Are There Directly Referring
Non-Rigid Designators?

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ABSTRACT: The paper is aimed to show that directly referring terms have to be rigid designators. Since directly referring expressions refer to something on the basis of semantic conventions alone and since the conventions are independent of possible worlds, there cannot be a directly referring expression with shifting reference across possible worlds. Although this claim seems to be indubitable and widely recognized, it was questioned recently. Drawing on D. Lewis' ontology of counterparts, G. Martí has shown that a directly referring expression is capable to refer to different objects in different possible worlds. A directly referring term designating an object in our world is supposed to designate its counterparts in other possible world. The paper tries to show that the purported directly referring terms assumed by Martí's argument are not, in fact, directly referring.

KEY WORDS: Counterpart ontology, direct reference, Genoveva Martí, proper name, rigid designation, semantic convention.

It is a platitude in current philosophy of language that some expressions are modally insensitive in the sense that their reference is constant across all possible worlds; such expressions are usually called *rigid designators*.[1] Another platitude has it that some expressions refer to something without any conceptual mediation that would determine which objects are referred to by such phrases; expressions of this kind are usually labelled *directly referring phrases*. And the last platitude I wish to highlight is that the two features are closely related because every directly referring term has to be a rigid designator as well (though the converse does not hold). The present paper aims to show that the last platitude is highly plausible because (*i*) there is a conceptual dependence between the two notions

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[1] The terms "reference" and "designation" (and their derived forms) are used interchangeably throughout the paper.

and (*ii*) a recent criticism apparently undermining this platitude can be refused.

The structure of the paper is as follows: I start with the definitions of rigid designation and direct reference (Section 1). Section 2 contains some preliminaries relevant for the argument given in Section 3. The argument demonstrates that if an expression is a device of direct reference, it cannot but be a rigid designator. However, this argument seems to be overridden by a recent challenge according to which directly referring terms can be non-rigid under certain conditions. The challenge is outlined in Section 4. In Section 5, I try to show that it misses its point. More precisely, it is demonstrated that no directly referring term can be non-rigid despite the fact that the ontology backing up the challenge is adopted.

1. Rigid Designation and Direct Reference

Let us start with the precise definitions of the two notions mentioned above:

> Given that *L* is a language, *e* is an expression (in *L*) and *o* is an object, *e rigidly refers* to *o* in *L* provided *e* refers to *o* in all possible worlds in which *e* refers to anything at all.

> Given that *L* is a language, *e* is an expression (in *L*) and *o* is an object, *e directly refers* to *o* in *L* provided there is no conceptual mediation, *m*, between *e* and *o* such that *m* determines *e*'s reference to *o*.

Concerning rigidity, various definitions are available in the literature. The definition given above is my preferred one because it is silent about the existence of objects designated. As far as I am aware of, it was suggested by Hilary Putnam for the first time (see Putnam 1975: 231). Putnam ascribes it to Saul Kripke, but Kripke's official definition claims that an expression is a rigid designator if it refers to the same individual in all possible worlds in which the individual exists (see Kripke 1980: 48–49; Kripke 1993: 172). Although it might seem that my definition is just an alternative formulation of the idea encapsulated in Kripke's, they lead, in fact, to different predictions. Observe that expressions such as "the individual who both authored *The Republic* and is identical with Plato" are rigid in Putnamian sense but non-rigid in Kripke's sense. The reason is that there are possible worlds in which Plato exists without being the author of *The Republic*; in such worlds, the description "the individual who both authored *The Republic* and is identical with Plato" fails to refer to Plato (in fact, it fails to refer to anyone else too). Since the description does not refer to anything in such worlds and, in other worlds, it refers to Plato and nothing else, it is a rigid designator according to the Putnamian definition, but it cannot be

rigid for Kripke because there are worlds in which the description refers to nothing, despite Plato's existence in these worlds. Does it mean that the description "the individual who both authored *The Republic* and is identical with Plato" is non-rigid for Kripke? Well, it should not be such because it does not refer to different individuals in different possible worlds. So, given Kripke's definition, it is neither rigid nor non-rigid and this implies that Kripke's notion is not general enough.[2]

