Austerity and openness

In "On the sense and reference of a proper name" (1977), John McDowell makes two striking claims. One is that, without resorting to a description theories of names, we can do justice to Frege's view that names with the same referent may differ in sense. The other is that in order to describe ordinary thought and talk, we need to make use of the notion of de re sense, a kind of sense which has its referent essentially and which is unavailable in the absence of a referent. In the early article, the two views are presented as if intimately related. An argument relating the first to the second could be constructed as follows:

> The non-reductive or "austere" account of the sense of names, which allows names with the same referent to differ in sense, describes their semantic contribution on the lines:
>
>> "Hesperus" stands for Hesperus.
>
> Such a description is true only of there is such a thing as Hesperus. An austere account of names associates with every name a sense of a kind which ensures that the name has a referent.

In §1, I argue that the ideal of austerity can be attained in a way which allows for intelligible empty names. In §2, I suggest that there is no tension between allowing intelligible empty names and holding, as McDowell does in *Mind and World* and elsewhere, that the mind is open directly to the world. In §3 I make a similar suggestion concerning the trickier case of demonstratives. The overall conclusion is that McDowell could abandon his belief in de re senses (as he understands these) without damage to other aspects of his philosophy.

<div align="center">1</div>

McDowell's first main point is that one can attribute distinct senses to coreferring names without adopting a description theory of names, and he argues for this within the methodology of Davidsonian truth theories. Not all true truth theories are usable for interpretation. One so usable, an "interpretive" truth theory, will be sufficient for interpretation in the following sense: if an utterance, u, is an utterance of a sentence, s, and the s-related canonical T-theorem of the truth theory says that s is true iff p, then the utterer of u thereby said that p.[1] If we can assume that it is

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[1] A T-theorem is any theorem of the form "s is true iff p". What makes a theorem canonical is supposed to be defined purely syntactically, and is roughly that no T-theorem relating to the

one thing to say that Phosphorus is visible and another to say that Hesperus is, we have a reason to prefer a T-theorem

> 1   "Hesperus is visible" is true iff Hesperus is visible.

to the following

> 2   "Hesperus is visible" is true iff Phosphorus is visible.

Given the way in which T-theorems are derived from truth theoretic axioms, this gives us a reason to give axiomatic status to the first rather than the second of the following truths:

> 3   "Hesperus" stands for Hesperus

> 4   "Hesperus" stands for Phosphorus.

In the same way, we reach the analogous conclusion for axioms for "Phosphorus". This shows that, truth theoretically, we have a reason to treat coreferring names with different axioms. To the extent that a truth theory can be regarded as a theory of sense, this shows that we treat coreferring names as having different senses without associating them with any definite descriptions.

As this argument shows, truth-theories are overtly sympathetic to "homophony": the semantic contribution of an object language expression may be properly described by reusing it in the metalanguage. This sympathy should be shared by all semantic theories designed to supply interpretations. It is at least possible that there should be a language containing no redundancy: no pair of distinct expressions count as synonymous. This would mean that it would be impossible to use that language to state or fix the meanings of the expressions it contains except by reusing those very expressions in the homophonic way. If such a language contains "Hesperus", there would be no way of giving a correct semantic description of it within that language, a description fit to lead to interpretation, except by using the expression itself, in some such sentence as (3).

McDowell wards off some misunderstandings concerning what such homophonic sentences achieve, whether they relate to a single word or to a whole sentence. Despite their "austerity", the facts they state are not trivial, if that means known to all reflective persons. A

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same object language sentence can be proved in fewer steps. The idea is to exclude unsuitable T-theorems like "s is true iff (p and (q or not-q))". In some presentations of truth theoretic methodology (e.g. by Larson and Segal 1995), the logic is said to be so weak that, in the present terminology, all T-theorems are canonical. The statement in the text of the way in which T-theories are to be applied in interpretation ignores indexical features of language.

monolingual Spaniard, however reflective, is in no position to know that "Snow is white" is true iff snow is white. However, the homophonic mode of expression of these facts makes the sentences unsuitable for use in a school teaching English. One who does not already understand the sentence "snow is white" will evidently not come to understand it by confronting an authoritative utterance of the sentence "'Snow is white' is true iff snow is white", though confronting the fact thereby stated, if that could be arranged, would be helpful. The general conclusion ought to be, as Davidson has said, that we shift our attention away from trying to illuminate the meanings of words, trying instead to cast light on the compositional properties of language and on those features of speakers' behaviour that constitute evidence for their speaking one language rather than another.

