*Singular Content and Deferred Uses of Indexicals**

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Abstract

Deferred uses of indexicals challenge views on singular content in at least two ways. On the one hand, they could be regarded as conveying propositions about objects which are not entirely discriminated by the hearer (or speaker as well), violating possible epistemic constraints on semantic content. On the other, they can also receive attributive interpretations, making it dubious that their truth-conditional contribution could be determined by pragmatics-free semantic processes, as recently suggested by Emma Borg (2004). This paper gives a critical review of some existing semantic approaches to the issues and it argues in support of a truth-conditional pragmatic approach, while also suggesting a modification of existing TCP accounts that seems necessary in order to accommodate the empirical facts across different uses of indexical expressions.

1 Introduction

There is substantial agreement with the claim that although indexical expressions encode descriptive information (e.g. 'the speaker of the utterance' in the case of 'I', 'the addressee of the utterance' in the case of 'you'), their truth-conditional contribution cannot be equated with definite descriptions. The *locus classicus* of a theoretical defence of such claim is Kaplan's (1989a, 1989b) logic of indexicals. There, he distinguishes two aspects of what may be regarded as the 'meaning' of an indexical expression. On the one hand, there are linguistic mechanisms that select the relevant individual in a context: the *character of* the expression. On the other hand, there is the indexical's truth-conditional contribution: the expression's *content*. This distinction captures the fact that characters, regarded as a property of a linguistic system (i.e. expression-types), are context-*in*dependent; while at the same time it preserves the idea that *contents*, the truth-conditional contribution of

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indexical-tokens corresponds to particular individuals or objects, which vary systematically according to features of the context.

Kaplan defined *characters* and *contents* in a way such that the former would 'load' individuals into the latter. From this characterization a lot of interesting predictions follow. Firstly, once individuals are 'loaded', the content of the utterance determines a singular proposition, i.e. a semantic representation which somehow depends on the objects it is about. Secondly, Kaplan's defence of direct reference for indexicals is not only interested in the linguistic mechanisms that deliver singular propositions, but also in the *way* they do so. *Obstinately rigid* terms, such as 'the cube root of 8' and complex expressions formed by dthat-operators, could also be used to convey singular propositions, but they are different from *direct referential* terms in the way reference is determined (Kaplan 1989b: 579-582). Indexicals, a paradigmatic example of the latter, convey singular propositions by virtue of exploiting certain metaphysical features of the context, e.g. the utterance's speaker (agent), its time, its place, etc…, while the rigidity of content in the case of complex descriptive expressions, such as 'dthat[The F]', is achieved via the satisfaction of the relevant property.

So far, I have only given an intuitive characterization of singular content. It is time now to see how this notion is captured in theoretical terms. It is important to note two intuitive ideas regarding the notion of 'object-dependent' propositions. Firstly, the existence and individuation of the proposition depends on the existence and individuation of the object it is about. Secondly, if the proposition is used in a counterfactual statement, the identity of the object does not change across possible worlds. Had we no object, were the object too complex to be individuated, or were the object different according to each considered situation, it would be difficult to see how the proposition at stake would concern *that* specific object. In addition to these remarks on object-dependence, one might require speaker and hearer to know which object the proposition concerns, so a singular thought is communicated. Since my last claim will receive special attention throughout the paper, I will reserve more comments on it for later on.

These intuitions on singularity of content are nicely captured by Kaplan's picture of indexicality. Given that singular propositions are represented as ordered tuples containing only objects(s) and property(ies), their existence and individuation would crucially depend on the existence and individuation of the object(s) they are about. Moreover, the counterfactual behaviour displayed by directly referential expressions is explained by two Kaplanian mechanisms. First, there is the distinction between *contexts of utterance*: the set of parameters which captures certain metaphysical facts concerning the communicative situation at hand; and *circumstances of evaluation*: the counterfactual settings against which we evaluate the utterance with respect to truth or falsity. Secondly, given that the *character* of indexicals determines the intension of the proposition relative to contextual indices

(i.e. agent, addressee, time, place, world), indexical utterances would determine, at the intensional level, object-dependent propositions, which could then be *evaluated* with respect to truth or falsity in different *circumstances*. For example, an utterance of 'I could have been a millionaire' said by me is true *iff* there is a world–time pair, different from the actual, in which Thiago Galery instantiates the property of being a millionaire. The intuitive punch of Kaplan's remarks emerges when we take a look at the converse possibility: the idea that propositional operators operate on *characters*. If that were the case, the same utterance above would not be about *ME*. Instead, it would be true *iff* there is a world–time pair, different from the actual, where the speaker in that world instantiates the property of being a millionaire at that time: clearly a counterintuitive result.

But is object-dependence all there is to the notion of singular content? Suppose that a speaker ***S*** expressed a proposition ***p***, dependent (in the aforementioned sense) on the object ***o*** by an utterance ***u***. Here, we may be tempted to say that ***S*** expressed an object-dependent proposition about ***o***, but what about a hearer, who grasps the content of ***u***? Has he entertained an object-dependent proposition just by the very fact that the speaker expressed one? Possibly not, for it could be said that the hearer needs to identify *which* object is referred to (i.e. ***o***). Working the 'loading' metaphor backwards, one might ask what 'loads' objects into propositions and how? Following Russell (1911: 159), whatever the answers to these questions may be, they must not evoke knowledge of a unique satisfier of a certain description; otherwise we would run the risk of losing object-dependence. In this famous (1911) paper, he championed the necessity of a *direct* way of identifying the referents of singular thoughts.

Following Evans (1982, chapter 4), it seems that Russell's remarks are well motivated, once we shift from the conditions on *expressing* a singular thought to the conditions on *understanding* a singular thought. Kaplan was well aware of this, as he conceived the mechanisms of his logic of demonstratives as capable of satisfying the more stringent conditions on understanding. According to him (1989b: 578-582), the linguistic rules encoded by indexicals relate the hearer and context in a way such that the expressions convey *simple representations*. As mentioned before, this kind of representation is different from the complex representations formed when descriptions are embedded under a *dthat* operator, in the sense that the former, but not the latter, could provide a direct way in which reference is determined. Given that this paper aims at discussing the communicative features of a specific use of indexical expressions, it seems necessary to motivate the three principles that might be involved in the *grasp* of utterances which express singular thoughts. Schematically, they are:

(E) One who entertains the singular thought must know which object is referred to by the constituent expression ***e*** of the utterance used to convey it.

(M) The truth-conditional contribution of the constituent expression ***e*** is exhausted by the object it denotes (i.e. the existence and individuation of a singular thought depends on the existence and individuation of the object it is about).

(L) The constituent expression ***e*** must denote the same individual in every possible world (i.e. it must be a rigid designator).

Here, I am using (E), (M) and (L) to characterize constraints of an epistemic, metaphysical and linguistic order, respectively. One may argue that once we follow the suggestion that rigid designation is characterized as a *linguistic* phenomenon, we are automatically committed to the idea that our ability to track a specific individual in counterfactual reasoning *must* be addressed at the level of what is encoded by the expression, and for this claim we might need extra argument. For the moment, I will not address this point, as we shall see much of this paper is dedicated to it. Although I keep the terminology, nothing of importance hinges on it.

Part of the purpose of this introductory section is to show that (E), (M), and (L) are deeply interconnected. If this is so, they not only define what is required for the grasp of a singular thought, namely, the satisfaction of all of them; but also what is required for grasping a general thought, namely, the violation of at least one of them. Taking (E) as an example, one might follow Evans in holding that in cases where there is lack of discriminating knowledge, reference would be 'fixed by description' (see Evans 1982: 48, 144-145). Obviously, given the intimate relation between the three constraints, general thoughts would be entertained also in situations where (M) or (L) are violated.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how constraints on singular content relate to descriptive interpretations of indexicals[1], more specifically to the 'deferred cases'. The structure of the paper runs as follows. In section 2, I shall give a few examples of deferred use. In section 3, I discuss Nunberg's (1993) approach, especially his rejection of pragmatic treatments of such cases. In section 4, I look into Borg's (2002, 2004) position: an interesting approach on the relations between singular semantic content and discriminating knowledge. In section 5.1, I briefly review the truth-conditional pragmatic approaches proposed so far, more specifically Recanati (1993) and Powell (2003). Section 5.2 aims to set up the points in which my own proposal departs from the TCP proposals just reviewed in order to accommodate empirical facts across the full range of indexical uses. It must be noted that my position is located within the relevance theoretic framework

[1] I believe that the points discussed in this paper could also apply to deferred interpretations of names (following Powell 1998), but I will not attempt to pursue this here.

initiated by Sperber and Wilson (1986/95) and developed by Carston (2002) and many others. Concluding remarks are stated in section 6.

2 The Deferred Cases

In a series of papers, Geoffrey Nunberg (1993, 1995, 2004b) discusses the so called 'deferred' uses of indexicals and demonstratives, or simply 'deferrals'. The terminology was introduced by Quine (1968: 194) as 'deferred ostention' and has some variations in the literature. Here, I am taking these terms as interchangeable. A paradigmatic example of a deferred case, originally due to Schiffer (1981: 49), is given in (1) (italics indicate contextual information available to communicators).

(1) *Someone encountering a giant footprint in the sand points at it and says*: 'He must be a giant!'

Apparently, (1) should be interpreted as 'the person whose foot made the print must be a giant', and if this intuition is right, the indexical's truth-conditional contribution is a definite description. In this situation, the speaker apparently does not have any particular individual in mind; otherwise the use of the modal would be odd. Accepting that (E) should constrain singular thoughts, it seems that the mental representation she intends the hearer to derive is general. Assuming that the hearer also does not have a direct form of acquaintance with the individual who made the footprint, a general thought would be communicated. Let us consider another example, due to Nunberg (1993: 14):

(2) *US Supreme Court Justice O'Connor says*: 'We might have been liberals.'

