

THE OBJECTIVE DIMENSION OF BELIEVING *DE RE*

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In this paper I wish to elaborate on the objective dimension of reference and *de re* beliefs and respond to some objections to my analysis. In section 1, I shall set the stage by contrasting my position on the issue, presented in my 1982 paper,¹ with the position held by Hintikka, Kaplan, and Quine, which embraces a context-dependent character for the reference relation, and, consequently, for beliefs *de re*. In section 2, I shall present more arguments against the latter position. In section 3, I shall discuss a recent version of this latter position, advanced and contrasted with my own analysis by D.E. Over. In section 4, I highlight the fundamental difference between my own position and the ‘knowing-who’ conception of *de re* beliefs, advanced and developed by Hintikka, Kaplan, Quine, and defended by Over in his response to my article.

1. *Introduction*

1.1. Three major theorists, Hintikka, Kaplan and Quine, have held, in various forms, that the possession of *de re* beliefs is a context-dependent and interest-relative relation. What does exportation from a *de dicto* ascription to the corresponding *de re* ascription require? According to Hintikka, whose answer was

¹ *Journal of Philosophy*, LXXIX, 6, June 1982: 295–328.

adopted by Quine, it requires a condition of the form

(1) *s* knows who *a* is

(*s* being the believer) where knowledge is involved, or of the form

(2) *s* has an opinion who *a* is

where belief is involved,² both of these conditions being highly context-dependent. According to Kaplan, vividness is a necessary condition for such exportation, vividness being an interest-dependent notion the characterization of which invokes the knowing-who condition.³ Since these three writers, pioneers in the field of *de re* belief attributions rested *de re* belief attributions on, as they themselves recognized, notoriously context-dependent and interest relative conditions, *de re* belief attributions must consequently also be context dependent and interest relative. For Quine, this was a sufficient reason to dispense *de re* belief attributions.

In my article "Quine and Modalities *de re*: A Way Out?" (*op. cit.*, henceforth: *QMDR*) I argued, against the exposition adopted by these three authors, that exportation does not involve the knowing-who or the having-an-opinion-who conditions 1 and 2. Rather, it involves the reference relation (*i.e.*, as I use the term, the relation of *speaker reference*), connecting a believer *s*, who believes '*Fa*', the singular term '*a*' in his belief

² Or, for Hintikka, in some contexts, a condition such as *s* having a correct belief who *a* is. Cf. Jaako Hintikka, "Sosa on Propositional Attitudes *de dicto* and *de re*", *Journal of Philosophy*, LXVIII, Aug. 1971: 489–497; p. 493.

³ David Kaplan, "Quantifying in", in Leonard Linsky (ed.), *Reference and Modality*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, pp. 136–137.

'*Fa*',⁴ and an object *b*. I symbolized this relation as:⁵

(3) $IR_s('a', 'Fa') = b$.

This relation, I argued, is not context-dependent or interest-relative in the way the knowing-who condition 1 or the believing-who condition 2 are. Its not being so allows for the rehabilitation of exportation and, with that, of *de re* beliefs.⁶

1.2. Now one must be somewhat careful about the relevant

⁴ For present purposes, this notion of belief is peripheral and immaterial. To avoid entering into adjacent issues which need not be discussed here, the notion of speaker reference may be taken to be considered in contexts of assertions by the speaker of '*Fa*'. In my view, the notion of *s* believing '*Fa*', or equivalently, as I advocate, that '*Fa*' is a belief of *s* encompasses normal cases of *s* asserting '*Fa*', as well as other cases which call for speaker reference ascriptions. However, for those to whom my notion of belief is unacceptable, the restriction to reference in cases of the believer asserting '*Fa*' will do.

⁵ In *QMDR* I used the term 'the intended reference function' and the function-symbol '*IR*'. Even though I emphasized (fn. 15 there) that my notion of reference is non-intentional, this choice of terminology may mislead. It seems preferable, therefore, to replace the locution 'intended reference' by mere 'reference', in the sense of speaker's reference, and replace the notation '*IR*' of the corresponding function with '*R*'. (Hopefully the use of 'reference' —instead of 'intended reference'— in the sense of speaker reference will not create confusion. Over, in his response to my paper, was not so misled; cf. below.)

⁶ Cf. more below about the notion of context-dependence involved. Elsewhere ("A Theory of Thinker Reference" [*Journal of Philosophy*, forthcoming] and my book-manuscript *Reference and Knowledge* [unpublished]) I argue that the reference relation involves a causal component and a sentential knowledge (*de dicto*) component. Whatever the status of knowledge *de dicto* is, it is not pragmatic in the way the knowing-who condition is (*i.e.*, purpose relative and assessor-information relative; cf. below). It was this conception of mine concerning the reference relation (plugged into the above position on exportation) that allowed me to argue against the conception of exportation as context-dependent and interest relative (in this sense), and thus against Quine's despair with *de re* beliefs. Thus, it is quite erroneous to suggest, as Over does, that I play down the pragmatic character of the reference relation *because* it makes Quine pessimistic about *de re* beliefs (p. 59 in his response; cf. below).