Thus far we have a justification for homophony, or at least for austerity: a semantic theory will not attempt to analyze or decompose the meanings of the object language's words, but will reuse them, or close equivalents, in the metalanguage.[2] In the early article, having recommended the austere homophonic approach to proper names, McDowell turns to consider what he describes as "a complication" besetting such an account: bearerless names (McDowell 1977: 172). (3) entails that Hesperus exists, and so an axiom of this form cannot be given for a name which lacks a bearer. On the other hand, (3) is classically equivalent to the following:

5   For all x ("Hesperus" stands for x iff x=Hesperus).

The equivalence ensures that a truth theory with (5) instead of (3) will have just the same T-sentences, and thus be indistinguishable from the point of view of the project of interpretation. It avoids descriptivism, yet the previous arguments apply in just the same way to show (5) to be superior to the equally true:

6   For all x ("Hesperus" stands for x iff x=Phosphorus).[3]

Whether or not (5) entails the existence of Hesperus is contentious. Within classical logic, it does; within negative free logic it does not. If there really were a desire to incorporate

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[2] Homophony is a special case of austerity. A T-theorem in French which uses "Londres" to describe the behaviour of "London" will count as austere even though not homophonic.

[3] (5) entails (6), given a general notion of entailment (e.g. one according to which one sentence entails any other whose truth conditions it includes). It does not follow that the truth theoretic proof theory will represent this fact. Either the needed additional premises (e.g. "Hesperus=Phosphorus") are to be excluded (perhaps on the grounds that truth theoretic axioms must be confined to semantic information) or the entailment is by-passed by considering only T-sentences with canonical proofs.

bearerless names into a semantics of this kind, it could readily be satisfied by making (5) rather than (3) the model for the semantics of names, and adopting negative free logic rather than classical logic. One would then have all the advantages of the first of the two main claims McDowell argues for, without the implausibility of the second; austerity without a ban on sense without a referent.

The free logical model can be completed in more than one way, but according to the completion I envisage every atom with a referring expression which fails to refer is false. This can be effected by a composition axiom along the following lines (for legibility I consider only the monadic case):

7   An atomic sentence "Fa" is true iff there is an x such that x is the actual referent of "a" and x satisfies "F"; it is false otherwise.

As with all free logics, there are restrictions on the rule of existential generalization (see e.g. Simons 2001).

Free logical truth theory makes no concessions to descriptivism about proper names, even though it allows the possibility of a content without a referent. Accordingly, it pulls apart two ideas which risk being merged. In the first sentence of "*De re* senses"[4], McDowell sets up as a target a supposedly Fregean view according to which there is a kind of

content that determines the object by specification, or at least in such a way that the

content is available to be thought or expressed whether the object exists or not.

(McDowell 1984: 283)

The first disjunct expresses the familiar idea of descriptivism; the second disjunct expresses a view which might loosely be labelled object-independent content. It is easy to see that the free logical approach is not descriptivist, and so is not the target of the first disjunct. The second disjunct is ambiguous between the claim that there are contents which have their objects essentially, a claim accepted by the negative free logician, and the claim that there are no singular contents lacking objects, a claim the negative free logician rejects. I will work through these points in turn.

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[4] On some of McDowell's formulations of the nature of de re sense, the best way to put the view I argue for is that free logical semantics allow for de re senses. Consider "A de re sense would be specific to its res" (1984: 287). If this means that a de re sense has its referent essentially, this is merely rigidity (for senses rather than expressions), a feature that the version of free logical semantics proposed here is at pains to preserve (see below).

There are three reasons for which McDowell is committed to the view that free logical axioms along the lines of (5) (for all x ("Hesperus" stands for x iff x=Hesperus)) do not determine an object "by specification" in the undesirable sense. First, such axioms are classically equivalent to McDowell's preferred kind of axiom. Although classical equivalence is obviously in general much weaker that sameness of content, the equivalence makes it hard to see how anyone could suppose that (5) determines an object "by specification" whereas (3) ("Hesperus" stands for Hesperus) does not. Setting (5) in a free logic may be held to affect its content; but it would be implausible to suppose that this would go so far as to transform something which is not a specification (in the relevant sense) to something which is. Secondly, in the earlier paper, McDowell is explicit that the unwanted view is one offering "a blueprint or specification which, if formulated, would be expressed in purely general terms" (1977: 173), thus excluding the kind of "specification" attributable to the free logical model, which is certainly not purely general. Thirdly, the reasons McDowell gives for rejecting specification-determined contents do not extend to a rejection of contents determined by such conditions as *being Hesperus*. For example, he says, entirely convincingly, that we "have the ability to tell that a seen object is the bearer of a familiar name without having the slightest idea *how* one recognizes it" (1977: 165), from which he concludes that one cannot reasonably demand of a semantic theory that it describe the recognitional mechanisms. The free logical model, in making use of such conditions as *being Hesperus*, evidently makes no attempt to provide revealing descriptions of recognitional mechanisms. From a subject's knowledge of the axiom for "Hesperus", whether in free logical or classical form, one can extract no more than that the subject knows what it is to be Hesperus.