Again, it seems that the pronoun in (2) might be interpreted as 'the US Supreme Court Justices'. But before we jump to this conclusion, I would like to make some preliminary remarks. For starters, as pointed out by Nunberg (1993:14-15), the sentence above has two readings: (i) a rigid one, according to which there are possible worlds in which the individuals selected by 'we', in the context where (2) was uttered, are liberals, and (ii) a non-rigid one, according to which there are possible worlds in which the US Supreme Court Justices in *those* worlds are liberals. The availability of the non-rigid reading comes out most clearly when the sentence is embedded under a conditional. In Nunberg's paper (1993: 14), (2) is embedded under 'If the democrats had won the last few presidential elections …', which shows that his intuitions were in the right place.

Regarding the non-rigid reading, it seems clear that O'Connor does not have specific identifiable individuals in mind. Thus, we might say that the thought she

intends to communicate is object-*in*dependent. Now, suppose that Justice O'Connor has specific individuals in mind. She has discriminatory knowledge capable of identifying them and she intends to communicate the object-dependent interpretation of (2). In this set-up, we have two possibilities. The first is a literal interpretation of the pronoun 'we', where the hearer identifies the intended referents via the *character* of the expression and features of the context alone. Alternatively, the hearer could grasp a *deferred* but *rigid* interpretation of 'we' (e.g. '*dthat*[the US Supreme Court Justices]'. In this case, he would not be in a position to identify the objects via the *character* of the expression and features of the context alone, but he is in a position to infer that O'Connor has a singular thought in mind concerning the actual Supreme Court members[2] and his world knowledge may identify the relevant individuals. I am not going to try to develop an account of how such an inference would be licensed here. My only concern is to point out a blind spot in Nunberg's example: as mentioned earlier, rigidity may not be the only ingredient in drawing the divide between literal (singular) and deferred (general). In order to get more insight into what is at stake, let us analyze deferred cases of 'pure' indexicals, where we can appreciate the generality of the phenomenon. Nunberg (1993: 20) gives the following example:

(3) *Bill Clinton says*: 'The founders invested me with the sole responsibility for appointing Supreme Court Justices'

Here, 'me' seems to be most naturally interpreted as 'the president of the USA'. Again, this claim is supported by the fact that Clinton does not have himself, or any other previous American president, in mind while giving his speech. I believe that similar examples could be given for other pure indexicals, but I will not pursue this here (see Nunberg 1993, Powell 1998). Instead, the question that must be addressed is the following: what are the mechanisms underlying deferred interpretations?

3 Nunberg on deferrals

[2] There is another possibility: the hearer may have discriminating knowledge of the referent, while the speaker does not. If we assume, as Relevance Theory does, that the hearer aims at recovering the interpretation intended by the speaker, he would attribute the deferred reading as the explicit content of the speaker's utterance, even though he may additionally infer a singular proposition at his own responsibility. This would be a case, where relevance of the input is maximized by the hearer's, but not the speaker's, epistemic state. Since this piece of information may not be mutually manifest, the singular proposition is not communicated in this case.

In order to give an answer to this intriguing question, Nunberg sets out a semantics for indexicals that indicates how deferred uses might be constrained. He postulates that indexicals and demonstratives encode three components: (i) a *deictic* component, which is defined *à la* Kaplan as descriptive information encoded by pronouns that works as 'a function from occurrences or utterances of an expression to elements of the context of utterance' (Nunberg 1993: 8), (ii) a *classificatory* component, responsible for guiding the interpretation process and consisting of features such as number, person, gender, and (iii) a *relational* component, which constrains the relation between the object picked out by the deictic component, the *index*, and the intended interpretation. In the case of participant terms (e.g. 'I', 'you', 'we'), the relational component imposes that the 'index must be included in, or more generally, must instantiate the interpretation' (Nunberg 1993: 9). Let us now consider the work these components do in the process of indexical/demonstrative interpretation.

In the case of 'we', the deictic component is 'the speaker' (same thing for 'I') and the classificatory features are plural and animate. The deictic component of its occurrence in (2) determines an index: Justice O'Connor. At this point the interpretation might be carried out in two different ways: literal or deferred. In the former case, the pronoun selects the relevant individuals with respect to the *actual context of utterance*, comprising O'Connor, Rehnquist, Thomas, etc. In the same spirit as Kaplan, this means that the deictic component 'of an indexical does not figure as part of what is said by the utterance containing it' (Nunberg 1993: 4); indexicals are 'indicative'. In the deferred case, the pronoun is interpreted as 'the US Supreme Court Justices': a property which is instantiated by O'Connor, but whose interpretation might be non-rigid or object-*in*dependent.

A similar explanation follows for (3). The first-person pronoun encodes 'the speaker' as deictic component, and in the situation portrayed, it determines Bill Clinton as index. In a literal reading of (3), the intended interpretation is attained by virtue of the relation that the speaker has with a token of the pronoun; hence index and intended referent coincide[3]. In a deferred reading of (3), a salient property instantiated by the index, in this case 'the president of the USA', becomes the pronoun's truth-conditional contribution. Thus, the constraints imposed by the classificatory and relational components are preserved in both cases.

Although many examples of deferred indexical use have been mentioned in earlier literature (Quine 1960; Schiffer 1982), Nunberg seems to be Donnellan's (1966) mirror image. While the latter suggested that descriptions admit referential

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[3] One might point out Nunberg's account entails that the index and referent of 'we' never coincide, thus, in a sense, even the literal use is a deferred interpretation. This seems to be a weak spot in Nunberg's account, because one might point out different interpretative mechanisms at play in each of these two cases. I will address this issue in due time.

uses, the theory advanced by the former accounts for the fact that some non-anaphoric uses of indexicals can receive descriptive readings. At this point, one might object that Kaplan's (1989a, 1989b) defence of direct reference was motivated to capture some empirical facts about indexicals, namely, the mechanisms by which they contribute to truth-conditions and certain inferential patterns they allow. If Nunberg extends the explanatory power of his theory to deferred readings of indexicals, how would he account for the empirical facts motivating Kaplanian semantics?

To answer this question, Nunberg warns us that the claim that indexicals do not always determine singular propositions is not the same as the claim that indexicals are not 'indicative'. By characterizing such expressions as indicative, Nunberg could explain much of what has motivated Kaplan's theory, but at the same time this would be free from committing a certain kind of natural language expression to always express singular propositions. His notion of 'indicativeness' (Nunberg 1993: sec 2.1 and 2.4) contains the following tenets: (a) the deictic, classificatory, and relational components (the 'meaning' of indexicals) are not a part of the utterance interpretation; rather (b) they 'enable us to turn the context itself into an auxiliary means of expression, so that contextual features are made to serve as pointers to the content of the utterance' (1993: 20). The interpretation of indexicals follows a two-stage process (1993: 4, 10-11, 19): first, the deictic component determines an index in the context, and then the index, together with the classificatory and relational components, constrains the intended interpretation. Since an 'index' is always determined in an early step in the interpretation, indexicals are indicative also in the sense that (c) they do not receive empty interpretations. The last point is used by Nunberg against possible bare-plural treatments of indexicals, especially of 'we', according to which sentences like 'In the Soviet Union, *we* worked in shipyards' said by a woman could be interpreted as 'In the Soviet Union, *women* worked in shipyards' (see Carlson 1980)[4].

For Nunberg, the remarks on the 'indicativeness' of indexicals should not be reduced to Kaplan's theory of direct reference, because the former, but not the latter, is compatible with a wider range of empirical data, including: deferred, anaphoric, and bare plural uses of indexicals (1993, sec 1.0, sec 2.2). Of course, direct-reference theorists might have the means to reply to this charge, but I am not interested here in restating the debate. Instead, I would like to take a closer look at

[4] This argument should be read with a certain amount of scepticism. Nunberg's theory prescribes that the *index* of 'we' is always determined prior to the deferred interpretation. Here, there is no risk of empty terms. But, as we move to deferred interpretations which are object-*in*dependent, nothing blocks the possibility that there is no object picked out by the description in the circumstance in which the utterance is evaluated.

how the 'meanings' Nunberg postulates allow *indicativeness* and *descriptiveness* to co-exist in harmony.

Given that the interpretation of indexicals is a two step process, determining an index and afterwards the intended interpretation, Nunberg's system allows two possibilities. In the first case, index and intended interpretation may coincide. Here, Nunberg's theory makes similar predictions to Kaplan's. Alternatively, index and referent may not coincide. This is the deferred reading. In this case, the conveyed description must be instantiated by the index, a constraint encoded by the relational component, and it must be compatible with the grammatical features encoded by the classificatory component (e.g. number, gender, animacy), but other than this, the interpretation process is not linguistic controlled. We get a clearer grasp on the theoretical mechanisms devised by Nunberg by taking a look at the summary below.

Table 1

Pronoun	Deictic component	Classificatory component	Relational component
'I'	the speaker	singular, animate	interpretation must be instantiated by the index
'you'	the addressee	animate	interpretation must be instantiated by the index
'we'	the speaker	plural, animate	interpretation must be instantiated by the index
'he' – 'she' / 'it'	demonstrations for 'deictics'; contextual salience for 'contextuals'	singular, animate, gender / singular, inanimate	index must be in 'salient correspondence' to the intended referent
'they'	demonstrations for 'deictics', contextual salience for 'contextuals'	plural	index must be in 'salient correspondence' to the intended referent
'this' - 'that' / 'these' - those'	proximal / distal information, plus demonstrations, for 'deictics' or contextual salience for 'contextuals'	singular / plural	index must be in 'salient correspondence' to the intended referent

Even though the components above place a certain amount of linguistic constraint on the phenomenon, one might say that the linguistic instructions are not capable by themselves of fixing an index in a context. For example, in a given situation, there might be many people that are potential candidates for being the index of

'you', let us say; so speaker intentions seem to play an indispensable role in this early interpretative stage. Speaker intentions might also be required in determining the final intended interpretation, given that either the index or a property it instantiates must be selected as such. Thus, the 'semantic-oriented' treatment pursued by Nunberg relies heavily on information that falls outside the domain of what is encoded by words. Furthermore, the relation between the three components and pragmatic aspects of indexical interpretation seems to be especially unclear for demonstrative pronouns, which we will now turn to.