notion of context-dependence. The knowing-who or believing-who conditions 1 and 2 are context-dependent, in the sense relevant to our concerns, in that their application is relative 1) to the purposes or interests in the context in question (whether of the believer or of the ascriber); 2) to the information possessed by the ascriber (as distinct from the believer *s*).⁷ It is these two respects of context-dependence which are at issue in this discussion of the status of *de re* believing —ascriber-dependence and interest-relativity. Thus, when discussing context-dependence in what follows I will be talking about these two respects. There is a third aspect of context-dependence which is *not* at issue here, which involves the determination of the *denotation* (as I use the term, *i.e.*, semantic reference) of the locutions employed by the believer (*e.g.*, the terms ‘*F*’ and ‘*a*’ in his belief ‘*Fa*’, as in 3 above and 4 below, for which we are considering exportation). Believers normally employ context-dependent expressions, and the denotation function would normally assign objects to context-dependent expressions in their context of use. One may willingly acknowledge that the determination of the speaker-reference (henceforth: reference) function (or of Kaplan’s representation relation) requires a resort to the denotation function, and is therefore context-dependent in *this* sense. However, this aspect of context-dependence does not concern us here. The issue is whether exportation is purpose and information relative in the first two senses specified. It is in these *two* senses that I shall discuss context-dependence in what follows. In this paper, the issue is whether believing *de re* is an objective phenomenon *modulo* the denotation relation. So it is, I argued in *QMDR*. This

⁷ Thus, the believer *s* is the one on whose belief ascriptions exportation is being contemplated. The assessors (ascribers) are, *e.g.*, you and I (when different from *s*) who use their intuitions and judgment to decide whether exportation on *s*’s belief ascriptions can go through.

is the objective dimension of believing *de re*.⁸

1.3. In *QMDR* I examined the exportation inference from the *de dicto* form of “*s* believes ‘*Fa*’”, *i.e.*,

(4) $B_s, 'Fa'$

to the *de re* form of “*s* believes ‘*F*’ of *a*”, *i.e.*,

(5) $B_s, 'F'$ of *a*.

Quine held that the additional premise suitable for exportation is

(6) $(\exists x)B_s(x = a)$,

which he read (after Hintikka), alternately as 2:

(2) *s* has an opinion who *a* is as well as, in the more literal way:

(7) *s* believes of someone that he is *a*.

In *QMDR*, I argued, against Quine (and Hintikka), that 2 and 7 are not equivalent, and that consequently 6 cannot be read as 2. Hence, the pragmatic character of 2 need not afflict exportation if 6 is the requisite additional premise. Yet, I proceeded to argue, neither 6, now read as 7, nor 2, are the requisite premises for exportation. The requisite premise for simple exportation (*i.e.*, in inferring 5 from 4), I argued is:

(8) $R_s('a', 'Fa') = a$,⁹

while for extended exportation (*i.e.*, in inferring from 4 that $B_s, 'F'$ of *k* —as opposed to 5), the requisite premise is 3. I then proceeded to elaborate on the causal character of the reference relation *R*.

⁸ To the extent that knowledge is taken as involving a normative dimension, via the justification relation, reference is not an empirical phenomenon. (Cf. above, fn. 6.) I will not here address the issue of whether or not the normative aspect of the justification relation is objective.

⁹ As noted before, I replace ‘*IR*’ with ‘*R*’.

2. *Believing who and believing of*

2.1. In his response to my *QMDR*, D.E. Over¹⁰ undertook to defend a knowing-who or believing-who conception of exportation against my criticism, and against my claim that exportation is not pragmatic, or context and interest relative, in the way the knowing-who construction is. He begins by defending, following Quine, the equivalence of 2 and 7. He says:

So Kvarn does not prove with his first, briefly described example, that [2] used in this sense is not equivalent to [7]. It can still be argued that such a version of [2] taken *de dicto* is equivalent to [7] taken *de dicto*.¹¹

In the example in question, *s* has her purse snatched by a man, with whom she had no contact before, and who disappears into the crowd. In order to defend the equivalence of 2 and 7, Over believes he needs to expand on my example, and he does so first by adding¹² that “*s* would be able to identify the purse-snatcher at a police line-up” (p. 49).

Yet whether *s* has an opinion who the purse snatcher is cannot hinge on whether she *would be* able to identify him in a police line-up. (Any line-up? Of any composition—including his look alike? Or *some* line-up—*e.g.*, with the male purse-snatcher surrounded by females? Or an appropriate line-up by legal standards? Every such? Some such?) *s*’s identifying abilities would be relevant to her having an opinion who the purse-snatcher is on an *occasion* of a line-up; but not at all on other occasions, *e.g.*, shortly after the purse-snatcher disappeared (thus reflecting the context-dependence of the knowing-who construction). Thus, I can imagine that she thought she recognized the purse-snatcher as her next-door neighbor, and nev-

¹⁰ D.E. Over, *Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXI, 1, January 1984: 48–59.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50. I have replaced Over’s numbers with the ones used in this paper for the same sentences.