Does the free logical approach become a target for McDowell through falling under the second disjunct, offering a "content … available to be thought or expressed whether the object exists or not"? Some versions of free logical semantics insist on the rigidity of names, and some of these would endorse this claim by Kaplan:

> a proper name either denotes the same individual with respect to every possible circumstance or else denotes nothing with respect to any possible circumstance. (Kaplan 1973: 510)

The content of a non-empty name is thus not available "whether the object exists or not"; likewise the content of an empty name is not something which allows for the possibility of it being non-empty. On the most natural interpretation of the words in which McDowell introduces

object-independent content, the present version of negative free logical semantics does not fall within the target area. The version may consistently hold that there is a semantic category of names, all treated by axioms of the same general kind, which includes both empty and non-empty ones, so that a name's right to belong to the category, and so to be usable in the expression of thoughts, is independent of whether or not some object is its referent.

In the remainder of this section, I consider the role of classical logic in leading McDowell from austerity to the ban on bearerless names. To think of a logic as "correct", in connection with natural language, is to think something on these lines: for every valid first order argument (validity here being judged by the formal first order semantics), any natural language argument which it formalizes is valid (validity here being judged intuitively and by informal reasoning). (The converse is not required: that would amount to something like the completeness of first order logic relative to natural language validity.) It might seem that if we apply this test, we very quickly get a result favourable to the free logical approach. Consider the first-order validity "$a = a$". A natural language instance is, apparently: "Vulcan is identical to Vulcan". Neither McDowell nor the negative free logician regards this as true,[5] so it might seem that we have an agreed counterexample to the test for the correctness of first order logic. If this were the right moral, our work would be over: McDowell's implicit subscription to classical first order logic would be shown to be unjustified by his own lights. But the issue is not so straightforward.

The test required that "$a = a$" should count as a formalization of "Vulcan is identical to Vulcan", and this McDowell could dispute, as would anyone who believes in the correctness of first order logic as a description of natural language. An English expression is fit to be formalized by an "arbitrary name" or individual constant (like "a") in a classical first order formalization only if it is genuinely a name, and for McDowell that will involve it having a bearer. Since "Vulcan" does not have a bearer, it is not a name, and so cannot be formalized by "a". In attempting to apply the test for the correctness of first order logic, a test designed to help us forward in our account of the semantics of names, we find ourselves first having to take a stand on the very semantic issue in question. The free logician is happy to see the case as a

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[5] There are species of free logician who take such sentences to be true (see Lambert 1991); their views will be congenial neither to McDowell nor to the kind of free logical semanticist envisaged in the present paper. Nothing hinges on whether the first order formalization uses arbitrary names (as I assume in this presentation) or not.

genuine counterexample because he allows empty names; the classical first order logician will not see it as a counterexample because he does not. Deadlock.

Can we resolve the deadlock by appeal to the notion of validity in virtue of form? Who can deny that in some sense "Vulcan is identical to Vulcan" is like in form with "$a = a$"? If so, the fact that the first is not a truth is grounds for holding that a correct logic should not count the second as valid, which would immediately count in favour of negative free logic.[6] Likeness of form, it may be said, it to be determined "structurally" and not "semantically", so it cannot be denied on merely semantic grounds; there is no room for McDowell to bring a names-specific view to bear on the relevant question about validity. The problem with this suggestion is that it is not true that the concept of sameness of form is wholly non-semantic. "Walks is walks" is not like in form with "$a = a$" for semantic reasons, not syntactic ones; Paderewski cases lead, by a different route, to a similar conclusion. The syntactic fillings have to have the appropriate semantics; whether this is so for "Vulcan" is precisely what separates the classical and the free logician.