Third person (singular and plural) pronouns (called 'non-participant terms') are problematic for Nunberg, because their deictic component does not encode enough information to direct the hearer to any set of potential *indices*. Some uses of these expressions would require a demonstration to do that, (called 'deictics', Nunberg 1993: 23, 36). Other uses can dispense with demonstrations, because an object is salient in the context in such a way that communicators take it as the pronoun's *index* (called contextuals, Nunberg 1993: 23, 36). Here, it is unclear whether deictics and contextuals encode different deictic components, or whether they could be unified by encoding the same requirement of 'object salience' (the role of demonstrations would be to make a particular object salient). Following Powell (1998), I argue that the distinction between two types of demonstrative pronouns would introduce an ambiguity for non-participant terms, which we hardly see evidence for.

With regard to the classificatory component, gender, number, and animacy features do not seem to be obligatory as Nunberg thinks; even for literal cases. We can easily think of examples where the grammatical features encoded by the pronoun and its referent do not match, as for example, when the obsessive car owner refers to his Ferrari by 'he'. In these cases of non-deferred use, a lot of things may happen. We could have a harder time in identifying the man's car, because of his strange choice of words. In other cases, we could learn, via the speaker's use of a specific pronoun, that an old friend underwent a sex-change operation, and so extra information compensates extra efforts. Deferrals also seem to follow this pattern. Consider:

(4) *Sometime around the 70s in a loud car factory filled with busy workers, an engineer says*: 'In 20 years time, they will probably be one man pushing buttons on a keyboard' (adapted from Powell 1998: 158)

In this example, the plural feature of the pronoun would have to be suppressed in order to preserve the overall intelligibility of the utterance. Thus, classificatory components do not have to be preserved in the final interpretation of non-participant terms (see Powell 1998: 158, for discussion). Note that, in this example, no demonstration seems to be required.

The last fall back option is the relational component. Nunberg (1993: 25) claims that 'we should properly say that non-participant terms simply have no relational component; used indexically [non-anaphorically], they contribute any individual or property that corresponds to their *indices* in some salient way'. I have two worries with this passage. First, what counts as a 'salient correspondence between an object and a property? Nunberg (1993: 25) gives us only a tentative answer. Second, given that the 'contextual' non-participant terms require only salience as a deictic component, why do we have to say that the deferred interpretation must be obtained via a specific index? Why not say that property of being a factory worker is salient in the context of (4)? The trouble here is that, as far as non-participant terms are concerned, the deictic component, the classificatory component, and the relational component do no offer linguistic constraint enough to rule out the possibility just raised.

The tentative conclusion is the following: there are examples that fail to be fully determined by the linguistic features postulated by Nunberg. Two problems emerge from this fact. Firstly, his unified treatment of indexicals would break down. Secondly and more importantly, the weakness of the linguistic constraint in some cases might motivate pragmatic treatments of deferrals. Regarding the latter claim, one may be suspicious about the reasons why Nunberg has multiplied semantic features that seem to be insufficient to explain the data, given the fundamental role speaker intentions play at each stage in the interpretation.

At the time, Nunberg conceived pragmatic accounts of natural language data as *implicature* accounts. Thus, whether Nunberg should account for deferred cases as implicatures comes down to whether Grice's (1967a) characterization of the notion is appropriate for explaining the phenomenon or not. Grice thought that if the literal reading (*what is said*) is initially based on the semantics, we could expect that the substitution of the indexical by a 'synonymous' expression would implicate the same descriptive interpretation (this is the non-detachability property of conversational implicatures). However, that does not seem to be the case. Nunberg's example involves the substitution of the indexical 'me' in (3) by a proper name which makes the same truth-conditional contribution, i.e. 'Bill Clinton, but even if we substitute the pronoun for a more appropriate synonym, such as 'the speaker of this utterance, the deferred reading seems to be less accessible.

In addition to non-detachability, the recovery of conversational implicatures depends on the obedience of rational principles governing human communicative behaviour. The hearer would have to work out what the speaker implicated by considering what the speaker said plus other available contextual clues. The calculability of conversational implicatures characterizes them as a very special kind of inference. Roughly, the set of mutually manifest assumptions together with the content of *what is said* puts the hearer in a position to infer, based on the

assumption that the speaker is following certain communicative principles, *what is implicated*. Given this rough characterization, let us see what an implicature account of deferrals would look like.

Instead of the various features of Nunberg's account, we could simply say that as far as semantics is concerned, there is no difference between literal and deferred uses. However, the former could be used in a reasoning schema that delivers the latter as an implicature. With this in mind, let us analyze example (1). By pointing to the footprint and uttering 'He must be a giant' the speaker *says* the proposition that the footprint must be a giant. Such a nonsensical propositional violates the hearer's expectations of rational communicative behaviour, so this might support the idea that there is an implicit level of meaning capable of satisfying those. The problem here is to figure out what this level is. On the one hand, speaker and hearer's common knowledge together with this proposition does not seem to warrant the inference to the deferred interpretation. On the other hand, the fact that the hearer might suppose the deferred reading in order to make sense of *what the speaker says* is also very unlikely, because grasping the descriptive interpretation does not render the nonsensical proposition more intelligible. This suggests that the nonsensical proposition is never retrieved in the first place; hence deferrals are not a matter of implicature retrieval. Let us sum up the insights concerning deferred uses that have emerged from this section.

(N1) Deferred uses of indexicals contribute definite descriptions to the utterance's truth-conditions.

(N2) The interpretation of deferred uses seems to be different from implicature derivation.

Although Nunberg's theory shows a way to preserve the data of deferred uses while also characterizing indexicals as 'indicative', it has some problems of its own. Now is the time to address those.

First, examples given by Grimberg (1996) and Powell (1998) suggest that Nunberg's postulated meanings do not offer a precise mechanism of linguistic control over deferred interpretations. So, why not go for a pragmatic account? As discussed, Nunberg takes (N2) as blocking this move. It is highly probable that this issue resulted from terminological disputes concerning the word 'pragmatics', and once we extend it to processes that provide truth-conditional constituents of what is said, the argument disappears.

Second, we may argue that Nunberg does not account for more fine-grained data concerning deferrals. As mentioned in the introduction of example (2), there may be deferred readings that behave rigidly, but there still is a sharp difference between them and literal uses of indexicals. How is this explained in Nunberg's

account? Besides some remarks on the 'indicativeness' of indexicals, there is no substantial answer. I believe the lack of this explanation is also behind the prediction that 'we' always gets a deferred interpretation (see footnote 4).

Before assessing how deferrals are handled in truth-conditional pragmatics (TCP), I would like to discuss a possibility put forward by Emma Borg. Her insight is to come up with a notion of singular content which prescribes that at least part of the data reviewed so far does not capture the utterances' 'real' (e.g. minimal) truth-conditions. Moreover, this digression will put us in a position to fully appreciate the importance of the second criticism stated here, namely, that literal and deferred uses, regardless of their modal behaviour, exploit different *ways* of contributing to truth-conditions.

4 Singular Content and Semantic Minimalism

Emma Borg (2004) forwards a position according to which language understanding is a *formal*, *systematic* and *algorithmic* process. Fundamental to this view is the idea that the truth-conditional contribution of an expression is entirely retrievable from its lexical entry and the way in which it is combined with other expressions in the sentence. This suggests that information encoded in expression *types*, once retrieved from the expression *tokens*, are the entities computed through linguistic processing and responsible for contributing to utterance's truth-conditions. This computational view of language understanding is underpinned by the requirement that a semantic theory should only account for the (pragmatics-free) outputs of the language faculty and makes the further stipulation that the outputs of such a semantics are always fully propositional (truth-conditionally evaluable) .

Although this may hold for context *independent* words, Borg's approach faces obvious difficulties when it comes to indexicals and demonstratives. Kaplan's distinction between character and content captures the distinction between indexical meaning, *qua* property of expression types, and indexical meaning, *qua* property of expression *token* in a certain context. The first difficulty is to see how the explanatory power of Kaplan's two-tiered theory could be framed in the semantic minimalism envisaged by Borg. More specifically, how does it explain the emergence of referentiality from the intricate relation between *character*, *context* and *content*? Furthermore, even though she tries to circumvent these problems by rendering indexical-types relative to formal features of the context (agent, addressee, time, place), this strategy would not work for demonstrative pronouns, given that their truth-conditional contribution cannot be traced back to any formal aspect of the context. The third difficulty is to see how speaker intentions can be completely cast aside from indexical interpretation. Finally, we

might ask: if she succeeds in characterizing indexicals as directly referential, how come deferred uses contribute descriptions to the utterance's truth-conditions?

Borg attempts to answer the first difficulty by preserving Kaplan's character/content distinction in terms of a lexical rule that determines objects relative to contextual features related to expression token. Since every meaningful utterance requires an agent, an addressee, a time and a place, indexicals' lexical rules could be devised in such a way that no further information, apart from that provided in these formal parameters, is necessary to fix the expression's truth-conditional contribution. It is hard to see what she means by this idea, but I will try to illustrate with an example of the first-person pronoun. Suppose John is walking on the street and he hears someone behind him saying 'I'm hot'. Now, any utterance presupposes some metaphysical facts. For example, the speaker of the utterance is the source of a string of sounds that carry some meaning and John is a potential referent of a constituent expression in the string (e.g. 'you') just by virtue of being able to hear it. Thus, if these causal relations are built into the lexical entries of indexicals, the language faculty would be capable of delivering the truth-conditional contribution of the pronoun, without any perceptual identification of the person who uttered the token, because whoever that person is, it must be the source or *the producer of that particular token* (see Borg 2004: 158-163, 166-167).

Once the meaning of indexicals are captured by rules such as the ones just described, they would always make their truth-condition contribution with respect to the actual context of utterance. In this way, Borg could characterize indexicals as rigid-designators by virtue of something they encode as linguistic-types, but whose truth-conditional contributions are generated by specific tokens relativized to formal aspects of contexts. Thus, in the example above, the token 'I am hot' would convey a singular representation of the form 'α is F', where α is the singular concept introduced by the particular token of indexical and F represents the property of being hot. Again, it is important to note that the introduction of singular concepts does not depend on the identification of the referent in any robust sense. Nevertheless, the pronoun behaves rigidly.

