

## INDIVIDUATION BY ACQUAINTANCE AND BY STIPULATION

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### I

#### THE CASE OF THE MISSING DAGGER

What do we see when we see what isn't there? Macbeth the hallucinator sees a dagger. There is no dagger there to be seen: no ordinary steel dagger before his eyes, no miniature dagger on his retina or inside his brain, no ghostly dagger of spook-stuff. There is no reason to think that our world contains any such thing. But the lack of a dagger makes it mysterious how we can describe Macbeth's state, as we do, by means of predicates applying to the dagger he seems to see—it is bloody, it has a wooden handle—and not to the nerve signals, brain states, and other nondaggers that really exist. Notoriously, if we try to describe Macbeth adverbially—he is appeared to daggerishly, bloody-and-wooden-handled-daggerishly, and so on—it becomes plain that we only understand our Macbeth-descriptions by understanding the dagger-descriptions that are built into them. How so, if there is no dagger there to describe?

The case of the missing dagger has been solved by inspector Hintikka.<sup>1</sup> I accept his solution, differing only on points of detail, and I shall begin this paper by restating it in my own way.

When Macbeth is appeared to daggerishly, his experience has informational content, and part of that content is that there is a

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<sup>1</sup>Jaakko Hintikka, "On the Logic of Perception," in his *Models for Modalities* (Reidel, 1969); "On Attributions of 'Self-Knowledge,'" *Journal of Philosophy* 67 (1970) 73-87; "Knowledge by Acquaintance—Individuation by Acquaintance," in D. F. Pears, ed., *Bertrand Russell: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Doubleday Anchor, 1972); and Chapters 1-4 of *The Intentions of Intentionality and other New Models for Modalities* (Reidel, 1975).

dagger before him. His experience tends to modify his belief, and if he is fooled by his hallucination, then also part of the content of his belief is that there is a dagger before him. An ordinary dagger, not a spooky one; and before the eyes, not inside the head.

The dagger Macbeth seems to see has the same status as Sherlock Holmes; or as the planet Vulcan, mistakenly posited to explain the perturbations of Mercury. The dagger, or Holmes, or Vulcan, exists according to something with false informational content, but does not actually exist.

Informational content can be explained in terms of possibilities. The information admits some possibilities and excludes others. Its content is given by the division of possibilities into the admitted ones and the excluded ones. The information is that some one of *these* possibilities is realized, not any one of *those*.

Besides the daggerless Macbeth of this world, there are countless other possible Macbeths who inhabit countless other possible worlds. Some of them have daggers before their eyes—just the right sort, bloody and wooden-handled, in just the right orientation with the handle toward the hand, against just the right background, . . . . What Macbeth's experience tells him is that he himself is one of these possible Macbeths. The possibility that is realized, according to the content of his visual experience, is some one of the ones in which there is a suitable dagger before him. Let us call the possibilities admitted by Macbeth's present visual experience his *visual alternatives*. Likewise his *perceptual alternatives* give the content of his complete perceptual experience; his *doxastic alternatives* give the content of his system of beliefs; his *epistemic alternatives* give the content of his knowledge; and so on.

To solve the case of the missing dagger, we need only look for it in the right place. It is not some very peculiar brain-dagger or spook-dagger hidden somewhere in this world. It is a perfectly ordinary dagger. But it is part of another world, floating before the eyes of an otherworldly alternative Macbeth whom the real Macbeth wrongly takes himself to be. By describing the ostensible dagger, we specify which alternatives are admitted or excluded by the informational content of Macbeth's state. And thus by trafficking in mere possibilities we describe actuality; for it is in virtue of what is actually going on in Macbeth that he is in a state with a certain

content, rather than in a different state with different content.<sup>2</sup>

But now a question arises: one dagger or many? We speak of *the* dagger Macbeth seems to see. We ascribe properties to *it*. We regard it as a definite individual. Yet how can that be? The other-worldly daggers of Macbeth's visual or doxastic alternatives are many, or so it would seem. Unless Macbeth enjoys a godlike view of all of space and time, his visual experience leaves many questions unanswered and so admits many alternative possibilities. Unless he is opinionated to an absurd degree, his doxastic alternatives likewise are many. Each alternative has its dagger, but there is no reason to think that one and the same dagger runs through them all. Macbeth has little notion where the dagger before him comes from, or whose it is, or when and where it was forged, or what famous stabbings it has been involved in, or what it is made of. Still

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<sup>2</sup>The right assignment of content to Macbeth's states will be the one given by the best general rule of assignment. The best rule will be the one that does best at assigning contents that rationalize behavior, according to the principles of common sense psychology. We want the rule that does best generally: for Macbeth now and at other times, for Macbeth as he actually is and as he would have been under different circumstances, for Macbeth himself and for others of his kind. See my "Radical Interpretation," *Synthese* 23 (1974) 331-44; however, that account is too individualistic and should be corrected in that respect.

Note that it is not a question of Macbeth's states gaining causal powers by entering into relations with unactualized *possibilia*. Rather, the states are related as they are to *possibilia* in virtue of their causal powers. Compare the case of numerical magnitudes. When water boils because it reaches a temperature of 100° that is not a case of a number managing to cause physical effects.

I allow that the best rule for assigning content may be one that leaves the assignment somewhat indeterminate. Indeed it must be so if we are to treat moderately irrational—that is, normal—belief systems. If someone thinks that a certain restaurant is so crowded nowadays that nobody goes there any more, we need not assign him impossible doxastic alternatives, where the restaurant is crowded and deserted, as possibilities admitted by his belief system! Instead, his confusion amounts to indeterminacy between a belief system—an alternative set—in which the restaurant is crowded and one in which it is deserted. In a sense, he believes each half (though not the whole) of a contradiction; in a sense, he believes neither half. Someone who looks at a *trompe d'oeil* version of Escher's "Belvedere" might suffer a like indeterminacy between conflicting sets of visual alternatives. See the discussion of fragmented belief in my "Logic for Equivocators," *Noûs* 16 (1982) 431-41, and Nicholas Rescher and Robert Brandom, *The Logic of Inconsistency* (Blackwell, 1980).

less does his present visual experience tell him these things. He has little notion which of all the possible and actual daggers there are is the one before his eyes—unless we count it an answer just to say “Which one? Why, *this* one!” The identity of the dagger is one of the many questions left open by the content of his experience and belief, and differently answered by the different alternatives.

## II

### CROSS-IDENTIFICATION BY DESCRIPTION AND BY ACQUAINTANCE

At this point we have struck the famous problem of identity across possible worlds, or *cross-identification*. It is the problem of what we mean in saying, for instance, that a dagger present at one world and a dagger present at another are the same. The problem divides into two parts. (1) Is cross-identification literally a matter of identity, in that one and the same thing is wholly present at each of two worlds? Or is it a matter of relations that unite distinct things, each confined to its own world, so that we may treat them together as one although they are not really the same? Hintikka and I take the latter view, and regard cross-identification as the uniting of suitably related, but distinct, individuals from different worlds. (2) Are cross-identifications determined entirely by the qualitative character of the things and worlds in question?<sup>3</sup> Or do they depend at least partly on some other aspect or relation of things or worlds, something else that might differ even between perfect qualitative duplicates? Hintikka and I see no need for this mysterious something else. We regard cross-identifications as holding in virtue of qualitative matching or resemblance, either in the intrinsic character of the cross-identified things or in their relations to the world-mates that surround them.