Other attempts to find neutral ground for a decision between classical and negative free logic seem to me no less indecisive. There are two ways in which one might wish to disagree with Leverrier's utterance

        8   Vulcan is a least 1000 miles in diameter.

One might side with Leverrier in thinking that there is such a heavenly body as Vulcan, but dispute his calculations of its diameter; or one might think there is no such heavenly body. Technically, the negative free logician could (but need not) register these options as differently scoped negations:

        9   Vulcan is not at least 1000 miles in diameter.

        10   It is not the case that Vulcan is at least 1000 miles in diameter.

One could not place any reliance on one's precise opinion being correctly identified by the use of one rather than the other of these sentences. The scope distinctions made available by the logic do not surface reliably in natural language, and some kind of ad hoc explanation is required of why this is. A free logician will take comfort from the fact that the same goes for some scope

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[6] Negative free logic has "$\forall x\; x{=}x$" as an axiom, reflecting the logical truth that every object is self-identical. It is not committed to the truth of every instance: instances in which an empty constant replaces "x" have no bearing on the self-identity of every *object*. See Burge (1974: 320–1), whose approach is followed here.

distinctions endorsed by classical logic. One should not count on a choice between the following to make clear one's position on whether or not there is a unique king of France:

> 11   The King of France is not bald.

> 12   It is not the case that the King of France is bald.

Because the scope distinctions are not reliably detected by ordinary speakers, it is also hard to get any direct evidence relating to the issue which should make for the prime difference between negative free logic and classical logic: the former's restrictions on quantification. For example, the negative free logician who holds that (10) is true will also hold that a proper formalization will not provide a premise which would sustain existential quantification with respect to the position occupied by "Vulcan", just as all agree to the analogous point when the position is that occupied by "the King of France" in (12). But just as one cannot count on English speakers to appreciate the point for (12), perhaps through lack of practice in distinguishing it from (11), so one cannot count on English speakers to appreciate the point for (10), perhaps through lack of practice in distinguishing it from (9).

I think it unlikely that there is a way to choose between classical and negative free logic which does not involve a prior decision about the semantics of names. McDowell's move from austerity to the rejection of the intelligibility of empty accordingly cries out for supporting argument, for austerity is neutral between classical and free logical approaches. In this context, to assume the correctness of classical logic is in effect to assume that there are no intelligible empty names, whereas we were looking for an argument for this view. If one is going to assume classical logic, and assume that it is applicable to natural language in a straightforward way, the validity of every instance of $\exists x \ x=a$ already settles that natural language contains names whose semantics requires them to have a bearer, and that it contains no other expressions worthy to be called names.

The decision between the logics must be made on the familiar, but admittedly not decisive, grounds of the unnaturalness of not recognizing intelligible empty names, ones introduced through error, deception or pretence. Because it is so natural to take it that users of such names really do think thoughts thereby, a case needs to be made for the contrary view; otherwise the free logical approach would win by default. A case could be made if intelligible empty names had to be descriptive, but we have seen that they do not. A case could be made if

the only austere axioms for names say such things as that "Hesperus" stands for Hesperus, but we have seen that this is not so.

Might thinking of semantic theory as the specification of word-world relations justify the classical logical approach? McDowell's axioms link names to objects, and so are genuinely semantic by the test just mentioned. By contrast, a free logical axiom like

13   for all x ("Vulcan" refers to x iff x = Vulcan)

does not link "Vulcan" to any object, and so, by the envisaged test, does not count as a contribution to semantic theory.[7]

The proposal simply smuggles in its preferred semantics for names, thinly disguised as a general principle of semantics. The basic thought underlying austerity is that one can do no better, in semantic theorizing, than describe an expression's semantics by reusing that expression, with whatever semantic properties it in fact has. If the expression is a name with a bearer, then in using that name to give its semantics one uses it to link it with its bearer; but if a name does not have a bearer, this will not occur. Only a prior commitment to the impossibility of empty names allows one to draw the conclusion that nothing appropriate to semantics will occur.

<div align="center">II</div>

In a number of writings, McDowell has described a philosophical position whose main feature might be expressed by the slogan: the mind is open to the world. Encounters with objects are "glimpses of objective reality" (1994b: 193), rather than an engagement with mediating "proxies" (1984: 292–3); when things go well, what we believe is nothing other than what is the case, and is part of the world (1994a: 9, 27). We should resist a certain dualism of "scheme and world"; and we should recognize that "experience must stand in rational relations to judgment if we are to be able to understand the very possibility of empirical content" (1994a: 125). Which of these major themes, if any, would be compromised by accepting that there are intelligible referring expressions which do not have a bearer and whose content is not given by description? I believe that the answer is: none. I have already shown that the free logical model contains no concession to the kind of descriptivism which McDowell rejects on the grounds that it prevents the mind's full openness. The model also gives no encouragement to two–component views: it is not that it posits an internal content which, in favourable cases, is supplemented by something

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[7] An axiom of this form for a non-empty name like "Hesperus" does link it to an object, though not as a matter of form or logic.

external. A name with a bearer has a content which it could not have had were there to have been no bearer. A name without a bearer has a content which it could not have had were there to have been a bearer. I suspect that getting these modal facts right is the main task confronting one wishing to separate McDowell's semantic austerity from his rejection of sense without reference for names.