Although this may work for some indexical expressions, problems certainly emerge for demonstrative pronouns (i.e. Nunberg's non-participant terms). As Kaplan once put it, demonstratives cannot be traced to any formal model of the context, that is, a demonstrated object is not a necessary metaphysical feature of every communicative situation. Borg's formal treatment of such difficult case heavily borrows from Higginbotham's notion of conditionalized truth-conditions (henceforth, CTCs), which can be summarized as follows:

> If the speaker of 'this is red' refers with the utterance of 'this' therein to x and to nothing else, then that utterance is true if and only if x is red. (Higginbotham 1994: 92-3)

Borg (2004: 165) claims that knowledge of the truth-conditions of utterances containing demonstrative pronouns involves the knowledge of an antecedent condition which specifies that an object was referred to. In turn, this requirement must hold for the pronoun to have the truth-conditional contribution that it has. In loose terms, we might say that because demonstratives encode CTCs, they introduce singular concepts (e.g. α) that behave rigidly and are independent from speaker intentions and perceptual identification. I am sure that the characterization provided so far is not fair to the reader nor to her account, but here I just intend to stress that she provides an explanation of the way in which indexical and demonstrative truth-conditional contributions are generated linguistic process which is itself independent from our intuitive understanding of how an expression can be said to be 'about' a specific object. Whether this works out or not is an issue that I do not discuss in this paper.

It is clear that Borg's notion of *singular concept* is very different from the grasp of singular *thoughts*, as conceived by Russell or Evans. By the very fact that semantic representations are only traced back to the utterance's lexical items (relative to certain aspects of the context) plus their syntactic structure, there is no place in her theory for an (E)pistemic constraint *at the level of semantic content*[5]. Minimal truth-conditions could obviously be enhanced when combined with other mental representations, such as information delivered perceptually or by long term memory. Now, as (many) deferred readings stem from violations of (E), e.g. (1), Borg's account predicts that their alleged descriptiveness is merely illusory. A singular concept is introduced in the hearer's mind by virtue of the tokening of a particular expression-type used in the utterance, but possible integration failures between semantic representations and other mental representations (e.g. perceptual information) explain the apparent descriptiveness of the interpretation. In order to make her case, Borg (2002) begins by employing a series of arguments against what she calls 'descriptivism': the view according to which the semantic content of indexicals in certain situations *can* (and *should*) be represented as definite descriptions. Here, she is not only going against philosophers, such as Russell and Evans, who attributed a fundamental role to discriminatory knowledge of the referent, but also the data which motivated Nunberg's account.

The first argument, which I call 'the variety of descriptions argument', runs along the following lines. If descriptivism is right, not only one, but many descriptions could be used to pick up the intended referent in a given situation. Consider the following scenario, slightly modified from Quine (1968: 194):

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[5] It could be argued that her theory also entails that constraint (M) concerning object-dependence does not play any role in the determination of singular content at the semantic level.

(5) *Someone points to a parked car with a ticket on its windscreen and says*: 'He is going to be sorry'

Here the indexical's truth-conditional contribution seems to go proxy for 'the owner of the car', but the description recovered could just as easily be 'the car's driver' or 'the person who is paying for the tickets'; these (and others) would be equally appropriate. Since there are multiple semantically non-equivalent quantified phrases that apply, none of them could capture what is literally expressed by a token of the sentence in (5). We might take Borg to be arguing either or both of two things here, the first concerning communication success/failure; the second concerning semantic compositionality.

On the one hand, if the speaker associates 'the G' with the indexical token and the hearer associates 'the H' with the same token, the truth-conditional content entertained by each may differ and thus communication breaks down (see Borg 2002: 494-5). There are several lines of response available to this. First, even though the deferred readings are 'free' from what indexicals literally encode, they are not 'free' from what is mutually manifest to communicators. It seems then that the argument is not specifically directed to the phenomenon of deferred uses, but to linguistic unconstrained processes that contribute to truth conditions, like enrichment, for example. Since the debate on this issue transcends the pursuit of an empirically adequate theory of deferrals, here is not the place to deal with it.

On the other hand, Borg could press on and abandon descriptivism on the grounds of compositionality. As a token of 'he' can contribute different descriptions in different contexts, there is no possible explanation of how an utterance's truth-conditions are composed of the meaning of its parts. There are two lines of response here. First, one can hold that a compositional explanation holds at the level of what is encoded by the utterance, but, *contra* Borg's view, this falls short of a complete set of truth-conditions. Second, one might argue that compositionality does not need to hold at any pragmatics-free level such as Borg would like to. Rather, one might devise a compositional explanation which encompasses the relation between encoded content and the pragmatic processes that shape them into truth-conditional contributions. In this sense, the very process of semantic composition requires adjustments, or 'modulations', on the lexical meaning of words uttered. Such adjustments may involve top-down pragmatic processes triggered by the bottom-up composition and/or highly salient information in the conversational setting. This point will be further developed in the next section (see Recanati 1995, 2004, forthcoming).

Borg's second argument, which I call 'the modal and scope argument', consists in the analysis of the indexical's modal and scope behaviour. The idea is that if descriptivism is right, the deferred uses of indexicals would give rise to scope ambiguities when the expressions interact with other operators (negation, other

quantifiers, propositional attitude verbs, etc). Assuming the negation of the sentence in (5), we would have:

(6) *Someone points to a parked car with a ticket on its windscreen and says*:
'He is ***not*** going to be sorry'

Given that the indexical's truth-conditional contribution is a definite description, the sentence above would have two scope readings: (i) 'there is a person who owns the car and that person is not going to be sorry', and (ii) 'there is not a person who owns the car and is going to be sorry'. However, no ambiguities rise when we interpret the negated sentence; only the first reading seems to be available. Moreover, we could assess the modal behaviour of the pronoun in (5). Consider the sentence embedded as the antecedent of a conditional statement, producing 'Even if parking tickets were cheap, he would be sorry'. With this example, Borg shows that the interpretation of 'he' is tied to the actual world, not to the one in the shifted circumstance of evaluation (i.e. a potentially different car owner in each different world in which tickets are cheap).

Borg's (2002: 508-509) third argument against the descriptivist concerns how to draw a semantic divide between perceptual cases of demonstrative reference and deferred cases. For example, overtly pointing to John while uttering 'he' or 'that person' counts as a genuine case of demonstrative reference, but what about a demonstration to a part of his body, or to his shadow, or to the door he just slammed shut, or to his car? Borg seems to be arguing that if descriptivism is a semantic thesis, there would have to be a clear-division between the requirements encoded by referential and deferred uses of the expressions, which in turn would be the criterion to sort out which of the examples belong to which category. However, there is no clear divide to support such categorization. Although I agree with Borg's line of reasoning, the conclusion I drawn is a different one. Descriptivism would only have to account for such alleged distinction, if it were a thesis according to which different uses of demonstratives (literal vs. deferred) are only explained by a difference in grammatical rules (encoded information). However, there is an alternative defence for descriptivism: it could postulate that the information encoded by demonstratives remains the same across uses, but the truth-conditional contribution made by the pronoun are largely dependent on (i) what the hearer takes the speaker's intentions to be, and (ii) the hearer's ability to discriminate the intended object (if there is one). So, although Borg's argument serves well in rejecting the idea that descriptivism is a semantic thesis (i.e. a thesis about what words encode), this argument simply is not able to reject the idea that descriptivism concerns the pronoun's truth-conditional contribution in different uses.

Even though the modal and scope arguments presented here are far stronger than the others, there seems to be a lack of explanation for why deferred uses have such a descriptive flavour. Although such a demand might be legitimate, Borg (2002: 497) claims that it should not be answered by a semantic theory. The rigid behaviour in many of the examples analyzed is evidence for claiming that the terms are genuinely referential. Now, even if we grant her the point, the fact that rigidity is a matter of the linguistic type predicts that all deferred interpretations would have to behave the same in modal constructions. As Nunberg pointed out, this might be a problem. The difficulty here is to account for cases like (2) ('We might have been liberals') and the one below (due to Borg 2002: 502), where the pronouns seem clearly to be interpreted as attributive definite descriptions:

(7) *Someone pointing to the American presidential podium*: 'Everybody wants to have an affair with him'

Here, the pronoun 'him' is interpreted as 'the president of the USA' in the attributive sense. This can be tested by embedding the sentence in (7) under a conditional. If it were preceded by 'Even if the US loses its political power….', the description would pick its referent in the newly shifted circumstance of evaluation (i.e. in worlds where US politics is not so influential). The remarks on (7) together with Nunberg's discussion on O'Connor's 'We might have been liberals' (e.g. (2)), establish well-grounded counter-examples to Borg's main line of argument. Those cases are of fundamental importance because their object-independent interpretations show that a linguistic type relativized to a specific context *might not* determine a *singular concept*. As an answer to this difficulty Borg claims that:

> [W]hile the referential reading gives the sole *semantic* interpretation of the utterance, a further, pragmatically conveyed reading is available in these cases; so, for instance, though the speaker who utters [7] in the current context literally says that every intern wants to have an affair with Bill Clinton, he may thereby convey the proposition that 'every intern wants to have an affair with the President of the USA' as an instance of speaker meaning. In this case, though we would view the speaker as having made some kind of mistake in his choice of sentence, we can still follow what he is trying to say. (Borg 2002: 502)

The use of 'speaker meaning' here might be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, we could associate Borg with other types of semantic minimalism (e.g. Cappelen & Lepore 2005), which claim that a minimal proposition about Clinton is expressed by (7) and then the hearer retrieves an object-independent proposition about a unique American president, as an implicature. Following Nunberg's

arguments against implicature-based accounts of deferrals (see section 3), two worries might be raised. First, Gricean implicatures are non-detachable. If we replace a word with a 'synonym', the same implicatures should be retrieved. However, my intuition is that once we replace 'him' in (7) by 'that man', the attributive interpretation becomes less accessible. One then may argue that intuitions are shifty in those cases, so we must provide a better argument. In addition to the non-detachability test, there seem to be some problems related to the 'inferential' aspect of an implicature treatment of deferrals. Implicatures are triggered to preserve certain communicative principles that were apparently violated by *what the speaker said* (explicit content). In addition to what is said, the hearer's presumption that the speaker is somehow committed to the preservation of communicative principles provides the premises necessary for *inferring* the implicature. However, this story does not seem to hold in the example above. It is difficult to see what the proposition about Clinton violates and what 'mistake in [the speaker's] choice of sentence' underlies the inferential steps that take us from the singular to the general proposition.

