller? Three options can be distinguished.

First, we could claim that Kripke's construal of the Donnellan cases is complete and correct. In other words, we could insist that Kripke's claim that the intuitive appeal of the idea that the speaker has "said something true" in the Donnellan cases is fully explained by the fact that such cases involve a clash between speaker's reference and semantic reference, and that the matter of public reference is completely irrelevant. One way to do so would be to claim that, in the Donald case, we *do* intuitively feel that Bob has said something true about Donald. I fail to see any merit in following this option; personally, I feel no appeal to say that Bob has, in any sense, said something true about Donald, nor have I encountered any semanticist who has such an intuition. Furthermore, on such a view it would merely be the most fantastic coincidence that all the traditional cases just happen to be cases where speaker's reference and the public reference coincide despite it seeming obvious that the cases were identified in virtue of this fact. For these reasons I feel safe in dismissing this variant of option one.

Another way to defend option one would be to admit that we do not feel compelled to say that Bob said something true about Donald, but to deny that this has anything to do with Donald not being the public referent of the utterance. In other words, it could be claimed that the traditional cases and the Donald case are also different in some other way that does not involve public reference, and that this difference, once noticed, somehow implies that we need not abandon a Kripkean construal of the traditional misdescription cases. One way of doing so would be to suggest that our intuitions in the Donald case are generated in virtue of the fact that the example invites us to consider the case as hearers of the utterance, whereas in Kripke's construal of the Donnellan cases we consider the illustrative scenario as speakers or as omniscient third parties apprised of all the facts. If this is correct, then we are the victims of a kind of parlour trick when we think the Donald case casts doubt on Kripke's construal of the misdescription cases.

While I cannot conclusively dismiss the above possibility, I do not see any positive reason to suppose that it is true. The misdescription cases are standardly explained from the perspective of a third-person narrator. This places us, at least as far as the stories go, in the position of an omniscient third party and I see no reason to suppose that we place ourselves in an epistemically constrained position when our intuitions are solicited. Admittedly, it is the case that the Donald case – and the notion of 'public reference' – brings the perspective of the hearer¹² "into the story" in some basic way. This, however, as mentioned before, is also true of the traditional cases; it is surely no accident that the traditional cases are cases where public reference and speaker's reference coincide, i.e. where the speaker's reference of the utterance is obvious to those who hear the utterance. The original cases were clearly selected with the perspective of

¹² Not the actual hearers but rather the rational constraints on communication that arise from the fact that a speech act is directed at an audience.

the hearer in mind, and so I see no reason to suppose that the Donald case involves hearers in a way that the original cases do not.

The above, of course, is only one way of arguing that there is some relevant difference between the original cases and the Donald case that serves to disqualify the Donald case from casting doubt on Kripke's analysis. Perhaps other ways of making such a case are possible. Nothing obvious, however, springs to mind, and so I will treat this option as dismissed until a positive case for such a contention is made.

A second option would be to say that Kripke is partially correct, but that his analysis needs to be supplemented by acknowledging the role of public reference. On this analysis, then, the Donnellan cases should be seen as cases where our intuitive judgment that the utterer "said something true" tracks the fact that speaker's reference and public reference coincide, i.e. on such a view our intuitions are responsive to the *coincidence* of speaker's reference and public reference. On this view, "what is really going on" in the traditional cases is that public reference and speaker's reference coincide, but clash with semantic reference. This would imply that Kripke's analysis is partially correct, but incomplete as it misses the relevance of public reference.

A third, more radical option, would be to say that Kripke's analysis is simply wrong, i.e. that the traditional Donnellan cases should be analysed as cases where public reference and semantic reference differ, with the matter of speaker's reference being altogether irrelevant. This would be the case if someone thinks that the Donald case is like the traditional cases in all *relevant* ways, i.e. for those who intuitively feel that Bob "said something true" about the happy teetotaller in the Donald case, despite the fact that he was trying to talk about Donald (and despite the fact that some unrelated person was the semantic referent of his utterance). On this view, then, our intuitive judgment that the utterer "said something true" in Donnellan's cases was responsive to facts about public reference, not speaker's reference (as Kripke seems to think) or the coincidence of public reference and speaker's reference (as on the second option). Such a construal amounts to claiming that, when Kripke identified speaker's reference as the non-semantic *species* of reference operative in the Donnellan case, he picked the wrong one of the two non-semantic *species* of reference that coincide in such cases.

