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Semantics through Reference to the Unknown

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*In this paper, I dwell on a particular distinction introduced by İlhan Inan—the distinction between ostensible and inostensible use of our language. The distinction applies to singular terms, such as proper names and definite descriptions, or to general terms like concepts and to the ways in which we refer to objects in the world by using such terms. Inan introduces the distinction primarily as an epistemic one but in his earlier writings (1997: 49) he leaves some room for it to have some semantic significance i.e., the view that in certain intensional de re contexts whether a term occurring in a sentence is ostensible or inostensible may have a bearing on the semantic content of the sentence. However, in his later writings e.g., *The Philosophy of Curiosity*, he appears to abandon his earlier thoughts regarding the semantic significance of his distinction. He says: “the ostensible/inostensible distinction is basically an epistemic one.... It is an epistemic distinction that has no semantic significance” (2012: 65). I argue that there are indeed such intensional contexts in which the distinction has some semantic significance, i.e., whether a term is ostensible or inostensible has in fact a bearing on what proposition is expressed by the sentence in which the term occurs.*

Keywords: Inostensible reference, semantic significance, reference fixing.

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1. Introduction

One of the striking features of our language is that we are able to talk about objects we have not *known* or *experienced* yet. For Inan, what allows us to acquire the capacity of talking about the things that are *unknown* to us is that our language has a distinct *tool* as a peculiar use, namely the tool of *inostensibility*. The distinction between ostensible and inostensible is introduced in terms of the epistemic distance between a speaker and an object which is the referent of the term used by the speaker. Many terms in our idiolects that we use to refer to objects are ostensible for us. For instance, the terms, by virtue of their referents, such as “Hisarüstü” or “the location of my former residence” are to some extent ostensible for me since I have a sort of knowledge of the referents of such terms mostly from ‘immediate acquaintance’ or experience and they are inostensible for someone else who does not have such knowledge. Terms like “Barack Obama” or “the president of United States in 2016” are ostensible presumably for most people who are interested in global politics. On the other hand, terms like “the president of United States in 2025” is inostensible for everybody since nobody knows who will be the president of United States in 2025. In this descriptive sense, Inan’s distinction has Russillian roots.¹ As Inan pointed out (2012: 67), Russell had already the conceptual elements that could have helped him to construct a theory of inostensibility and thereby, a theory of ignorance and curiosity, but he did not develop such theory based on ignorance. Russell was far more knowledge-oriented at the time than ignorance-oriented as Inan now is.

Besides ordinary singular and general terms, the distinction has far-ranged applications on different kinds of terms such as empty names, indefinite descriptions and non-extensional general terms. Generally speaking, due to the object-independent character of the distinction, for instance, an empty name can well be inostensible for a speaker if the speaker does not know that it does not have a referent. Thus, non-referring terms, as Inan pointed out (Inan 2012: 164), can be qualified as ostensible for a speaker when the speaker knows that it has no referent. The inostensibility of a non-referring term depends upon the knowledge of the non-existence of the referent of the term. In addition, a term which is inostensible for a person at some time *t* can be ostensible for him at some other time *t'* or *vice versa*. I may not know who the queen of the Kingdom is but *later* learn that she is Elizabeth. Likewise, I may know Elizabeth as the queen of the Kingdom but *later* forget

¹ “The basis for inostensible terms are descriptions, and especially definite descriptions, i.e. terms that have the semantic function of referring to one and only one entity.” (Inan 1997: 11). Although Inan’s distinction owes a lot Russell’s famous distinction between “knowledge by acquaintance” and “knowledge by description”, it considerably diverges from Russell’s theory in that neither all knowledge by description is qualified as inostensible nor is all knowledge by acquaintance qualified as ostensible. See also (Inan 2012: 67–75).

that she is the queen or that the queen is her. For these reasons, Inan's distinction is subject-relative, relative to subject's epistemic condition.

