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Putting Things in Contexts

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1. Introduction

Thanks to David Kaplan (1989a, 1989b), we all know how to handle *indexicals* like ‘I’. ‘I’ doesn’t refer to an object *simpliciter*; rather, it refers to an object only relative to a *context*. In particular, relative to a context *C*, ‘I’ refers to the agent of *C*. Since different contexts can have different agents, ‘I’ can refer to different objects relative to different contexts. For example, relative to a context *c* whose agent is Gottlob Frege, ‘I’ refers to Frege; relative to a context *c** whose agent is Alexius Meinong, ‘I’ refers to Meinong.

‘I’ is *directly referential*. This means that the object that ‘I’ refers to (relative to a context *C*) is its *content* (relative to *C*), where the content of an expression (relative to *C*) is what it contributes to the propositions that sentences that contain it express (relative to *C*). As a result, what a sentence that contains ‘I’ expresses (relative to a context *C*) is a *singular proposition*, one that contains the very object that ‘I’ refers to (relative to *C*). For example, relative to *c*, whose agent is Frege, the content of ‘I’ is Frege himself; and, as a result, relative to *c*,

(1) I exist

expresses a singular proposition that contains Frege himself.

‘I’ has a *character*, which determines that its content relative to a context *C* is the agent of *C*. For example, the character of ‘I’ determines that, relative to *c*, whose agent is Frege, the content of ‘I’ is Frege himself. The character of ‘I’, which is stable across contexts, is its meaning. This is the (by now familiar) general framework for ‘I’. Other indexicals—like ‘you’ and ‘here’ and ‘now’—can easily be accommodated within this general framework if, in addition to providing an agent (for ‘I’ to refer to), a context also provides an addressee (for ‘you’), a place (for ‘here’), and a time (for ‘now’).¹

In “Demonstrating and Necessity,” Nathan Salmon (2002) addresses the following question: how should we accommodate *demonstratives*—that is, expressions like ‘this’, ‘that’, or (on some uses) ‘he’—within the general framework for indexicals?² At least typically, demonstratives need to be accompanied by something extra: for example, a pointing gesture, a glance, or a special kind of intention. Following David

Kaplan (1989a, 490) and David Braun (1996, 146), let's call this something extra, whatever it is, a *demonstration*.³ A demonstration demonstrates an object. Following Kaplan (1989a, 490), let's call this demonstrated object a *demonstratum*. For example, if I point at myself, then my pointing gesture is a demonstration and I am a demonstratum.

One way to accommodate demonstratives within the general framework for indexicals is to say that, even relative to a context, demonstratives themselves don't refer; rather, only demonstratives combined with demonstrations do. For example, on this view, 'he' combined with a demonstration that demonstrates Frege would refer to Frege (relative to a context). This is Kaplan's (1989a, 524–27) view. Let's call it *Kaplan's Theory*.⁴ On Kaplan's Theory, demonstrations are put with demonstratives; together, they make up the things that refer (relative to contexts).

Another way to accommodate demonstratives is to include demonstrata in contexts. Just as a context provides an agent for 'I' to refer to, so it would provide a demonstratum for 'he' to refer to. For example, on this view, 'he' would refer to Frege relative to a context whose demonstratum is Frege. Following Salmon (2002, 511), let's call this *the Bare Bones Theory*.⁵ On the Bare Bones Theory, demonstrata are put into contexts; and, like ordinary indexicals, demonstratives refer relative to contexts.

A third way to accommodate demonstratives is to include demonstrations (rather than demonstrata) in contexts. Instead of providing a demonstratum, a context would provide a demonstration, which would in turn demonstrate a demonstratum. For example, on this view, 'he' would refer to Frege relative to a context whose demonstration demonstrates Frege. Following Salmon (2002, 519), let's call this *the Indexical Theory*.⁶ On the Indexical Theory, demonstrations are put into contexts; and, like ordinary indexicals, demonstratives refer relative to contexts.

Suppose that we have ordinary, unsupplemented expressions (that aren't combined with demonstrations) and ordinary, unsupplemented contexts (that don't include demonstrata or demonstrations). How do we deal with demonstratives? Kaplan's Theory says, "Leave the contexts alone, but combine the expressions with demonstrations." The Bare Bones Theory says, "Leave the expressions alone, but put demonstrata in the contexts." And the Indexical Theory says, "Leave the expressions alone, but put demonstrations in the contexts." (As far as I know, no

view says, “Leave the contexts alone, but combine the expressions with demonstrata.”)

Salmon (2002) argues against both Kaplan’s Theory and the Bare Bones Theory, and he argues for the Indexical Theory. In this paper, I defend the Bare Bones Theory. *Contra* Salmon, I don’t see why we should adopt the Indexical Theory instead of the Bare Bones Theory. In section 2, I point out that Salmon’s arguments against Kaplan’s Theory don’t favor the Indexical Theory over the Bare Bones Theory. In sections 3 and 5, I present Salmon’s arguments against the Bare Bones Theory; and, in sections 4 and 6, I reply to them.⁷

2. Salmon’s Arguments against Kaplan’s Theory

Salmon offers two arguments against Kaplan’s Theory. Salmon’s first argument is that, on Kaplan’s Theory, a demonstrative itself isn’t the thing that refers; rather, a demonstrative combined with a demonstration is. But that’s wrong, Salmon says (2002, 515), because demonstratives themselves refer. When I say

(2) That’s the one

and point at a chair, what refers is the expression ‘that’, and not the strange hybrid—or “cross-bred mereological union,” as Salmon puts it (2002, 503)—of an expression (namely, ‘that’) and an action or movement (namely, my pointing gesture). The Indexical Theory gets this right, because on the Indexical Theory demonstratives themselves refer (relative to contexts that include demonstrations). But the Bare Bones Theory gets this right, too, because on the Bare Bones Theory demonstratives themselves also refer (relative to contexts that include demonstrata).