¹² This is Over’s first expansion of my example.

ertheless would fail to identify the latter¹³ in a police line-up. Yet, in this case, shortly after the crime she would have a very good opinion (correct or not) who the purse-snatcher is. I can also imagine that she saw him well enough to identify him in a line-up, yet shortly after the crime (with no suspect —and thus no line-up) would have no opinion who the purse-snatcher is. Whether she would be able to identify the purse-snatcher in a future line-up is *irrelevant* to whether she has an opinion who he is in a situation where there is no line-up, *e.g.*, as in the example in question, shortly after the crime. Yet in that situation, when the purse-snatcher has already disappeared, *s* does not have an opinion who the purse-snatcher is, but nevertheless believes of someone, *i.e.*, the purse-snatcher, that he snatched the purse. So construed, the example *does* demonstrate, I believe, that 2 and 7 are not equivalent.¹⁴

2.2. Notice, however, that the central issue here is whether 7 is context-dependent. Over and myself agree that 2 is. I held that whether or not beliefs are *de re* is not a context-dependent matter, and accordingly, nor are *de re* attributions of the form of 7.¹⁵ I tried to illustrate this difference between 2 and 7 in *QMDR* by the example discussed by Over. A brief elaboration of this example can make this point crystal clear. As Over has recognized, while the purse-snatcher (after the snatching) is still seen by *s*, 7 is true. Now change the context (without, of course,

¹³ Or the purse-snatcher, whether they are the same or not.

¹⁴ Over's second possibility (of expanding my original example) considers the situation when the purse-snatcher has not yet disappeared, and when *s* can point at him. I shall discuss it shortly, since it provides an even clearer demonstration of the non-equivalence of 2 and 7. In the context of an actual line-up, where clearly 2 does not hold due to identification failure, Over believes that 7 does not hold either. I strongly believe it still does hold. Cf. below, section 4, and fn. 40.

¹⁵ Insofar as the *de re* element is concerned. Surely 7 can be context dependent if 'a' is, or 's' is, and surely in 7 there is no mention of time, etc. Cf. section 1.2 above.

changing the pertinent facts of the story),¹⁶ and suppose first that *s* (who did not recognize the purse-snatcher) was accompanied by a friend who also saw the purse-snatcher disappearing into the crowd. Now the friend asks *s*, as the purse-snatcher is running away, yet is still in their sight: “Do you have any idea who the purse-snatcher is?” *s*’s response, of course, should be No (*s* is aware that her friend sees the purse-snatcher running away just as she does). Now take a *different* context, in which *s*’s friend was looking in the other direction and did not see the crime. When *s* cries, “A thief! My purse was snatched!”, the friend turns around and asks her, “Do you have any idea who the purse-snatcher is?”, *s* can reply, “Yes, there he is!”, pointing at the purse-snatcher who has not yet disappeared in the crowd. Thus, at that same time, in response to the question of the friend who did not see the crime, 2 is quite true. Yet, in the first case, in the context of the friend who did see the crime, 2 was false. But surely, as Over recognizes, 7 is true in this case, and, furthermore, is true in both variations of the story. One would definitely not want to say that *s*’s possessing or not possessing *de re* beliefs about the thief hinges on whether or not her *friend* saw the theft.

The difference between these two variations lies only in the context, and has to do with the information possessed by the questioner as a result of her recent visual experiences (or lack of them). The relevant facts about the crime and *s*’s own epistemic state at the time have not been altered. What has been altered is the epistemic state of the friend who asks *s* whether 2 is true. Thus, when the context of questioning changes while the facts concerning *s* and the crime remain unaltered, 2 changes its truth-value; but 7 does not. Surely whether or not the friend saw the purse-snatcher at that time

¹⁶ That is, change the context without changing the facts which determine reference, as I see it.

has nothing to do with whether 7 is true; but it would clearly alter *s*'s correct response to the question as to whether 2 is true. I thus conclude that my thesis in *QMDR* that 2 and 7 are not equivalent is correct. Thus, the truth value of 7 is determined by the facts of the case *regardless of the information and purpose* that non-participating bystanders may have (whether they be the friend, someone reporting the case, or we, the assessors); 2, on the other hand, is critically dependent on the information and purpose of such bystanders.

Another argument for the same conclusion can be made with another variation on the example in *QMDR* discussed by Over. Suppose *s*'s purely epistemic state is as described in this example. She believes that her purse has been snatched, and she sees the purse-snatcher disappearing into the crowd. Only in this variation *s* is drugged and hallucinating: in fact there is no purse-snatcher —she has inadvertently dropped her purse, and no one is running away. To make the contrast more striking, assume there is no one there at all except *s* (and her friend, who looked the other way). *s* believes that the purse-snatcher has disappeared behind a nearby corner. In the *de dicto* sense *s* has an opinion who the purse-snatcher is. When asked by her incredulous friend, who had not noticed that the purse had been dropped, *s* would correctly affirm that she has an opinion who the purse-snatcher is: she would point in the direction where she believes she still sees him (only in fact there is no one there), thus making 2 true. Yet clearly she doesn't believe of anyone that he is the purse-snatcher, and thus 7 is patently false.

The *de dicto* readings of 2 and 7 are of particular interest for exportation,¹⁷ as Over agrees. Yet the evidence to the effect that they are not equivalent is so overwhelming that I saw no

¹⁷ *I.e.*, regarding the position occupied by 'a'.

need for expanding¹⁸ on the subject in *QMDR*.¹⁹

2.3. As Over mentions, Hintikka used a knowing-who construction as the extra premise in the case of knowledge. Since in *QMDR* I limited myself to discussing belief, I did not deal with the exportation problem for knowledge. But Over seems to suggest, following Hintikka, that the knowing-who condition is the requisite premise for exportation from knowing *de dicto* to knowing *de re* and, what is more, that it will do as the requisite condition for exportation from believing *de dicto* to believing *de re* (p. 56). Yet it is clear that the knowing-who condition (*i.e.*, 's knows who *a* is'), read of course, *de dicto* for '*a*'²⁰ would not do even for exportation from believing *de dicto* to believing *de re*.