On the other hand, we could take Borg to be endorsing the notion of 'inference' not along Gricean lines, but according to a view currently adopted by many cognitive scientists. In this approach, implicature derivation could be fast, automatic, and subpersonal, employing heuristics that short-cut the inferential process. Taking the framework outlined in Borg (2004), she could claim that a proposition containing the singular concept α is the explicit content conveyed by (7), and then fast processes responsible for the retrieval of implicit levels of meaning convey the deferred interpretation. In this respect, the deferred interpretation could either be a part of what is said or what is implicated by the speaker, as for Borg both levels fall outside the semantic domain. Now a new difficulty emerges: how to reconcile this view on inferential processes of human cognition with the earlier evidence used to support that indexicals introduce singular concepts in the first place?

As mentioned previously, there are two key properties that Borg takes to be essential to content singularity: (i) the idea that the term behaves rigidly, and (ii) the idea that the concepts introduced by referential expressions may be said to be about an object even though the object has not been identified. Regarding rigidity, it seems dubious to claim that a certain concept α is rigid at a sup-personal level and then inferential processes deliver the deferred interpretation at a personal level, for all the tests used to claim that indexicals introduce singular concepts in the first place were based on intuitions about utterance interpretation available at the personal level. To sum up, once Borg takes this later view on implications, there seems to be scarce evidence for claiming that the pronoun in (7) is rigid in any level of consciousness whatsoever.

Furthermore, the introduction of singular concepts presupposes that empty uses and cases of divided reference are ruled out, but the problem is to see how. An empty use of a demonstrative is discussed in a very interesting footnote. There, Borg considers an example where the speaker, due to the hallucination of Dragon, points to the empty space and utters 'That is red'. Potential hearers of this utterance would then entertain a singular concept, but they would be 'unaware that this concept lacks content (possessing only the character associated with the linguistic item which gave rise to it)' (2004: 195, fn 48). To me, it is rather unclear how this might work out, for the content of demonstratives cannot be traced back to any formal parameter of the context, so what transforms the expression's character into truth-conditional content cannot be itself a linguistic mechanism. To strengthen my point, following the passage just quoted, Borg claims that 'When [hearers] come to try to integrate the linguistically generated concept with perceptual information they may have, they will find no perceptual object available' (2004: 195, fn 48). This suggests that our intuitions concerning the lack of reference – the hallmark of empty cases – are explained as a matter of integration between semantic representations and other sorts of mental representations. Now, integration falls outside of the mental computations on lexical items and their mode of composition. Therefore, Borg cannot rule out that information concerning the existence of the referents of singular concepts – a crucial component of object-dependence – might be only specifiable by information external to what is encoded by context-dependent words. Such conclusion suggests that epistemic constraints are well-placed, for they may be deeply connected to other well-placed constraints on singular thought.

This long detour puts us in a position to answer our initial worry. Even if we characterized pragmatic inferences as fast sub-personal processes that deliver deferred interpretations at a personal level; the claim that the minimal proposition used as input contains a singular concept might be unwarranted, for information concerning the existence of concept's referent might derive from extra-linguistic sources.

There are two conclusions to draw here. First, if both alternatives of characterizing notions of 'speaker meaning' and 'inference' run into dead ends, the data regarding deferred cases which convey object-independent interpretations remains unexplained. Second, based on this conclusion we could question the very idea according to which singular concepts can be generated only by virtue of token-reflexive rules relativized to certain formal aspects of contexts. This suggests that it is time to look at frameworks that allow a larger gap between what an expression encodes and its truth-conditional contribution.

5 Deferred cases and Truth Conditional Pragmatics (TCP)

5.1 The debate about deferred cases in current TCP accounts

Now, I will present some truth-conditional pragmatic approaches (TCP) to the issue, specifically those held by François Recanati (1993) and George Powell (2003). They have the challenge of accounting for the data concerning deferred cases in such a way that possible objections from the semantic minimalist side cannot be raised. In the previous section, Borg gave three main arguments against the idea that descriptions can (and should) be a part of the utterance's (minimal) truth-conditions in deferred uses. There I have also examined ways in which those arguments might be deflected; the upshot is that some deferred uses do seem to be interpreted (at the truth-conditional level) as attributively used definite descriptions. Thus, given that the minimalist's objections provided so far do not seem to pose any real problem, TCP has the sole concern of explaining the data.

Truth-conditional pragmatists differ fundamentally from semantic minimalism on one point. According to them, the end of the decoding process leaves the hearer with a skeletal propositional form, whose components are subject to a range of pragmatic operations, such as disambiguation, saturation, domain restriction, and so on. Thus, the truth-conditions of a given utterance - its 'explicit' content - can only be ascertained through an appeal to (primary) pragmatic processes. Yet, those processes must not be confused with the (secondary) ones involved in the derivation of Gricean implicatures: the 'implicit' content conveyed by an utterance. Let us take the example of saturation. Clearly, what is linguistically encoded by 'he' is completely underspecified with regard to the individual it refers to. Accordingly, what secures the specific referent of the pronoun (if any) falls outside purely encoded information. Therefore, even if certain expressions are marked as referential at the type level, there is no guarantee that the contents of their tokens will be singular.

The breakdown of a strict correspondence between type-referentiality and the corresponding singular thought constituents could be pursued in, at least, two ways: (i) indexicals, *qua* expression types, encode information that marks them as referential but that can be overridden by pragmatics, or (ii) indexicals, *qua* expression types, do not encode any information that marks them as referential; the predominance of referential uses of indexicals is rather due to some other factors. The first option has been pursued by Recanati (1993). The second one is due to Powell's (2003) recent work, which shares some similarities with Bezuidenhout's (1997) proposal. Let us start by analysing the motivations for taking the first option.

5.1.1 The Synecdoche Theory[6]. In order to understand Recanati's account of deferred cases, his views on indexicality must be properly introduced, which, as we shall see, depend on theoretical commitments with certain positions concerning: the relation between information encoded by indexicals and contextually available information, on the one hand, and the phenomenon of immunity to error through misidentification, on the other. In latter sections (5.1.2) and (5.2) I will sketch alternatives which do not rely so heavily in specific theoretical commitments concerning these issues. For now, let me start with the notion of type-referentiality.

Recanati claims that referential expressions, *qua* linguistic types, are marked by a feature called 'REF'. One might say that proper names, indexicals and demonstratives encode such a feature, whereas definite descriptions, which are only capable of being token-referential, do not. This feature is responsible for (i) indicating that the proposition conveyed by an utterance in which the expression occurs is singular and (ii), at the same time, it renders any encoded descriptive material truth-conditionally irrelevant. 'I', for instance, plausibly encodes 'the speaker'; but since it also encodes REF, the latter blocks the former from being part of the utterance's truth-conditions. Recanati calls such descriptive material 'linguistic modes of presentation' and it roughly plays the same role as Kaplan's notion of *character*, or Nunberg's *deictic component*. But, what is the relationship between linguistically encoded information and the processes that shape them into thought constituents?

For Recanati (1993, chapter 1), the notion of referentiality is something that is not exhausted by the notions of rigid designation nor object-dependent truth-conditions, even though they are important ingredients in it. Along Kaplanian lines, the contrast is between terms, such as 'the cube root of 27', and indexical expressions. In the former case, the term behaves rigidly and the truth-conditions of an utterance containing it are individuated by a certain mathematical object, even though the hearer has not computed the relevant mathematical function that determines it. Conversely, referential expressions exploit the communicative context in a way such that reference is established rather directly. REF is intended to linguistically mark such a direct route, but unless we specify what this route is, the feature seems to lack theoretical import.

If my remarks are on the right track, the interaction between REF and the linguistic mode cannot be conceived in terms of a rigidifying operator and a descriptive operand, such as 'dthat[the speaker]' for 'I'. Indeed, REF *marks* the relation between information encoded by expression types and information represented under a particular kind of (de re) *psychological mode of presentation*. Consider, for example, the way in which information is gained in perceptual

[6] It must be noted that in much of this section I attempt to reconstruct Recanati's predictions on certain examples of deferred uses which were not originally treated by him.

(including proprioperceptive) experience: 'by watching an object or by holding it in my hand, I gain (visual or tactile) information about that object; by standing in a certain place, I gain information about what is going on at that place; by being a certain person, with a certain body, I gain information about that person and that body' (Recanati 1993: 122). The fact that I gain information about myself 'from the inside' suggests that first-person information is presented to the speaker in a very special way, namely under a first-person psychological mode of presentation. In this sense, psychological modes are conceived as *thought vehicles*: different mental representations about me could be delivered under the informational channel. For example, the representations that I am now tired and that I am now hungry could be presented under the same first-person way (e.g. 'from the inside'), although they constitute different thought episodes (i.e. mental tokens). In addition to Self-Thoughts [**Ego** mode], information could be present under other types of vehicles, which comprise the ability to entertain *Now-Thoughts* [**Nunc** mode], *Here-Thoughts* [**Hic** mode], and *Demonstrative-Thoughts*.

Psychological modes of presentation, *qua* thought vehicles, are not sufficient to determine *de re* thoughts: only in a specific context or environment these cognitive resources are exploited in a way such that contextual information is represented under a *token* of a psychological mode of presentation. To give an example, my ability to have Now-Thoughts is conceived as psychological mode *type*, but as I watch the rain fall outside, this thought vehicle is engaged in the environment so that a psychological mode *token* is produced, namely, the (specific) Now-Thought that it rains. As a consequence, *de re* thought constituents are only determined at the level of tokens of psychological modes: if there were no rain (at that specific type or place) there would be no corresponding *de re* thought, although I would still retain the ability to have Here, Now, Demonstrative and Self-Thoughts.