These answers to questions (1) and (2) lead to something like the

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<sup>3</sup>Here I use “qualitative character” in a broad enough sense to cover the causal relations, laws, and chances that prevail at the world in question, whether or not these things supervene on qualitative character more narrowly construed.

counterpart theory I have proposed elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> We have a multitude of daggers, or whatever. Each one is “world-bound”: it belongs wholly to one single world, and never appears at any other world. However, some of these daggers resemble others in various ways, and sometimes we think of distinct but similar daggers as if they were identical. Although a dagger cannot itself appear at worlds other than its own, it may have counterparts at other worlds, united to it by bonds of resemblance. Questions of cross-identification are to be understood not in terms of literal identity (in which case they would be trivialized) but in terms of counterpart relations. For instance, a certain dagger might have been used to stab Caesar if it has a counterpart that was used to stab a counterpart of Caesar. A dagger has some property essentially if it shares that property with all its counterparts. A “singular proposition” predicating a certain property of a certain actual dagger holds at just those worlds where some counterpart of that dagger has that property. A counterfactual conditional about a certain dagger is to be assessed by considering certain of the worlds where that dagger has a counterpart that satisfies the antecedent supposition. And so on.

A counterpart theorist must say that, strictly and literally speaking, the daggers of Macbeth’s alternatives are many. The question is whether these many daggers are counterparts. The closest we can come to saying that the dagger is a definite individual, reappearing throughout the alternatives, is to say that the daggers of any two alternatives are counterparts united by the common role they play. The diversity of the daggers—their differing origins, history, composition, and so on—is what originally put us off calling them the same. Shall it now likewise put us off calling them counterparts?

So stated, the difficulty will not puzzle us for long. Things resemble and differ from one another in many different respects. There are countless ways to amalgamate similarities and differences into a

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<sup>4</sup>In “Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic,” *Journal of Philosophy* 65 (1968) 113-26; “Counterparts of Persons and Their Bodies,” *Journal of Philosophy* 68 (1971) 203-11; and section 1.9 of *Counterfactuals* (Blackwell, 1973).

resultant relation of overall similarity. Hence we are not stuck with one fixed counterpart relation. Our daggers can be noncounterparts in one way and counterparts in another, and so can be a multitude in one way and a definite individual in another. One big advantage of counterpart theory is that it has no trouble providing for more than one kind of cross-identification; strict identity across worlds could replace at most one of all the different counterpart relations we need.<sup>5</sup>

Hintikka speaks of cross-identification by description and by acquaintance. In the language of counterpart theory, we have two different counterpart relations. Or better, we have two families of counterpart relations; both kinds of cross-identification may be further subdivided. The daggers of Macbeth's alternatives are not, in most cases, counterparts by description: they are not alike in their descriptions. But they are counterparts by acquaintance, being alike in the way Macbeth is acquainted with them. Cross-identifying by strict identity, they are a multitude. Cross-identifying by description, they are still a multitude. Cross-identifying by acquaintance, however, they are a definite individual, united by resemblance in a way that entitles us to regard them as if they were one.

Counterparts by description are united partly by similarity in their intrinsic character; and partly by similarity in their place in the world—their places in their worlds, I might better say—which is a matter of their relations to their surroundings. There is no special part of the surrounding world which has a privileged role; counterparts by description are alike *vis a vis* the world at large. (That will make it hard for things to be counterparts if their surrounding worlds differ too much.) One especially weighty sort of resemblance is match of origins.<sup>6</sup> Suppose two worlds are just alike

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<sup>5</sup>A harmless multiplicity of counterpart relations (by description) can solve problems about *de re* modality that would otherwise require an objectionable multiplicity of mysteriously related entities. I discuss one such case in "Counterparts of Persons and Their Bodies." Several others have been discussed by Denis Robinson, in a lecture at the Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference in Sydney in August 1980.

<sup>6</sup>I have reported Hintikka as agreeing with me that cross-identification by description is governed by similarity. Yet Hintikka denies this: see pages 127-29 and 209 of *The Intentions of Intentionality*. He insists, that besides, or

in their initial temporal segments, and diverge thereafter. Within the region of match, it is easy to find counterparts. They are perfect duplicates. Outside the region of match, we can still find counterparts that are alike in the way they are connected, by lines of spatiotemporal and causal continuity, to things inside the region of match. If I had remained a chemist, I might be very different today. But I and my counterpart the chemist would be continuations of duplicate initial segments, situated in duplicate surroundings, with duplicate histories. I doubt that our counterpart-by-description relations always give decisive weight to match of origins (when it is present) but certainly there is a tendency that way.

Counterparts by acquaintance, on the other hand, are united by resemblance in their relations to a subject of attitudes. In particular, the relations that govern the subject's epistemic access are alike. The subject plays a privileged role: the relations of the counterparts to him matter in a way that their relations to other things don't. Switch the subject, therefore, and you switch the cross-identification. So whereas cross-identification by description employs a two-place relation between counterparts, it seems that cross-identification by acquaintance requires a three-place relation. We must say that *X* and *Y* are counterparts by acquaintance for subject *Z*, meaning by this that *X* is related to *Z* at *X*'s world in much the same way that *Y* is related to *Z* at *Y*'s world.

The perceptual cases are simplest. The counterparts are similar in the way the subject perceives them. For instance, they are situated alike in what Hintikka calls the subject's "visual geometry." As it might be: straight ahead, about two feet away, the handle toward the hand. To this, I would add a causal similarity. Perceptual counterparts are to be similar in the contribution they make to the subject's perceptual experience, and in the way that the subject's

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instead of, similarity, we need to use "continuity principles." Counterparts are to be related alike by continuity to individuals in a region of good match where cross-identification is especially easy. Yes indeed, say I; but why is this not one kind of similarity? If Hintikka's point is that purely intrinsic similarity is not enough, and we also must consider certain kinds of relational similarity, then we have never disagreed. I said at the start "your counterparts resemble you closely in content *and context* . . ." (page 114, "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic," italics added).

experience causally depends on them. (Here I depart to some extent from Hintikka's account.)<sup>7</sup>

The case of Macbeth's dagger required cross-identification by acquaintance between his perceptual alternatives. We also may consider cross-identification between the subject's alternatives and reality. Reality may indeed supply one of the alternatives, if the content of the subject's perceptual experience is free of all error. But if not, then although his perceptual alternatives are all of them unactualized possibilities, he may yet be perceiving real things. Not so in the case of Macbeth's hallucinatory dagger; but in other cases, the things present in the alternatives may be counterparts by acquaintance of real things that the subject is perceiving or misperceiving. Each of my visual alternatives has a sheet of paper contributing in a certain distinctive way to my visual experience. This world has an actual sheet of paper contributing to my experience in just that way, or near enough. So even if this world does not quite succeed in supplying one of my perceptual alternatives—thanks to a deceptive afterimage, let us say—there is a good sense in which the actual sheet of paper is the very one I seem to see. Not only are the sheets of paper of the alternatives counterparts by acquaintance, for me, of one another; they also are counterparts by acquaintance, for me, of the real sheet of paper before my eyes.