To see that this is so, suppose the time is September 1999, shortly after an atomic war that took place in August 1999, of which an old lady (our *s*) and a young couple (in good health) are the only survivors. The couple has decided to call their next child Newperson 1. In fact, in December 2000, the wife will

¹⁸ Requests from the editors to shorten the originally much larger paper had to be accommodated in some way.

¹⁹ In *QMDR* (p. 300) I observed that 7 has existential import, while 2 does not (in addition to the occurrence of '*s*', of course), which preclude their equivalence. I brought there the example of the Russian village and the KGB to illustrate this point. Over, in his response, did not take up this argument, compelling as it is against the presumed equivalence of 2 and 7. The same point can also be made in an example where the believer *s* was deliberately misled to believe her husband had had a brother (in fact he never did). *s* was also given an (entirely false) elaborate description of the purported brother. One evening she thought she saw someone in the garden, and thought she noticed a good deal about him, enough to be convinced it was her husband's brother. In fact there was nobody in the garden, not even an object she mistook for that man: She was just hallucinating. Yet she clearly had an opinion (*de dicto*) who the man in the garden was (she would say: it was my husband's brother). Yet she believed of no one that he was the man in the garden: 7 is false, 2 is true.

²⁰ It won't do for the purposes of exportation to adopt its *de re* form: *s* might not refer by 'the shortest spy', yet may know very well who the shortest spy is (*de re*) in case the latter is his next-door neighbor (whom *s* does not suspect of being a spy).

give birth to a healthy boy, and will indeed call him Newperson 1. Surely *s* has an opinion *de dicto* (now, September 1999) who Newperson 1 is: she even *knows de dicto* who Newperson 1 is —she knows the parents, etc. But even though she believes and knows that Newperson 1 will have bluish eyes (being knowledgeable about genetics, and, in particular, about the parent's genetic constitution),²¹ she cannot be said, in the year 2002, to have known or believed Newperson 1 to have bluish eyes in September 1999. (This is thus a counter-example to the theses that the knowing-who condition is a sufficient condition for exportation from knowing *de dicto* to knowing *de re*, that the know-who condition is a sufficient condition for exportation from believing *de dicto* to believing *de re*, and the thesis that the condition '*s* has a correct belief about who *a* is' (*de dicto*) is a sufficient condition for exporting from believing *de dicto* to believing *de re*. The latter condition was proposed by Hintikka and was taken up by Over (p. 51).)

The knowing-who condition does not only fail as a sufficient condition for exportation (from believing/knowing *de dicto* to believing/knowing *de re*), as the above example shows, but it also fails as a necessary condition for exporting from knowing *de dicto* to knowing *de re*. In the purse-snatching case, *s* may well know that the purse-snatcher is tall, and thus may also know the purse-snatcher to be tall (thus *de re*), without knowing who the purse-snatcher is (in the appropriate context, shortly after he disappears), or even having an opinion who the purse-snatcher is. So here exportation holds, without the knowing-who condition obtaining. Consequently this example disqualifies the knowing-who condition also as a necessary condition for exporting believing *de dicto* to believing *de re*. Accordingly, the same is true for the believing-who condition (and *a fortiori* for the believing-who-correctly condition).

²¹ And her examinations *after* the atomic explosion reveal that no genetic damage had been done in this respect.

2.4. In his “Quantifying In”,²² David Kaplan proposed a vividness condition (on the singular term which is a candidate for exportation) as a necessary condition for exportation. While being in extensive agreement with a good deal of Kaplan’s approach in that article to exportation regarding belief, his vividness requirement, which he recognizes as interest-relative, is, in my view, mistaken.

The vividness of a name, according to Kaplan, is closely connected to knowing-who, or acquaintance, thus endowing the character in question with a leading role in the believer’s inner story.²³

Yet vividness varies in a way that does not seem to have much to do with whether one does or does not have beliefs *de re*. Two people can have the very same interaction, and yet form representations which differ considerably in vividness. Thus, my friend, who is a bird freak, and I, both have a long look at a bird on a nearby bush. Yet he will discern features which I will not, and be able to extract information which I will not. Furthermore, it will remind him of his favorite bird whom he fed daily, and who deserted him a few months earlier, and he will thus be moved by this encounter. He will discern distinguishing marks on this bird (*e.g.*, a color irregularity, or a broken feather) which set it apart from other birds of its kind. For him, the image of the bird, which he finds so intriguing, will be vivid and rich and associate smoothly with other items in his inner story; I, on the other hand, will have a meager image. Yet both of us believe this bird to have distracted our attention in the middle of our conversation about the next elections. We both have *de re* beliefs of this bird. We have both had pretty much the same sort of encounter with the bird. Yet, due to differences in skills

²² *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 135–138.