The free logical model is committed to the truth of some interpretation of this claim on behalf of "object-independent" content:

> 14   A content expressible by a sentence containing a proper name may or may not involve an object, the bearer of the name.

The interpretation to which the free logical approach is committed gives wide scope to the modality which is expressed, perhaps obscurely, by the "may or may not", and might be reformulated thus:

> It is possible that there is a content expressed by a sentence containing a proper name which has an object as referent; and it is possible that there is a content expressed by a sentence containing a proper name which has no object as referent.

On the free logical approach, both these possibilities are actualities for English, which is seen as containing both empty and non-empty names. The approach is not committed to (14) so interpreted as to render contingent the connection between a non-empty name (given its actual meaning) and its referent, or to render contingent the emptiness of an empty name (given its actual meaning). The free logical semanticist can accept, and embody in her theory, Kripke's insights about rigidity: it is essential to a sentence containing a name with a bearer, holding its meaning constant, that it have a bearer, indeed that it have that very bearer; and essential to a sentence containing a name with no bearer, holding its meaning constant, that it have no bearer. Although not entailed by the free logical model as such, these facts of rigidity are ones that any approach needs to make room for; the free logical model has no problem in doing so.

For names with bearers, the actual bearer is what matters to the evaluation, with respect to any world, of the utterance of any sentence in which the name occurs. For names which in fact lack bearers, this emptiness is to be held constant as an utterance of a sentence containing the name is evaluated with respect to non-actual worlds. Rigidity is essentially the same phenomenon for both empty and non-empty names: reference with respect to an arbitrary world is just actual reference, if any.

This way of putting it is designed to be neutral between two ways of making the notion of rigidity precise. Kripke's original words were:

> Let's call something a *rigid designator* if in every possible world it designates the same object. (Kripke 1972/1980: 48)

As he pointed out, this account (as most naturally understood) requires that the names of contingent things designate, with respect to some worlds, things which do not exist in those worlds:

> a rigid designator [has] the same reference in all possible worlds. I … don't mean to imply that the thing designated exists in all possible worlds, just that the name refers rigidly to that thing (Kripke 1972/80: 77–8).

One might argue for this position by analogy with times. "Aristotle" now refers to Aristotle, even though Aristotle does not now exist. One option for a negative free logical approach is simply to adopt this view. However, it is not entirely unproblematic, and there is an alternative, one which exploits a distinctive feature of free logic. One problem with Kripke's position is that it introduces a non-uniformity in truth with respect to a world of sentences of the form "N does not exist". If N is a name which actually has a referent, and the world is one with respect to which that referent does not exist, the truth of the sentence with respect to that world is a matter of the referent of the name with respect to the world having the property of non-existence with respect to that world. If N is a name which actually lacks a referent, we do not, by hypothesis, want to explain the truth of the sentence in terms which presuppose that N actually does have a referent. I do not say that this is a refutation of the standard Kripkean approach to rigidity,[8] but it motivates looking at the following alternative: for non-empty names, their rigidity consists in their having their actual referent as their referent with respect to any world in which that referent exists, and no referent with respect to any other world. If we consider at world w in which Kripke does not exist, the truth of "Kripke does not exist" with respect to w can be explained as follows:

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[8] The point is independent of the following difficulty for classical modal logic (no matter which account of rigidity is adopted): if "Kripke does not exist" is true with respect to w, then so presumably is "$\neg \exists x\, x=$Kripke". Given the classical rule of existential generalization, it follows that "$\exists y \neg \exists x\, x=y$" is true with respect to w. Even Meinongians would not regard this sentence, which says that there is something to which nothing is identical, as true with respect to any world. See Wiggins (1995). The more immediate consequence, that "there is something which does not exist" is true with respect to w, is also problematic for non-Meinongians. Negative free logic has none of these troubles, thanks to its restriction on existential generalization.

"Kripke" does not have a referent with respect to *w*, so (by (7) above) "Kripke exists" is false with respect to *w*, so its negation "Kripke does not exist" is true with respect to *w*. The account is uniform with that of the actual truth of a sentence like "Vulcan does not exist". I suggest that negative free logical semantics should adopt this account of rigidity:

15   for all *x,y,w* ((*x* refers to *y* with respect to the actual world and *y* exists at *w*) iff *x* refers to *y* with respect to *w*).