Perceptual cross-identification may be generalized in virtue of the analogy between relations of perceptual acquaintance and other, more tenuous, relations of epistemic rapport. There are the relations that someone bears to me when I get a letter from him, or I watch the swerving of a car he is driving, or I read his biography, or I hear him mentioned by name, or I investigate the clues he has

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<sup>7</sup>Hintikka uses causal relations for cross-identification between the actual world and its perceptual alternatives, but not for cross-identification between these alternatives. (See *The Intentions of Intentionality*, Chapter 4, especially page 71.) I think my use of causal relations even in cross-identifying between alternatives has its uses in the perceptual case (for instance, in handling the problem about mirrors noted on page 67, *op. cit.*) and is indispensable in the doxastic and epistemic cases. It has its price: suitably ordinary causal relations must prevail in the perceptual alternatives, making causal information part of the content of perceptual experience. But I think that is objectionable only given the forlorn hope that we can speak sensibly of the pure content of perceptual experience, separated from all collateral information.



left at the scene of his crime. In each case, there are causal chains from him to me of a sort which would permit a flow of information. Perhaps I do get accurate information; perhaps I get misinformation, but still the channel is there. I shall call such relations as these *relations of acquaintance*. Just as perceptual counterparts are alike in the way they are linked to the subject by perceptual relations, so, in general, counterparts by acquaintance are alike in the way they are linked to the subject by relations of acquaintance of all sorts.

For cross-identification by acquaintance, match of origins does not matter at all. Neither does similarity of intrinsic character, except insofar as it would be hard for things of quite different kinds to be alike in the relations of acquaintance into which they enter. And that is not so very hard. Waxworks and people may be perceptual counterparts, or shadows and spooks, or puddles and layers of hot air.

Cross-identification by acquaintance can be put to good use in describing the subject's state. Holmes begins his investigation with an open mind: each of his doxastic alternatives has some murderer or other, since he believes that someone is the murderer, but in no sense is it the same murderer throughout the alternatives. Later there is someone in particular whom he believes to be the murderer: the murderers of the alternatives that remain uneliminated are counterparts by acquaintance for Holmes of one another, and in that sense they comprise a definite individual. (They need not be counterparts by description. It is not part of Holmes' task to discover the murderer's right name, his famous deeds, his origins, or even whether he is man or spook.) Holmes comes to believe: the murderer is the one I am acquainted with in such-and-such ways. Holmes being what he is, doubtless he is right in this belief, in which case the real-world murderer also is a counterpart by acquaintance of the murderers of Holmes' doxastic alternatives. (He might even be one of them, if Holmes is wrong about nothing at all.) It is otherwise with the imaginative and deluded Scholmes. He is dead wrong, completely out of touch with reality. But his belief system is not unlike Holmes', and his doxastic alternatives have narrowed down in much the same way. We may say of Scholmes too that after much "investigation" there is someone in particular whom he believes to be the murderer, though in Scholmes' case this is not anyone real.

For Scholmes, as for Holmes, the murderers of his doxastic alternatives are counterparts by acquaintance of one another. Thus they comprise a definite individual for him, a “vivid character in his inner story.”<sup>8</sup> What makes this character fictitious—a mere figment of Scholmes’ imagination—is that there is no cross-identification by acquaintance between the *possibilia* that comprise it and anyone real.

Likewise in perceptual cases we may use cross-identification by acquaintance to make familiar distinctions. I see the famous speckled hen. Or I hallucinate it—no matter, the distinctions we want cut across the difference between successful perception and hallucination. At first I do not pay close attention. The content of my visual experience is not very detailed: it tells me that there are speckles, but it does not tell me their number or distribution or size or shape. Each visual alternative has speckles, but no single speckle is present throughout them. The alternatives differ too much. Then I focus my attention on one of the speckles. My visual experience becomes more informative and my new set of alternatives is less diverse. That speckle, with its distinctive location in my visual geometry and its distinctive causal contribution to my experience, runs uniformly through my alternatives. Or better: there are speckles, one for each alternative, that are cross-identified for me by perceptual acquaintance. They are perceptual counterparts. I saw at once that there were speckles; only later was there a particular speckle (real or hallucinatory) that I saw. Similarly, Macbeth sees a (hallucinatory) dagger only if the daggers of his alternatives are perceptually cross-identified. That might not have been so if, for instance, he had hallucinated a scene of furious battle. Suppose his eye is on his attacker’s axe, and he barely notices that some of those nearby are wielding daggers. Then he sees—or hallucinates—that there are daggers, but there is no dagger that he sees.

### III

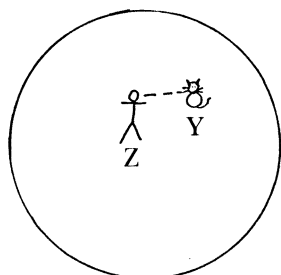
#### CROSS-IDENTIFYING THE SUBJECT

Thus far, Hintikka’s story, slightly amended. But now I shall raise a problem which seems to me serious, and which Hintikka

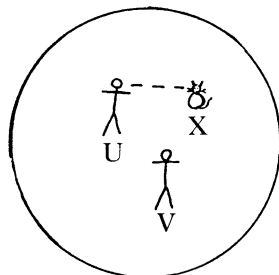
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<sup>8</sup>Cf. David Kaplan, “Quantifying In,” *Synthese* 19 (1968) 178-214, especially pages 199-203.

does not consider. It is simplest to state it as a problem about cross-identification by acquaintance between the subject's own world and his alternatives, though it could be stated instead as a problem about cross-identification between alternatives. I think my problem can be solved if, and only if, we change our thinking about possibilities in a rather fundamental way. I think this change is desirable also on other grounds.



World 1



World 2

Please look through the Verneoscope at these two possible worlds.<sup>9</sup> You see *Y* and *Z*, here at world 1. Perhaps that is our world. As you see, *Z* is a perceiving subject, and *Y* is something which stands to *Z* in certain relations of acquaintance. And you see *X*, here at world 2. Perhaps that is a world that supplies one of *Z*'s perceptual alternatives. Examine these worlds and their inhabitants closely and tell me: is *X* a counterpart by acquaintance of *Y* for subject *Z*?

You see that among *X*'s worldmates at world 2 are *U* and *V*. Both of them are perceiving subjects, rather like *Z* at world 1. And *X* stands to *U* in relations of acquaintance just like the relations of *Y* to *Z*. But *X* stands in no relation of acquaintance to *V*, or at any rate none that resembles any of the relations of *Y* to *Z*. Now what do you think?

You say: it depends. If *U* is the subject *Z*, then indeed *X* and *Y* are counterparts by acquaintance for *Z*. But if *V* is *Z*, not so. First we

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<sup>9</sup>The Verneoscope is an impossible device, invented by David Kaplan, for inspecting other worlds. See Kaplan's "Transworld Heir Lines," in Michael J. Loux, ed., *The Possible and the Actual* (Cornell, 1979), especially page 93.

must settle which inhabitant of world 2 is Z, then we can answer the question.

I say: strictly speaking, no inhabitant of world 2 is Z. We'll have no cross-world identities, if you please. Z is wholly at world 1 and nowhere else, and only his counterparts are at other worlds such as world 2. The best you can do is to settle which inhabitant of world 2 is Z's counterpart.

You say: right. Which kind of counterpart?