²³ Kaplan still favors a knowing-who or a believing-who condition for quantifying in his *Demonstratives* (unpublished manuscript, 1977), p. 88.

and knowledge (in view of which he possesses much finer discerning capacity and recognition skills concerning birds) and due to differences in prior experiences and interest, my friend forms a vivid image, while I do not.

To see that vividness is interest dependent in a way in which believing *de re* is not, recall that for Kaplan a vivid name must play a major role in the inner story of the believer (*ibid.*, p. 136). Now suppose *s*, our believer, is informed by a friend that he (the friend) has just returned from Tegucigalpa, a city in Honduras, and that it is a pretty town. He also tells *s*: “With your skills, you can make a fortune there.” However, *s* does not have any interest in making money, and this being the only information he has about Tegucigalpa, he puts it out of his mind just as soon as he hears it. It does not play a significant or major role in his inner story: It is not a vivid name for him.

Yet, due to an internal psychological transformation (or as a result of a pill he took or of some other influence), a few hours later his interests change radically: being wealthy becomes the thing uppermost in his mind. He now recalls what his friend said, he tries to imagine how he can make money in Tegucigalpa with his skills, and getting to Tegucigalpa now becomes his foremost concern. In short, the non-vivid name now becomes very vivid indeed. Yet his having *de re* beliefs of Tegucigalpa has not changed: he had them before the transformation (as a result of what his friend, serving as a source, told him), and he has them now as well. Thus, while the name shifted from being not vivid to being vivid, reflecting a shift in interest, the *de re* character of his relevant beliefs remained constant.

Thus, whether or not a formed image is vivid has little to do with whether we possess a *de re* belief. On my view, the police officer who has just come to the scene of a brutal murder, sees the dead victim and knows it was the work of a single murderer, possesses *de re* beliefs about that murderer. Yet he is not

acquainted with him nor knows him, nor has a vivid name for him. Furthermore, in cases of acquisition of reference from a source, vividness can clearly be absent. An acquaintance told me about the girl he met last night. I thereby acquired reference to that girl, yet I need not know (nor have an opinion) who the girl he met last night is:²⁴ I am not acquainted with her, and she need not play any major role in my inner story (insofar as I am not interested in my acquaintance's dating experiences).²⁵ Moreover, it is well known that in various cases of acquisition of reference from a source, who the source was may well be forgotten. The girl who, a week ago, made a convincing speech in an impromptu rally downtown may have a reference for me, if such a token appeared in a story recounted to me by a source, even if the identity of the source is by now forgotten, and even if I thus do not have an opinion (nor know) who that girl was. Vividness, a close relative of knowing who, is not, therefore, a constituent of exportation, and does not enter into the making of believing *de re*.

3. *Effective reference*

3.1. Over proposes an alternative account of exportation, one closely related to the knowing-who condition. According to him, "the step from [4] to [5], 'exportation', is justified if *s* can use '*a*' with effective reference" (p. 54),²⁶ where "the concept of effective reference [is] the notion of an ability to decide which object is being referred to" (p. 56).²⁷ But this proposal does not seem to have much promise.

²⁴ Even he may not know —he forgot to ask her for her name, telephone number, etc.

²⁵ Compare also Kripke's example concerning Einstein, or Feinman or Gödel: there is reference, and thus *de re* beliefs, yet no vividness whatsoever.

²⁶ I have replaced Over's numbers with their corresponding ones in this paper.

²⁷ Thus, Over wants to associate the possession of *de re* beliefs by a

Suppose there is a non-referring but omniscient computer²⁸ available to me (of course, for particular cases, local, though sufficiently thorough, approximations of knowledgeability would do). This computer can thus correctly answer my pertinent questions. Another powerful, resourceful agent, let us assume, can use the information provided by the computer to take me to remote and inaccessible places.²⁹ The omniscient

believer, as distinct from mere *de dicto* ones, with the possession of more information and abilities. The information in question may yield an ability to pick out the object in question or abilities to acquire further information that would yield further abilities helpful for picking out the object, or else, if not such abilities in him, abilities to pick it out in others (*e.g.*, in his contemporaries) (*ibid.*, pp. 53–63).

²⁸ Thus, suppose a computer factory manufactures computers which answer questions concerning the location of objects described to the computer by a definite description, which is provided together with information concerning the context in which the question is asked (time, place, origination, etc.). Thus, the information available to such a computer will include referential information (*e.g.*: the city called by its inhabitants ‘London’ is located x miles to the north and y miles to the east of the southernmost tip of the country called by its inhabitants ‘England’). Among the information available to it, the computer will possess a list of all singular terms denoting individuals by which the believer in question does not have reference. A constraint on the information provided by the computer in response to questions by the believer would be that the computer would not provide information that would allow the believer to acquire reference for singular terms for which he did not have reference before through sources specified by the computer to whom he did have reference. Thus, in response to specific questions such as ‘Where is a located?’, he will be given very specific spatio-temporal information, relative to the time and location he is at, but *without* thereby providing him with mediated reference (via a ‘source’) for singular terms, for which he did not have reference before. Of course, assume that out of the enormous number of random collections of information fed to the computers manufactured by the company, one computer happened to possess a correct body of information, and that this happened to be the computer in question, and that the believer believes (for whatever reason) that the computer is infallible. (Thus, characterizing the computer as omniscient really amounts to its possessing correct and sufficiently complete information of the sort described.)