Salmon’s second argument is that, on Kaplan’s Theory, a demonstrative has no meaning in isolation; and, insofar as it does have a meaning, a demonstrative isn’t univocal. This is because, on Kaplan’s Theory, a demonstrative has a character only when it is combined with a demonstration, and the same demonstrative combined with different demonstrations has different characters. But that’s wrong, Salmon says (2002, 512, 515), because demonstratives are meaningful in isolation, and the meaning of a demonstrative remains the same no matter which demonstration accompanies it.⁸ For example, the word ‘that’ is meaningful, even if it is not accompanied by any demonstration, and ‘that’ has the same meaning whether I am pointing at a chair or a person. The Indexical Theory gets this right, because on the Indexical Theory

demonstratives are meaningful in isolation (on its own, a demonstrative has a character that determines a function that maps each context onto the object demonstrated by the demonstration of that context), and they're univocal (the character of a demonstrative remains the same no matter which demonstration is in the context). But the Bare Bones Theory gets this right, too, because on the Bare Bones Theory demonstratives are also meaningful in isolation (on its own, a demonstrative has a character that determines a function that maps each context onto the demonstratum of that context), and they're also univocal (the character of a demonstrative remains the same no matter which demonstratum is in the context).⁹

Demonstratives are, as Salmon puts it, "monogamous in meaning while promiscuous in designation" (2002, 504). Kaplan's Theory gets this wrong: on Kaplan's Theory, demonstratives themselves are abstinent in both meaning and designation (and, insofar as they're not abstinent in meaning, they're promiscuous rather than monogamous). By contrast, the Indexical Theory and the Bare Bones Theory both get this right. Salmon's arguments against Kaplan's Theory thus favor both the Indexical Theory and the Bare Bones Theory over Kaplan's Theory. But neither argument favors the Indexical Theory over the Bare Bones Theory. So why does Salmon reject the Bare Bones Theory in favor of the Indexical Theory?

3. Salmon's First Argument against the Bare Bones Theory: Absent Demonstrata

Salmon offers two arguments against the Bare Bones Theory. The first is based on absent demonstrata (Salmon 2002, 516–17). Suppose that at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 we are hanging out at Bar Italia. I point at a picture of Frege (which I happen to be carrying around with me) and say to you

(3) He's a philosopher.

My utterance of (3) can be represented for semantic purposes by pairing (3) with a context whose agent is me, whose addressee is you, whose time is 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003, and whose place is Bar Italia.¹⁰ Frege isn't around with you and me at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 at Bar Italia. So he can't be included in the context. But my pointing gesture does occur at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 at Bar Italia. So it can be included in the context. At least in this case, the context can include the demon-

stration (namely, my pointing gesture); but, contrary to the Bare Bones Theory, it can't include the demonstratum (namely, Frege).

If the Bar Italia case is to provide an argument against the Bare Bones Theory and in favor of the Indexical Theory, then it must be that the following three claims are true:

- (A) Frege is the demonstratum of my pointing gesture
- (B) The relevant context can't include Frege

and

- (C) The relevant context can include my pointing gesture

where the relevant context is the one that, when paired with (3), represents my utterance of (3) for semantic purposes.

The Bar Italia case is one of what W. V. O. Quine calls "deferred ostension" (1968, 194): I'm pointing at a picture of Frege, but 'he' refers to Frege himself rather than to the picture of him. We know what the demonstration is: it's my pointing gesture.¹¹ And we know what 'he' refers to: it's Frege himself. But what's the demonstratum? Is it Frege himself or the picture of him? It must be the former, if Salmon is to have an argument against the Bare Bones Theory. Otherwise, since the picture is with us in Bar Italia just as much as my pointing gesture is, deferred ostension wouldn't provide us with a case in which the demonstratum is absent. On what I assume is the standard account of deferred ostension, the demonstratum in the Bar Italia case is Frege himself. For the demonstratum is what the demonstrative refers to, and 'he' refers to Frege rather than to the picture of him. (What I said by uttering (3) is true; but the picture of Frege isn't a philosopher; so 'he' doesn't refer to the picture of Frege.) Indeed, Salmon would say that in the Bar Italia case the demonstratum is Frege himself (2002, 516–17). This is (A).

Although (A) is true on the standard account of deferred ostension, the standard account isn't the only account of deferred ostension. For example, on Marga Reimer's (1996) view, the demonstratum in the Bar Italia case is the picture of Frege. To maintain that 'he' refers to Frege himself rather than to the picture of him, Reimer rejects the assumption that 'he' refers to the demonstratum; rather, on her view, it refers to something that is related to, but not identical with, the demonstratum: namely, Frege himself. This happens in other cases. To take one of Reimer's examples, if I point at a copy of *Word and Object* and say

(4) That was published in 1960

the demonstratum is the copy of the book, but ‘that’ doesn’t refer to the copy; rather, it refers to something related to it: namely, a type of which the copy is a token.¹² A Bare Bones Theorist could reject (A) by following Reimer and denying that demonstrata are absent in cases of deferred ostension. But I don’t think that this is how a Bare Bones Theorist should reply to Salmon’s argument. For one thing, the reply presupposes Reimer’s account of deferred ostension, and that account would need to be argued for. And, for another, Salmon’s argument doesn’t depend on deferred ostension. Salmon mentions other cases of absent demonstrata (2002, 517). Suppose that, at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 at Bar Italia, you say

(5) The person who wrote the *Begriffsschrift* sure is one clever fellow

and I say

(6) Yeah, he’s awesome.