I confess that my own intuitions concerning the Donald case are not definite enough to make it obvious which facts such intuitions are tracking. On the grounds afforded by such intuitions, I am inclined to accept option three, but not without also seeing some merit in option two. Once we consider matters beyond intuitions, however, I think it becomes clear that we should prefer option three. I base this on the fact that the notion of 'public reference' is so basic to communication that we would expect our intuitions to track it. I explain below why I view it as basic.

4. The importance of public reference

When communicating, the hearer of an utterance of a designator needs to try and determine the speaker's referent of the designator. He can do no better than rationally exploiting the public evidence as to speaker's reference that is available at the time of utterance. A rational speaker will recognise that a hearer is in such an epistemic situation, and is therefore obliged to tailor his communicative action so as to make his intention recoverable via the exploitation of such

evidence. A rational hearer will recognise that the speaker intends for his intention to be recoverable in virtue of such cues, a rational speaker will recognise that a rational hearer will recognise that he intends for his intention to be thusly recoverable, and so on. The publicly available cues that facilitate this process include the conventional rules of the language known by all competent speakers of the language. These rules serve to determine semantic reference. These conventional cues, however, are only a subset of the cues that can be rationally employed to communicate, for communication is also facilitated by non-conventional, contextual¹³ factors. Hence the need arises to talk about the public referent of a designator, i.e. the object that best fits all public cues available at the time of utterance. The categories of semantic reference and public reference are alike in that both concern cues that speakers use to communicate, that hearers will know that speakers use to communicate, that speakers will know that hearers will know that speakers use to communicate, and so on. This reasoning, if correct, implies that communication is only intelligible if both speaker and hearer have *some intuitive grasp* of the notion of ‘public reference’, just as they have some intuitive grasp of the notion of ‘semantic reference’.

Our practices serve to vindicate the claim that speakers and hearers have an intuitive grasp of the notion of ‘public reference’. Suppose, for instance, that I am speaking to a friend about a mutual acquaintance who has recently much improved his golf game, and I call the acquaintance “Tiger Woods”. Such a communicative act only works if both parties exploit certain conventional and non-conventional interpretive cues, i.e. the conventional linguistic rule that “Tiger Woods” refers to Tiger Woods and non-conventional aspects of context such as it being common knowledge between the relevant parties that Tiger Woods is a fine golfer, that the actual Tiger Woods is not conversationally salient, that the friend who has recently much improved his golf game *is* conversationally salient, and so on. Note, furthermore, that such a communicative act is only intelligible if the parties to the communicative act grasp that a sincere speaker can rationally violate the general norm of trying to make sure that speaker’s reference and semantic reference coincide. However, it is never similarly rational for a sincere speaker to violate the general norm of trying to make sure that speaker’s reference and public reference coincide. Such an action would amount to sincerely trying to communicate, i.e. make an intention manifest, and also trying to intentionally create a situation where the overall public evidence as to the intention is misleading, i.e. actively trying *not* to make the relevant intention manifest. Such action cannot be rational. In fact, it is precisely because pragmatics is more basic than semantics, at least in this sense, that I can rationally and sincerely violate linguistic convention in the Tiger Woods case. In such cases, I rationally depend on it being common knowledge between myself and the hearer that extra-conventional public evidence can, in principle, “overrule” the conventionally determined semantic verdict. This presupposes that both speaker and hearer have, as was predicted by theory, some grasp of the notion of ‘public reference’.

The above reasoning also explains why, when we say that the happy teetotaller is somehow relevant to Bob’s utterance, this is not something irrelevant that we “impose” on Bob. Any sincere and rational speaker can be expected to, in typical cases, have a standing intention to

¹³ These cues are contextual cues, but in the *epistemic* sense, not in the constitutive sense. Their relevance depends on whether they can be evidence as to the speaker’s reference of an utterance. Note that such relevance will always be relevance for a specific “public”, i.e. audience. The specific “audience” will be determined in the same way as “public reference” is determined and for the same reason; the relevant audience would be the audience that it is most rational, based on public evidence, to *take to be* the intended audience.