²⁹ Again, some more realistic local approximations can do here as well. (Notice that as an extra precaution we may not want to combine the comput-

computer can thus provide information which will help me “decide which object is being referred to”, by providing a place designation, so that the agent can bring me before that object or person at that place and point to it.

Now according to Over, whether I do or do not refer by a given singular term depends on “my ability to decide which object is being referred to” (*i.e.*, in his terminology, semantically referred to). Thus whether I do or do not have appropriate purely *de dicto* beliefs³⁰ would seem to depend on whether I have been given access to the computer in question or can resort to the good will of the agent or even can compel him to help me in my searches), since this will determine, in the situation at hand, whether or not I will be able to decide (with their help) which is the semantic referent of my term. But this is absurd. The existence of such a computer and such an agent and the availability of their help (as long as it has not yet been provided) have nothing to do with whether or not I refer. Effective *Habeas Corpus* procedures do not underlie reference.

As Kripke has pointed out, and apart from the above computer-agent device, reference by a term does not require that the speaker remember who his source is. If the speaker does not, he would *not* be “able to follow the history of the use of a proper name back to its referent”, which, according to Over, would endow him with reference. The notions “an ability to decide”, “ability to pick out effectively” or “ability to follow”, all involve practical abilities which are contingent upon conducive external circumstances in a way which is foreign to the notion

er and the agent in one, since we want to prevent the latter from acquiring reference to the object in question before actually launching on the project of taking me to a place in front of it, in order to prevent me from acquiring reference via the information the agent would possess —cf. fn. 27.) For the same reason we may stipulate that at the time of questioning, the agent does not have reference by (relevant) singular terms by which I do not have reference.

³⁰ I exclude here beliefs about distant past or future, but presently non-existent, objects, unless we want to consider a magic time machine as well.

of reference, as the computer-agent example and the forgetting-the-source case have illustrated. These two cases show, respectively, that having an ability to pick out effectively is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for reference.

3.2. That effective reference (in Over's sense) is insufficient for exportation can also be shown as follows. According to Over, in order to refer to *a* effectively, it is sufficient that "*s* knows the name of *a* and can follow its causal history back to *a* or at least to some significant information, of the above sort, about *a*". The latter would be satisfied if "he grasps some description of *a* [or] has some information about *a*, which could, or could have been, used to pick *a* out" (p. 57). Now take the name 'Newman 1', as introduced by David Kaplan (for the first-born child in the 21st century). It has acquired notoriety, and in fact various philosophers keep hearing it. Suppose this is also the situation in February 2000.³¹ *s* heard the name 'Newman 1' in a philosophical discussion. Knowing the users, he can, let us imagine, follow the causal history of 'Newman 1' back to David Kaplan, and thereby acquire the significant piece of information that Newman 1 is the first-born child in the 21st century. He would thereby certainly grasp some description of *a*. It would also be information of the required sort, *à la* Over, because we can assume that, due to some nuclear holocaust, only 30 children were born in the first month of 2000, and they were all gathered under the supervision of *s*, who is in charge of "operation survival, 2000". Surely the information that Newman 1 is the first child born in 2000 can be used to single him out, assuming birth records are still being kept accurately and accessibly.³² Thus, *s* has "significant information of the above sort, about *a*", *i.e.* "information about *a* which could [...] [be] used to pick *a*

³¹ Since philosophers keep talking about Martians long after they know there are none, they may well keep using 'Newman 1' for the same illustrative purpose after the year 2000.

³² And assume no overlap in birth-times.

out”. Yet *s* does *not* refer by ‘Newman 1’, nor have *de re* beliefs about Newman 1 any more than I do now, *prior* to picking out Newman 1 (if he does pick him out). Therefore, Over’s sufficient condition for effective reference, which is designed to allow exportation, fails.

3.3. One need not use the computer-agent or the Newman 1 examples in order to produce cases of an effective ability to pick out *a* despite the fact that the belief concerning ‘*a*’ is a purely *de dicto* one. Having purely *de dicto* beliefs concerning ‘The tallest kid in this room’ (where the room contains 20 kids *s* invited for her 8-year old son’s birthday party)³³ could provide a fairly simple way of picking him out (just line them up), a much simpler way than being in possession of a *de re* belief via the singular term ‘The man I saw in my garden 3 years ago’ (about whom not much else is known). Similarly, though having merely *de dicto* beliefs concerning ‘the winner of the election’, where the results (yet unknown to me) are to be announced in one minute and while being flanked on both sides by the two candidates, I nevertheless possess excellent abilities to pick out the winner: All it takes is for me to stay right there and wait one minute.

For Over, not only ability to pick out the semantic referent suffices for *de re* beliefs. Even if *s* cannot actually pick out the object, reference may still be established if he possesses information that would enable *others* to pick it out (p. 56). But who are these others? Presumably, Over would agree, Jack the Ripper recognized himself as ‘Jack the Ripper’.³⁴ Suppose I flew above a wrestling match in some small town that has just

³³ Such beliefs can be purely *de dicto* even though *s* may have reference to each of those kids via *other* terms, *e.g.*, their proper names. Similarly, the head of the Chinese espionage service need not have reference by ‘the shortest spy’ even if the latter, as he indeed believes, is under his command, and he can just order a search that would pick him out readily.