As I use it, ‘he’ is a demonstrative that refers to Frege, even though Frege isn’t at Bar Italia with us. On Salmon’s view, the definite description ‘the person who wrote the *Begriffsschrift*’ is itself the demonstration that accompanies my use of ‘he’; and, of course, the definite description demonstrates Frege. So, although absent, Frege is the demonstratum. Once again, we have an absent demonstratum, but this time without deferred ostension.

What about (B) and (C)? To underwrite these claims, Salmon seems to be appealing to something like a pretheoretic notion of context according to which contexts are natural things out there in the world. Salmon says, “I am thinking here of a context as the setting or environment in which an utterance occurs” (2002, 532 n. 37). If a context is a localized environment in which an utterance occurs, then, as Salmon would say (2002, 507), Frege is indeed “nowhere to be found” in a context that includes you and me and 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 and Bar Italia. I think that, given this notion of context, it’s supposed to be obvious or intuitive that a context that includes you and me and 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 and Bar Italia couldn’t include Frege but could include my pointing gesture. Salmon says, “*Intuitively*, [demonstrations such as] the agent’s hand gestures, fingerpointings, and glances of the eye are features of the context of use, every bit as much as the identity of the agent and the time and place of the utterance” (2002, 517, my empha-

sis). Let's call this notion of context, on which contexts are natural things out there in the world, the *natural notion*. The natural notion is shared by a number of philosophers. For example, David Lewis says, "A *context* is a location—time, place, and possible world—where a sentence is said. It has countless features, determined by the character of the location" (1981, 79, emphasis in original).¹³

Demonstrations needn't be pointing gestures. As in the second Bar Italia case discussed above, they might be linguistic expressions; or, as Kaplan suggests (1989b), and Salmon acknowledges (2002, 526 n. 4), they might be intentions of some kind. So Salmon's argument against the Bare Bones Theory and in favor of the Indexical Theory rests, not only on (B) and (C), but also on

- (D) The relevant context can include my intentions and your definite descriptions.

A Bare Bones Theorist could reply that, although the natural notion of context underwrites (B) and (C), it doesn't underwrite (D). It might be intuitive that the relevant context can't include Frege and that it can include my pointing gesture. But is it equally intuitive that the relevant context can include my intentions and your expressions?

But I don't think that this is how a Bare Bones Theorist should reply to Salmon's argument either. For one thing, I don't think a Bare Bones Theorist should rest too much on our intuitions about what contexts, taken as natural things out there in the world, could or couldn't include. And, for another, the reply presupposes the natural notion of context; and, as we'll see, that notion is suspect.

4. A Reply to Salmon's First Argument

There's another notion of context, on which contexts needn't be natural things out there in the world. On this other notion, a context is whatever provides what we need for the semantics of indexicals. Kaplan discusses this notion of context in "Afterthoughts." He says that—at least from a certain "abstract, formal" point of view—"context is a package of whatever parameters are needed to determine the referent, and thus the content, of the directly referential expressions of the language" (1989b, 591). On this notion, a context provides what we need: for example, an agent for 'I', an addressee for 'you', a time for 'now', and a place for 'here'. Kaplan contrasts this notion of context with the natural notion, which he describes as a "pretheoretical notion" of context on which a context is (or provides) "a natural feature of a certain

region of the world" (1989b, 591 n. 52). Let's call this new notion of context, on which contexts provide whatever we need for the semantics of indexicals, the *formal notion*. On the formal notion, a context is much like an index in various formal (or less formal) semantics: namely, an ordered *n*-tuple of a person, a place, a time, and so on.¹⁴

If a context is a natural thing out there in the world, as it is on the natural notion, then it must be *proper*: that is, it must be the case that the agent and addressee of the context are located at the time and place of the context. For example, if a context provides me as the agent, you as the addressee, 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 as the time, and Bar Italia as the place, then we must be at Bar Italia at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003. This is what prevents such a context from including Frege: he can't be part of the context, because he isn't at Bar Italia with us then. (This is (B).)

But there is reason to think that some contexts are improper and hence that, contrary to the natural notion, contexts aren't natural things out there in the world. We are all familiar with voicemail messages like

(7) I'm not here now.

If we evaluate (7) relative to a proper context, whose agent is located at the time and place of the context, then it will come out false. But, intuitively, it can be true. For (7) to come out true, what we need is an improper context, one whose agent isn't located at the time and place of the context.¹⁵ The need for improper contexts tells against the natural notion of context and in favor of the formal notion of context. On the formal notion of context, if what we need is an agent who isn't located at the time and place of the context, so be it; our context provides it. Curiously, Salmon (2002, 532 n. 39) considers allowing some improper contexts, particularly those that provide demonstrations that aren't performed by the agent of the context at the time and place of the context. Otherwise,

(8) That (if it exists) is now being demonstrated

would be a logical truth; relative to every context, it would express a true proposition.

There's a further reason to think that contexts aren't natural things out there in the world. Elsewhere, Salmon says that we can evaluate any expression relative to any context (1995, 19 n. 32). In particular, he says, we can evaluate

(9) I am speaking

relative to a context whose agent isn't in fact speaking at the time of the context; otherwise, (9) would be a logical truth. To tweak Salmon's example a little, we can evaluate

(10) I'm talking to you now

relative to a context c_1 whose agent is me, whose addressee is you, and whose time (say, 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003) is one during which neither of us is talking to the other. Relative to c_1 , (10) expresses a false proposition, one that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that I'm talking to you at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003. We can also evaluate (10) relative to a context c_2 whose agent is *you*, whose addressee is *me*, and whose time is 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003. Relative to c_2 , (10) expresses a different false proposition, one that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that you're talking to me at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003.

Relative to c_1 , (10) expresses a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that I'm talking to you at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003. And, relative to c_2 , (10) expresses a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that you're talking to me at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003. These propositions are different. For, if I were talking to you at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003 but you weren't talking to me at that time, the first proposition would be true and the second proposition would be false.