Here's the problem in a nutshell. Before we can cross-identify anything by acquaintance for a certain subject, we must first cross-identify the subject. As good counterpart theorists, we cannot do that by strict identity. In fact, I shall argue that we cannot do it at all, given the way I posed the problem. Neither kind of counterpart relation does the job.

Let us first try cross-identification by acquaintance. As you see, Z bears certain relations of acquaintance to himself. Foremost among these is identity, which indeed is a relation that provides plenty of epistemic rapport. (But also there are others: relations which Z bears to himself, although it is possible for someone to bear them to something else. Like the famous hero, Z studies records of his own past exploits; like the unfortunate man with his pants on fire, Z unwittingly watches himself in a mirror.)<sup>10</sup> So Z's counterpart by acquaintance at world 2 must be linked to Z by much the same relations of acquaintance as Z himself is. Linked to Z himself?—No, to Z's counterpart at world 2, whoever that is. The most we will get this way, I think, is that Z's counterpart by acquaintance at world 2 has the same sort of epistemic self-rapport that Z has. This is too easy a condition to satisfy. Both *U* and *V* satisfy it. For instance both of them are self-identical, just as Z is.

Perhaps we'd do better to try cross-identification by description. But that way, we get a condition that may be too hard to satisfy. Suppose Z is rather badly mistaken in his opinions, and suppose world 2 is the sort of world that Z wrongly supposes himself to

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<sup>10</sup>The hero appears in Hector-Neri Castañeda, "On the Logic of Attributions of Self-knowledge to Others," *Journal of Philosophy* 65 (1968) 439-56, especially pages 446-47; the man with his pants on fire appears in David Kaplan, "Demonstratives," presented in part at the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association, March 1977.

inhabit. It is one of his *belief worlds*, a world of just the kind that we must consider in order to characterize the content of *Z*'s system of beliefs by assigning him a set of doxastic alternatives. Then world 2 may contain no counterpart by description of *Z*. No inhabitant of world 2 matches *Z* in origins: *Z* came from a certain sperm and egg, but he is convinced that the myth of sperms and eggs is scientific tommyrot and that a rival hypothesis is correct. The inhabitants of *Z*'s belief worlds are all brought by storks. There is nobody at world 2 who matches *Z* in intrinsic character: *Z* himself is a complicated physical object like you and me, whereas his belief worlds are populated entirely by embodied spirits who conform to his philosophy of mind. Although *Z* has many famous deeds to his name, he refuses to believe that anyone—least of all, he himself—could have done all those things. He is kind but cynical, so that nobody at *Z*'s belief worlds is as nice as *Z* himself. And so it goes. If we cross-identify by description, *Z* is nowhere to be found at his own belief worlds. Shall we conclude that *Z* does not believe that he himself exists? No, *Z*'s opinions are a mite peculiar, sure enough, but they're not that peculiar.

The case was extreme, but more realistic cases would be bad enough. We might well have counterparts by description of *Z* at only some of his belief worlds, not all. For this to happen he needn't be wrong about anything, only open-minded. We should not conclude from this that *Z* is uncertain whether he himself exists.

In the more and the less extreme cases alike, it may be that world 2 contains no counterpart by description of *Z*. If so, we still have no answer to our question whether *X* and *Y* are counterparts by acquaintance for *Z*. But that is a question we need to answer if world 2 provides one of *Z*'s perceptual or doxastic or what-not alternatives. We can't just ignore the alternatives that make trouble. To leave out some of the alternatives would impute richer content to *Z*'s state than is really there.

It could also happen that *Z* has two different counterparts by description at a single world: *U* and *V*, say. They are twins from the same sperm and egg, and they are leading similar lives. If we cross-identify by description, they have equal claim to be taken as *Z*. Honor both claims, and we get conflicting answers about whether *X* and *Y* are counterparts by acquaintance for *Z*.

So if we cross-identify the subject by description preparatory to cross-identifying other things by acquaintance, we hit trouble. But even if the proposal could work, still it is unsound in principle. When we cross-identify by acquaintance between the subject's alternatives, we are doing so in order to describe the informational content of his state. If two subjects are psychological duplicates—if they believe alike, or are alike in their visual experience, or whatever—we should assign them the same sets of alternative possibilities, with the same cross-identification by acquaintance between these alternatives. But if we first cross-identified the subject by description, we might get answers that depend not only on the state we intend to describe, but also on such irrelevancies as the subject's origins, intrinsic character, and so on. If two subjects who are psychologically alike are different in ways that give them different counterparts by description, that should not matter at all. But on the present proposal it will matter. It may matter a lot, as we have seen; but it is bad if it matters even a little bit. Irrelevancies intrude into what was meant to be a purely psychological characterization.

What makes it wrong to cross-identify the subject by description is that the subject may be wrong about his own description. Take the doxastic case. The subject has a certain conception of himself. He believes that he has such-and-such intrinsic properties and stands in such-and-such relations to his surroundings. (He also believes that he inhabits such-and-such a kind of world; if we count this as part of his self-conception, as I think we should, his self-conception subsumes his entire belief system.)<sup>11</sup> Since the subject's doxastic alternatives are to be exactly the possibilities admitted by the content of his belief, they must in particular conform to his beliefs about himself. No matter how we cross-identify the subject into his doxastic alternatives, we always must find someone who fits his self-conception. His counterparts by description cannot be relied on to do so; for his self-conception might be wrong in essential ways, as we have seen. Further, the discrepancies between the sub-

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<sup>11</sup>See my "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*," *The Philosophical Review* 88 (1979) 513-43, especially page 518.

ject's true description and his self-conception are something that might differ between psychological duplicates. That is why irrelevancies intrude into our attempted psychological characterization if we cross-identify the subject by description.

It may seem that we have solved our problem *en passant*. Perhaps we should cross-identify the subject not by acquaintance and not by description but by self-conception. Let us search world 2 through the Verneoscope for someone who fits *Z*'s self-conception; the one who does is the one we will cross-identify with *Z*. He is the one we will take as a point of reference in cross-identifying other things by acquaintance. (If world 2 supplies one of *Z*'s doxastic alternatives, there will indeed be at least one of its inhabitants who fits his self-conception. But what if there are two, for instance both of *U* and *V*? And what if it supplies not a doxastic alternative but, for instance, a visual alternative? Let us ignore these problems.) I say that this is no solution at all. It is circular. The subject's self-conception is (at least) part of the content of his belief system, which content is supposed to be given by his set of doxastic alternatives. To find out his self-conception, we look to see what is true of him throughout these alternatives. To find out what is true of him, with respect to any given one of the alternatives, we must first find him. And which one is he?—the one who fits the self-conception! Either we need an independent way to find the self-conception, in which case the alternatives are unfit for their work, or else we still need an independent way to find the subject.

#### IV

##### STIPULATION AND HAECCEITISM

No matter how we try to cross-identify the subject, we meet both technical difficulties and difficulties of principle. We can't win. But we Yanks have a way with unwinnable wars: we simply declare them won, go home, celebrate the victory, and live happily ever after. (*We* live happily ever after.) Saul Kripke has proposed that we conquer the problem of cross-identification in the same way. He invites us to consider questions of identity across possible worlds

unproblematic, and to settle them by declaration.<sup>12</sup> Kripke advises us not to stare at another world through the Verneoscope in search of something that will tell us which, if any, of its inhabitants is Nixon—is he, perhaps, this inept politician over here who has never won an election? Rather, we should simply stipulate: let us consider a world where Nixon invariably loses elections.