use designators correctly, i.e. to make sure that semantic reference and speaker's reference coincide. The same goes for how a speaker exploits non-conventional cues in order to communicate. Just like the hearer of an utterance will expect the utterer to be trying to use linguistic rules correctly in order to communicate, so a hearer can expect that the utterer will be trying to employ non-conventional cues "correctly". For example, if the communicative success of an utterance depends on the attention of both parties being drawn to the most visually salient object, then the hearer can expect the utterer to make the utterance only if the utterer believes that one object clearly qualifies as the most visually salient, that there is good reason to believe that the parties will identify the same object as most visually salient, and so on. In general, we can say that a rational and sincere speaker can be expected to have a standing intention to make sure that the public referent of a designator upon an occasion of use coincides with the speaker's reference of the utterance. This intention amounts to no more than the intention to communicate in such a way that the extra-conventional, public cues relevant to the utterance help to make the speaker's intention manifest¹⁴. If a speaker can be attributed such intentions, then the semantic referent and the public referent of a designator are relevant to his utterance in virtue of norms that *he himself is committed to* in virtue of attempting to communicate.

The above point about the basic nature of the notion of 'public reference' also suggests that we should not make the mistake of thinking that this notion is only applicable to exceptional cases where conventions are used in a non-standard way. The notion is relevant to all communicative contexts that feature a designator. This can be shown by considering a *case of seeming misdescription*. Stipulate that the facts are as Kripke says they are in his modified Donnellan case, but, this time, the speaker *does* intend to speaker-refer to the man drinking champagne. In other words, stipulate that some thought worthy of expression concerning the champagne drinker had suddenly occurred to the speaker, but that nothing in his past behaviour indicated that he is aware of the champagne drinker's existence. Further stipulate that the teetotaller is standing close by and has, just seconds prior to the utterance of (1), let out a yell of delight after receiving a phone call, hence making himself – and his happiness – salient. In such a scenario, speaker's reference and semantic reference coincide, but a rational observer would *still* think that the speaker wishes to speaker-refer to the teetotaller. Something has gone wrong: the mistake is a matter of the speaker's misjudgement of the communicative context. The speaker violated an obligation that goes beyond making sure that he means what his words mean; he violated a reasonable obligation to make sure that it is *evident* that he means what his words mean¹⁵. Hence, *even when the speaker is speaking in a standard way*, the extra-conventional evidence as to speaker intention available at the time of utterance still places some minimal constraint on what can usefully be uttered, and remains something that rational speakers and hearers should be mindful of.

The above considerations strongly suggest that the category of public reference is, as is the case with the categories of speaker's reference and semantic reference, among the "natural kinds" of communication. It forms a basic part of the scaffolding that makes communication possible; hence we should expect people to have some intuitive grasp of the notion of 'public reference'. I see no similar considerations that indicate some utility in tracking the *coincidence* of speaker's

¹⁴ Such rational constraints on communication can be motivated in terms of more general principles or in terms of established theories of pragmatics, e.g. Relevance Theory. My formulation is intentionally generic as my argument does not depend on any particular view of pragmatics.

¹⁵ Or, at least, he violated some obligation to make sure that he is not in a situation where there is strong evidence to upset the default assumption that he means what his words mean.

reference and public reference. Simply put, there is some point in tracking public reference (option three), but no point in tracking the coincidence of speaker's reference and public reference (option two). On the assumption that our intuitions track entities that are useful to track, I endorse option three. In other words, I do think that any lingering inclination to say that the speaker "said something true" in the Donnellan cases should be seen as an intuitive response to facts about public reference, not speaker's reference.

Note, however, that if the reader is unconvinced by the above reasoning and endorses option two, it remains the case that Kripke's analysis missed something important, namely the role of public reference in the Donnellan cases. This conclusion is interesting in itself. Both option two and three also imply the more important claim¹⁶ that there is a *species* of reference – public reference – that is fundamental to communication, is tracked by our intuitions, and that our intuitive judgments are responsive to¹⁷. Kripke's paper showed how easy it is to conflate semantic reference and speaker's reference. His paper also played a large role in sensitising the profession to the general importance of this distinction. The present considerations show that there is at least one more *species* of reference that should similarly be at the forefront of our minds.

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¹⁶ Of course, the construal of the misdescription cases offered in this paper does not affect the conclusion Kripke reaches in his argument against Donnellan. Kripke's conclusion, namely that the oddity of the Donnellan cases reflect a non-semantic *species* of reference, holds good even if we construe Donnellan's cases as concerning public reference and not speaker's reference.

¹⁷ It also suggests that we may be well served by recognising a parallel notion of 'public meaning' to go with 'speaker meaning' and 'semantic meaning'.

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