³⁴ I use Over’s own example against his proposal. Yet, unlike him, I do believe we have reference by ‘Jack the Ripper’.

ended. I do not know who won (or even who was playing, though I know the name of the place). In such a case ‘the winner of the wrestling match at place x on day y ’ carries no reference for me. But the information conveyed in this expression is sufficient for allowing various others, who were present at that match and who know the result, to readily point out the winner. In the audience in the theatre I did not attend last night there must have been (so I believe, somehow, for some superstitious reason) a 30-year-old Haitian dermatologist whose hobby is collecting of Fiji stamps. Let us assume that there indeed was one such Haitian there: I do not *thereby* have *de re* beliefs of her. Yet she (or her husband) might have readily been able to pick herself out by this description. Every party, so I believe, has a killjoy. I know that every Saturday night there is a party at the club house of the apartment complex I live in. At the party there last night there was indeed a killjoy, and no one at the party can forget who he was and what he did. But I do not have *de re* beliefs about that killjoy. Yet many of those present can readily use the information in ‘the killjoy at the club house last night’ to point him out. And if I were to conduct a fairly straightforward inquiry of my own, so would I.

I thus conclude that there is no correlation between the *de dicto-de re* distinction and the possession of abilities— by the believer or by others—to pick out the semantic referent.

4. *The fundamental contrast*

4.1. On a deeper level, the suggestion that the distinction is associated with such abilities (or with the knowing-who construction) collides head-on with the picture of the distinction between believing *de dicto* and *de re* that I have in mind.

Thus, Over’s more fundamental challenge is to the conception which I favoured in *QMDR* that a certain sort of causal condition is a necessary condition for reference. On this issue unfortunately, there seems to be considerable divergence of in-

tutions, separating many theorists prone to favoring a causal outlook from others, and in particular, separating Over and me. Unlike Over, I certainly do believe that the police chief in charge of the investigation did believe of Jack the Ripper (even before he was captured) that he brutally murdered the victims discovered, and I certainly do consider myself and others to believe *of* Deep Throat that he helped establish a milestone in the history of journalism. The latter case seems particularly clear since I (and every reader) have derived our reference to Deep Throat through the reporting of Woodward and Bernstein, who, by that term, clearly did have reference to this person. I am also quite convinced that I do not have *de re* beliefs about future objects (such as Newman 1) which do not yet exist.³⁵ I am even willing to go further and hold, contrary to Over's convictions, in the example about the purse-snatching, that *s* might well have believed of the purse-snatcher that he was a criminal, even if she had not lain eyes on him.³⁶ Similarly, I hold that I have *de re* beliefs regarding the man who came on the telephone line while I was talking to my friend yesterday and said 'Hello' four times in an insistent voice, and I likewise have *de re* beliefs by means of proper names acquired from a source already forgotten. It is thus clear that such a causal conception of *de re* beliefs has nothing whatever to do with the capacity of effective identification (which Over favors) or with a knowing-who conception. This difference is a consequence of a fundamental divergence in outlooks concerning the *de re-de dicto* distinction.

³⁵ I also do not take myself or anybody else to have *de re* beliefs about numbers: as a nominalist concerning numbers, I do not believe that they exist. I hold the capacity to participate in causal relations to be a hallmark of being an existent object; cf. my "Possible Worlds and Causal Empiricism", *The Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, forthcoming

³⁶ She noticed her purse being snatched, and had good reason to be convinced (correctly) that somebody was snatching it; but when she turned around she could not pinpoint the thief.

On my view, there cannot be any difference in *abilities* between someone possessing a singular term by which he refers, and someone possessing a singular term (with exactly the same information) by which he *believes*, though mistakenly, that he refers.³⁷ Consider the example in *QMDR* concerning the man in front of the railroad station. Our believer, looking out of the railroad station window one very foggy day, believes there to be a man standing 20 feet ahead of him, and believes he sees him well enough to be able to tell a good deal about him. In fact, he sees what is only a fog formation, since the fog is so thick he can not see any farther than 5 feet ahead. Yet in fact there is a fellow standing 20 feet ahead of him, completely unseen by him, who looks just as our believer mistakenly imagines. Clearly, our believer does not possess *de re* beliefs through the term 'the man in front of the railroad station'. But his abilities for picking out that man are indistinguishable from those of a person standing next to him, looking through another window where the fog is locally thin, enough so that he *can* in fact see this fellow. Insofar as their relevant *de dicto* beliefs are concerned, these two believers are virtually identical.³⁸ Insofar as their relevant abilities are concerned, they may very well be identical too. Yet the first does not, though the second does, have reference by (and thus *de re* belief in terms of) 'the man in front of the railroad station'. In my view, it is only the possession of *de dicto* beliefs that has anything to do with specifying the psychological state at a given time for a certain cognizer: whether his beliefs are *de re* or not makes no psychological difference

³⁷ So long as those respective beliefs of theirs remain intact, and the environment in which they are in is the same. (The history through which they reached their respective states must, of course, be different.)