The contexts c_1 and c_2 are also different. For, relative to them, (10) expresses different propositions. But it's hard to see how these contexts could be different natural things out there in the world. Granted, a situation in which I'm talking to you is different than a situation in which you're talking to me, and these situations might be different natural things out there in the world. *But neither of us is talking to the other at the time of either context.* And yet the contexts are different.¹⁶

Someone who favors the natural notion of context could say that c_1 provides a world w_1 in which I'm talking to you at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003, whereas c_2 provides a world w_2 in which you're talking to me at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003. But appealing to worlds won't help distinguish contexts in general. For we can evaluate

(11) I am actually talking to you now

relative to contexts c_3 and c_4 that provide the same world (for 'actually'). Suppose that c_3 and c_4 both provide Bar Italia as the place, 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003 as the time, and the actual world, α , as the world. Even

if neither of us is talking to the other at that time and place and world, c_3 can provide me as the agent and you as the addressee, whereas c_4 can provide you as the agent and me as the addressee. These contexts are different, since relative to them (11) expresses different propositions: relative to c_3 , (11) expresses a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that I am talking to you at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003 in the actual world; relative to c_4 , (11) expresses a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that you are talking to me at 2 p.m. on 29 June 2003 in the actual world.

What makes me the agent of c_3 has nothing to do with my talking to you at the time and place and world of c_3 , since I'm not; and what makes you the agent of c_4 has nothing to do with your talking to me at the time and place and world of c_4 , since you're not either. (Similarly, what makes you the addressee of c_3 has nothing to do with your listening to me at the time and place and world of c_3 , since you're not; and what makes me the addressee of the c_4 has nothing to do with my listening to you at the time and place and world of c_4 , since I'm not either.) Maybe all we can say about what makes the contexts different is that one provides me as the agent and you as the addressee, whereas the other provides you as the agent and me as the addressee. This doesn't fit with the natural notion of context. But it does fit with the formal notion of context.

In addition, once we bear in mind that one of the things that a context provides is a world (for 'actually'), we can see that there's actually something unnatural about the natural notion of context.¹⁷ Is there really some natural thing out there in the world that *includes* the actual world? The most plausible thing for someone who favors the natural notion of context to say, I think, is that a context just is a world. But then, quite apart from the problem of distinguishing contexts in which neither of us is talking to the other, there's no reason to think that objects that are far away in space and time aren't here with us now in the context. For worlds are standardly taken to include (or to represent) distant places and times. If the relevant context in the Bar Italia case just is the actual world, then, since Frege is just as much a part of the actual world as you and I are, the relevant context can include him after all.¹⁸

As we have seen, there are several independent reasons for rejecting the natural notion of context in favor of the formal notion of context. And, on the formal notion of context, contexts can provide absent demonstrata just as much as they can provide absent agents. For exam-

ple, on the formal notion, there is a context c_5 that provides Frege as the agent, 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 as the time, and Bar Italia as the place. (In this case, Frege is an absent agent, since he is the agent of c_5 , but he is not located at the time and place of c_5 .) Relative to c_5 ,

(12) I'm here now

expresses a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that Frege is at Bar Italia at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003. But, on the formal notion, there is also a context c_6 that provides me as the agent, 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 as the time, Bar Italia as the place, and Frege as the demonstratum. (In this case, Frege is an absent demonstratum, since he is the demonstratum of c_6 , but he is not located at the time and place of c_6 .) Relative to c_6 ,

(13) He's here now

also expresses a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that Frege is at Bar Italia at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003. So (B) is false, and absent demonstrata aren't a problem for the Bare Bones Theory.^{19, 20}

5. Salmon's Second Argument against the Bare Bones Theory: Frege's Puzzle

Salmon's second argument against the Bare Bones Theory is that it doesn't solve Frege's Puzzle (2002, 511–12, 515–16).²¹ Frege presents the puzzle as one about identity sentences: for example, given that 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' both refer to Venus, how can

(14) Hesperus = Hesperus

and

(15) Hesperus = Phosphorus

differ in what Frege calls "cognitive value" ('*Erkenntniswert*') (1892, 25–26)? But, more generally, the puzzle arises whenever one substitutes co-referential expressions: for example, given that 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' both refer to Venus, how can

(16) Hesperus is a planet

and

(17) Phosphorus is a planet

differ in cognitive value?²² This puzzle also arises for demonstratives. Suppose I see Bernard J. Ortcutt looking suspicious in a brown hat. Pointing at him, I say

(18) He's a spy.

Later, I see Ortcutt looking respectable at the beach. Pointing at him, I again say (18). Intuitively, my utterances of (18) seem to differ in cognitive value. For it seems that you might believe what I say when I'm pointing at the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat but not believe what I say when I'm pointing at the respectable-looking man at the beach. But given that in both cases it is Ortcutt who is being referred to, how can my utterances of (18) differ in cognitive value?²³

On any directly referential semantics, the same singular proposition, one that contains Ortcutt himself, is expressed in both cases.²⁴ So content doesn't explain the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of (18). On Kaplan's Theory, character does. On Kaplan's Theory, my first utterance is represented for semantic purposes by (i) pairing the demonstrative in (18) with a demonstration that presents Ortcutt as the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat; (ii) replacing the demonstrative in (18) with the demonstrative–demonstration pair; and (iii) pairing the result with a context. By contrast, my second utterance is represented for semantic purposes by (i) pairing the demonstrative in (18) with a different demonstration, one that presents Ortcutt as the respectable-looking man at the beach; (ii) replacing the demonstrative in (18) with the demonstrative–demonstration pair; and (iii) pairing the result with a context. These different demonstration-supplemented sentences have different characters. Relative to any context in which the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat is the respectable-looking man at the beach, these characters determine the same content; but they present it in different ways. The first character presents that content as the singular proposition, about the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat, to the effect that he is a spy, whereas the second character presents that content as the singular proposition, about the respectable-looking man at the beach, to the effect that he is a spy. And this is what explains the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of (18).²⁵