Recanati's idea that thoughts can be classified as *de re* only at the level of information represented under (successful) tokens of psychological modes stems from what Perry (1986) and Bach (1987: 12) characterize as *indexicality in thought*. As one would naturally expect, these authors argue that the referential way in which indexical expressions determine their referents crucially depends on the connection between the two levels of indexicality: linguistic and mental. According to Perry, Bach and Recanati, members of a position which I will call here 'the Mental File Approach' (MFA), the non-descriptive or non-satisfactional status of *de re* thoughts arises from the causal impact that the environment has upon a thinker (in a specific time, at a place). Suppose I watch a person walking towards me. The content of the visual experience depends on the causal connection between this person and my egocentric space, in the sense that the individual perceived does *not* have to be identified *as something that falls under a concept*. The person does not need to be represented *as* my old friend John, as an adult man with a funny beard, or as a human being for that matter. No object as a causal source, no *de re*

content. Now, the introduction of causal relations as *a* way to individuate *de re* thoughts brings two complementary aspects of (tokens of) *de re* psychological modes of presentation into scene. On the one hand, the fact that our intentional states co-vary with changes in the environment puts forward the idea that information represented under psychological modes are stored in temporary repositories or dossiers of information (see Grice 1969), which is guaranteed by the fact that information flows through a specific thought *vehicle*. Thus, in the aforementioned example, the fact that the perceptual information is represented under the same demonstrative mode enables me to pull out information from the perceived individual, such as 'has a funny beard', 'wears an AC/DC T-shirt', 'is called 'John'' and to store them in the same mental file, which initially contained only 'that x', (where 'x' marks the bare individual). Given that the causal relation between object and egocentric space creates a dossier that may or may not contain other sorts of information in it, such temporary dossiers function as a genuine thought constituent: an *egocentric concept*[7]. In this sense, we say that psychological modes of presentation serve as *modes of identification* of the object.

Moving to the case of linguistic indexicality, let us suppose that, in the scenario mentioned above, John has the intention to communicate the thought that he is hungry by uttering 'I am hungry'. As he walks towards me and clears his throat to speak, my dossier of information on him is adjusted accordingly by adding the information 'is speaking' to the set of representations that causally derives from him. By the time he utters the first person pronoun, I can identify its referent by the fact that the information encoded by its linguistic mode is contained in the temporary dossier on him. Similar explanations apply to other pronouns and other *de re* psychological modes, but I am not going to develop this here (see Recanati 1993, chapter 7). If this story is on the right track, the identification of the referent of an indexical expression engages (tokens of) psychological modes in a way such that information linguistically encoded by the expression is already represented in a temporary dossier about the referent (e.g. the dossier on John already contains 'the speaker' in it). Recanati then conceives *direct reference* as a synecdochic (part - whole) relation between information encoded by indexicals represented under the temporary dossiers that REF is intended to be marking. But how *direct* is the special link between linguistic and psychological modes in the synecdoche theory?

Let us suppose now that John and I are watching the trial of Smith's murderer. Both of us perceive the defendant from where we sit. As the judge sentences the

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[7] Egocentric concepts contrast with another type of *de re* concept: encyclopaedic entries. The latter are conceived as non-temporary dossiers of information and do not exploit what I am characterizing here as indexicality in thought. For this reason, I will leave encyclopaedic entries aside and focus on the relation between egocentric concepts and linguistically encoded information

defendant guilty, the description 'Smith's murderer' is added to our dossiers on the man. If John were to utter 'Smith's murderer is insane' to me, I could identify the specific man in the courtroom via the synecdochic relation between the description contained in the utterance and information represented under the demonstrative psychological mode (i.e. the temporary dossier)[8]. Thus, the description 'Smith's murderer' would not figure in truth-conditional content, and a *de re* thought containing the demonstratively identified individual would be communicated; in short, the description is used as a surrogate for the whole mental file (see Recanati 1993, chapter 15). Given that the synecdoche theory could be also extended to descriptions, what would explain the difference, in this scenario, between utterances of 'He is insane' and 'Smith's murder is insane'? In other words, what compels us to account for the referentiality of indexicals at the level of expression-types rather than expression-tokens? More fundamentally, how could one claim that indexicals determine their referents in a *direct* and *special* way, given that the kernel of this mechanism, namely the synecdoche theory, can also be extended to referential uses of descriptions?

Recanati's initial answer to this set of questions begins by pointing out that indexicals (and names), as opposed to descriptions, encode REF. However, this by itself sheds no light on the problem, for we are questioning what sort of psycho-interpretative processes REF seems to be marking. The first substantial insight emerges with Recanati's (1993: 288-292) distinction between contextual conditions on truth and truth-conditions *proper*. The idea follows Kaplan's (1989a) spirit, if not the letter, in the sense that the linguistic meaning of 'I' is different from the linguistic meaning of the description 'the present speaker', because the former, but not the latter, imposes a condition that the *context of utterance* must meet in order for a proposition to be expressed. In addition to the idea that linguistic modes of presentation are context-conditional, the difference between indexicals and descriptions is further deepened by the way in which linguistic modes are associated with psychological modes of presentation (see Recanati 1993: chapter 5). Although descriptions can exploit information contained in temporary de re dossiers, the meaning of indexicals exploits this information in such a way that the *re*-identification of a referent under a linguistic mode is *immune to error through misidentification* (IEM). This notion represents the idea that 'the way information is gained determines what it is about' (Recanati 1993: 88) in a way such that the thinker cannot be wrong about reference identification. Here is Recanati:

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[8] In what follows, I am ignoring improper cases of referentially used definite descriptions (e.g. when we refer to a specific man drinking water in a martini glass via 'the man drinking martini'). I am also assuming a lot about Recanati's theory of referential descriptions, but such assumptions only play a dialectical role in the paper. I am not defending any particular theory of referentially used descriptions.

> The information that someone is uttering this token is not given independently of (and cannot be dissociated from) the information that *I* am uttering this token. Hence the concept 'utterer of this token' (i.e. the linguistic mode of presentation of the reference of 'I' cannot be dissociated from that of Ego (i.e. from the corresponding psychological mode of presentation), in a normal situation. This is so from the point of view of the speaker, of course; but it is manifest that this is so, hence it is manifest that an utterance in the first person expresses a thought involving the concept **Ego**. (1993: 89-90)

This summarizes the treatment of literal interpretations, but what about deferred ones? The latter are explained by an additional primary pragmatic process that takes the literal interpretation, which Recanati claims to be the *basic level*, as input, and delivers a descriptive interpretation as output. Initially, REF mandates the process of saturation: a singular interpretation for the pronoun must be provided. This *obligatory* step occurs in literal and non-literal cases alike; the only difference being that the latter case involves a further process known as 'transfer': an *optional* operation from the linguistically mandated interpretation to the deferred interpretation. Differently from implicature accounts, this 'shift' between interpretations of the pronoun occurs locally, that is, it does not occur after an overall interpretation for the utterance is delivered. Although Recanati's account allows deferred uses to contribute descriptive constituents to *what is said*, those are accessed after the literal interpretation has been processed, at least for referential expressions. But what triggers the transfer or interpretative shift from the literal to the non-literal interpretation?

Many philosophers and linguists, including the ones we have discussed so far, think that deferred interpretations result from the hearer's attempts to *infer* what the speaker meant (in Grice's terms, the content she m-intended). However, this move is blocked for Recanati (1993: 260-275; 1995; 2004, chapter 2), as he draws a sharp distinction between primary pragmatic processes, which are based within an associative (activation-spreading) framework, and secondary pragmatic processes (implicatures), which result from consciously available reasoning mechanisms. Roughly, the activation-based model relies on the idea that words make accessible (or activate) certain mentally represented concepts as candidates for the constituent's semantic value in the utterance. The default semantic value is the expression's literal meaning, but once it is activated, activation spreads in parallel to other candidates and all of them compete to be the one to undergo semantic composition. Although activation unreflectively spreads from the literal interpretation to other plausible candidates, there are ways for an alternative interpretation to be processed first. These 'activation-shifts' might stem from (i) the

online composition of other lexical items in the utterance or (ii) a set of representations abstracted from a given type of situation against which the utterance is interpreted, namely, a cognitive frame or script (see Recanati 2004: 36-37). Without getting into too many details, let me illustrate with an example discussed previously and repeated below.

(7) *Someone pointing to the American presidential podium*: 'Everybody wants to have an affair with him'

Recanati's description of the situation runs along the following lines. As the hearer enters the official room in which (7) will be uttered, the perception of the environment creates a lot of temporary *de re* concepts (dossiers) concerning different objects in the room: the presidential podium, the American flag on the back wall, a set of cameras ready to broadcast the speech, among others. Let us say that this set of *de re* concepts evokes a 'presidential speech' concept-frame. Now, as the decoding of (7) unfolds, the first activated candidate for being the pronoun's semantic value is Bill Clinton (at the time of utterance), given the pronoun's encoded REF, person, number, and gender features[9]. Activation then spreads to other plausible candidates; the most highly activated one here is 'the president of the USA', which receives activation both from the presidential speech frame and from the fact that the hearer's Bill Clinton dossier contains the description 'the president of the USA'. In this example, the descriptive phrase is the most activated candidate, so (synecdochic) transfer occurs, going, this time, in the whole-part direction, that is, from the *de re* Clinton concept to the descriptive concept which is contained within it. This is an attractive account but it raises a question. Given the possibility that activation can be over-determined (i.e. it can spread from different sources), why does the *de re* concept of Bill Clinton have to be activated first? In other words, given the presidential speech frame, why cannot we say that 'him' in (7) directly contributes 'the president of the USA' to the utterance's truth-conditions?