³⁸ I assume that their *de dicto* beliefs concerning the windows they look through are indistinguishable (they are, say, in a circular room with windows all around on the second floor, away from the elevator or any other salient landmark). Any two adjacent windows are separated from each other by curtains, and they are both convinced that all windows are occupied by viewers.

whatsoever. However, whether or not his beliefs are *de re* has a lot to do with his *history of acquiring those beliefs*. It has a lot to do with the sort of interactions with his environment (if any) through which he came to possess the beliefs in question. It is this history of acquisition and such causal relations in virtue of which it would be correct to ascribe to him *de re* relations to certain objects which thereby determine the objects his beliefs are *of*.

4.2. Let me illustrate this point more vividly. Suppose we have a computer capable of constructing human brains (and human beings) with raw biological material in accordance with given specifications. The computer has available to it a huge array of options for constructing a 73 year old individual, and these options are specified in terms of the biological constitution of the brain cells, etc. (but are *not* modeled after actual particular individuals). The computer is ordered to produce such a specimen, whose qualities he chooses randomly. He happens (by pure accident) to construct an exact, indistinguishable copy of Ronald Reagan. (Ronald Reagan and his counterpart, I hold, would be in exactly the same psychological state.) Yet although Ronald Reagan would have many *de re* beliefs, his counterpart would not. The causal history of the counterpart disqualifies beliefs of his from being *de re*, whereas corresponding beliefs of the real Ronald Reagan are *de re*. Yet surely there is not a speck of difference between Reagan and his counterpart concerning the possession of any abilities (or any information) whatsoever.³⁹ Still the difference between them regarding the *de re* char-

³⁹ Of course, you will have to neutralize the fact that one is in the White House, the other just out of the factory. So put them both at that minute alone, side-by-side, outside the factory (so that no traces are left as to who came from the White House and who came from the factory: same clothes, rings, etc.). There is no telling now who is the president and who is the clone. Similarly, for the issue not to be trivial, we must of course not count abilities to have beliefs with a *de re* element (*e.g.*, the ability to conclude correctly in 5 minutes whether he believes of his mother that the number of

acter of their beliefs is as great as can be.⁴⁰

At bottom, there is a fundamental issue that I have taken up with Hintikka, Kaplan, and Quine. I proposed condition 3 (that is: $IR_s('a', 'Fa') = a$) as the requisite premise in the exportation inference, in contrast to the knowing-who condition 's knows who a is'. The issue is whether or not reference is ascriber and interest relative (cf. above, section 1). In *QM-DR*, I disqualified Quine's version, 's has an opinion who a is', from constituting the extra premise for exportation, and I have argued herein against the stronger condition of having a correct opinion who, against the knowing-who condition (employed by Hintikka), against Kaplan's vividness condition, and against Over's effective reference condition. Yet Over believes there is a strong argument against my position that the reference relation is not context-dependent (in the sense under consideration). The argument Over brings is based, again, on the purse-snatcher example (when *s* has a good look at the purse-snatcher). According to Over, in an ordinary context, *s* may well be regarded as having *de re* beliefs of the thief. Yet, given a police line-up in which she cannot identify him, there would no longer be any pertinent *de re* beliefs, since "it would in this context be at least misleading for her or the police to claim without qualification that there was someone in the line-up whom she believed to be the purse-snatcher" (p. 58).

Much more than a qualification is needed. I claim that, on the contrary, that in this very example there is no interest or information relativity whatsoever concerning the possession of *de re* beliefs by *s*, and thus no context-dependence in any inter-

her fingers is divisible by two). Such do not seem to be the sort of abilities Over has in mind (e.g., abilities to locate someone, to point at someone, etc.).

⁴⁰ The above arguments apply against the positions of Hintikka, Kaplan and Quine as well, since Over characterizes *de re* beliefs via information or abilities, thereby developing further the direction of their characterization by means of the knowing-who locution.

esting, relevant sense.⁴¹ Yet a careful analysis is called for. A *description of the situation* with the usual *de re* construction may be misleading because, even though *s does believe of* someone in the line-up that he is a thief (*i.e.*, of the purse-snatcher), she *also* suspends-judgement *of* that very fellow as to whether or not he is the purse-snatcher. These two are *entirely consistent* with each other. Over would be quite right in saying that it would be misleading to use *only* the *de re* belief construction on this occasion. But this is so not because it would be false, but because important relevant information is *left out* if only this construction is being used: the *de re* form of the suspend-judgement construction is called for as well. Since elsewhere I have dealt with this issue at some length, I will not go into it in further detail here,⁴² except to register my claim that this sort of case does not in any way undermine the context-independence (in the sense used here) of believing *de re*.

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⁴¹ *I.e.*, modulo the semantic reference relation; cf. above, section 1.2.

⁴² Cf. my "The Hesperus-Phosphorus Case" (*Theoria*, 1984), esp. sections 8–9. Cf. also my "Kripke's Belief Puzzle" (*Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, vol. X, 1985, section VII).

RESUMEN

En este ensayo se sostiene que la dimensión objetiva de la relación del referente y de las opiniones *de re*, tal como se refleja en la teoría del autor sobre la inferencia “exportación” (*exportation*), que a su vez fue concebida en términos de la relación del referente. En particular se contrasta esta dimensión objetiva de las opiniones *de re* con la contexto-dependencia de las formulaciones “tener una opinión sobre ¿quién es *X*?” y “conocer ¿quién es *X*?” que se usan en los análisis al estilo de Hintikka, y la contexto-dependencia del carácter vívido de las experiencias, que se utiliza en el análisis de Kaplan.