On the Indexical Theory, my two utterances of (18) have the same content and the same character. So neither content nor character explains the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of (18). But, Salmon says (2002, 519–22), context does. In both

cases, the content is the singular proposition, about Ortcutt, to the effect that he is a spy. Relative to a context, the character in both cases presents that content as a singular proposition, about the object demonstrated by the demonstration of the context, to the effect that it is a spy. My first utterance of (18) is represented for semantic purposes by pairing (18) with a context that provides a demonstration that presents Ortcutt as the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat, whereas my second utterance of (18) is represented for semantic purposes by pairing (18) with a context that provides a different demonstration, one that presents Ortcutt as the respectable-looking man at the beach. If you grasp the character of (18) and, by observing my pointing gestures, know which demonstration is in which context, then you'll know that, in one case, the content is presented as the singular proposition, about the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat, to the effect that he is a spy; and you'll know that, in the other case, that content is presented as the singular proposition, about the respectable-looking man at the beach, to the effect that he is a spy. And *this* is what explains the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of (18).

But, on the Bare Bones Theory, my two utterances of (18) have the same content and the same character, and they're both represented for semantic purposes by pairing (18) with the same context. On the Indexical Theory, the contexts are different, because they contain different demonstrations. But the demonstrations demonstrate the same object: namely, Ortcutt. That is, there is only one demonstratum. So, on the Bare Bones Theory, there is only one context. As a result, neither content nor character nor context explains the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of (18). It seems, then, that the Bare Bones Theory—unlike Kaplan's Theory and the Indexical Theory—is left without the resources to solve Frege's Puzzle. As we saw in section 2, Salmon has already argued against Kaplan's Theory. That leaves the Bare Bones Theory and the Indexical Theory. If we need to put demonstrations rather than demonstrata in contexts to solve Frege's Puzzle, then it seems that we have no choice but to reject the Bare Bones Theory in favor of the Indexical Theory. That's Salmon's second argument against the Bare Bones Theory.

6. A Reply to Salmon's Second Argument

On the Indexical Theory, demonstrations do explain the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of

(18) He's a spy.

But that the demonstrations are in the contexts doesn't do all of the work; in addition, what does some of the work is that, by observing my pointing gestures, you know which demonstration is in which context. As Salmon explains (2002, 519–20), this is what allows you to know, for example, that the content is presented as the singular proposition, about the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat, to the effect that he is a spy—rather than knowing merely that the content is presented as the singular proposition, about the object demonstrated by whichever demonstration is in the context, to the effect that it is a spy. One of the things that matters, then, is that you observe the demonstrations. The Bare Bones Theory doesn't prevent you from observing demonstrations. In one case, you observe a demonstration that presents Ortcutt as the suspicious-looking man in the brown hat; and, in the other, you observe a demonstration that presents him as the respectable-looking man at the beach. And *this*, a Bare Bones Theorist can say, is at least the beginning of an explanation of the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of (18). The explanation has nothing to do with content or character or context, and everything to do with your observing my pointing gestures. Although more would need to be said, the Bare Bones Theory doesn't seem to be obviously worse off than the Indexical Theory when it comes to solving Frege's Puzzle.

Salmon argues against Kaplan's character-based solution to Frege's Puzzle. He points out (2002, 516) that character can't explain other apparent differences in cognitive value: for example, between

(16) Hesperus is a planet

and

(17) Phosphorus is a planet.

For both sentences have the same content and the same character.²⁶ The lesson Salmon draws is, "*The epistemologically significant ways in which the same proposition is differently presented, or differently taken, are not always a matter of semantics (linguistic meaning [i.e. character])*" (2002, 516, emphasis in original). Since the solution to Frege's Puzzle in other cases can't appeal to character, the Indexical Theory (which doesn't appeal to character to explain apparent differences in cognitive value) fits better than Kaplan's Theory (which does appeal to character) with a general solution to Frege's Puzzle. Salmon (2002, 521–22) seems to

take this to be a reason to prefer the Indexical Theory over Kaplan's Theory.

The 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' cases do give us reason to prefer the Indexical Theory over Kaplan's Theory. But these cases also give us reason to prefer the Bare Bones Theory over the Indexical Theory. On the Indexical Theory, context explains apparent differences in cognitive value (at least in part). As Salmon says, "In short, the difference [in cognitive value] lies not in the semantics but in the contexts" (2002, 521). But context can't explain other apparent differences in cognitive value: for example, between (16) and (17). For those sentences can appear to differ in cognitive value even relative to the same context.²⁷ Another lesson to be drawn, I think, is this: the epistemologically significant ways in which the same proposition is differently presented, or differently taken, are not always (if ever) a matter of context. Elsewhere (1986, esp. 114–18; 1989a, esp. 267–68), Salmon appeals to modes of presentation (or guises) to solve Frege's Puzzle in the 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' cases.²⁸ Unlike Frege, Salmon doesn't put the modes of presentation in the contents. Nor, like Kaplan, does he put them in the characters. But, unlike an Indexical Theorist, he doesn't put them in the contexts either. Rather, like a Bare Bones Theorist, he leaves the modes of presentation outside of content, character, and context. In this respect, the Bare Bones Theory (which doesn't appeal either to character or to context to solve Frege's Puzzle) fits better with a general solution to Frege's Puzzle than either Kaplan's Theory (which appeals to character) or the Indexical Theory (which appeals to context) does.