Concerning direct reference, there are also different notions to be found in the literature. According to one of them, an expression is a device of direct reference provided its reference is not mediated by any conceptual content (*cf*., for example, Marcus 1993a: 11 or 1993b: 203, 212); according to another notion, proposed in particular by David Kaplan (see Kaplan 1989), an expression is directly referring provided the object designated is everything the expression contributes into the proposition expressed by the sentences involving the expression.[3] Kaplan has shown that the two notions differ in the case of demonstratives and other indexicals – they are directly referring in the latter sense without being such in the former sense. For there is some conceptual mediator expressed by an indexical determining which entity is designated by a particular utterance of it; on the other hand, the entity referred to by the indexical is everything it contributes into the propositions expressed. However, concerning proper names, these two notions make no difference because a name both refers to something without any conceptual mediation and its referent is everything it contributes into the propositions expressed.[4]

Both notions defined above bear some implications for truth conditions. Let $F(a)$ be a sentence and a be a term. (*i*) If a is directly referring, $F(a)$ is evaluated as true or false, in a given possible world, with respect to the object designated by a. (*ii*) If a is rigid, $F(a)$ is evaluated as true or false with respect to the same individual in all possible worlds in which a designates something. Consider the sentence "Plato is wise". It is Plato himself – rather than descriptive conditions such as *being the tutor of Aristotle* or *being the author of The Republic* – who enters the truth conditions of "Plato is wise" in particular possible worlds; similarly, it is Plato himself – rather than anyone else – who enters the truth conditions of the sentence in all possible worlds (in which "Plato" refers to anything at all).

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[2] Further details about the two notions of rigidity, i.e., Putnam's and Kripke's, can be found in Zouhar (2011).

[3] For further details see also Martí (1995); (2003).

[4] Anyway, since the challenge to be discussed in Sections 3 and 4 is based on the former notion, I stick to it.

2. Baptism and Semantic Conventions

Suppose **R** is the set of all rigid designators (in English, say) and **D** is the set of all directly referring expressions (in the same language). Now it is commonly agreed that **R** is not identical with **D** because some expressions are members of **R** without being members of **D**. On the other hand, all members of **D** are usually supposed to be the members of **R** as well. Thus, **D** is a proper subset of **R**; i.e., for every directly referring expression it holds that it must be a rigid designator, but not vice versa. This is what I call *the Standard View*.[5] Since the Standard View has it that directly referring expressions are rigid designators by necessity, there is supposed to be a (one-way) *conceptual* dependence between direct reference and rigid designation. No doubt, the Standard View has considerable intuitive and philosophical appeal.

There is a simple and straightforward argument supporting the Standard View. Before embarking on details of the argument, some general considerations concerning naming individuals and introducing expressions into language might be useful.

The reference of proper names is fixed by the so-called *baptisms*. Baptisms are (idealized) acts designed to ascribe names to objects. They can be circumscribed in this simple (and maybe simplistic) manner:

> Given that there is an object to be named, o, an expression to be attached to the object, e, and another device, d, identifying o for the baptizer, b (d might be another expression already referring to o, or a pointing gesture towards o, or anything else that enables b to identify o), b decides that o identified for her by d shall be henceforth named e.

Baptisms can be taken also as acts introducing *new* proper names into language. Naming objects and introducing proper names into language are just two sides of the same coin. To introduce an expression into language is to say what it means in that language. Therefore, baptisms can be taken as establishing *semantic conventions* for new expressions. The semantic convention established in this way is a relation between an expression, e, an object, o, and language, L, such that e refers to o in L on the basis of the semantic convention and irrespective of anything else. The convention can be thus represented as an ordered couple $\langle e, o \rangle_L$, where the subscript L suggests that the convention is relativized to L.