The distinction applies also to the ways in which we refer to objects in the world.² I believe, *inostensible reference* is of upmost importance as the key term in understanding Inan's conception of inostensibility. Inan defines inostensible reference as "*the reference to an object without knowing to which object the term one is using refers.*" (2005: 158) The key point in understanding inostensibility requires us to understand what we mean by knowing an object (a person or a thing). Inan considers a crucial distinction between knowledge about objects: Knowledge of the existence of an object and knowledge of an object itself.³ He admits (2010: 2) that the notion of 'knowing the referent of a term' is based upon the latter kind of knowledge, e.g., objectual knowledge. For the rest of the paper, I will take into account only this kind of knowledge in characterizing the distinction. There are two reasons for this: First, objectual knowledge is what allows for *de re* exportation (though this does not imply that there is no propositional *de re* knowledge). Second, in the reference-fixing cases that we are going to discuss in

² Inostensibility applies to both semantic and speaker's reference. There are certain occasions where the speaker reference is semantically relevant. In his book, Inan gives a detailed discussion of the inostensible reference as the necessary condition of human curiosity on the one hand and of the semantic/speaker's reference on the other (see Inan 2012: Ch. 7: "Reference to the Object of Curiosity", especially p. 124). For Inan, inostensible reference involving both successful speaker's reference and successful semantic reference is always *de re* and give rise to singular curiosity by the singular *de re* reference. Where there is no speaker reference, the way the speaker refers to an object is said to be taken *de dicto*. For Kripke, there are certain cases where the speaker's referent is the semantic referent, i.e., where the speaker's *general intentions* coincide with his *specific intentions*. Kripke says: "In a given idiolect, the semantic referent of a designator (without indexicals) is given by a general intention of the speaker to refer to a certain object whenever the designator is used. The speaker's referent is given by a specific intention, on a given occasion, to refer to a certain object. If the speaker believes that the object he wants to talk about, on a given occasion, fulfills the conditions for being the semantic referent, then he believes that there is no clash between his general intentions and his specific intentions... My hypothesis is that Donnellan's referential-attributive distinction should be generalized in this light... In one case (the "simple" case), his specific intention is simply to refer to the semantic referent; that is, his specific intention is simply his general semantic intention... Alternatively—the "complex" case—he has a specific intention, which is distinct from his general intention, but which he believes, as a matter of fact, to determine the same object as the one determined by his general intention" (Kripke 1977: 264). In this passage, contrary to Donnellan (1966), Kripke argues that "having an object in mind" is not a requirement in order for that object to be considered as speaker's reference. Throughout the paper, I also do not count the condition of "having an object in mind" as a condition for speaker's reference.

³ The roots of this distinction between knowledge about objects go back to medieval times. Although there is the difference in its peculiar object, it was in fact once made by Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* (2015) when he discern the knowledge of God from that of its existence and presented some arguments for the latter while defending the impossibility of the former.

the next part, it is the kind of knowledge that the reference fixer lacks, which is what makes the term inostensible for the fixer when she fixes the referent of the term with certain descriptions.

2. *Semantic significance*

So far we have seen that Inan introduces the distinction primarily as an epistemic one. Now we shall turn to its semantic significance. One of the ways to find out whether a given distinction is semantically significant is to check out whether it is susceptible or leads to a semantic ambiguity in certain contexts. There are in fact some intensional *de re* contexts where Inan's distinction is susceptible to a semantic ambiguity. And the task in front of us is to provide such contexts in which a sentence expresses a false proposition if its semantic content includes an inostensible term and a true proposition if it does not or *vice versa*. Here we apply a general test under a general assumption according to which if two propositions have the same content (the same meaning), then it cannot be the case that one is false and the other is true in the same context of utterance as well as the same context of evaluation. I argue that there are some contexts (intensional), where speaker's epistemic distance to an object—a distance determining speaker's ignorance or his knowledge of the object in question—is at least *partially*⁴ responsible for the alteration in the truth values of certain contingent propositions. Thereby, I claim that in these contexts, one's epistemic condition contributes to the meaning of the sentences whose contents differ in having a subject term which picks out a *unique* object (or a *unique* kind) to which the one is either ostensibly or inostensibly referring.