A referent with respect to a world always exists in that world. A name which actually refers to a given object has that object as its referent with respect to every world in which that object exists, and has nothing as its referent with respect to worlds in which that object does not exist. A name which is actually empty is empty with respect to every world.

Words intelligibly used on a specific occasion count as expressing "thoughts". In particular, consider the thought expressed by an utterance of "Hesperus is visible". A theorist guided by (15) will not agree that "Whether the object exists or not would … be incidental to the availability of the thought" (McDowell 1984: 173). Had Hesperus not existed, what was in fact expressed by those words would not have been expressed by them. Something was expressed which relates to Hesperus and is true at some worlds, times and places. Had Hesperus not existed, this same thing could not have been expressed.

An objector may protest that a free logical axiom for "Hesperus", unlike a classical axiom, would remain true even if Hesperus had not existed, and hence that a free logical semantics is committed to only that kind of content which is independent of, and indifferent to, the existence of specific objects. In response, we must distinguish between what is possible in some unrestricted sense, which includes the possibility that "Hesperus" should have been used in a language resembling English and have been empty; and a more restricted possibility in which we hold the actual meaning of "Hesperus" constant. The first kind of possibility is not what McDowell is (or should be) worried by: of course there might have been all sorts of languages with some resemblances to and some differences from English. The issue that matters is whether the restricted possibility obtains, a possibility relating to English as actually spoken, and if so whether it leads to a lack of openness. As I see semantic axioms, they are necessary truths, implicitly or explicitly relativized to some actual language. Hence "for all *x*, 'Hesperus' refers to *x* iff *x* = Hesperus" is true even with respect to a world in which Hesperus does not exist. The world-relativized claim is that "Hesperus", as we use it in English, refers to something with

respect to *w*, iff that thing is Hesperus and exists in *w*, so that if Hesperus does not exist in *w*, "Hesperus" refers to nothing with respect to *w*. One can accept this while denying that it reveals a kind of content which is "indifferent to the existence of specific objects", in the way which worried McDowell. The worrying indifference would obtain if the actual world might have contained no Hesperus, yet "Hesperus" have meant just what it actually means. This potentially worrying possibility is not one to which the present semantics is committed. The innocent possibility, which might be mistaken for the worrying one, is simply that there is a possible world lacking the object that our word "Hesperus" actually refers to, and that "Hesperus" has no referent with respect to such a world. If the actual world had been Hesperus-free, then "Hesperus" would not have meant what it actually means; but a specification of the meaning or semantic role of "Hesperus" can properly entail that the word as actually used has no referent with respect to a Hesperus-free possible but non-actual world.

For non-empty names in natural language, arguments for rigidity are familiar from the work of Kripke, Evans and McDowell himself. It seems to me that the considerations generalize to empty names: there is no world with respect to which "Vulcan is at least 1000 miles in diameter" is true, even if there is a world with a planet of that diameter between Mercury and the Sun.[9] Moreover, a free logical semantics can, as McDowell would welcome, allow for the possibility of "illusions of content", cases in which people mistakenly suppose that they are using a contentful or intelligible expression. For example, as used in a logic exercise, "John is happy" may have no complete content (there is no possible answer to the question who John is supposed to be), but a student might fail to appreciate this, and delude himself into supposing that there was a genuine content and even that he had grasped it.

<center>III</center>

In discussing names, it is legitimate to bracket the impact of context, and to pretend that for each name, syntactically individuated, there is a single semantic story to be told. We thus overlook the fact that context may determine which Aristotle we are talking about when we use "Aristotle". A similar idealization would not be helpful in an account of demonstratives. In this connection we find a particularly detailed argument by McDowell against alternative views. He urges his preferred conception, according to which a use of a demonstrative which does not have a referent

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[9] The reasons are familiar from several writers. The earliest expression I have found is by Kaplan (1973).

results not in a thought which is false or lacking truth value, but in no thought at all: there is simply "an absence". Let us consider how these cases might be treated within a free logical model.

The most straightforward idea is that an atomic utterance containing a demonstrative which fails to have a referent would count as false. We adapt the free logical theory to make it speak of utterances rather than sentences. The compositional axiom (7) could be modified to this:

16   An utterance of an atomic sentence "Fa" is true iff there is an x such that x is the actual referent of "a" as used on that occasion and x satisfies "F"; it is false otherwise.

Whatever the theory may say about how the referent of a demonstrative on an occasion is determined, and however exactly it deals with the appropriate understanding of austerity for T-sentences relating to utterances containing demonstratives, it seems that anything like (16) will be inconsistent with McDowell's position.

Though the version of free logical semantics I am putting forward goes down this route, it is not the only possible one. In context-free truth theories, we speak rather casually of "sentences of the (object) language". This does not commit the theorist to treating anything isomorphic to a sentence of the language as also a sentence. If an ant-trail happens to resemble the shape of "All men are mortal", a theorist should not regard his theory as having assigned the trail a truth condition. The analogous point applied to utterances is that the theorist need not regard everything with the same sound as an utterance as an utterance: a sound similar to an utterance of "That is a planet", but generated by some odd static in a loudspeaker system, need not be assigned a truth condition by the theory. The conditions for something genuinely to count as an utterance are presumably typically given in terms of utterer's intentions. One might insist that for a proper use of a demonstrative there must be an object to which these intentions are suitably related, and so prevent empty uses counting as utterances. Thus even a theory which relies essentially on free logic in its treatment of names might arrive at a position on demonstratives congenial to McDowell. But rather than pursue this version of a free logical treatment of demonstratives, I will revert to the more natural one, according to which uses of atomic sentences containing empty demonstratives come out false.

Consider an utterance of "That is a planet" which, thanks to the use to which "that" is put, involves a reference to Hesperus. There is some temptation to say that what is expressed

might have been available had Hesperus never existed. This is because we fasten on to the character (in Kaplan's sense) of the sentence uttered, and rightly see this as available for expression in other contexts, independently of whether that character determines for these other contexts a content, in particular, a referent for the demonstrative. McDowell urges (1984: 288) that we must also be alive to a different way of reckoning. Demonstratives are associated with a *sort* of de re sense, something which, in favourable contexts, will determine a de re sense, but not in unfavourable contexts:

> Given a context, a sort of de re sense may determine a de re sense (if one cares to put it like that), or else it … may determine nothing. (1984: 288)

If the sort of de re sense determines nothing, then

> there can only be a gap—an absence—at, so to speak, the relevant place in the mind—the place where, given that the sort of de re sense in question appears to be instantiated, there appears to be a specific de re sense. (1984: 288)

This contrasts with a character which, in some context, fails to determine a content, for the character is available in that very context as a feature of "cognitive space": although only contents are truth evaluable, so that a character which fails to determine a content is not associated with truth conditions, the character is a something and not a mere absence. It also contrasts with the free logical model, which (on the assumptions we are currently making) delivers a result even further from McDowell's, namely that the utterance or thought is false.[10]

McDowell believes that alternatives to his view will involve us in a conception of demonstrative thought according to which its relation to its objects is indirect, and will thus compromise the mind's openness to the world. He writes:

> if an object thought of demonstratively is present to the mind only by way of something which could have been deployed in thought even if the object had not existed, the object is before the mind only by proxy. Without some seemingly inescapable compulsion, it is hard to believe that anyone would tolerate this indirectness in an account of how demonstrative thinking relates us to objects. (1984: 292–3)

On his preferred view, according to which "contents depend on the existence of the relevant *res*" (1984: 291), there is no such indirectness, for there is no separating the existence of the content and the existence of the object. Indirectness enters the picture once we allow (and presumably

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[10] Let a (demonstrative) thought be what is or could be expressed by a (demonstrative) utterance.

only once we allow) a conception of senses according to which they "are expressible whether the objects exist or not" (1984: 292). [11]

Free logical truth theory need make no mention of senses, but can harmlessly make use of the notion: for senses, to be is to be expressible; the sense of an expression is what is shown by an appropriate axiom for it; expressions have the same sense only if they are assigned the same truth condition, or contribution to a truth condition, by the canonical theorems of the theory; and senses are constituents of thoughts. Free logical truth theory allows that there could be, because there in fact are, senses which are expressible even though there is no object which is their referent. It denies that there could be singular terms with senses whose nature is indifferent to whether they have an object as referent. The last alleged possibility, which corresponds to the most natural interpretation of McDowell's words ("senses are expressible whether the objects exist or not"), would violate the demand for rigidity expressed by (15). Its realization would require a sense which would have been the very sense it actually is even if it had had a different referent, or had had no referent at all. To the extent that the free logical model does justice to (15), it rules out this possibility. Rigidity is sameness across worlds of actual referent (if any), with sense held constant. To allow that one and the same sense has different referents at different worlds is to abandon rigidity. Free logical semantics poses no threat from this direction to the openness of the mind to the world.

The essential point is that free logical semantics can do full justice to the rigidity of reference, and thus prevent the separation of content and object which, McDowell fears, would threaten the mind's direct contact with the world. If this is right, austerity in semantics, and openness in philosophy of mind, do not require what McDowell supposed they did: a ban on sense without a referent. Should one, then, simply recommend that McDowell lift the ban? Will not doing so encourage more thinkers to accept austerity and openness, once these are freed from their entanglement with the ban?

In the case of proper names, I think it is straightforward that the ban should be lifted. Doing so gives by far the most straightforward account of the serious (and non-conniving) uses of empty proper names, like the uses of "Vulcan" before it was discovered that there was no such thing. In the case of demonstratives, however, the situation seems to me more difficult. Whereas,

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[11] The demanded directness is consistent with the causal mediation of thought and perception by neural processes, as McDowell explains (1977: 166, note 1).

for empty proper names, free logical semanticists can quite well specify, in the austere, and indeed homophonic, way what was expressed by an utterance of, for example, "Vulcan is at least 1000 miles in diameter", namely, that Vulcan is at least 1000 miles in diameter, this straightforward device is not available in the case of demonstratives, whether or not they have referents. Typically, the theorist will not be in the same context as that of the target utterance, and so cannot simply reuse the target demonstrative. The methodology of austere truth theories needs some significant modification in order to deal with this feature, and there are several different approaches. In McDowellian spirit, I will assume that the theory will be guided by how speech is reported. Jill yesterday uttered "That is a planet" and I can today report this event by saying "Gazing earnestly at Hesperus yesterday, Jill said that it was a planet". Reports of this kind involve two parts. In the first part ("Gazing earnestly at Hesperus yesterday"), the reporter sets the scene for the utterance, introducing in his own terms any objects of reference that may be needed (including times); in the second part, the reporter specifies the uttered content, using an anaphoric expression, whose reference is determined by some expression in the first part, in place of the utterer's demonstrative. The anaphor goes as far as possible, under the circumstances, towards meeting the demands of austerity: it reveals nothing about any particular "mode of presentation" that might have been involved in the speaker's act of reference. Though the reporter exercises the capacity to refer to Hesperus as Hesperus, he does not attribute this capacity to the utterer.

This style of speech report readily accommodates certain kinds of error on the part of the speaker, in a way which leaves unaffected the content reported. For example, there is nothing incoherent, or even jarring, about a report like: "Gazing earnestly at a fixed star, Jill said that it was a planet". The question we need to ask, in order to decide whether it would be wise to allow for intelligible empty uses of demonstratives, is whether the error can extend to cases in which there is no object of reference at all. We can coherently envisage a narrative like this: "Jill lay in her hospital bed, still under the influence of the medication. Hallucinating a heavenly body, she said that it was a planet". This passes muster as a report of an empty use of the demonstrative sentence "That is a planet". The nature of the scene-setting part of the report ensures that there is to be no referent for the anaphoric "it", just as there was no referent for Jill's "that". There are various kinds of inference or speculation in which even hallucinating Jill may engage which are most readily explained by attributing to her such a content. There is thus a case to be made for

the view that allowing sense without a referent even for demonstratives improves the ease and naturalness with which we can make sense of speech behavior.

McDowell remarks of a somewhat similar case for proper names that a reporter might assert: "This man is saying that Mumbo-Jumbo brings thunder". He goes on: "Such an interpreter is simply playing along with his deluded subject—putting things his way" (1977: 175). In this case, McDowell has to see the reporter as saying something he does not regard as literally correct, for on McDowell's view any use of a genuine proper name, even in oblique contexts, licences existential generalization, which the reporter in this case does not accept. This makes McDowell's case different from the one we have just considered for demonstratives, in which intuitively, and also according to the free logical model, the reporter says nothing he need retract, or qualify, or fail to take fully seriously. It is not a case of connivance, if to connive involves pretending. The total report is not something that would be accepted by the speaker (assuming that Jill had no awareness of the hallucinatory nature of her condition), so it is not properly described as putting things her way. I conclude that the device that McDowell used to try to make his view about proper names more palatable will not happily extend to demonstratives. Here (as also I believe for empty proper names) we have reports even of empty cases which are accurate and involve the reporter in no kind of error, qualification or special non-assertive speech act (connivance). If speech using an empty demonstrative is straightforwardly reportable, the speech must have expressed something, so the words of which it was composed must have expressed something, so even some empty demonstratives have content.

McDowellian austerity in semantics, and openness in philosophy of mind, are positions which, in one form or another, I think we should all adopt. I hope that, by separating them off from the ban on sense without a referent, I will increase their attractiveness.

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