Recanati (1993: 313) claims that the referential step in the interpretation is more *basic* than the deferred one for two reasons. First, *saturation* is a linguistically mandated primary process triggered by REF, whereas transfer is an *optional*

[9] Note that one could say that the literal interpretation would be the one on which 'him' referred to the presidential podium. However, this option would have some non-literal aspects in it, because 'have an affair with' (usually) requires an animate entity and so does the pronoun's features. The idea that the interpretation must go through the Bill Clinton seems to be pressing, at least for Borg. But it is interesting to contrast the podium case with example (1), where the speaker points to a huge footprint and says 'He must be a giant'. Here there seems to be no specific male entity for the pronoun to single out. What would be the pronoun's basic level of interpretation? The footprint?

primary pragmatic process. Second, deferred interpretations presuppose the basic level, because the latter contains the description which is the output of *transfer*. Regarding the first point, we could wonder whether saturation really *must* be triggered by REF. This will be elaborated in due time. About the second point, things seem to be rather unclear. As Carston (2006) pointed out, the accessibility-based account faces difficulties when it comes to making candidates, which are not somehow encoded by the constituents, available for processing. In our explanation of the example above, 'the president of the USA' might receive activation from either the 'presidential speech' frame or its synecdochic relation with the *de re* concept of Bill Clinton (or the de re concept of the podium). Now, it seems that the synecdochic relation *per se* is not sufficient for justifying the basic level of interpretation, for the fact that the hearer's dossier contains 'the president of the USA' does not explain *why*, among the plethora of descriptions contained in the dossier, this one gets particularly selected as output of the *transfer* process. It seems that some pre-processing is required in order to make the description the most accessible representation. Recanati could then claim that it is the 'presidential speech' frame that selects (activates) this particular definite description as a possible semantic value of the pronoun. However, once cognitive frames are conceived like this, there seems to be no reason to suppose that a basic level must be derived first. More generally, given that Recanati (2004, chapter 3) construes his accessibility-based framework in a way such that even hypotheses concerning the speaker's implicit meaning can provide activation for certain non-literal interpretations of the constituent expression, the role played by the basic (referential) level becomes unclear. Carston (2006) provides an interesting discussion of similar points and raises more general objections to Recanati's activation framework, but my point is that there might be a defence of the activation model for deferred interpretations that dispenses with the basic level. Of course, the literal interpretation still is an important source of activation, but if we concede the over-activation point, there is no need to think that the interpretative routine must flow through a basic level in *every context*[10]. Consequently, the role played by REF should be reviewed.

If the motivation for a basic level does not come from the activation framework, were does it come from? The justification seems to crucially rely on the idea that REF *mandates* the process of saturation. Since mandatory processes must take place in every communicative context, a singular interpretation has to be derived at some level in the comprehension of the non-literal case. However, as I have been suggesting throughout this section, the postulation of REF *per se* is not *sufficient* to

[10] Once accessibility shifts are allowed in deferred interpretations, synecdochic transfer (narrowly understood) cannot be unified with the processes underlying referentially used descriptions, as they do not involve accessibility shifts.

characterize the *direct way* in which reference is determined in literal indexical interpretation. To account for this, Recanati had to advance the synecdoche theory and to characterise the linguistic meaning of indexicals as imposing *conditions on the context* in a way such that the thoughts they convey are *immune to error through misidentification*. Given that such substantive theses are necessary for his account of direct reference, one may then wonder what role REF is playing in all this. Here is the answer:

> REF is a linguistic marker of the synecdochic transfer from descriptive concept [linguistic mode of presentation] to de re concept that characterizes referential terms …. Being semantically marked, that process is mandatory… Level 2 is the basic level of interpretation *for indexicals* because the p-process which takes us from level 1 [linguistic meaning] to level 2 (i.e. the synecdoche from descriptive concept to de re concept) is mandatory, while that which takes us from level 2 to level 3 [deferred interpretation] is optional. (Recanati 1993: 315)

Apparently, REF is marking referentiality at the linguistic type level and once it is postulated, we are committed to an interpretative routine that serially invokes saturation of the pronoun, delivering a *de re* concept about the referent, and then transfer, which delivers a description contained in such a *de re* concept as the final interpretation. In this picture, the literal/non-literal asymmetry is preserved by an extra interpretative layer. But, how would things work if REF were not a part of the repertoire of features encoded by indexicals? Could we mark referentiality at the linguistic type level without committing ourselves to a basic level of interpretation?

Before putting forward an answer to these questions, I would like to consider an approach within truth-conditional pragmatics that does not require referentiality to be marked at the level of linguistic types. If the points made by such a theory are well taken, we could simply dispense with any theoretical apparatus meant to characterize referentiality in terms of encoded information. If not, there is the challenge to provide an account of type-referentiality and deferred uses that does not appeal to a *basic level of interpretation*.

5.1.2 Relevance Theory, Individual Concepts and Deferred Cases. Although Recanati's account shares with proponents of Relevance Theory the fundamental idea that pragmatic processes can affect the utterance's primary truth-conditions in a linguistically unconstrained way, the accounts differ in some important aspects. As briefly mentioned in the last section, Recanati conceives primary pragmatic processes within an activation-based framework, whereas for Relevance Theory, even the simplest case of saturation may involve non-demonstrative inferences requiring consideration of the speaker's beliefs and intentions.

Another important difference lies within the principles that guide pragmatic processes in the two accounts. For Recanati, primary p-processes provide propositional constituents via an activation criterion constrained by a principle of interpretative coherence, while secondary p-processes are driven by Gricean maxims of rational communicative behaviour. The fact that Relevance Theory regards both primary and secondary p-processes as inferential suggests that they should be driven by the same underlying principle: the search for an *optimally relevant* interpretation. More generally, relevance is a property of the inputs to cognitive processes and can be represented as a ratio between the cognitive efforts used in processing the input and the cognitive effects it produces. Although this property applies quite applies to different sorts of stimuli, linguistic inputs are a special case, as they are presumed to be (i) relevant enough to warrant the call on the hearer's attention and (ii) maximally relevant given the speaker's abilities and preferences (i.e. they carry the presupposition of their *optimal* relevance). Thus, hearer expectations regarding rational communicative behaviour *à la Grice* could be paraphrased as hearer expectations regarding the relevance of the processed input. Given this sketchy characterization of Relevance Theoretic pragmatics, I would like to assess George Powell's (2003) proposal on deferrals.

Against the idea that indexicals encode REF or that a basic level is mandatory in non-literal interpretations, Powell claims that 'indexicals are not semantically constrained, i.e. constrained by their linguistic meaning, either to express *de re* concepts or to express descriptive concepts: they can do either' (Powell 2003: 31). In his terminology, expressions that can be used to pick out an individual, such as 'John', 'I', or 'the man', introduce what he calls 'individual concepts' in the mind of the hearer. These expressions are completely underspecified with regard to the singularity or generality of the truth-conditions conveyed by their tokens, but nevertheless encode descriptive information (characters, linguistic modes). The issue then is: what role does the descriptive information play in Powell's account? He claims that it is neither a part of the utterance's truth-conditions nor serves as a direct way of 'loading' objects into propositional form. Rather it 'provide[s] only pragmatic guidance to the interpretation of indexicals' (Powell 2003: 133). But what does this mean?

If I am not mistaken, by assigning only a pragmatic role to *character*, Powell's position allows such descriptive information to be overridden in the process of interpretation. He (2003: 133) mentions an example where someone refers to a building by the pronoun 'she'. In this case, some of the pronoun's features were 'deleted', so the hearer could grasp the proposition expressed. Differently from Nunberg's distinction between the *deictic* and *classificatory* components, Powell treats the descriptive information encoded by pronouns as on par with their grammatical features. From the point of view of cognitive processing, a mismatch between a word's encoded information and the state-of-affairs it describes would involve extra effort and thus, other things being equal, reduce relevance. However, we must remember that extra effort is sometimes accompanied by extra effects, rendering the input more relevant. Now, let us consider the situation described in (7) again. Two people are in the room where the American president usually gives press conferences. One person then points to the podium and says to the other: 'Everybody would like to have an affair with him'. Powell would say that the pronoun introduces an individual concept which is completely underspecified with regard to its referentiality or generality and the features it encodes are used as evidence to infer what the speaker means. Since being the president of the USA – as opposed to being Bill Clinton – would not only provide a constituent of the proposition expressed, but would also explain why people are attracted to such a person, the descriptive interpretation seems to convey more effects. Now, it seems that the same effects could be generated had the speaker uttered the definite description instead of the pronoun, but in this case there is more cognitive effort in processing the former than the latter since, in the given scenario, the descriptive concept of the president of the USA is already highly accessible. To sum up, whether the individual concept is understood as singular (*de re*) or descriptive/general is a matter of which of these meets the criterion of optimal relevance.

Differently from Recanati's proposal, Powell claims that deferred interpretations result from a single pragmatic process contributing to the truth-conditions of the utterance. Whether the hearer is in a position to directly identify the referents of indexical expressions or not is something that encoded meaning is silent about[11]. However, once Powell rejects the *desideratum* according to which the descriptive information encoded by indexicals is closely associated with the way in which information about their referents becomes mutually manifest (see Recanati 1993: 86), there seems to be no way to account for our intuitions regarding the predominance of referential interpretations of indexicals. This worry is expressed in the following passage:

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[11] Note that in this respect Powell seems to agree with Borg.

> Why, then, are intuitions on the rigidity of indexicals so strong? Because, given the facts about human cognition, most uses of indexicals are referential. This does not entail, however, that all uses of indexicals are referential….Putting the same point another way, we should expect to see a bias towards referential uses of indexicals even if they are not semantically referential, i.e. even if they are not marked as referential by their encoded meaning. (Powell 2003: 169)

In clarifying what he means by the 'facts about human cognition' he says that 'we are cognitively designed primarily to track physical objects rather then properties' (2003: 168). But again, what does this mean? Following Spelke (1990), Xu (1997) suggests that pre-linguistic infants have correct expectations about the behaviour of physical objects in the world. Without entering into the details of how this evidence should be interpreted and how it carries over to the use of indexicals, if it does, it simply seems that Powell's remarks are incapable of explaining why certain expressions are intimately associated with referential interpretation. In other words, if human beings are very good at identifying physical objects in virtue of the relations in which they stand to egocentric space, then it would be strange not to devise linguistic items that exploited this special relation in the first place[12]. I believe that this intuition is present in many of Kaplan's and Recanati's observations on referentiality (as opposed to mere rigidity) of indexicals. In what follows, I will not pursue ways in which Powell might try to answer these worries, given his few words on the issue. Instead, I will provide a slight modification to the TCP accounts provided in these sub-sections that might meet the *desiderata* across different uses of indexicals. On the literal side, we would like an explanation that: (i) preserved a token-reflexive account, and (ii) preserved the idea that indexical expressions seem to be closely connected to certain referential interpretation. On the non-literal side, we would like to: (iii) preserve the idea that deferred uses of pronouns can receive attributive interpretations (see N1 in section 1), and (iv) also preserve the idea that such descriptive interpretations are not a matter of implicature retrieval (see N2 in section 2).