Indeed, thinking about Frege's Puzzle reveals that there is something odd about the Indexical Theory; perhaps there's even a "fundamental tension" lurking within it.²⁹ Essentially, demonstrations are modes of presentation of their demonstrata. On the formal notion of context I argued for in section 4, a context provides whatever we need for the semantics of indexicals. Given that demonstratives are directly referential, what we need are the referents; once we've got those, we've got the contents. A context provides an agent for 'I', an addressee for 'you', a time for 'now', and a place for 'here'; it doesn't provide modes of presentation of them. In these cases, a context provides the very objects that are the contents of the indexicals in question. But, on the Indexical Theory, a context doesn't provide the very object that is the content of a demonstrative; rather, it provides a mode of presentation of that object. This is odd. It would be more in keeping with the semantics of other directly referential indexicals to have a context provide the

very object that is the content of a demonstrative.³⁰ And this is exactly what the Bare Bones Theory does.

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Notes

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¹ Although Kaplan (1989b, 585, 585 n. 41) himself is neutral on this score, I assume that (at least on some uses) 'you' is a (pure) indexical and not a (true) demonstrative. (Kaplan uses 'indexical' so that it includes demonstratives, and he reserves 'pure indexical' for indexicals that aren't demonstratives. Unlike pure indexicals, demonstratives—or what Kaplan sometimes calls 'true demonstratives'—must typically be accompanied by demonstrations. See Kaplan 1989a, 489–91.)

² Although Salmon doesn't, I focus exclusively on simple demonstratives (like 'that') and ignore complex demonstratives (like 'that person'). The literature on complex demonstratives is complex. See, for example, Richard 1993, Braun 1994, King 2001, Dever 2001.

³ In “Demonstratives,” Kaplan (1989a, 489–91) says that a demonstration is a pointing gesture. In “Afterthoughts,” Kaplan (1989b, 582–84) says that a demonstration is what he calls a “directing intention.” Marga Reimer (1991a, 1991b, 1992a, 1992b) argues against the second view. Kent Bach (1992a, 1992b) defends it.

⁴ Kaplan (1989a, 528) calls Kaplan’s Theory “the *Corrected Fregean theory*” (emphasis in original). On Kaplan’s Theory, demonstrations are themselves context-sensitive. For example, a demonstration that demonstrates Frege relative to one context might demonstrate Meinong relative to another. I ignore this complication in the text.

⁵ Kaplan (1989a, 528) calls the Bare Bones Theory “the *Indexical theory*” (emphasis in original). Kaplan (1989a, 527–29) suggests the Bare Bones Theory; but, officially, he adopts Kaplan’s Theory (hence the name). In “Structured Characters and Complex Demonstratives,” Braun (1994) adopts the Bare Bones Theory, and it is one of two views that he offers elsewhere, in “Demonstratives and their Linguistic Meanings” (1996). (But in “Demonstratives and their Linguistic Meanings,” Braun ultimately favors the other view, on which a demonstrative has a meaning other than its character or content.)

⁶ What Salmon and I call ‘the Indexical Theory’ is thus not what Kaplan does (see note 5). Although he doesn’t officially endorse it, Kaplan (1989b, 587–88) suggests something like the Indexical Theory.

⁷ Throughout this paper, I ignore sentences—for example,

(i) That is that

—in which a single demonstrative occurs more than once. Although it’s a version of the Bare Bones Theory, Braun’s (1996) context-shifting theory provides the resources for both the Bare Bones Theory and the Indexical Theory to account for such sentences. (But, in the end, the context-shifting theory is not the theory that Braun favors. See note 5.) Salmon (2002, 515–16) seems to assume that, on the Bare Bones Theory, multiple occurrences of the same demonstrative have different characters. Although I won’t argue for this here, I assume that, on the contrary, Braun (1996) has shown how the Bare Bones Theory can allow that multiple occurrences of the same demonstrative have the same character. (Roughly, it’s not the character that shifts; rather, it’s the context.) And, besides, I don’t see how the Indexical Theory could allow multiple occurrences of the same demonstrative to have the same character if the Bare Bones Theory couldn’t either. So, as far as I can tell, accounting for sentences in which a single demonstrative occurs more than once (although a valuable project in its own right) is a red herring when it comes to adjudicating between the Bare Bones Theory and the Indexical Theory.

⁸ See also Wettstein 1986, 196 n. 17, Braun 1996, 149–50.

⁹ See note 7.

¹⁰ Kaplan and Salmon both take semantics to be concerned with sentences (or, more generally, expressions) rather than utterances. (See Kaplan 1989a, 522–23, 1989b, 585–85; Salmon 2003a, 2003b, 2003c.) So, on their view, semantics tells us about sentences, not utterances, relative to contexts; by itself, semantics doesn’t tell us anything about utterances. If we want to use

semantics to figure out something about utterances, then we're going to have to find a way to take what semantics tells us about sentences relative to contexts and use that information to figure out something about utterances. Roughly, to say that a sentence-context pair *represents* an utterance *for semantic purposes* is to say that we can use what semantics tells us about that sentence relative to that context to figure out something about that utterance. (For example, one thing we might be able to figure out in this way is the utterance's truth-value: if a sentence-context pair $\langle S, C \rangle$ represents an utterance U for semantic purposes, then U is true if and only if S is true in C (where S is true in C if and only if the proposition that S expresses relative to C is true with respect to the world that C provides).) The term 'representing ... for semantic purposes' comes from Predelli 2002, 311.

¹¹ But see note 3.

¹² What Quine calls 'deferred ostension', Reimer calls "deferred reference" (1996, 136). Reimer's term fits her view better. For, on her view, it is reference rather than ostension that is deferred: for example, in the *Word and Object* case, the type is referred to, but it is not demonstrated (or ostended). For a discussion of Reimer's view, see Caplan 2002.