Let us first focus on Inan's earlier and later thoughts about what semantic implications can be derived from his distinction. The earlier thoughts he defends in his dissertation (1997) generally maintains that in certain intensional contexts a term's inostensibility "may have some bearing on what proposition is expressed" by the sentence in which the term occurs (Inan 1997: 50). In his later thoughts (Inan 2012: 136), on the contrary, Inan appears to endorse the view that the transition of a term from inostensible to ostensible, e.g., the improvement in one's epistemic condition concerning the knowledge of the referent, has no effect on the meaning of a sentence. Contrary to Inan's later thoughts, we have good reason to hold that there are some intensional *de re* contexts where, *ceteris paribus*, the epistemic distance of the speaker to the object which the speaker refers to inostensibly or ostensibly is (however *partially*) responsible for the change in the truth values of certain contingent propositions. And these propositions as contents under the scope of an epistemic operator include a subject term picking

⁴ Partially, because we need some room for the modal force applied by the epistemic operator on the meaning of the given sentence.

out a *unique* object (or a *unique* kind) to which the one is either ostensibly or inostensibly referring.

In his doctoral dissertation (Inan 1997), Inan gives a brief discussion for the semantic significance of his distinction. He says “in certain intensional contexts such as the sentences with epistemic operators, whether a certain term in a sentence is ostensible or inostensible (for some or all of the speakers in a community) may have some bearing on what proposition is expressed by that sentence” (Inan 1997: 52). However, he admits that in most cases, what proposition is expressed by a simple sentence in the subject-predicate form ‘N is F’ uttered by a speaker is independent of whether ‘N’ is ostensible or inostensible for the speaker. When the sentence “the smallest prime number is even” is uttered by a speaker, we need not know whether the subject term ‘the smallest prime number’ is ostensible or inostensible for him in order to determine what proposition is expressed by the sentence. The cases in which inostensibility of terms may have some bearing on what proposition is expressed by the sentence they occur in are in fact very special and peculiar cases where a sort of reference-fixing ceremony is required. Hence, I shall restrict the discussion only to those specific reference-fixing cases. The detailed discussions for the two reference-fixing cases can be seen in both Inan’s earlier (1997) and later works (2010), (2012). In the first case, we apply the distinction on the general term ‘helium’ by considering the discovery of the element and in the second we apply it on the singular term ‘Neptune’ by considering the discovery of this planet.

Let us start with the discovery of helium. Inan gives a brief summary as to how the term ‘helium’ was introduced into our language as following:

Pierre Jansen first found a bright yellow line in the spectrum of the light emitted by the solar chromosphere, which he thought to be a sodium line. Later the chemist Edward Ramsey and the astronomer Joseph Lockyer concluded that the element was not sodium, but some other element that was not discovered on earth, and gave it the name “Helios”, the Greek word for sun, which later turned into ‘helium’. Only afterward did William Ramsey discover the existence of helium on earth. If this is historically accurate, then I believe that it should be correct to say that Lockyer and Ramsey introduced the general term ‘helium’ not by ostension but rather by fixing its reference by a description....This is how a simple inostensible general term may be introduced into language. Later when helium was discovered, and we came to know a certain element as being the referent of the term ‘helium’, the term became ostensible. (Inan 2012: 35)

Let us assume that Ramsey introduced the term ‘helium’ by the description “the element causing the D-3 line at t ”, where the D-3 line is the name of some particular yellow colored line that had been observed on a light spectrum emitted by the sun at some time t and further, he fixes the reference by that description. Given that introducing of the name takes place before the element is discovered on Earth, the name

'helium' is an inostensible term not only for Ramsey but also for all the speakers in the community at t . In other words, because 'helium' is introduced by an inostensible description which has the reference-fixing descriptive content for whatever 'helium' refers to, the term itself also is inostensible for the whole community including Ramsey at t . Moreover, since the reference-fixing occurs before the discovery, Ramsey (like the whole community) is not in a position to fix the extension of the term by ostension. That is another reason why one lacks knowledge of the object, namely its objectual knowledge, thus; he must solely rely on the initial reference-(extension)-fixing descriptive content. After the discovery, the extension of 'helium' could be fixed by ostension, and once that is done, the initial extension-fixing-description would have no longer any significance other than historically (Inan 1997: 49).

Throughout the paper we rely on a general assumption regarding the relation between truth value of a sentence and its meaning and that is: if two propositions have the same content (the same meaning), then it cannot be the case that one is false and the other is true in the same context of utterance and that of evaluation. The aim is to show that in a certain context, a certain sentence expresses two different propositions having different truth values with respect to the inostensibility of terms occurring in that sentence. Now consider the following sentence:

(1) It is discoverable that helium did not cause the D-3 line at t .

There is a strong case to be made that if 'helium' is an inostensible term for both Ramsey and the whole community at t , then (1) has to express a false proposition.⁵ As Inan pointed out, "If 'helium' named some element, it had to be the one causing the D-3 line at t " (1997: 50). But after its discovery on Earth, the term turns into an ostensible name for Ramsey (and for the whole community) in the sense that now he can fix the reference by ostension; thus (1) will express a true proposition. After all, Ramsey like the other members of community can conceive that the element that caused the D-3 line at t was not the same element he later becomes acquainted with on Earth since after the term becomes *adequately* ostensible for Ramsey (or for the whole community), the content of reference-fixing description attached to the name would express an accidental property of the designated entity. To put it differently,

⁵ In his dissertation, Inan marks out the intensional contexts through the sentences with epistemic operators such as "*it is discoverable that*" and "*it is certain that*". The first operator can also be modified in modal terms such as "*it is possible to discover that*". But even in the sentences only with modal operators, term's inostensibility may also have a bearing on what proposition is expressed by the sentence in which the term occurs. When Ramsey uttered the sentence "It is possible that helium did not cause the D-3 line at t ." (*), he would admit that what he uttered expresses a false proposition given that the term 'helium' is inostensible for him and by substituting the term with its reference (extension)-fixing description, Ramsey as the reference-fixer would arrive at the sentence "It is possible that the element causing the D-3 line at t did not cause the D-3 line at t ." towards which his rational response would obviously be false when he is asked what he thinks about (*).

there are some possible worlds where not helium but some other alien element causes the D-3 line at t as well as there are many worlds where not 'helium' but 'xhelium' refers to the element causing the D-3 line at t . So, the sentence (1) expresses a true proposition when the term becomes ostensible simply because it is discoverable that helium did not cause the D-3 line at t . According to Inan, "... unlike singular terms, when fixing the reference of a general term if we necessarily fix a content to it (such as a Fregean sense) that is not necessarily the content of the reference-fixing description, then it may be argued that the term 'helium' when first introduced (as an inostensible term) differs in content from the content of the term today (as an ostensible term). This would then imply that the discovery of helium changed the meaning of the term 'helium'. This sounds very implausible" (Inan 1997: 52, fn. 17). But if the reference-fixing- descriptive content of an expression was its meaning, then it would be right to conclude that the discovery of helium changed the meaning of the term 'helium'. There are many reasons for us to argue otherwise, i.e., that the content of the term 'helium' cannot be identified with the content of the reference-fixing-description nor do we necessarily fix a content to it and yet the term's inostensibility has a bearing on what proposition is expressed.⁶ The first reason comes from the Kripke-Putnam account of natural kind terms according to which such terms seem to be deprived of descriptive content and their extensions are partly fixed by external factors. The second reason would be that such terms are considered as rigid designators which pick out one and the same kind in all possible worlds whereas the reference-fixing-description is not a rigid designator and does not individuate an essential property for what the term refers to. Thus, the sentence (1) expresses a false proposition at t but expresses a true proposition now (or after the empirical discovery which let people to fix the referent of the term by ostension). However, a possible objection can be given as following: The sentence (1) expresses different propositions with respect to different times such as t and *now* only because there is a shift in the context of evaluation. Therefore, the reason why we have two different propositions is because of a shift in the context of evaluation, not because of the term's inostensibility. As a reply, we may say: it is true that there is a change in the context of evaluation of (1) with respect to these different times but this does not imply that two different propositions

⁶ There is no consensus among philosophers on what general terms designate. Marti (2004) opposes the orthodox view that rigid general terms expresses essential properties. For some, in different worlds a general term may have different extensions as its designation, which puts a question mark on their rigidity. Some others like Inan (2008) take the extension of a kind term to be an abstract entity which is independent of its particular objects, thus, he finds enough room to hold their rigidity safe. But this view too is controversial for it renders almost all general terms rigid and leads to an open-ended discussion that cannot take place in this paper. For that reason, I leave these issues aside. Cf. Inan (2008), Salmon (2005), Marti (2003, 2004), Lewis (1986), Soames (2002), Devitt (2005), Burge (2010).

are not brought about due to the term's inostensibility. To show this, we can modify the case by keeping the context of evaluation same and arrive at the same conclusions. Suppose, upon reading some articles about the element, not Ramsey, but someone else in today's world, who does not have any knowledge about science or chemistry, fixes the referent of the term 'helium' by the description "the element causing the D-3 line at t ". Given Inan's characterization of inostensibility, the name 'helium' is an inostensible term for that person. The name must be inostensible for him for it is introduced by an inostensible description. Given also the ignorance of this person about to what the element the term refers, he is not in a position to fix the extension of the term by ostension, thus; he must solely rely on the initial reference-fixing description. Although the sentence "helium is the element causing the D-3 line at t " expresses a contingent truth, the falsity of (1) is due to the modal force of the operator. Given this modal force, it appears that it cannot be discovered that helium did not cause the D-3 line at t . The modal force of the operator is from one's epistemic condition which determines the term's inostensibility. One knows that there is a specific kind which has some property, and one knows this fact because of the fact that the description's uniquely individuation function picks out the kind through which one comes to know that it exist. Therefore, the sentence (1) has to express a false proposition if the term is inostensible for that person. Suppose further that after some time, this person decides to study chemistry and has sufficient acquaintance with the chemical substance. And now the term becomes adequately ostensible for him in such a way that his initial reference-fixing-description becomes no longer significant for he could fix the extension of the term by mere ostension now. After all, this person can conceive that the element that caused the D-3 line at t was not the same element he later is acquainted with since the term becomes adequately ostensible for him. Therefore, (1) has to express a true proposition when the term becomes ostensible for that person. So from the perspective of the ignorant person who fixes the referent of the term 'helium' by that description, (1) is false, but from our perspective, it is true, though the context of evaluation is the same. Inan notes that Brueckner mentions a possible objection to this argument. Brueckner suggested that there is still a difference in the context of evaluation, since certain facts about the idiolect of the ignorant person who fixes the referent of the term 'helium' differ from the experienced or the epistemically improved one. But as Inan replies, "normally the context of evaluation of a sentence such as (1) should not include facts about someone's idiolect" and continues that even if we accept such an inclusion, the intuitive conclusion we may drive from it supports our claim because "it shows that the truth value of the sentence is sensitive to whether the name is ostensible or inostensible for the evaluator" (Inan 1997: 51, fn.18).

Now let us turn to the case of Neptune and suppose Leverrier introduced the name 'Neptune' with the definite description "the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus".

- (2) Neptune is the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus

Given that reference fixing ceremony *via* a linguistic stipulation, for Kripke (1980), Leverrier could know the truth of the sentence (2) *a priori* just as the reference fixer of the standard meter in Paris could know that the length of S at *t* is one meter *a priori*. Since Leverrier knows *a priori* the contingent truth, (2) expresses a true proposition. Before the empirical discovery of Neptune and after the reference fixing ceremony, Leverrier could intelligibly utter: “I know that Neptune is the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus”. For Kripke, why the sentence (2) express a contingent truth is because of the fact that the definite description as the predicate term is not a rigid designator whereas the subject term ‘Neptune’ is (Kripke 1980: 55). The reference-fixing-description picks out an accidental property such as being the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus for the referent of the name ‘Neptune’. Hence, in some possible worlds in which Neptune, Uranus and Earth exist, Neptune can be the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Earth, not of Uranus. But in all possible worlds in which Neptune exists ‘Neptune’ refers to Neptune.⁷

Now consider the following sentences given by Inan (1997, 2012):

- (4) It is discoverable that Neptune is not the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus.
 (5) It is certain that if Neptune exists, then it is the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus.

Before its empirical discovery, the name ‘Neptune’ was an inostensible term for Leverrier. After the discovery, he could fix the referent of the name by ostension. The context of evaluation of the sentences (4) and (5) should again be taken from the perspective of Leverrier. If so, we see that Leverrier’s rational responses to the question “What do you think about the truth of those sentences?” would drastically change with respect to the term’s inostensibility for him. Hence; (4) is obviously false but (5) is true if the term ‘Neptune’ is inostensible for Leverrier as the reference fixer. One may argue that if the modal force applied by the operator is taken as metaphysical, then the term’s inostensibility should not have any bearing on what proposition is expressed. I think this intuition is right but in our case the modal force embedded in the operator should be taken as epistemic. For instance, if we are asked whether it is possible that 521 is not a prime number, then we, in principle, may answer that “Yes, it is possible that it is not a prime number”, provided that we have no knowledge as to whether

⁷ Suppose a neutron star is approaching to the solar system. Eventually by the force of the gravitational field of the star, the state of the orbits of the heavenly bodies in the solar system can break down in such a way in which Neptune for some time will be the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Earth, not of Uranus. Thus, this is not just metaphysically but also physically possible *scenario*.

521 is a prime. Lack of *de re* knowledge about the number affects the modal force applied on the proposition. But in the metaphysical sense, 521, the 98th prime number, must be a prime number. So, we will have an epistemic reading of the sentence in mind. Why (4) is false when the term is inostensible for Leverrier is not only because it is not possible (given epistemic modality) that after Leverrier fixes the reference of the name, he finds out that Neptune was never the cause of the perturbations but also because it would contradict with what Leverrier knows *a priori*. It just seems absurd to claim that by a description one can name an object which is known to exist as having a certain property through which he identifies the existence of the object with that description and at the same time one finds out that the description does not fit the object in question. Another reason for why (4) is false and (5) is true when the term is inostensible for Leverrier is because the propositions constructed by the reference fixing ceremony *via* an act of linguistic stipulation are non-informative and indubitable for the reference fixer. For Inan, the reason why the sentences expressing non-trivial propositions that are contingently true cannot be the object of doubt for Leverrier is that such sentences are non-informative and indubitable for him (Inan 2012: 170). Besides all, in its *de re* context Leverrier knows *a priori* that there is a specific object and that it is the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus. Inan maintains that in the reference-fixing cases the speaker is not under *normal conditions*.⁸ When Leverrier fixes the reference of the name ‘Neptune’ by its reference-fixing-description and later forms the sentence “Neptune is the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus”, in the mind of Leverrier there is no prior file of the object, which allows him to evaluate the truth of the sentences (4) and (5) different from when he is under normal conditions. On the other hand the sentence (4) is true but (5) is false if the term ‘Neptune’ is ostensible for Leverrier. The reason why the sentence (4) is true and (5) is false now is because after the empirical discovery of Neptune and consequently after the term becomes ostensible for Leverrier, his initial reference fixing would no longer be significant for him given that (due to the non-rigidity of the description) it could have been the case that the uniquely individuation function of the reference-fixing description of the term ‘Neptune’ picks out a different object who has the accidental quality. One may object to our account in the following way: It would not be a big surprise that an epistemic distinction may have a bearing on what proposition expressed by a sentence whose content includes an epistemic operator. It would be vacuously true to say that an epistemic distinction applied on a certain term occurring in a certain sentence with an epistemic operator *must* have a bearing on what proposition is expressed by that

⁸ According to Inan, if S acquires a name “N” and then later learns that N is F, then S is under normal conditions with respect to the sentence “N is F” (Inan: 2012: 172).

sentence if the term on which the distinction is applied is in the scope of the operator. However, this objection cannot undermine our claim since we would explain nothing about the fact that makes the meaning of the sentence, not only of the operator susceptible to the given distinction. Strictly speaking, if a term on which an epistemic distinction is applied is in the scope of a certain epistemic operator in a given sentence and if there are cases in which that epistemic distinction applied on that term occurring in that given sentence with that operator has a bearing on what proposition is expressed by that sentence, then we must agree that meaning of that sentence depends upon that distinction, however trivial it seems. The triviality requires its own account of explanation, which is a work that ought to be done in another paper.

3. Conclusion

I argued that there are some certain intensional contexts such as the sentences with certain epistemic operators, where the epistemic distance of the speaker from the object to which the speaker inostensibly refers might be the thing that is responsible for the change in the meaning of the concepts or the thoughts about those objects. Thus, the distinction based on the epistemic condition of the speaker as the reference fixer has a semantic significance in some certain intensional contexts. What does this picture tell us? What kind of philosophical consequences may we derive from the thesis that in certain contexts, subjects' epistemic condition has a bearing on the meaning of certain sentences? What implications of these consequences can we also derive from this picture to have an idea about why in these reference-fixing cases, epistemic condition of subjects does have a bearing on the semantic content of certain propositions and why in most other cases does not? I will leave the possible answers of these questions aside for another and perhaps a more detailed discussion.

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