The semantic conventions established by baptisms are essential to expressions *qua* expressions of a given language. In particular, the semantic convention, c, for an expression, e, is a distinctive mark that is

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essential to *e*'s identity. Suppose an act of baptism establishes a semantic convention, *c*, for an expression, *e*, to the effect that *e* refers to an object, *o*, on the basis of *c*. Imagine also another baptism establishing another semantic convention, *c**, assigning an expression to another object, *o**. Since *e* was introduced into the language *as* an expression referring to *o*, *c** ascribes *o** to *another* expression, *e**, even though *e** might be phonetically and orthographically indistinguishable from *e*. In other words, since semantic conventions are essential to the identity of expressions (as expressions of a given language), different conventions go with different expressions.[6]

3. Semantic Conventions, Direct Reference, and Rigid Designation

Now I am ready to present the argument for the Standard View advertised above: Since (*i*) the referent of a directly referring expression (in the sense defined above) is conventionally selected, (*ii*) the semantic convention determining what an expression means holds for all possible worlds without exception, and (*iii*) variable (i.e., non-rigid) reference of an expression is dependent (also) on how things are in particular possible worlds, an expression cannot refer to different individuals in different possible worlds on the basis of one and the same semantic convention alone. Such an expression is rigid, if directly referring.

Let us look at point (*i*) more closely. It is easy to see that if an expression, *e*, refers to a particular object, *o*, it has to be determined somehow that *e* refers to *o rather than to any other object*. If *e* is a directly referring expression, it has no conceptual content that might serve as a reference fixing mediator. And since the reference of *e* cannot be established by such a mediator, there is just a conventional assignment available as a guarantee that *e* refers to *o*. Thus, to say that *e* refers to *o* merely on the basis of a semantic convention established by an act of baptism, is tantamount to

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[6] If someone finds this idea problematic, s/he is invited to consider a more moderate thesis. We might admit that there is but one expression, *e'*, instead of *e* and *e**, and that *e'* is associated with two semantic conventions, *c* and *c**. Even in this case, it is important to distinguish *e' as meaning one thing* and *e' as meaning another thing*; i.e., e'_c and e'_{c*} (subscripts hint at what *e'* means in a given use). The talk of *e* and *e** as being different expressions is, as far as I can see, tantamount to saying that *e'* can have two different meanings. The reason is that *e* and *e** can be meaningfully described either as directly/indirectly referring or as rigid/non-rigid, but *e'* is not the proper kind of expression which might be described in this way (for *e'* itself is not a referring phrase); rather, these predicates can be ascribed to e'_c and e'_{c*}. Anyway, the former way of putting things I find more comfortable. But whatever can be said in the former way can be translated, without any loss, into the latter one.

saying that *e* refers to *o* directly.[7] Directly referring expressions refer to something on the basis of their semantic conventions alone and irrespective of anything else.[8]

Next, turn to point (*ii*). Semantic conventions are introduced to hold for all possible worlds indiscriminately and regardless of how things are in those worlds. If semantic conventions were bound to particular possible worlds, different conventions might be possible for different worlds. However, to say there are different sets of semantic conventions for different sets of possible worlds is tantamount to saying that different languages are used to describe those worlds. Therefore, if the same language can be used to describe all possible worlds without exception, the same semantic conventions have to hold for them. Of course, the same language can be used to describe *all* possible worlds without exception. In other words, if there is a world which is not describable in our language, it cannot be possible for us. Thus, the very notion of a possible world guarantees that point (*ii*) holds.

Finally, turn to point (*iii*). Given that possible worlds are distributions of properties over individuals, one and the same individual may possess various properties in different possible worlds. Some of these properties are empirical in the sense that an individual exemplifies them in some possible worlds and fails to exemplify them in others. Let us say that an empirical property, *P*, is *referentially effective for an expression*, *e*, provided *e* refers to an object, *o*, in all possible worlds in which *o* has *P* and *e* fails to refer to *o* in all those worlds in which *o* does not have *P*. If *o* loses any of those properties that are referentially effective for *e*, *e* does not refer to *o* anymore. If a property, *P**, is not referentially effective for *e*, *P** is *referentially idle for e*. If *o* loses any of those properties that are referentially idle for *e*, *e* might still refer to *o*. Now, since the semantic conven-