Kripke makes it fairly clear that these stipulations are not meant as acts of mental worldmaking, or of mental identification-making. What we make are not worlds, with or without built-in cross-identifications, but rather are (partial) specifications of worlds. When we stipulate we are selecting. Out of all the worlds there are, we stipulate which ones we wish to consider. And in doing this, Kripke insists, it is perfectly right and proper to specify worlds in terms of cross-identification.

Certainly we are free to stipulate that the world under consideration shall be one where Nixon invariably loses. Anyone can agree to that, whatever his views on cross-identification (unless his views provide no way at all to cross-identify Nixon with an otherworldly loser). Even a counterpart theorist like myself can be happy with such a stipulation, rightly understood. It comes to this: let us consider a world such that the qualitative character of that world and its inhabitants, plus the qualitative character of our world and its Nixon, together make some election-loser in that world be a counterpart by description of our Nixon. In brief: let us consider a world that bears certain relations of qualitative likeness and difference to ours. It is not in dispute that stipulations involving cross-identification are proper. The real issue is whether these always can be replaced, in principle, by purely qualitative stipulations (perhaps making reference, as above, to the unspecified qualitative character of our own world). We have already raised this issue. Are cross-identifications determined entirely by the qualitative character of the things and worlds in question, as counterpart theorists believe? Then stipulations in terms of cross-identification are just a convenience. They add nothing to our resources. Or do cross-

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<sup>12</sup>In his "Naming and Necessity," in Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman, eds., *Semantics of Natural Language* (Reidel, 1972), especially pages 264-69.



identifications depend at least partly on some other aspect or relation of things or worlds, as Haecceitists (in approximately David Kaplan's sense)<sup>13</sup> believe? Then indeed stipulations in terms of cross-identification can do something that no amount of purely qualitative stipulation can do. They can specify the alleged non-qualitative determinants of cross-identification.

Our problem in finding the subject was that nothing we could see through the Verneoscope seemed to help. Now we are advised simply to stipulate: let world 2 be a world where *U* is *Z*. Or: where *V* is *Z*. Or somebody else, or nobody. Any of these stipulations would solve our problem, and put us in a position to cross-identify by acquaintance. But if such stipulations are to make sense, it cannot have been fully settled beforehand just which world we had in mind. Our Verneoscopic, purely qualitative view of the so-called "world 2" must have been a view not of one world but of many: many worlds exactly alike qualitatively but differing in some other way. The nonqualitative differences among these duplicate worlds must somehow be relevant to cross-identification, so that some of them are worlds where *U* is to be cross-identified with *Z*, some are worlds where *V* is to be cross-identified with *Z*, and so on. Stipulation is beside the point. We are invited to give up on counterpart theory, join the Haecceitists, believe in nonqualitative determinants of cross-identification, and rely on these to solve our problem of finding the subject.

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<sup>13</sup>David Kaplan, "How to Russell a Frege-Church," *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975) 716-29, especially pages 722-23. Haecceitism as Kaplan defines it, however, is a package deal consisting of several independent theses. I shall concentrate on the central thesis of the package: namely, that there are nonqualitative determinants of cross-identification. I shall use "Haecceitism" simply as a name for this thesis. Thus a Haecceitist could hold any of various opinions about what the nonqualitative determinants of cross-identification are, and how they do their work. In particular, he might or might not believe in identities between inhabitants of different worlds. He might not even believe in the irreducibly nonqualitative haecceities that give the package its name, for he might be a nominalist and believe in no properties at all. Conversely, someone who rejects Haecceitism might believe in nonqualitative haecceities for reasons having nothing to do with cross-identification (as indeed I do); see Robert M. Adams, "Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity," *Journal of Philosophy* 76 (1979) 5-26.

## V

## WHY I AM NOT A HAECCEITIST

I decline the invitation. My reason is that Haecceitism in any form will lead us into intolerable mysteries. But different versions will lead us into different mysteries, so we must take them separately.

I first consider the version that is suggested by Kripke's discussion of cross-identification. (I do not say that Kripke himself is committed to all of it.) This kind of Haecceitism disagrees with counterpart theory on two points, but it does not sever cross-identification from resemblance altogether. Its theses are as follows. (1) Cross-identification is literally a matter of identity. When something in one world is cross-identified with something in another, one and the same thing is wholly present at each of two worlds. (2) There are nonqualitative determinants of cross-identification, differing between worlds that are qualitatively alike: namely, these identities between the inhabitants of the worlds. Duplicate worlds may differ by having different individuals in common with, for instance, our world. However, (3) there are qualitative constraints on cross-identification, limits on how different a thing could have been from the way it actually is. Things have nontrivial qualitative essences. Cross-identification enforces certain resemblances in qualitative character, particularly match of origins; contrapositively, certain dissimilarities preclude cross-identification. Saul Kripke being what he is, there is no world where he himself is present and is a puddle, or a poached egg, or someone originally brought by a stork.

This version of Haecceitism cannot solve our problem of finding the subject. Because of its essentialism, it fails in the same way as our previous proposal to cross-identify the subject by description. Anyone too different from the subject as he actually is, anyone who lacks his qualitative essence, cannot be him. So again it may turn out that the subject is nowhere to be found at his own belief worlds, thanks to his mistakes. Or he may be found at only some of them, thanks to his open-mindedness. Stipulation might select among too many eligible candidates for cross-identification, but stipulation cannot help if there are too few. (If there is no world where Saul

Kripke himself was brought by a stork, it's no use stipulating that we are to consider such a world.) Further, I object again that irrelevancies are intruding into what was meant as a purely psychological description. Our cross-identification by acquaintance will depend as before on the subject's actual qualitative character. That will now enter by way of essentialistic constraints on identity across worlds, rather than by way of a descriptive counterpart relation, but it ought not to enter in any way.

It would therefore be a step in the right direction to drop the essentialism, and switch to a more extreme version of Haeccetism in which cross-identification depends not at all on qualitative character: any individual can have any character.<sup>14</sup> We might of course worry that such a Haeccetism cannot account for certain facts, such as the fact that I could not possibly have been a poached egg. But that is no real difficulty. We counterpart theorists can offer the loan of our own account, suitably adapted. The limits to difference that no longer constrain identity across worlds may reappear, optionally, in the form of an accessibility relation. It is common enough to say modal things that disregard some of all the possibilities there are; and so long as we disregard those worlds where things differ too much from the way they actually are, there are no worlds where I am a poached egg.

Consider an extreme version of Haeccetism, without essentialism, which retains both the theses (1) that cross-identification is literally a matter of identity, and (2) that identities across worlds serve as nonqualitative determinants of cross-identification. On this view we have things wholly present at more than one world, and there is no limit to the qualitative difference between something at one world and that same thing at another. For example—and it is not a very extreme example—we may have something wholly present at one world, where it is square, and at another, where it is round.

How can this be? I know what it is to be square, or to be round; but this thing is supposed to be both. “But at different worlds!”—How does that help? I know what it is to have a square part and a

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<sup>14</sup>Such a theory has been defended by Pavel Tichý in lectures and in conversation. I am grateful to him for persuading me that it is worthy of consideration.

round part—as may happen when something changes its shape over time—but this thing is supposed to be *wholly* square and *wholly* round. Presumably, the thing is supposed to bear the square-at relation to one world, and the round-at relation to another. There is no contradiction because these relations are born to different *relata*. But what are these alleged relations?—Not shapes! Shapes are properties, not relations. We cannot just be told to think of them now as relations but understand them exactly as before. An explanation is required. What is it to be square at a world? What has that to do with simply being square?

If I say that something is square at a world, most likely I just mean that it is square, and it is at that world. Or I might be speaking of something composed of parts from several worlds, in which case I would mean that the part at the world in question is square. Also, I could say that seven numbers the circles at one world but not at another, meaning by this that seven bears the numbering relation to the class comprising the circles that are at one world, but not to the class comprising the circles that are at the other. So my problem is not that I cannot understand the adverbial phrase “at such-and-such world.” I can; but not in a way that allows something to be wholly present at two worlds without having exactly the same intrinsic properties at both.<sup>15</sup>

It is as if someone said that Ted and Ned are Siamese twins; they share a hand; as Ted’s right hand it has five fingers but as Ned’s left hand it has six fingers. We would not put up with such double-talk, but would ask once and for all how many fingers are on the hand. “Five if you’re Ted, six if you’re Ned” would not be an acceptable answer.

(Doubtless I shall be told that my mistake is to suppose that something present at a world is literally part of that world, like the twins’ hand. I shall be advised that worlds are like stories. Rather special stories: maximally detailed, infinitely long, hence untold.

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<sup>15</sup>Nothing I have said here is an objection to identity across worlds in the special case in which the cross-identified thing is exactly alike in intrinsic properties at all the worlds where it appears. Likewise, the usual objection to identity across worlds determined by qualitative resemblance—identity is transitive, resemblance isn’t—does not apply to that special case. Cross-identification of this special sort is of course not enough to solve our problem of finding the subject; it suffers from essentialistic constraints to an extreme degree.

(Or perhaps they're like pictures, or models, or mental images, or belief systems, or representations of some other sort—again, infinitely rich ones, and hence unrealized.) If conflicting stories are told about someone, all of them are about *him*: about one and the same individual. And they are about the whole of him, not different parts. There is no problem about how he can be different in different stories, for he isn't literally *in* any of them. Nobody is literally part of a story. Likewise—so goes the advice—something can be square according to one world-story and round according to another one, although no part of either story is either square or round. The proposal that we should construe worlds as story-like, or (as I would put it) that we should use world-stories as substitutes for the worlds themselves, is a popular one. Fortunately, we need not consider its merits here. For it rejects a presupposition of the problem we are trying to solve. Hence it cannot solve that problem, though perhaps it might circumvent it. Remember how we began: we can describe Macbeth by describing his dagger because his state puts him into a relation with otherworldly daggers that fit our descriptions. No world-story theory can accept this solution to the case of the missing dagger. According to any such theory, there are no otherworldly daggers to be described—only false stories according to which there are daggers. However well they might succeed on their own terms, world-story theories are irrelevant to our present problem, and I shall consider them no further.)

If identity across worlds requires a mysterious wholesale transformation of properties into relations, perhaps the Haeccetist will decide that it is more trouble than it is worth. He might then give up on the identities, but continue to maintain that cross-identification varies independently of qualitative character. According to this version of Haeccetism, when something in one world is cross-identified with something in another, the two never are identical. Each is confined to its own world. Yet these two things are somehow linked, as many other pairs are not, in virtue of something nonqualitative.

I ask what the nonqualitative determinants of cross-identification are, and how they do their work. So long as the Haeccetist believes in identity across worlds, he has a good answer to me. But if he gives up on the identities, he throws that answer away and he owes me another.

He might say that when two things are cross-identified, that is

because they stand in a certain relation. Or they share a certain property. Or they are both included as parts of a certain mereological aggregate, one that is not entirely in any one world. But this tells me nothing at all. *Any* two things stand in infinitely many relations, share infinitely many properties, and are both included as parts of infinitely many aggregates. For any class of ordered pairs, however miscellaneous, there is the relation of being paired by a member of that class; for any class of things, however miscellaneous, there is the property of belonging to that class and there is the mereological sum of that class. Perhaps the Haecceitist thinks that some of all these relations or properties or aggregates are somehow special, and he meant to speak only of the special ones. (Perhaps he also thinks that only the special ones exist.) Then he must tell me which of all the relations and properties and aggregates I believe in are the special ones. He cannot draw on my (sadly partial) understanding of what it is for some of them to be special by cutting along the qualitative joints; and he must avoid circularity. I do not think he can answer me. If he cannot, he leaves it entirely mysterious how cross-identification is supposed to be determined.

Since I do not see how honest toil can solve my problem of finding the subject, I should like to accept the Haecceitist's invitation to solve it by other means. Further, there is a certain amount of direct intuitive evidence for Haecceitism, which we will consider shortly. But we do really want the mysterious Haecceitistic differences among duplicate worlds? Or the transformation of familiar properties into unfamiliar relations? I say not. We should not buy the Haecceitist's costly wares, even if they would solve our problem,<sup>16</sup> until we have made sure that no cheaper substitute can be had.

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<sup>16</sup>And would the Haecceitist's wares solve our problem? Suppose that somehow we have a satisfactory, anti-essentialistic version of Haecceitism, and we use it to cross-identify the subject. I complain once again that irrelevancies intrude into our psychological descriptions of the subject. This time it is not the subject's qualitative character that wrongly intrudes, but his very identity. Suppose we have two subjects, *S* and *T*; we have a certain set of alternative possibilities; and at each alternative *S* and *T* are present (let the Haecceitist tell us what this means) and *S* is wise and *T* is foolish. Now: if someone had this as his set of doxastic alternatives, would he think himself wise? Or foolish? This question about his self-conception

## VI

## POSSIBILITIES AND WORLDS

One uncustomary distinction, and our problem solves itself. We shall have a cheap quasi-Haecceitism, and we shall be free to find the subject by stipulation.

From the outset I have spoken of the subject's perceptual or doxastic or what-not alternatives as *possibilities*—not as *possible worlds* (except in discussing proposals due to be rejected). Let me distinguish: *possibilities are not always possible worlds*. There are possible worlds, sure enough, and there are possibilities, and possible worlds are some of the possibilities. But I say that *any* possible individual is a possibility, and not all possible individuals are possible worlds. Only the biggest ones are.<sup>17,18</sup>

The world is the totality of things. It is the actual individual that includes every actual individual as a part. Likewise a possible world is a possible individual big enough to include every possible individual that is compossible with it. It is a way that an entire world might possibly be. But lesser possible individuals, inhabitants of worlds, proper parts of worlds, are possibilities too. They are ways that something less than an entire world might possibly be. A possible person, for instance, is a way that a person might possibly be. A possible dagger is a way that a dagger might possibly be.

A central thesis of the metaphysics of modality is that the unit of

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seems like a purely psychological one, so the alternative set ought to answer it. But on the present proposal, the answer depends on whether the subject is *S* or *T*, and it shouldn't. See also my discussion of a similar point on pages 522-24 of "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*."

<sup>17</sup>My point is not that possible worlds are maximal specific possibilities, and there are also less specific ones. That is so, but here I am speaking always of maximally specific possibilities. A possible individual, whether or not it is a possible world, is a maximally specific possibility.

<sup>18</sup>Quine's "centered worlds," or some slight generalization of them, might indeed correspond to all the possibilities. But centered worlds are not just worlds, much as stuffed cabbage is not just cabbage; centered worlds amount to presentations of possible individuals, so a proposal to use centered worlds differs little from my proposal to use the individuals themselves. See W. V. Quine, "Propositional Objects," in his *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (Columbia, 1969); and see Section X of my "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*."

possibility is the possible world. I divide the thesis, retain part, and reject part. It is true, and important, that possibilities are invariably provided by whole possible worlds. There are no free-floating *possibilia*. Every possibility is part of a world—exactly one world—and thus comes surrounded by worldmates, and fully equipped with relational properties in virtue of its relations to them. What is not true is that we should count distinct possibilities by counting the worlds that provide them. A single world may provide many possibilities, since many possible individuals inhabit it.

To illustrate, consider these two possibilities for me. I might have been one of a pair of twins. I might have been the firstborn one, or the secondborn one. These two possibilities involve no qualitative difference in the way the world is. Imagine them specified more fully: there is the possibility of being the firstborn twin in a world of such-and-such maximally specific qualitative character. And there is the possibility of being the secondborn twin in exactly such a world. The Haecceitist says: two possibilities, two worlds. They *seem* just alike, but they must differ somehow. They differ in their cross-identification of David Lewis, hence they must differ with respect to the determinants of cross-identification; and these must be non-qualitative, since there are no qualitative differences to be had. I say: two possibilities, sure enough. But they are two possibilities within a single world. The world in question contains twin counterparts of me. (Counterparts by description, under a counterpart relation that stresses match of origins and personal continuity.) Each twin is a possible way for a person to be, and in fact is a possible way for me to be. I might have been one, or I might have been the other. These are two distinct possibilities for me. But they involve only one possibility for the world: it might have been the world inhabited by two such twins. The Haecceitist was quite right when he thought that purely qualitative worlds gave us too narrow a range of distinct possibilities. He concluded that worlds must not be purely qualitative. He'd have done better to conclude that *worlds* gave us too narrow a range of possibilities. The parts of worlds also must be put to use.

For a second illustration, consider the thought that I might have been someone else. Here am I, there goes poor Fred; there but for the grace of God go I; how lucky I am to be me, not him. Where there is luck there must be contingency. I am contemplating the possibility of my being poor Fred, and rejoicing that it is unre-



alized. I am not contemplating a possibility that involves any qualitative difference in the world—not, for instance, a world where someone with origins just like mine suffers misfortunes just like Fred's. Rather, I am contemplating the possibility of being poor Fred in a world just like this one. The Haecceitist will suggest that I have in mind a qualitative duplicate of this world where the nonqualitative determinants of cross-identification somehow link me with the qualitative counterpart of Fred. But this distorts my thought: I thought not just that I might have lived Fred's life, but that I might have been Fred living Fred's life. Maybe I misunderstood my own thought—it's hard to be sure—but let's see if the Haecceitist's amendment is really needed. I think not. I suggest that the possibility I have in mind is not a world that is like ours qualitatively but differs from ours Haecceitistically. Instead it is a possible individual, in fact an actual individual, namely poor Fred himself. Like any other possible person, he is a possible way for a person to be. And in a sense he is even a possible way for me to be. He is my counterpart by description under an extraordinarily generous counterpart relation, one which demands nothing more of counterparts than that they be things of the same kind.<sup>19</sup> Any property that one of my counterparts does have is a property that I might have; being Fred—being literally identical with him—is such a property; and so there is a sense in which I might have been him. That is not to say that the world might have been such that I was Fred—it makes no sense to thank God for His gracious favoritism in making the world be as it is, rather than some different way such that I would have been poor Fred! The possibility in question is a possibility for me, not for the world.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>This counterpart relation is one that permits things to have counterparts in their own worlds, other than themselves, *contra* a requirement I took as axiomatic in "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic."

<sup>20</sup>Thomas Nagel, in "The Objective Self," forthcoming in Carl Ginet and Sydney Shoemaker, eds., *Mind and Knowledge: Essays in Honor of Norman Malcolm*, discusses the thought that I might have been someone else. He writes "my being *TN* (or whoever I in fact am) *seems* accidental . . . it seems as if I just *happen* to be the publicly identifiable person *TN*." He insists that this thought should be respected at face value, and not converted into the more tractable thought that I might have lived a different life. I in turn insist that it should not be converted, as Nagel himself proposes, into the thought that I might have borne some relation other than identity to someone other than the one to whom I actually bear this relation. The treatment I suggest here is due, in essentials, to Allen Hazen; see his

Besides possible individuals, world-sized and smaller, there are still other possibilities: joint possibilities for two or more individuals. These are ordered pairs, triples, etc. . . . , or even infinite sequences of possible individuals, all from the same world. An ordered pair of compossible individuals, for instance, is a way that a pair of individuals might possibly be. Imagine that we live in a spatially symmetric world. The entire history of one side is replicated on the other side. But it didn't have to be so. An alternative possibility for the world starts out symmetric, just as this world supposedly is; but tomorrow one side is destroyed by a catastrophe and the other side survives. I have my twin, *J*, on the other side. One joint possibility for me and my twin is that I am killed in the catastrophe and he survives. Another, which I prefer, is that he is killed and I survive. The Haeccetist has his way of distinguishing these two possibilities. I have my cheaper way. The world of the catastrophe has its pair of twins, *K* who gets killed and *L* who lives. Therefore it provides two ordered pairs of compossible individuals:  $\langle K, L \rangle$  and  $\langle L, K \rangle$ . These are two different ways for an ordered pair of individuals to be. In particular, they are two different ways for the ordered pair  $\langle I, J \rangle$  to be, two different joint possibilities for me and my twin. Both *K* and *L* are counterparts by description of both *I* and *J*; further, the relations between *K* and *L* are like the relations between *I* and *J*; so there is a natural sense in which both the pairs  $\langle K, L \rangle$  and  $\langle L, K \rangle$  are counterparts by description of the pair  $\langle I, J \rangle$ . Of these two joint possibilities for  $\langle I, J \rangle$ ,  $\langle L, K \rangle$  is the one I prefer. Other cases require sequences with repetitions or gaps (which we can fill, artificially, with a "null individual" denoted by \*). There might have been a world with no duplication, but only one shared counterpart *H* of the twins *I* and *J*. One joint possibility for *I* and *J* is that they might have both existed and been identical; this is the pair  $\langle H, H \rangle$ . Another is that I alone might have existed; this is the pair  $\langle H, * \rangle$ . A third is that *J* alone might have existed; this is the pair  $\langle *, H \rangle$ . Once again, we have our desired difference of possibilities without any difference of worlds.<sup>21</sup>

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"Counterpart-theoretic Semantics for Modal Logic," *Journal of Philosophy* 76 (1979) 319-38, especially page 331, footnote 17.

<sup>21</sup>The problem of the symmetric world and its asymmetric alternative is presented by Robert M. Adams in "Primitive Thisness and Primitive Identity," pages 22-23. The treatment I suggest for it is again due, in essentials, to Allen Hazen, "Counterpart-theoretic Semantics for Modal Logic."

This is my first argument that not all possibilities are possible worlds. By accepting the thesis, we satisfy the Haecceitist's intuitions on the cheap, giving him the distinctions among possibilities that he rightly demands without buying into any mysterious non-qualitative aspects of worlds.

## VII

### INDIVIDUALS AS ALTERNATIVES

The possibilities that are a subject's perceptual or doxastic or epistemic alternatives will almost never be possible worlds. ("Almost" because of solipsistic possibilities, in which the subject is the whole of his world.) The subject's alternatives will typically be possible people, or subjects rather like people; or better, they will be temporal stages thereof. The informational content of the subject's state will be: I am one of such-and-such alternative possible individuals. It will not just be: I inhabit one of such-and-such alternative possible worlds. As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>22</sup> the objects of attitudes in general are *properties*, defined as sets of possible individuals; only in special cases can we take them as *propositions*, defined as sets of possible worlds. Alternative worlds will do to characterize content having to do with the way the subject's world is. They will not do to characterize further content having to do with the subject's place in the world. To see what this further content is, imagine being without it. You have been told that there are two duplicate dungeons. The door of the one on the left leads to freedom. The door of the one on the right leads to the gallows. Open the door and there's no going back. In the duplicate dungeons are two duplicate prisoners. One of them is you. You know, well enough, what sort of world you live in. Narrowing down the alternative worlds won't help you to decide whether to open your door. Nevertheless you need to narrow down your alternative possibilities. You urgently need to know which of two alternative possible individuals—both actual, as it happens—is the real you.

This is my second argument that not all possibilities are possible worlds: alternative worlds cannot be used to characterize the whole

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<sup>22</sup>In "Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*."

of the informational content of perceptual experience, belief, knowledge, and other such states.

My third argument, of course, is that replacing alternative worlds by alternative possible subjects does away with the problem of cross-identifying the subject from one alternative to another, or from actuality to the alternatives. Thereby it does away with the main trouble that confronts cross-identification by acquaintance.

We did not know how to identify the subject and his acquaintances across worlds. But we don't have to do that. We have to identify them across the subject's alternatives, and those alternatives aren't worlds. They are alternative possible individuals. In the doxastic case, they're exactly those possible individuals who, according to the content of the subject's beliefs, he himself might be. They're the ones who fit his self-conception, since his self-conception consists of the properties he has throughout his doxastic alternatives. They may or may not be counterparts by description of the subject; they may or may not share his essence, which need not be part of his self-conception; so in that sense, they may or may not really be possibilities for him. We keep all the essentialism we want, but we don't let it restrict the range of doxastic alternatives.

Likewise the subject's visual alternatives are those possible individuals who, according to the content of his visual experience, he himself might be; they share just those properties that he sees himself to have. These will mostly be relational properties: properties of facing such-and-such an arrangement of nearby things. Likewise the subject's epistemic alternatives are those possible individuals who, according to the content of his knowledge, he himself might be; they share just those properties that he knows himself to have. He is one of them. Likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, for other attitudes having content that can be described by means of sets of alternatives.

We might usefully borrow some terminology usually applied to possible worlds. In the broadest sense, all possible individuals without exception, even the poached eggs, are possibilities for me. (Here we echo the extreme Haecceitist.) But some possibilities are accessible to me in various ways, others are not. My counterparts by description are *metaphysically accessible* to me; or better, each counterpart-by-description relation is a relation of metaphysical accessibility. My alternatives are *visually*, *perceptually*, *doxastically*, *epis-*

*temically*, . . . *accessible* to me. Metaphysical and (for instance) epistemic possibilities for me are not things of two different sorts. They are *possibilia* out of the same logical space. The difference is in the accessibility.

If the subject has two alternatives in a single world, we need not wonder which is the right one. That is a question to settle by stipulation: if we want to consider one of them we may, if we want to consider the other we may. We stipulate which, just as Kripke invited us to. But we are selecting among possible individuals, not among duplicate worlds that differ somehow. We are finding the subject by stipulation, sure enough. But we are not cross-identifying the subject by stipulation. Our problem of finding the subject is not, after all, a problem of cross-identification. That is why we could not find any approach to cross-identification that would solve it.

In trying to settle whether *X* and *Y* are counterparts by acquaintance for subject *Z*, we had come this far: taking *U* as the subject they are but taking *V* as the subject they are not. *And that is far enough*. We sought in vain for a three-place relation, asking whether *X* and *Y* were counterparts by acquaintance for subject *Z*. But all the while we had a four-place relation, and that is all we need for cross-identification by acquaintance. We can say it this way: *X for U is a counterpart by acquaintance of Y for Z*. (And *X for V* isn't.) This means that *X* and *U* are worldmates, as are *Y* and *Z*, and that the relations of acquaintance of *X* to *U* sufficiently resemble those of *Y* to *Z*. (Perhaps we also want a competitive condition: there is no rival worldmate of *U* whose relations of acquaintance to *U* resemble those of *Y* to *Z* even better.)

It is not written into the four-place counterpart relation that *U* is related to *Z* in any particular way; but in the applications we have in mind, they will be related in one or both of two ways. (1) It may be that *Z* himself is the subject whose state we are describing, and *U* is one of his alternatives. Then the four-place relation serves to cross-identify things in the subject's own world with things in the worlds of his alternatives. (2) It may be that *Z* and *U* are two of the alternatives for a certain subject. Then the four-place relation serves to cross-identify things between the worlds of different alternatives.

The worlds of different alternatives need not be different worlds, nor need they be different from the subject's own world. It

may happen, then, that a thing is or isn't cross-identified by acquaintance with itself. Consider, for instance, the situation in world 2 of our example:  $X$  for  $U$  is not a counterpart by acquaintance of  $X$  for  $V$ .

A subject of attitudes can scarcely fail to be intimately acquainted with himself, and the subject's alternatives will be likewise self-acquainted. So we will have cases that are reflexive in the first two places and in the last two. Normally, perhaps invariably, when  $U$  is one of  $Z$ 's alternatives, then  $U$  for  $U$  is a counterpart by acquaintance of  $Z$  for  $Z$ . It is an interesting question whether we can have reflexivity in the last two places only:  $T$  for  $U$  is a counterpart by acquaintance of  $Z$  for  $Z$ , where  $T$  and  $U$  are not identical. Such would be a case where some of  $Z$ 's major channels of self-acquaintance are relations which he could have born to something other than himself: he watches himself in the mirror he mistakes for a window, he follows his own trail, or what have you. Shall we permit such cases? Or shall we rule them out, giving identity predominant weight among channels of self-acquaintance?<sup>23</sup> I know of no evidence that we have settled this question. Nor need we settle it; we can allow that different versions of the four-place counterpart-by-acquaintance relation go different ways.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>This question is relevant to Hintikka's proposal, in his "On Attributions of 'Self-Knowledge,'" to represent self-knowledge using formulas that are to be interpreted using cross-identification by acquaintance. The proposal succeeds only if we do give identity predominant weight. At this point I am indebted to discussions with Mark Johnston.

<sup>24</sup>I thank many friends for valuable discussion; and I thank the Australian National University and La Trobe University for their hospitality while this paper was written.