5.2 The Proposal

I would like to steer a middle course between Recanati's type-referential synecdoche theory and Powell's type-neutral relevance-theoretic account, which has strong similarities with some of Evans's (1982) views on indexicality. Differently from Recanati's account, the remarks sketched here assume relevance-

[12] One might say that an expression that encodes information capable of exploiting this special relation maximizes relevance.

theoretic pragmatics, in which the recovery of both explicit and implicit content is shaped by consideration of the speaker's communicative intentions. *Contra* Powell, I will take it that the referentiality of indexicals must be addressed at the level of expression type. However, the special way in which linguistic information provided by indexicals exploits contextual information may not involve *REF* or a basic level of interpretation. Let me explain how this might be pursued.

In section 5.1.1, I have argued that the postulation of REF *per se* is not sufficient for explaining the special connection between the information indexicals encode and contextually available information. This explanation could only be substantiated with the introduction of the synecdoche theory, context-conditional linguistic modes, and the idea that recognition of the referent under such linguistic modes is immune to error through misidentification. It is only equipped with these theoretical mechanisms that Recanati can explain the difference between indexicals and some referential uses of definite descriptions. Given this picture, REF seems to be instructing the hearer to re-identify the referent under a given linguistic mode of presentation with information given in the context. But is this feature the only way to account for type-referentiality? I do not think so. Let me explain why.

If the sole motivation for REF is the necessity to linguistically encode type-referentiality, then it seems that the feature is doing redundant work. This is so because the true explanation of the *relational* (i.e. non satisfactional) way in which indexicals determine their referents emerges from Recanati's remarks about the special *context conditional* status of linguistic modes and the idea that the re-identification of the referent under these gives rise to thoughts immune to error through misidentification. It seems then that the instructions encoded in linguistic modes of presentation are more than simple descriptions of the form 'the speaker', for 'I', or 'the addressee', for 'you'. Now, it could be argued that REF is responsible for marking that linguistic modes impose contextual-conditions, which in turn could explain immunity to error. However, I do not think this is a possible move for the following reason. REF is supposed to be the single feature that accounts for the type-referential status of all indexical expressions, demonstratives and proper names. Conversely, the special characterization of linguistic modes highlighted here emerges from the idea that the specific conditions indexicals impose on context *cannot be dissociated* from the information encoded by *linguistic modes;* not REF. For example, the understanding of 'I' demands that the context must have a speaker, but this condition cannot be dissociated (neither is independent) from the information that a specific person (let us say me) is the producer of this token. Given that different indexicals impose different conditions, the different ways in which they are context-conditional cannot be explained by a linguistic feature that is common to all of them, namely, REF.

Now, there might be some dispute concerning the definition of this special notion of linguistic modes of presentation. In particular, one might question the idea that if

the contextual conditions are not met, no thought is expressed, or whether linguistic modes *must* exploit the context in a way such that the thoughts they convey are immune to error through misidentification, or whether the most empirically adequate account of the relation between such linguistic modes and contextually available information is a synecdochic one (i.e. the Mental File Approach). Although such disputes are well taken, I am not here in a position to answer them. My only concern was to suggest that an account of type-referentiality for indexicals, which aims to provide a special connection between the expression and the identification of its referent in environment, can hardly escape from characterizing *characters* (linguistic modes, procedures) in an essential non-descriptive way. This fact was well known since Kaplan, but what I have been at pains to point out here is that such *non-descriptive* way cannot be provided in terms of information *independent* from the token-reflexive rules associated from each particular indexical expression.

At this point, one may raise the following difficulty: my point of departure from Recanati amounts to the conflation of REF and the linguistic mode into a single notion, thus the previous objections levelled against REF could be easily applied to the notion of referential linguistic modes I have been trying to put forward here. More specifically, how is it possible to preserve type-referentiality as information encoded by special token-reflexive rules (i.e. referential linguistic modes, characters, or procedures), without a commitment to the basic level of interpretation?

The answer to this worry comes with the shift from the association-based account of primary p-processes to an ostensive-inferential model of human communication. On an inferential view of primary pragmatic processes, the cognitive bookkeeping of the time, place, and perceptually available information constrains what rational communicative behaviour might turn out to be. Thus, as presupposed by the synecdoche theory, there would be two sets of information presented to the hearer: (i) mutually manifest background assumptions (which might include Recanati's temporary *de re* dossiers about perceived objects or specific conceptual frames) and (ii) linguistically encoded information (which might be understood as token-reflexive rules which exploit (i) in a special way). Since both shape the hearer's search for an optimally relevant interpretation, it all comes down to the question whether (i) and (ii) support a literal or deferred reading. Let me illustrate.

Imagine a situation where the aforementioned John works as an intern at the Whitehouse. He fancies another intern named 'Jane', who he has recently met. John considers asking her out, but he does not know how. As both of them set up the press conference room for the next presidential speech, John tries to overcome his timidity, as he initiates the following dialogue:

(8) **a**. *John*: What do you think about people having relationships in the workplace?
b. *Jane*: I think people tend to avoid that nowadays. If anything goes wrong, things may become awkward at the office. Although… (*pointing at the presidential podium*)…Everybody wants to have an affair with him.

Now, what sort of evidence might the hearer use in order to recognise that the intended interpretation is not determined under the special token-reflexive rules encoded by the pronoun? For starters, a potential male referent is not contextually salient enough for the pronoun to be literally interpreted. Moreover, the truth conditional contribution of 'him' in (8) is shaped by John's expectation of relevance. Given the contrast set up by 'although', the optimally relevant interpretation would provide a reason why one (contrary to expectations) *would* consider having a relationship in the workplace. As mentioned before, the effects John is expecting are partially constrained by a set of mutually manifest assumptions, which might include the description 'the president of the USA'. Thus, an inferentially based explanation of deferrals only requires the description that goes proxy for the pronoun in the deferred reading to be contained in a set of mutually shared mental representations. This description need not be accessed via its association with a specific *de re* concept that is engaged in the local interpretation of the pronoun, as the synecdoche theory predicts.

The adoption of relevance theoretic pragmatics makes my account of deferrals very similar to Powell's account, so one might still wonder how I could account for the dominance of referential interpretations of indexical. Starting from previous remarks on Recanati's notion of *context-conditional* linguistic modes, we could ask what aspects of the special connection they have with the context *might* allow the hearer to infer a deferred interpretation. For Recanati, linguistic modes impose conditions directly on the context such that, in cases where these are not met, no proposition is literally expressed. The shift to an inferential model of explicit communication suggests that a weaker instance may be taken. In relevance theoretic pragmatics, speakers - and not word themselves - are the ones who do the *referring* (with a particular word use, of course). Thus, cases where the conditions linguistic modes impose on the context fail to obtain might provide further *evidence* for the hearer to infer a non-literal interpretation of the pronoun[13], which otherwise would not be possible for Recanati in the absence of an accessibility shift. Given that information indexicals encode seem to presuppose specific aspects of the context at hand, the fact that there is no information to be exploited plays an important role on the hearer's inference of a deferred interpretation. This seems to

[13] Note that these cases are different from cases of feature deletion, mentioned in section 5.1.2 (e.g. when one refers to a building by 'she' or 'he').

apply to cases where we would have a violation of the epistemic constraint on singular thoughts, but it suggests that a special characterization of token-reflexive rules also seems to be well motivated in an ostensive – inferential model of human communication.

Of course, there might be a considerable debate about what hinges on the notion of context-conditional token-reflexive rules sketched here, especially regarding the status of immunity to error through misidentification. Treating these issues in a satisfactory manner transcends the purposes of this paper, although I plan to pursue them elsewhere. My aim here was only to present a specific interpretation of the information indexicals might encode that could account for referentiality at the level of expression types within relevance theoretic pragmatics, while dismissing an interpretative routine that demands a basic level of interpretation for deferrals. In fact, many of the remarks made throughout this final section gesture towards alternative pragmatic processes to the notion of synecdochic transfer. Comparisons with cases of cross sentential anaphora and E-type phenomenon seem worth pursuing. For example, in the statement 'John owns some donkeys. Harry vaccinates them' the pronoun 'them' is not bound by the quantifier 'some'. One of the reasons for this claim rests on the intuition that Harry vaccinates all the donkeys owned by John (see Evans 1977, Neale 1990, chapter 5). Of course, deferrals differ from these cases in the sense that the description that occurs in the intended interpretation is not linguistically realised at any stage, but if the pragmatic processes that underlie interpretation of pronouns in discourse could be approximated to the ones involved in deferred interpretations (see Breheny 2006, for examples where the pronoun's antecedent is not linguistically realized), there would be a strong motivation for a unified account. However, fully specifying such an alternative would require another paper of its own.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was simply to assess different accounts of deferrals and their respective merits and flaws. Strong arguments have been presented against the idea that singular utterance content can be individuated by linguistic form alone. They suggest that Borg's notion of syntactically generated singular concepts and Recanati's appeal to a *basic* level of interpretation must be reviewed. Nevertheless, the complete dismissal of any encoded component capable of marking expressions as either referential or descriptive/general leaves unexplained the predominance of singular interpretations of indexical expressions, rendering Powell's (2003) account not fully satisfactory. Finally, I presented an attempt to reconcile both horns of the dilemma by proposing that Recanati's REF is unnecessary once we regard the token-reflexive rules encoded by indexicals as providing a direct way of identifying

the. The fact that deferrals do not employ such a mode of identification explains their descriptive status. Nevertheless, there are many challenges in specifying what pragmatic operations are present in the interpretation of deferred cases. Insights on these can only be provided by further research.

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