¹³ I think that the textual evidence quoted in this paragraph suggests that Salmon accepts the natural notion of context. ("I am thinking here of a context as the setting or environment in which an utterance occurs" is particularly hard to interpret otherwise; Salmon doesn't say, for example, "I am thinking here of a context as a formal parameter relative to which any sentence can be evaluated for content.") Still, I hesitate to attribute the natural notion of context to Salmon, since—as we will see—it is in tension with things that he says elsewhere, including in "Demonstrating and Necessity." More generally, the natural notion is in tension with Salmon's expression- rather than utterance-centered conception of semantics. See note 10.

¹⁴ See, for example, Montague 1968, Lewis 1981. For a discussion of the relation between contexts and indices, see Stalnaker 1999a, 4–5. Some philosophers explicitly endorse a notion of context on which contexts are (or at least are represented by) ordered n -tuples. See, for example, Predelli 1998b, 400 n. 1.

¹⁵ See Predelli 1998a, 1998b.

¹⁶ I have heard this point attributed to Scott Soames.

¹⁷ Thanks to David Braun for bringing this point to my attention. If you think of worlds as concrete universes (as David Lewis (1986) does), and if you think that persons, times, and places can exist in at most one world (as Lewis also does), then you don't need to say that a context provides a world. Rather, you can say that, relative to a context that provides an agent A (or a time t or a place p), 'actually' refers to the world in which A (or t or p) exists. But Salmon (1988, 1989c) does not think of worlds as concrete universes; rather, he thinks of them as abstract representations, and he thinks that persons, times, and places can exist in (or according to) more than one world. So he can't say that 'actually' refers to *the* world in (or according to) which A (or t or p) exists and hence he needs to say that a context provides a world.

¹⁸ Or at least that's what eternalists like Lewis (1986) would say. Presentists

would say that, although Frege used to be a part of the (concrete) actual world, he isn't any longer; or that, although it used to be the case that the (abstract) world that obtains represents that Frege exists, that is no longer the case. Although I am sympathetic to presentism (and, I suspect, Salmon is too; see Salmon 1998, 312 n. 24), I don't think that Salmon's argument from absent demonstrata is supposed to depend on the truth of such a large (and controversial) metaphysical thesis.

¹⁹ Salmon might insist that, even on the formal notion, contexts can't always provide absent demonstrata, even if they can sometimes provide absent agents. He might say that, in the voicemail case, for example, I am *active* in a way that Frege is not when I point at a picture of him. Of the voicemail case, Salmon says:

Though the agent of the context of such an utterance is, in some sense, absent from the context, he or she is nevertheless playing an active, or "real," role in the context—there is an assertion *in absentia* by the agent—and I conjecture that it is this fact that warrants including the absent agent as a contextual parameter. By contrast, the demonstratum of a particular demonstration may be entirely passive, utterly inert, a *mere* demonstratum. (2002, 532 n. 37, emphasis in original)

Salmon says that a passive object is one that is "not *connected* to the context in any significant ('real') manner, for example, causally" (2002, 517, emphasis in original). There is a question about how the relevant distinction between "active" and "passive" entities is to be cashed out—since, for example, there are causal connections between me and the picture of Frege, and between the picture of Frege and Frege himself—but, even if the distinction can be cashed out, there are reasons to think that contexts can include "passive" entities. First, as Salmon suggests (2002, 532 n. 39), a context can provide a demonstration that isn't performed by the agent of the context; and it seems that such a demonstration—which might be performed by Frege in 1892, even if the context provides me as the agent, 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 as the time, and Bar Italia as the place—is no less "passive" than Frege himself is when I point at a picture of him in 2003. Second, as Salmon elsewhere admits (1995, 19 n. 32), we can evaluate

(9) I am speaking

relative to a context whose agent isn't in fact speaking at the time of the context. Again, it seems that such an agent—who might be a comatose person, say, or even an inanimate object—is no less "passive" than Frege is when I point at a picture of him in 2003.

²⁰ The natural and formal notions of context are not the only ones available. Robert Stalnaker (1974, 1998) has developed a notion of context on which contexts are sets of worlds. Conversational participants take for granted, or presuppose, various propositions at various times. The set of propositions that conversational participants presuppose at a given time is the *common ground*. On Stalnaker's view, a context is the set of worlds that are consistent with the propositions in the common ground. (Since what is presupposed will vary with the conversational participants and the time, so will the common ground and hence so will the context.) For example, if I am chewing your ear off about Frege, we will normally presuppose, among other things, that Frege

is a philosopher. So the proposition that Frege is a philosopher will be in the common ground, and as a result the context will include only worlds in which Frege is a philosopher. In addition, we will normally presuppose that I am the person who is talking and that you are the person who is listening. So the propositions that I am the person who is talking and that you are the person who is listening will also be in the common ground, and as a result the context will include only worlds in which I am the person who is talking and you are the person who is listening. This feature of the context is what allows us to interpret sentences like

(i) I've told you about the *Begriffsschrift* before

relative to the context. It is in virtue of containing only worlds in which I am the person who is talking and you are the person who is listening that the context can be said to provide me as the agent and you as the addressee. Let's call this notion of context, on which a context is the set of worlds that are consistent with the propositions in the common ground, *the Stalnakerian notion*.

But the Stalnakerian notion of context, like the formal notion of context, undermines Salmon's argument from absent demonstrata against the Bare Bones Theory. If I point at a picture of Frege and say

(3) He's a philosopher

we will normally presuppose, among other things, that my pointing gesture occurred. So the proposition that my pointing gesture occurred will be in the common ground, and as a result the context will include only worlds in which my pointing gesture occurred. In virtue of including only worlds in which my pointing gesture occurred, the context can be said to provide my pointing gesture as a demonstratum. (So (C) is true.) But there is nothing to prevent us from also presupposing that Frege is the object demonstrated by my pointing gesture. In that case, the proposition that Frege is the object demonstrated by my pointing gesture will also be in the common ground, and as a result the context will include only worlds in which Frege is the object demonstrated by my pointing gesture. In virtue of including only worlds in which Frege is the object demonstrated by my pointing gesture, the context can be said to provide Frege as a demonstratum. But Frege is not at Bar Italia with us at 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003. So he is an absent demonstratum. Still, on the Stalnakerian notion of context, the context can provide Frege as a demonstratum. (So (B) is false.)