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[7] The position defended by Michael Pendlebury is particularly interesting for the present paper (see Pendlebury 1990). He demonstrated that proper names are rigid designators *because* they are arbitrary signs. Arbitrariness of proper names is, from my viewpoint, justified by conventional assignment. An expression is an arbitrary sign for an object if it designates the object by *fiat*, i.e., if the object need not satisfy any other condition which would establish the connection between the expression and the object. Since conventional assignment is the very essence of direct reference, it might be claimed that what Pendlebury demonstrated was in fact the idea that there is a conceptual connection between rigidity and direct reference.

[8] An indirectly referring expression refers to an object *also* on the basis of some other things. For example, the semantic conventions of a definite description (together with compositionality) guarantee that it expresses a particular conceptual content; however, an object has to exemplify uniquely a particular property to become its referent. Therefore, an indirectly referring term refers to something on the basis of its semantic conventions *together with* certain extra-linguistic facts such as the state of affairs.

tions determining what a given expression refers to hold for all possible worlds, i.e., regardless of any empirical properties the objects designated might exemplify, all empirical properties have to be referentially idle for that expression. As a result, no property is referentially effective for it and there is no way to change its reference across possible worlds. Thus, if an expression refers to something on the basis of its semantic convention alone and irrespective of any properties the object designated might exemplify, i.e., directly, its reference cannot vary across different possible worlds. On the other hand, if an expression refers to different individuals in different possible worlds, there has to be a property that is referentially effective for the expression. Therefore, variable reference is incompatible with conventionally determined reference.

To sum up: Variable reference cannot be warranted exclusively by the semantic conventions associated with expressions. Since direct reference is conventionally warranted, it is incompatible with variable reference. Hence, if an expression is directly referring, its reference cannot vary across different possible worlds. Therefore, an expression has to be rigid, if directly referring.

4. Against the Standard View

Given the above argument, it seems to be a genuine truism that if a term is a directly referring expression, it cannot but be rigid. This is what the Standard View claims. However, Genoveva Martí came up recently with a challenge to this view (see Martí 2003). It rests on the idea that it is possible to devise an expression that is *both* directly referring and non-rigid. The gist of the challenge consists, so far as I can see, in that the intuitive appeal of the Standard View is primarily derived from our metaphysical preoccupations rather than from the supposed conceptual relationship between the notion of rigidity and that of direct reference. For our notion of individual as existing across possible worlds seems to be essential to the Standard View. Given this notion of individual, it is easy to infer that directly referring phrases must be rigid designators. Now if this notion of individual is given up, the Standard View might be in serious danger. Martí's challenge deliberately assumes a notion of individual that deviates from our household one. She tries to show that if the *identity* relation between individuals across possible worlds is replaced by a sort of *similarity* relation between individuals from diverse worlds, the seeming conceptual relationship between the notions of rigid designation and direct reference disappears. Hence, if there is a linguistic convention assigning an object to an expression and if the expression refers, in any possible world, to

something that is not identical with this object but merely resembles it in certain respects, then the expression is non-rigid.[9]

One is, perhaps, allowed to work with various similarity relations. What should be preserved, however, is that the relation is good enough to replace the identity relation between objects across possible worlds and that ontology based on such a relation makes it impossible for one and the same object to exist in more than one possible world. Martí works with David Lewis's counterpart ontology (see Lewis 1983 or 1986). According to his theory, an object exists only in one possible world and in other worlds there are, instead, counterparts of the object.[10] Given that o is an object existing in a possible world, w, another object, o^*, from another possible world, w^*, is its counterpart (in w^*) provided o^* is similar to o more than any other object from w^*.[11]

Now Martí presents the following reason against the Standard View:[12]

