

# The Confessions of Saint Howard

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## 1 Introduction

Saint Augustine and Howard Wettstein are two of my favorite philosophers. I first read Saint Augustine only when I was charged with teaching the winter quarter of Stanford's Western Culture Sequence for freshmen in the early 1980's. His *Confessions* impressed me greatly. St. Augustine was a true philosopher. He became puzzled about things, and tried to work out answers to what he was puzzled about as best he could. One of the constraints he accepted, in doing his work, was consistency to the Christian theology of the Catholic church of the time, the same theology that he fought for politically and which he helped to develop. I tend to think that when philosophers accept constraints, even ones that I find rather bizarre, they do useful work.

Wettstein's latest book, *The Magic Prism*, reminds me of Augustine's *Confessions*. For one thing, Wettstein, like Augustine, is what I think of as a real philosopher. He battles with problems. He thinks about them all the time. He thinks about examples. I'm sure they keep him awake at night. Moreover, it is an autobiographical book, that records Wettstein's battles with Fregeanism

over a number of years. Where Augustine first accepted, then battled with, and finally rejected the dualist Manichean doctrine of an ultimate dualism between Good and Evil, Wettstein battled with Frege's dualism of *sinn* and *bedeutung*. It was a long battle. At an intermediate stage, he was attracted to a sort of watered-down version, the Kaplan-Perry doctrine. In the end this attractive and as Wettstein says "seductive" view was cast aside, gently and respectfully, but with finality, much like Augustine disposed of his faithful and heart-broken mistress. In Augustine's final conversion, the *New Testament* fortuitously falls open to a key passage. With Wettstein, it was the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Some of the key moments in Wettstein's conversion occurred in the early 1980's, when he was at Stanford for a couple of years, right when I was teaching Augustine. There he was, talking at least a couple of times a week with one of the architects of the Kaplan-Perry view, and becoming day by day less enthralled with it. I looked on and listened alternating between admiration at his dogged determination to get things right, and horror at his rejection of my beautiful and seductive view.

Eventually, his misgivings about the Kaplan-Perry view were explained in his essay "Has Semantics Rested on a Mistake." These criticisms are also developed in *The Magic Prism*. This was a very fine article, which influenced me deeply. In the article he drove home a point that he had no doubt made many times in our conversations at Stanford, as we sat on the concrete perimeter of the circular garden at Philosophy Corner, but which I had never quite absorbed. It pointed to a problem with the view, which required supplementation, although not, in my opinion, abandonment. I replied to the article in a paper called "Cognitive

Significance and the New Theory of Reference.” This was an important impetus to developing a view that I think of as a consistent but substantial development of the view I held then, which I have come to call the “reflexive-referential” theory.

Although Wettstein’s paper made a deep impression on me, I don’t think my reply made much of an impression on him, at least not a positive one. I think it is one of the things he has in mind in his book when he talk about epicycles. I think he probably saw the paper as trying to save a doomed theory by adding a few more layers of theory. That’s probably what it reads like.

Now, as it turns out, Wittgenstein was one of my first philosophical heroes. I belonged to the generation of Cornell graduate students who could carry on conversations merely by citing paragraph numbers from the *Philosophical Investigations*. When I moved to UCLA in 1968, however, I found that talking about language games produced mostly puzzled looks and occasionally laughter. Serious philosophers talked about possible worlds.

Always eager to please Howard, and delighted with an excuse to slip back into the methodology of my youth, I’m going to look at indexicals and proper names the way the muse of philosophy intended them to be looked at, as parts of primitive language games. After doing that for a while, I’ll compare the results to recent view of Wettstein and my own recent views.

Probably, when Augustine sent his mistress away, she tried in vain to exercise once more her powers of seduction. She probably flashed a thigh, or even bared a breast, to get him to leave the *New Testament* behind and come back to bed. I probably won’t be any more successful with Howard. But I’ll try.

## 2 Calling the kids to dinner

David Kaplan remarks somewhere that proper names are a real pain for the semanticist, and if they weren't so useful in calling the kids in for dinner, he would just as soon junk them. Let's start our anthropological investigation of proper names by thinking about this practice, of calling the kids in for dinner.

We can imagine that this use of sounds, that are at least recognizable ancestors of proper names, was once embedded in a practice that had no other recognizably verbal elements.