The same goes for various liberalizations of the Stalnakerian notion, on which contexts are sets of propositions that conversational participants presuppose, say, or sets of any propositions whatsoever. Conversational participants might presuppose that Frege is the object demonstrated by my pointing gesture. So the proposition that Frege is the object demonstrated by my pointing gesture can be in the context, and as a result the context can be said to provide Frege as a demonstratum. In a way, it is not surprising that, on any Stalnakerian notion of context, contexts can provide absent demonstrata. For, if we are presupposing that Frege is a philosopher, then the context will include only worlds in which Frege is a philosopher, or the context will include the proposition that Frege is a philosopher—even though Frege is not

with us at Bar Italia. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me on these points.

²¹ See also Kaplan 1989a, 528–29.

²² Actually, Frege is interested in a still more general problem: how can any two sentences with the same truth value differ in cognitive value? See Thau and Caplan 2001, Caplan and Thau ms.

²³ Salmon (2002, 497) present Frege’s Puzzle for demonstratives by considering

(i) This is that

(pointing at the same object from two different perspectives) and

(ii) That is that

(pointing at the same object twice from the same perspective). Considering two different utterances of (18) (or \lceil That is φ \rceil) allows us to raise Frege’s Puzzle without running into the further difficulty of accounting for sentences that contain more than one occurrence of the same demonstrative. This difficulty is, I think, irrelevant to debate between the Bare Bones Theory and the Indexical Theory. See note 7.

²⁴ My utterance of (18) at noon might express a proposition that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that Ortcutt is a spy at noon, whereas my utterance of (18) at midnight might express a different proposition, one that is necessarily equivalent to the proposition that Ortcutt is a spy at midnight. See Salmon 1989b. But I don’t think this difference in content explains the apparent difference in cognitive value between my utterances of (18). So I ignore it in the text.

²⁵ See Salmon 2002, 510–11.

²⁶ Elsewhere in “Demonstrating and Necessity” (2002, 528 n. 13, 534 n. 46), Salmon tantalizingly suggests that, for names that are introduced by using definite descriptions, a character-based solution might be in the offing. Incidentally, it seems that, contrary to Salmon’s suggestions and Kaplan’s view, character doesn’t explain every apparent difference in cognitive value, even in indexical cases. Standing next to a single boulder, I think

(i) It’s not very rocky around here.

Hours later, after wandering around in circles several times (and passing the boulder each time, but without reidentifying it), I’m lost. I don’t think (i); rather, I think:

(ii) It’s very rocky around here.

In both cases, (i) has the same character; but its cognitive value in the two cases appears to be different. I owe both the example and the point to Luca Struble. William Taschek (1987) makes the same point. For similar cases, see Salmon 1986, 73–74, Taschek 1987, 174–76.

²⁷ On the Stalnakerian notion of context (see note 20), uttering (16) rather than (17) changes the context. If I utter (16), we will normally presuppose, among other things, that I uttered (16) and that I used ‘Hesperus’ to refer to Venus. So the context will include only worlds in which I used ‘Hesperus’ to

refer to Venus. By contrast, if I utter (17), the context will include only worlds in which I used ‘Phosphorus’ to refer to Venus. (For a parallel case, see Stalnaker 1998, 10–12.) Perhaps this difference in context could explain the apparent difference in cognitive value between (16) and (17). But this explanation is not one that Salmon avails himself of. (See Salmon 1986, 1989a, where he offers a different explanation.) Nor is it one that he should avail himself of. For the explanation relies on the Stalnakerian notion of context, which undermines Salmon’s first argument against the Bare Bones Theory. (See note 20.)

²⁸ See also Braun 1998, 2002.

²⁹ Salmon uses the phrase ‘fundamental tension’ (2002, 497) in criticizing Kaplan’s Theory.

³⁰ Braun (1996, 161) makes this point. Salmon finds it provides “insufficient grounds to banish demonstrations” (2002, 533 n. 41) from contexts. I find it perfectly sufficient.

I do want to make two concessions, though. First, as Braun notes (1996, 161), a demonstration can be included in a context—if a demonstration demonstrates it. But the demonstration included in the context is included *qua* demonstratum, not *qua* demonstration. That is, its being a demonstration is irrelevant to its being included in the context; what matters, rather, is that it is the very thing that is the content of a directly referential expression that is being evaluated relative to that context.

Second, not every indexical is such that a context provides the very thing that is its content. For example, a context doesn’t (directly) provide a day to be the content of ‘today’ or ‘yesterday’ or ‘tomorrow’. Rather, a context provides a time *t*, and the contents of ‘today’, ‘yesterday’, and ‘tomorrow’ are determined accordingly: the content of ‘today’ is the day during which *t* occurs; the content of ‘yesterday’ is the day before the day during which *t* occurs; and the content of ‘tomorrow’ is the day after the day during which *t* occurs. In these cases, a context doesn’t provide the very thing that is the content of an indexical; rather, it provides something on the basis of which the content of the indexical is determined. But, still, a context doesn’t provide a *mode of presentation* of the contents of ‘today’, ‘yesterday’, or ‘tomorrow’. (For example, 3 p.m. on 29 June 2003 is not a mode of presentation of 28, 29, or 30 June 2003.) And, on the Indexical Theory, a context does provide a mode of presentation of the content of a demonstrative. So, even taking these cases into account, there is still something odd about the Indexical Theory.