> Consider, for instance, a Millian who accepts some of the fundamental ideas that inspire David Lewis's metaphysics… This Millian argues that "Hesperus" is not rigid: when someone utters "Hesperus is bright" the individuals relevant for the evaluation of what is said on that occasion of use are, strictly speaking, different in different possible worlds; which objects are relevant depends on the connection that make one object a counterpart of some other object. (Martí 2003: 169)

The argument lurking behind this quote can be summed up as follows. Let an object, o, exists in one possible world, w, only and in other possible worlds there are counterparts of o instead of o itself; let o be designated in w by a and $F(a)$ be a sentence. Assume that a is a directly referring

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[9] As Martí stressed out, identity across possible worlds is essential to the notion of rigidity and if identity is replaced by a sort of similarity relation, we are left with a different notion, "no matter how similar to rigidity it is" (Martí 2003: 169).

[10] It is impossible for one and the same object to exist in more than one world because, as a matter of definition, the object is a *part* of the possible world and worlds are disconnected. Therefore, an object existing in one world cannot be a part of any other world. It is to be pointed out also that there is not just one counterpart relation. This fact has been showed, for example, by Allen Hazen (*cf*. Hazen 1979) and confirmed also by Lewis himself in Postscript to Lewis (1983).

[11] I shall remain neutral as to which properties of objects and their counterparts are to be taken as decisive in establishing similarity between them. Some authors have argued that the condition placed on the counterpart relation given in the main text is misguided. For it is possible to devise situations in which it is better to take another object, o^{**}, as o's counterpart even though o^* resembles o more than o^{**} does. For details see Feldman (1971) or Hazen (1979).

[12] The Millian mentioned in the quote is a philosopher who embraces the notion of direct reference defined in Section 1.

expression. If *a* is directly referring, it contributes just *o* into the truth conditions of *F*(*a*) in *w*. If *w** is a possible world such that *w** ≠ *w* and there is a counterpart of *o* in *w**, the truth conditions of *F*(*a*) in *w** involve the counterpart of *o* in *w** rather than *o* itself. Thus, as *a* directly refers to *o* in *w*, so it directly refers to *o*'s counterpart in *w**. Since different objects are relevant for the evaluation of *F*(*a*) in *w* and *w**, *a* is non-rigid. Consequently, *a* is both directly referring and non-rigid.

By way of illustration, consider Martí's sentence, (1); its truth conditions can be put forth as (2):

(1) Hesperus is bright.

(2) The sentence "Hesperus is bright" is true in *w* *iff* either (*i*) Hesperus is bright in *w*, provided *w* is the actual world, or (*ii*) the counterpart of Hesperus in *w* is bright in *w*, provided *w* is a non-actual world.

Various objects that are counterparts of Hesperus in different possible worlds enter the truth conditions of (1) in those worlds. Alternatively it can be said that "Hesperus" refers to diverse objects in different possible worlds. It is thus non-rigid. At the same time, "Hesperus" is supposed to be a directly referring term because it just names Hesperus without any conceptual mediation. Hence, it is both directly referring and non-rigid.

The argument is powerful and convincing. If its premises are true, its conclusion has to be true as well. Thus, it presents a real challenge to the Standard View. In what follows I try to show that, despite appearances, the friend of counterparts need not claim that there are directly referring non-rigid designators.

5. The Standard View Defended

Admit, for the sake of argument, that different objects enter the truth conditions of (1) in different possible worlds. But if this is so, it is easy to see that the reference of "Hesperus" *cannot* be direct. For it has to be guaranteed that "Hesperus" contributes Hesperus into the truth conditions of (1) in our world and its counterparts in other possible worlds. It should be *stipulated* somehow that "Hesperus" behaves in this way rather than in any other way. There has to be some rule or other associated with "Hesperus" according to which it behaves differently in different possible worlds. To stipulate that "Hesperus" behaves in this way is tantamount to saying that there is such a rule. The rule has to determine that "Hesperus" contributes Hesperus into the truth conditions of sentences in which it occurs, if uttered with respect to the actual world, and that it contributes the counterparts of Hesperus into the truth conditions of sentences in which it occurs, if uttered with respect to non-actual worlds.

What might happen if there were not such a rule associated with "Hesperus"? It seems plausible to me that in non-actual worlds, in which Hesperus does not exist, "Hesperus" might contribute *nothing* into the truth conditions of sentences in which it occurs. So we have to guarantee somehow that the name contributes something into the truth conditions in those worlds in which the counterparts of Hesperus exist instead of Hesperus itself. So, to exclude this possibility, it is necessary to associate with the name a *rule* selecting the counterparts of Hesperus as truth-conditional constituents. Now, if this is admitted, the rule has to be taken as a *mediator* between "Hesperus" and what it designates in different possible worlds. The reference relation between "Hesperus" and what it designates is *not* direct anymore. Thus, if "Hesperus" is supposed to contribute the counterparts of Hesperus into the truth conditions of sentences in non-actual worlds, it cannot do so without any conceptual or semantic mediation. If this line of reasoning is correct, then "Hesperus" is both a non-rigid designator and an indirectly referring term.

The same conclusion can be justified also for other reasons. "Hesperus" is supposed to be a directly referring term in the sense introduced above. Thus, there is a semantic convention which attaches "Hesperus" to Hesperus. Now, if Martí's argument has it that "Hesperus" should be non-rigid, provided the counterpart ontology is adopted, "Hesperus" should be capable to refer to the counterparts of our Hesperus *on the very same semantic convention* (and regardless of anything else).[13] As we have seen, such semantic conventions are established by baptisms. If everything is done properly, the result is a semantic convention that can be represented (in a somewhat simplified manner) as the ordered couple ⟨"Hesperus", Hesperus⟩ in which the first member is the name and the second one the object named. Now if this is the case, "Hesperus" may contribute just Hesperus itself and nothing else into the truth conditions of the sentences in which it occurs. Suppose someone wants to evaluate (1) in a non-actual world in which there is a counterpart of Hesperus instead of Hesperus itself. Given the above semantic convention, "Hesperus" cannot contribute anything into the truth conditions of the sentence in such a world. It cannot contribute the counterpart of Hesperus because the semantic convention in question is completely silent about its counterparts.

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[13] The qualification "on the very same semantic convention" is essential. For it warrants the same language is under discussion. Recall that the argument developed in Section 3 has been based on the idea that, if the same language is under discussion and an expression refers to something on the basis of a semantic convention alone, the expression has to be rigid. Martí's argument is not aimed to show that the expression is non-rigid because the semantic convention has been replaced by another one.

Thus, if it is to be guaranteed that, on the very same semantic convention, "Hesperus" contributes different objects in different possible worlds into the truth conditions of the sentences in which it appears, the semantic convention has to be shaped differently. Instead of ⟨"Hesperus", Hesperus⟩, the semantic convention might be represented as the couple ⟨"Hesperus", R⟩, where R is the rule which claims that "Hesperus" refers to Hesperus in the actual world and to its counterparts in those worlds in which it has some. However, this is tantamount to saying that "Hesperus" is not directly referring.

Consequently, given the ontology of counterparts, "Hesperus" can be construed as a non-rigid designator. However, it cannot be treated as a directly referring term because its reference has to be mediated somehow. We may conclude that *if* "Hesperus" is taken as a *non*-rigid designator, *then* it is an *in*directly referring term.

A parallel argument shows that if "Hesperus" is supposed to be a directly referring term, then it cannot but be a rigid designator. Assume that "Hesperus" refers to Hesperus conventionally and irrespective of anything else, as required by the direct reference view. Again, the convention can be represented as ⟨"Hesperus", Hesperus⟩. Whenever "Hesperus" is uttered in the actual world it contributes Hesperus into the truth conditions of the sentences in which it occurs. And since Hesperus fails to exist in non-actual worlds, the name cannot contribute it into the truth conditions in such worlds. Now the semantic convention is completely silent about the fact that, in non-actual worlds, the name should contribute counterparts of Hesperus rather than Hesperus itself into the truth conditions. It may happen that "Hesperus" contributes nothing into the truth conditions in non-actual worlds. "Hesperus" can be taken as referring to nothing in the Hesperus-free worlds, while in those worlds in which Hesperus does exist it refers to it. Therefore, "Hesperus" is a rigid designator despite the fact that it refers to something just in one possible world, namely the actual world. Anyway, *if* "Hesperus" refers directly, *then* it refers rigidly as well.

Now it can be objected that the above line of reasoning makes it impossible to use "Hesperus" in describing counterfactual circumstances. It would be impossible to evaluate sentences such as (1) in non-actual worlds because there would be nothing in those worlds with respect to which such sentences could be either true or false. This objection, though correct, is utterly irrelevant, however. It is true that sentences such as (1) can be either true or false even in non-actual possible worlds. Therefore, there has to be something "Hesperus" and other names contribute into the truth conditions of sentences involving them in such worlds. Anyway, this fact cannot be used as evidence against my argument. It just suggests that "Hesperus" contributes something into the truth conditions also in

Hesperus-free worlds provided there are suitable counterparts of Hesperus in those worlds. The objection can be thus taken as a plea for taking "Hesperus" as non-rigid. Now in that case, the first part of my argument comes to the fore and forbids portraying "Hesperus" as directly referring. So, the objection comes to the following: Since "Hesperus" can be used to describe counterfactual circumstances and has to be non-rigid provided the ontology of counterparts is adopted, it cannot be taken as directly referring either.

There seems to be also another option available.[14] Despite the fact that its reference is mediated by a rule R, "Hesperus" can be portrayed as directly referring in the *Kaplanian* sense mentioned in Section 1. It might be claimed both that "Hesperus" contributes nothing but Hesperus into the truth conditions of sentences in which it occurs and that it refers to Hesperus on the basis of a rule R. In this manner, "Hesperus" might resemble ordinary indexicals. If "Hesperus" is directly referring in this sense, it is non-rigid because the rule R may select different individuals (those that are counterparts of our Hesperus) in different possible worlds as propositional contributions of "Hesperus".[15] Anyway, this possibility cannot be treated as justifying Martí's argument because she explicitly adopted, in her argument, the other notion of direct reference, namely the one that is based on unmediated reference.

So, leaving this option aside, my conclusion is that "Hesperus" is either an indirectly referring non-rigid designator or a directly referring rigid designator. In any case, it need not be a directly referring non-rigid designator as demanded by Martí's argument.

This conclusion is stronger than the one reached by A. Sullivan in his criticism of Martí's argument. He has pointed out that

> [a]n expression is a non-rigid designator only if (holding linguistic conventions fixed) what it designates from world to world varies according to contingent matters of fact…, and only a designator whose designatum (at a context) is determined via some sort of semantic mediator could possibly satisfy this condition. (Sullivan 2005: 585–586)

Thus, despite the ontology of counterparts, proper names need not be taken as non-rigid designators because what a name designates in different possible worlds does not vary "according to contingent matters of fact".

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[14] I am indebted to an anonymous referee here.

[15] Of course, "Hesperus" resembles indexicals in a very modest manner. For indexicals – or, better their utterances – are usually treated as rigid designators. An utterance of an indexical is rigid because it cannot but refer to the same individual to which it actually refers; the utterance cannot change its reference once it has been determined in a given context of use.

Directly referring expressions, though not rigid in the standard sense, are not non-rigid either; they are *quasi-rigid*. A designator is quasi-rigid if it refers, in all possible worlds in which it refers to something, only to those objects that are counterparts of the one designated in our world (*cf.* also Lewis 1986: 256). So, according to Sullivan, there cannot be directly referring non-rigid designators. Anyway, he admits that a directly referring phrase may refer to different objects in diverse possible worlds (provided the objects are in the counterpart relation to the one designated by the expression in the actual world). In other words, he is willing to admit the category of directly referring quasi-rigid designators instead of Martí's directly referring non-rigid designators.

How should we evaluate Sullivan's reasoning? