Kaplan 1989b: the speaker’s referential intention plays an essential role in fixing the referent of a demonstrative in a context.

Call any view where intentions must play a role in determining the reference of a demonstrative Intentionalist.

Linguistic meaning of a demonstrative is incomplete and does not determine a referent.

Speaker’s referential intention supplements linguistic meaning to fix the referent of the demonstrative.
Intentionalism

- Offers an appealing way to describe the resolution of demonstratives, and aligns closely with broader perspectives on meaning, e.g. Grice.

- Incompleteness of the meaning of demonstratives explains open endedness we often encounter in interpreting them.

- You chose from an open ended array of interpretations the one intended.

- Since intention recognition is abductive, interpretation is too

- Find the overall most plausible interpretation.
Appeal to intentions makes reference resolution a process of intention recognition.

Linguistic actions like pointing serve to disambiguate demonstratives by providing evidence of speaker intentions.
Also arguing against Wettstein-style contextualist view.
Sometimes rules seem to settle by themselves how demonstratives should be interpreted, and so, speaker intentions seem *not* to play the role intentionalism requires.
Examples

1: Even if you intend Sue to be the referent of your use of ‘she’, if she is not a prominent candidate referent, you will fail to pick her out.
Interpretation vs. meaning

People like Stephen Neale think interpretation is epistemology.

That is, it’s about how you know what the meaning is.

This (epistemology) is to be separated from the question of what grounds meaning (metaphysics).
Examples 2 and 3

2: Pointing at Ann, the referent of ‘she’ is Ann, *even if* you intend it to refer to Sue.

3: Pointing to Bill, your utterance is infelicitous *even if* you intend to refer to Bill or Sue.
4: If you utter:

‘Mary walked in. She sat down.’

intending ‘she’ to refer to someone other than Mary, then, unless you do something to render this other referent prominent, the pronoun will anaphorically pick out Mary.
Conclusions

- Ex 1-4 clearly show there are *limits* to what the speaker can reasonably intend the referent of a demonstrative expression to be on an occasion.
- This psychological process is constrained by rules governing the use of demonstrative expressions.
- Why this should be if ultimately intentions determine their reference?
Intentionalists get the relation btw intentions and demonstrative reference backwards.

When a speaker utters a sentence with a deictic demonstrative, she intends it to have a referent.

But she has these intentions even if the rules fix the referent!
Notice that also that the intention she has to have need not be a Gricean communicative intention:

- It can be just to contribute the meaning fixed by *that expression*.

- Elaborate
If a speaker intends to convey info about object a, she has to work out whether rules in circumstance specify a as the referent of a demonstrative.

If so, by uttering the demonstrative, she'll commit to picking out a as its referent.
To contribute information about $a$, she should use a demonstrative only if rules on that occasion specify $a$ as the referent.

If the rules specify something other than $a$ as referent, the strategy of conveying info about $a$ by using a demonstrative in the circumstances will be ineffective.

Example
Overriding the data

- Notice this is so even if you might have other epistemic hints cuing you onto a referent:
- For example, the referent is loud or salient or noisy or the speaker's favorite object, or perhaps even the most plausible interpretation.

Examples

- Margaret Thatcher admired Ronald Regan, and George W. Bush really worshiped her.*
So, the fact that speakers have intentions when uttering certain expressions provides little evidence about how demonstratives work.

In other words, no one is denying that a speaker normally has referential intentions when uttering a demonstrative.

However, nothing about the ways in which the reference of a demonstrative is determined follows from this fact alone.
Try to accommodate intuition that not anything goes, while preserving the gist of the intentionalist account.

This typically takes the form of placing constraints on what a speaker can reasonably intend as the referent of an expression, or on what kind of intentions count for determining the referent of a demonstrative expressions.
The guiding idea is typically that by placing constraints on intentions, one can secure their public availability.

Just as in the Gricean tradition, speaker meaning in general depends on publicly recognizable communicative intentions, so too the meaning of demonstratives depends on publicly recognizable referential intentions.

See King (2013,a; b), Reimer (1992), Bach (1992), for different attempts on constraining naïve intentionalism.
Somehow language rules are constraining because otherwise you could have no hope of manifesting the communicative referential intention if you are violating them.

The question for the intentionalist is -- Why?

Examples
Trouble with this defense

- If public availability of an intention settles reference resolution, aren’t the cues that make the intention public doing all the work?
- Cues that make the intention publically available typically trump the alleged communicative intention vis-à-vis reference determination.
- That is, intentions are *not* even necessary.
Consider a speaker who intends to refer to Ann, but her hand becomes stuck, and so, pointing at Sue, she utters, “She is happy”.

Odd to say she intended to refer to Sue.

But, intuitively, Sue, not Ann, is referent of ‘she’.
Note that the audience can follow up her utterance with, “So, you are saying Sue is happy” and can challenge with “That is false. Sue is not happy at all.”

But they could not felicitously ask, “So, are you saying Ann is happy?,” or follow up with “That’s false; Ann is not happy” or “True! Ann is happy”.
Even though a speaker typically intends to communicate information about a certain object, it does not follow it determines content.

Our examples suggest intentions are not even necessary for use of a demonstrative to refer.

We have no more reason to think intentions determine reference than that other mechanisms do.
Indeed, we even have reason to think other mechanisms do determine reference.

Note: we’ll be arguing even against the Wettstein non-intentionalist, contextualists.

Point: "something other" than intentions is not just "the world".
What we do not want:

If, in principle, *any* cue can supplement the meaning of a demonstrative in determining its referent on an occasion of use, then that would be a reason to despair for anyone looking for a tractable semantic theory of demonstratives.

Wittgenstein/Wettstein
The referent of a demonstrative in a context is fixed by linguistic rules governing its use.

In this regard, a demonstrative like ‘that’ works much like a Kaplanean pure indexical, like ‘I’.
Demonstratives are a model for context sensitivity generally unlike pure indexicals. Examples. ‘I’, ‘today’ vs. ‘he’ and ‘that’. We’ll argue there is no distinction de facto. For this to work, the context in which the demonstrative is uttered has to be antecedently appropriately set up.
Grammaticized Mechanisms

- Mechanisms that structure the context are grammaticized linguistic mechanisms.
- A set of mechanisms structure the context in a way that affects the interpretation of demonstrative expressions, viz., when their occurrence is anaphoric, or when deictic but accompanied with a demonstrative gesture (Stojnic, Stone, and Lepore, 2017).
Present relevant discourse rules, and offer an account of relevant cases.

Our view is that the referent of a demonstrative depends solely on the rules governing its use, quite independently of the speaker’s referential intentions.
If intentions determined reference, it would be mysterious why in all the cases where the linguistic rules and intentions come apart, the rules trump the intentions.

Next four classes, Una Stojnic will explore the conceptual and empirical underpinnings of this sort of approach.


King, J. C. 2013. Supplementives, the Coordination Account, and Conflicting Intentions.

King, J. C. The Metasemantics of Contextual Sensitivity. In T. N. Metasemantics, A. Burges, & B. Sherman (Eds.).