Our primitive language user DK has two kids, JK and VK. He is a sophisticated somewhat patriarchal non-verbalizer. He has various desires and intentions, and he expects his family to comply with them. To get them to do as he wishes he pushes and shoves them, he points to things, he shouts to get their attention. His shouting is a device for getting the attention of everyone within earshot, and it works well. When DK wants the kids home, he goes to the door of the cave and shouts. JK and VK know that they are to return to the cave right away or get cuffed. Sometimes he wants JK or VK but not both. He begins making the noise "Jordan" when he wants JK and "Valerie" when he wants VK. The two words give him two different ways of shouting, corresponding to his two different desires, and corresponding to the two different events, Jordan's return or Valerie's return, which will comply with those two different desires. By showing glee or sadness when one or the other returns, he conditions them to respond differently to the two sounds, JK returning when he shouts "Jordan" and VK returning when he shouts "Valerie". He establishes a practice that didn't exist before.

The philosopher's job, Wettstein says, is to make sense of things, sticking to the surface. And this language game does not seem very mysterious. Still, to make sense of it, we have to get a little bit beneath the surface. Since we are anthropologists, we can use our language to do this. We have to suppose that DK can have two different desires, and that he can utter, or shout, with the intention of getting one or the other of those desires satisfied. We have to suppose that Jordan and Valerie want to do as their father wants them to do—at least sometimes, often enough to make it worth DK's efforts to shout at them when dinner is ready. We have the elements here for Gricean non-natural meaning. DK shouts with the intention of getting his desire satisfied by getting it recognized. The names give him a way of articulating his intentions. This non-natural meaning existed already, in the pre-verbal practices of pointing and shouting.

There is no need to bring in *sinn* or *bedeutung* to understand what is going on here. But we do have to bring in something. To make sense of the language game it seems we need to recognize intentional shouting events, that these come in two types, Valerie-shouting and Jordan-shouting, that these shouting events have conditions of success, Jordan returning home in the one case and Valerie in the other, and we have to suppose that Jordan and Valerie can learn to respond differently to the different shouts.

### **3 Language as Convention-aided Action**

When we look at a primitive language game like this, two old slogans come readily to mind. One is Wittgenstein's, that meaning is use. The other is

the idea that language is action. It is the concepts of action theory, rather than those of semantics, that seem helpful in understanding DK's momentous invention.

I use "act" for the unique things, that happen once and never again, and actions for types of acts. Acts can be typed by the basic movements involved, or by the results that are brought about by those movements, which depends on the nature of the movements and the circumstances in which they are made. And of course, we characteristically type acts by their actual results and by their intended results.

As Alvin Goldman pointed out long ago, most of the interesting structure of action comes from the fact that performing one act is a *way of* performing another act in certain circumstances. Knowledge of *way of* relations can be explicit, as when one learns a recipe from a cookbook, or it can be implicit, as when one learns to ride a bicycle. Most of us who ride bicycles can't really say how we do it. We have *know-how*.

It is natural to describe acts in ways that disclose not only what results were brought about, but *how* they were brought about. If I say that Howard walked to the store, I convey the information not only that he did something that brought it about that he arrived at the store, but also that he did so by walking rather than driving. I might have said, "Howard went to the store by driving." The way we use "by" phrases tells us what way-of relations the agent exploited: "DK made VK come home by tying her up and dragging her"; "DK made VK come home by calling her name".

DK's invention of proper names really involved two things. He developed

some new action types that he could perform more or less at will, Valerie-shouting and Jordan-shouting. And he trained his children to react in certain ways when they perceived him acting in these ways. He established a new "way-of" relation. That's what words and the conventions they involve do.

In most of the cases we have examined, language allowed DK to bring about, in new ways, things he could already bring about in other ways. He had ways of getting JK and VK to come home, and ways of getting them to sit in certain places. But, as we noted, the new actions also extended the circumstances in which he could do these things.

In the case of the hide and guess game, language gave DK a new way to make clear what he believed. "Making clear what he believed" is of course an anthropologists phrase, not DK's. For DK making clear what he believed was not an end in itself, a goal he chose, but merely a way of achieving other goals, like getting a deer killed or some wood gathered, which he might have done by pointing in the direction of a deer or shoving a child in the direction where he thought there was some wood.

A second part of the picture comes from Wittgenstein, and his metaphor of the brake, which I need to look up before I actually give this talk. The idea is that attaching a rod to something fixes the brakes or makes the brakes work only when everything else is in place.

This is generally the case with actions. Our action bring about results in the typical case not merely because of their intrinsic nature, their nature as mere movements, but because of the circumstances in which they occur.

Now how does language work? By getting people to recognize other people's

intentions, and, as a result of that, doing what those other people want them to do. JK hears his father shout "Jordan," and comes running. Locke was quite right, in emphasizing that language is sign of what speaker's have on their minds. But what people have on their minds is often external objects, things and people.

## 4 Semantics

To understand language, we need to understand the conventions for the uses of words that constitute the linguistic system. But we also need to understand how these conventions make possible new ways of doing things.

I suggest that, as a first stab, can describe this language game in the following way:

- A shout by DK of "Valerie" indicates that DK has a wish, that is complied with iff Valerie returns to the cave.
- A shout by DK of "Jordan" indicates that DK has a wish, that is complied with iff Jordan returns to the cave.

Although the concept of designation or reference, or of the "bearer" of a name, is not required for understanding this game, it would allow us to take our description to one higher level of abstraction, and say something like this:

- A shout by DK of  $\alpha$  indicates that DK has an intention, that is complied with if the person  $\alpha$  designates returns home;
- "Valerie" designates VK;

- “Jordan” designates JK.

This formulation separates the particular conventions governing the names “Valerie” and “Jordan” from the practice into which they fit. By themselves these conventions make no sense; only as seen as part of a practice, a use of the conventions, a language game, do they make sense.

We can pleasantly imagine that as time goes by, DK’s consciousness is raised, and he realized that fathers don’t have to prepare all of the meals. His wife, Renee, can prepare some of them too. And even the kids can pick up some of the responsibilities. Pretty soon the whole family group is articulating their wishes as to whom is to return home. Renee shouts “David” and “Valerie” and “Jordan” and Jordan shouts “Renee” and Jordan shouts “Valerie” and “David” and so on and so on. So we have:

- A shout by a K family member X of  $\alpha$  is complied with if the person  $\alpha$  designates returns home;
- “Valerie” designates VK;
- “Jordan” designates JK.
- “David” designates DK
- “Renee” designates RK

## 5 Indexicals and demonstratives

DK and his family are so pleased with words they invent a couple more, “I”, “you.” In the beginning, DK uses these at dinner time to parcel out the rhubarb

and lizard parts that he, as a hunter-gatherer of rather modest abilities, has managed to bring home. Typically DK will begin by pointing at the largest piece of rhubarb and saying “I”. Once he has said this, anyone who makes a move for that piece of rhubarb gets cuffed. Then he points at another piece of rhubarb, looks at his mate RK, and says “you”. And so on with JK and VK, and then with the lizard parts.

Sometimes this part of the meal is preceded by RK, JK and VK pointing at morsels and saying, “I”. When DK is in a good mood, or is pleased with the utterer, he will respond with by pointing at the same morsel and saying “You”. Sometimes VK will pick out the smallest portion and look at JK and say “you,” and vice versa. If DK is happy with VK and irritated with JK, he will respond by pointing at the same morsel and looking at JK and saying “you” (or the other way round).

As anthropologists, looking on, we could describe all of this as follows:

- An utterance by DK of “ $\alpha$ ” accompanied by a point at morsel X, expresses a desire that is complied with if the person designated by  $\alpha$  eats morsel X
- An utterance “ $\alpha$ ” by another family member indicates a wish that is fulfilled if the person designated by  $\alpha$  eats X.
- An utterance of “I” designates the person who says it.
- An utterance of “you” designates the person the person who says it is looking at.

## 6 Truth-conditions

We step into a new type of language game when we imagine the use of names to talk about people who are not present. Again, the transition seems most easily imagine if we begin with cases expressing ones desires, and conveying compliance conditions, rather than asserting facts, with truth-conditions. Imagine that DK is a man with firm views about where his children should sit for dinner, and he starts conveying these wishes by combining his invention of names with what we can imagine a more primitive practice, pointing. This might be handy, because caves can be rather dark and he may want to convey his wish to people he cannot see. When VK or JK shows up for dinner, he points to various rocks around the dinner table and says “Valerie” or “Jordan,” and the kids learn that compliance requires sitting on the appropriate rock. When one day DK is sick and can’t get out of bed, or off his sleeping rock, or whatever. He points to a rock and says to RK, “Valerie”. In a bit, RK figures out what he wants. She goes to the door of the cave and shouts “Valerie,” and then when Valerie arrives points to the rock.

This is a watershed in the history of names, because DK did something like referring to someone who was not present. But it may not seemed like such a big deal at the time.

The K’s were actually a happy family, a playful bunch. DK’s inventions of names made a new game possible. After dinner JK and VK would go hide behind two big rocks in the cave while DK hid his eyes. Then DK would point to one of the rocks and say one of the names and then to the other rock and say the other name. If the kids were behind the rocks he pointed at when he said

their names, the kids did the dishes. If not, he had to do them.

This development brings into the K family linguistic practices a dimension of success that isn't captured by compliance conditions. DK isn't saying where the kids should be; he is making a conjecture or guess about where they are. Assuming he doesn't like to do the dishes, success is getting it right. That is, his utterance of "Jordan" accompanied by a pointing to rock A is successful if and only if Jordan is hiding behind rock A.

Here is another watershed that may not have seemed like such a big deal at the time. Perhaps the facts of the case don't drive us into thinking of this as such a big watershed. Up until now DK has been using his language to express his desires with the expectation that they will be complied with. It is this expectation that goes first. He isn't trying to bring it about that VK is behind this rock or that rock. He hopes she is behind this one rather than that one, since he doesn't want to do the dishes. But he realizes, at some level, that the "direction of fit" isn't the same as before. We know DK is a clever fellow, so he will soon start basing his guesses on whatever evidence is at his disposal. Maybe sometimes he even peeks. Perhaps he can smell which rock one or the other of the kids is behind — these are cave children, after all, and probably don't bathe all that often. We assume that DK doesn't antecedently care which rock his kids hide behind. He cares only once he has made his guess. In all these way, the step from expressing a hope instead of a wish he expects to be obeyed marks a change from one kind of success conditions to another, from compliance conditions to truth conditions.

## 7 Designation and Reference

Now we've got some practices that seem to me at least form a basis for thinking about what proper names are all about. Since we have a variety of language games, we can afford a generalization about the use of names and indexicals that cuts across them: the conventions associated with these words allows the K's to *refer* to each other.

As we have seen, it is useful to have the term "designation" for the relation between the sounds "Valerie" and "Jordan" and VK and JK that cuts across the various language games. Designation should not be confused with reference. Referring, in the form of pointing at objects as a way of making his wishes known, was something DK did before he invented names. Reference, it seems to me, would be naturally tied to a number of other pre-linguistic practices that we might have found DK involved in prior to his invention of names. These are all things that involve relations between DK and things. First, there are physical activities that involve one object rather than another: eating, hitting, sitting on, going into, coming out of. Second, there are cognitive activities such as thinking about and deliberating whether. We might want to stick an asterisk on these verbs, if we think that without language one cannot think about or deliberate whether in the same sense as we language users can. But, with or without the asterisk, I think it makes sense to say, of a dog or a pre-linguistic child, that they are thinking about a certain object, or deliberating whether to eat it. A child may show an object to a parent by picking it up and bringing it to them. And they may show what they want to eat by pointing. Referring, in the sense bringing to the attention of another an object that one is thinking

about, deliberating about whether to do something with — a cookie you want to eat, a child that hit you, a television you want turned on, is something children typically do before speaking. It is a natural bridge between language and pre-linguistic thought.

Wittgenstein said the if a lion could speak we would not be able to understand that. Could be. But if a lion is advancing at me with its fangs bared, I can divine what it intends to do. It want to eat, and its desire involves a certain thing, me. Lions don't need language to have attitudes directed at individuals.

Designation, as a word for the relation that DK genius' managed to establish between some sounds and family members, facilitates reference. The two are quite different relations. One holds between a person and an object, another between a type of sound and an object. A sound designates to an object for a population, like the K's, when one can refer to the object by making the sound.

It is quite natural to say, as I have been, that DK invented and the K's all learned *conventions* of designation. The most influential study of convention, David Lewis's in his book *Convention* runs conventions through the language as a whole, via conventions of truth-telling. I think this is ill-motivated. Primitive conventions of designation, as illustrated in the builder's language game for common names and in DK's practices for proper names, seem much more likely candidates.

## 8 Cognitive fixes

What sort of "cognitive fix" do we, as would-be Wittgensteinians and Martian anthropologists, need to recognize, if any, for the users of our primitive proper

names?

First, and perhaps most important, there is no reason to suppose that the conventions is posited in the last section are in any sense really conventions that link names with descriptions, identifying conditions, or anything like that. Any motivation for doing that will come as it were downstream from the considerations that naturally arise in thinking of these language games.

Suppose DK intentionally eats a piece of rhubarb. This requires a cognitive fix, in some clear sense. To eat a piece of rhubarb, in anything like normal conditions, DK will have to perceive it, pick it up, put it in his mouth, chew it up, and swallow it. He will choose one piece of rhubarb, probably the biggest, from the plate on the family dining rock. Still, eating is something DK does to the piece of rhubarb, not to his perception of it, or whatever ideas he picks up about it as he puts it in his mouth and chews it up and swallows it.

In using the names, DK doesn't require any *new* cognitive fix on his children. He acquires of new way of doing things he could do before. The new way of doing them allows him to do them in circumstances he couldn't do them in before. Before, we may suppose, he could get JK to come back to the cave by catching his eye and waving or motioning in some other way to make his intentions clear, or clear enough. Now he can do this as long as JK is within earshot. The names give him a new way of doing something he did before, and a way of doing it in a different range of circumstances.

## 9 Describing Language

If as anthropologists we see language as action, it is natural describe linguistic action as we typically describe other actions, in terms of the way-of relations and by-relations. We have given DK different linguistic methods of bringing about the same results. If DK wants JK to bring him a slab, he can point to JK and then to the slab pile, or he can say "Jordan" and then say "slab", or he can look at JK and say "you, slab" and so forth. If we are just interested in the compliance results of DK's act, all of these can be described as cases of getting JK to bring DK a slab. If we want to get at the differences, and keep track of which way-of relations were exploited, we can use the "by" locution. Imagine that DK starts a quarry business, and uses his children to help him move slabs and pillars around:

- DK got JK to bring him a slab by saying "Jordan" followed by "slab".
- DK got JK to bring him a slab by saying "you" while looking at JK and then pointing at the slab pile.

These different ways, of getting the same result, exploit different practices, and different circumstances, and put different cognitive demands on both DK and JK. The first method requires them both to understand the system of proper names and common names that DK set up. It doesn't require DK to find JK or the slab pile visually. The second method requires DK to know where the slabs are, and to find JK visually, and requires them both to understand the system of indexicals that DK has set up.

If we tried to describe DK's utterances *merely* in terms of their final compliance conditions, without using the by relation, and so without identifying the various actions DK performs *as a way of* getting the result, we can get at what the different acts have in common, but not at how they differ.

## 10 Information

Suppose now that the DK goes on to have more children, after he has invented these language games. For one reason or another, the language games are built into various rites of passage. At about age 7 the new children are trained in the indexical/demonstrative language game and taught to fetch various things around the cave. At age 10, DK, and RK d choose a name for the child. They begin to use this name when he isn't around; for example, DK will tell RK where he wants HK to sit by saying, the name and pointing at a rock. But they don't tell the child or his siblings. At age 12, along with getting a fountain pen, and perhaps being mutilated in various ethnically charming ways, a kid is told his own name. The child then tells his name to his siblings. A year later the child begins work in the quarry.

The next kid we'll call HK. HK is a bright young fellow, and he learns how names work before he has one. He sees that JK runs to the cave when DK shouts "Jordan" and VK runs to the cave when DK shouts "Valerie". Perhaps he occasionally shouts "Jordan" or "Valerie" himself, and enjoys how one or the other of his older sibling stops what they are doing and looks at him. Finally he is twelve. After the other aspects of the rite of passage are over, HK stands up in front of DK, and DK says "You, Howard" and HK say "I Howard". HK

has a new name, "Howard". HK then tells VK and JK, "I Howard".

The anthropologist, looking at the practice of saying the combination of "I" or "you" followed by a name, and the reactions of the various family members to it, will come up with the following:

- An utterance of the form " $\alpha, \beta$ " is true (regarded as correct) if the Designation of  $\alpha$  and the designation of  $\beta$  are the same person, and is false (regarded as incorrect) otherwise."

Now, given all of this, what did VK and JK learn, when HK said to them, "I Howard"?

So what do VK and JK learn? Well, they learn HK's name. But of course HK doesn't mention his name. No one of the K's has ever mentioned a name. They know how to use names, but not mention them. They have no word for "name."

Well, how did VK and JK *change* when HK told them this? They acquired a new ability, they added a new type of action to their repertoire of linguistic actions; they acquired a new way of calling HK to the cave, of telling him where to sit, of getting his attention, and so forth.

Suppose now that HK had said, "I,I" or "Howard, Howard" instead of "I,Howard". Perhaps JK and VK would have laughed at the first, and been puzzled by the second.

Our simple semantics provides us all we need to understand the difference between the informative "I,Howard" and the other two merely amusing utterances.

If VK and JK assume that HK speaks truly, they will realize that “Howard” is a way of referring to HK. I say “realize,” rather than believe, for “realize” is a more flexible verb. I mean merely that VK and JK will learn a new way to refer to their brother. Their learning is exactly of the same sort as when DK show them a new way to skin a lizard. They learn how to do something. They do not need the concept of a name or of designation or of reference. They need to know how to refer; given that, they learn a new way to do it. This doesn’t happen with either of the other locutions.

## 11 The Kaplan-Perry theory

What Wettstein calls the Kaplan-Perry theory came about in the following way. David Kaplan’s theory of demonstratives was first exposed to some of the public in the form of an NSF research proposal, which he circulated to fellow philosophers, which consisted of what was later published as part of *Deomonstratives*, the appendix called “On the Logic of Demonstratives.” This seemed a compelling account of semantics of indexicals and demonstratives, but it seemed various epistemological issues even more mysterious than they already were. Kaplan afficanodoes admired the epistemology of “Quantifying In,” which was a very sophisticated version of the view that so-called de re belief, what in that article was expressed as knowing *of* something that it was so and so, involved being in some way *en rapport* with the object one had the belief about. The idea of being *en rapport* is found in Russell’s distnction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, and also in Hintikka’s logic of knowledge and belief, which says you can have such beliefs about *the so-and-so*

if you know who the so-and-so is.

The semantics of “On the Logic of Demonstratives,” on the other hand, made it incredibly easy to *say* of something that it was so and so. One just needed to use an indexical or demonstrative. If you knock on the door, and I have no idea who you are, and I say, “That person knocks loudly, “ or shout at you “You are knocking too loudly,” I have expressed propositions that are about you. In the framework of “OLD” the semantic value of “you” or “that person” is a constant intension from worlds to you. In the later patois of singular propositions, it is a singular proposition with you as a constituent. What’s worse, Kaplan gave us a new demonstrative, “dthat”, that allowed us to express such a proposition about any thing or any person that was the denotation of any description we could formulate, even “the first person born in the twenty-first century,” which, in the late seventies, was not even a glint in his father’s eye. Indeed, as far as I know, the father of this person was not yet a glint in *his* father’s eye. What happened to being *en rapport*? Acquaintance? Knowing who?

While working on the issues of personal identity and self-knowledge, up to my knees and beyond in the works of the late great Hector-Neri Castañeda, I came up with what I thought was the solution to this epistemological problem, that made Kaplan’s theory of demonstratives not an obstacle to but a path to the true epistemology. Castañeda emphasized the importance and irreducibility of the sort of knowledge one expresses with indexicals and demonstratives. It seemed to me that Kaplan’s characters mapped much better on to the cognitive states that underlie knowledge that is so-expressed than do the proposition, either classical Fregean ‘qualitative’ propositions or singular propositions. Suppose

I think a thought that if I were to express I would express by saying, “I earn more than I deserve”. Then I have something in common with all of the people who believe that John Perry earns more than he deserves, and something in common with all of the people who believe that Stanford’s funniest philosopher of language earns more than he deserves, and something in common with all of the people who believe they they earn more than they deserve. The first two classes of doxastically similar people can be captured with propositions; they believe *what I believe*. But not the last group. They each believe something different, but they believe the things they believe in the same way I believe what I believe. Kaplan’s character gets us much closer to what this doxastically similar group of people have in common than do the propositions they believe. Something like character, I thought, gives us a more direct fix on *how* people believe things than does the proposition believed.

In his monograph “Demonstratives” Kaplan adopted something like this point of view. I like to think that my article “Frege on “Demonstratives” gave Kaplan a glimmer of how his semantics might be epistemically defensible, even insightful, and helped him to complete his monograph. Of course, it is likely that this option had already arisen in some form or another in his fertile mind.

At any rate, for a while at least, the Kaplan-Perry view seemed to provide not only a compelling semantics for demonstratives, but also something that had some hope epistemologically. What the view did not do, was to resolve the problems of the semantics of belief reports, a somewhat different, but related issue.

## 12 Wettstein's misgivings

As is apparent in *The Magic Prism*, Wettstein took the Kaplan-Perry view to be a form of the Fregean view, according to which anything like a singular proposition would be at best an *indirect* object of belief. The direct object of belief would be something purely qualitative, perhaps a denizen of the Third Realm of Fregean senses, perhaps some less esoteric abstract object. But the character would sit there, between the speaker and the content, what is said, or what is believed. Thus, in spite of the term “direct reference,” the Kaplan-Perry view is, in Wettstein's eyes, unacceptably indirect.

I think our Wittgensteinian explorations suggest a different way of looking at it, in line with how I thought of it; I won't speak for Kaplan, but one should note that already in “Quantifying In” he wasn't thinking of “de-re” belief as a shorthand for describing de dicto belief. That is, within the explanation of beliefs *of* so and so that he is such and such, he does not employ a requirement of some more basic belief in a qualitative proposition or a Fregean *sinn*. Instead he employs a technical term, “Bel” if memory serves, and something like a structural description of the belief state involving the “vivid name,” which is not a bit of language, but an idea.

Consider the two verbal ways that the K's have of referring to themselves, by name, or by the indexical “I”. None of the K's have the verbal or the conceptual equipment to refer to themselves or think of themselves as “the speaker of the present utterance” or “the thinker of the present thought”. What they have is a device that allows them to refer to the speaker of the words they utter.

In general, there is a difference between being able to exploit a fact in order

to bring about a result, and knowing which fact it is you are exploiting. The first requires the ability to register the fact, to respond differentially when the fact obtains and when it does not. That latter requires some conceptual or descriptive equipment of the sort that the K's do not have, and the rest of us do not need, in order to master the use of indexicals.

Let's go back to the example of riding a bike. A person who knows how to ride a bike is exploiting the fact that if one steers gently in the direction in which one is starting to fall, the bicycle will right itself. Every person who can stay upright on a bike exploits this fact. They are attuned to the constraint, to use the language of *Situations and Attitudes*. And they must have the ability to sense when and in which direction they are starting to fall. They succeed in staying up right because making these imperceptible corrections is a way of righting a bike. This is true of everyone who can ride a bike. But only a small minority know that this is how it works. And many who know that this is how it works, like my wife, and if memory serves, David Israel, cannot ride a bike.

The character rule, as applied to the K's or to any of us, is a way of describing practice which people who manage to refer to themselves with "I" or others with "you" have mastered.

So, I think this worry of Wettstein's is unwarranted.

### 13 The rock singer

What I (eventually) found compelling in Wettstein's article was the example of the rock singer. Here we have two different beliefs of the same person, expression of which would involve the same character, that of "He is a rock singer," and the

same content, that X is a rock singer, where X is the person who, unbeknownst to the believer, he sees twice, in different auditoria, from different angles. As Wettstein and I sat on the concrete bench at Philosopher's Corner, I tried in vain to convince him that somehow by bringing in different times or something like that we could get around the problem. But in my heart I slowly found myself agreeing with him, that something was missing.

What's missing, it seems to me, is perfectly obvious from the point of view of our Wittgensteinian investigations. It is the utterances, and behind them, the beliefs. There are two different beliefs, formed at different times, and, if the believer is a compulsive talker, two different utterances. I'll focus on the utterances.

Now Kaplan's theory of demonstratives was part of a project he calls the logic of demonstratives. And for the purposes of getting the logic of demonstratives straight, Kaplan decided he didn't want a theory of utterances, which for various reasons would screw things up. So he gave us a theory of pairs of sentence types and contexts.

But I am a philosopher, not a logician, and I daresay the same is true of Wettstein. If we think of language as action, then the utterance is the act. (This is, by the way, made clear in David Lewis's *Convention*, but I didn't have learning readiness at the time I first studied it.) It is also perfectly clear if we look at Kaplan's contexts. "The speaker," "the time," etc. The speaker of *what?* The speaker of the utterance. Kaplan's apparatus deals with properties of utterances, ignoring the utterances themselves, abstracting from them, in order to get certain intuitions about logic to work out. Well, that's fine. But there

is no reason to suppose that such an abstraction is required, or helpful, to understanding the nature of communication.

It seemed to me that the solution to Wettstein's puzzle was to recognize that the utterances of the sentences that *had* the character in question, and expressed the proposition in question, were different, and to bring them directly into the account. The utterances have many properties other than character and content. They are causally tied to different perceptions, and involve different beliefs—beliefs again being particulars—, that have lots of properties in addition to *something like* character, and the proposition that they constitute beliefs in.

Once we have the utterances, we see that even if the utterances involve the same context, the same character, and the same content, their truth puts different demands on the world. Almost the same point was made with the concept of *inverse interpretation* in *Situations and Attitudes*. But Barwise and I, like Kaplan, like Frege, like the whole utterance-a-phobic tradition, eschewed bringing the utterances directly into the theory. We talked about meanings as a relation among properties of the utterance: its discourse situation, connective situation, and interpretation—more or less the content or proposition expressed.

Once we have the utterances, it's not hard to say what the different truth-conditions are. We construct a proposition from the utterances, and the demands their character puts on their truth. I called this, "the proposition created," in my reply to Wettstein, but now I call it the reflexive truth conditions or reflexive content.

Now *if* one supposes that the Kaplan-Perry theory was trying to give the *direct* objects of belief, or what one in some sense directly says, one is likely to

interpret these new propositions as new candidates for such direct objects. But this is the wrong way to look at it. When I say “I am overpaid,” I say, as directly as can be, although not as sincerely as can be, that John Perry is overpaid. I don’t say that *by* saying that a certain utterance is made by someone who is overpaid. And, if I had a belief that this utterance expressed, that wouldn’t be in any sense a belief that that belief was possessed by someone who was overpaid. However, if what I say is true, the person who says it is overpaid, and if I had such a belief, it would be true only if it were possessed by someone who is overpaid.

These new entities, these propositions created or reflexive truth-conditions, are not new direct objects of belief. Nor do they replace character in getting at what utterances, by different people, to the effect that they are overpaid have in common.

What they are, are additional uniformities, that a Wittgensteinian anthropologist might find useful in getting at various forms of similarity that obtain among utterances. It is, I think, the uniformity that is needed to understand communication. The utterance is what a person produces, and another person perceives, when communication takes place.

Suppose for example that one of K’s shouts from the cave, “I’m sick and tired of always being the one who has to carry the slabs.” (We need to suppose the further development of the K language games). RK and DK are outside. RK thinks that it is VK that is shouting. DK thinks that it is JK that is shouting. They both think that the utterance is true. So RK comes to believe that VK is sick and tired of slab carrying, and DK think that JK is. But there is something

they both believe; there is a uniformity that underlies the difference. They both take the utterance to be uttered by someone who is sick and tired of carrying slabs. Unless we have that uniformity in place, we can't get at the differences.

## 14 Conclusion

I said at the beginning that I like Augustine as a philosopher, in spite of not really accepting the constraints to which he subscribes. The same is true, I think, of Wettstein. I think he believes that philosophy shouldn't be a theoretical enterprise, and that philosophical problems are susceptible to solutions that can be clearly stated in straightforward and ordinary language, and that problems in the philosophy of language don't require us to say much about the structure of cognition, and that our solutions shouldn't be constrained by fitting in with the needs or insights of linguists or psychologists. I admire Augustine and I admire Wettstein, in each case in part because of their allegiance to the constraints that they adopt. But I don't want to see philosophy filled up with Christians or with Wettsteinians. I suspect that on this note, I can expect partial agreement from Howard Wettstein.

## References

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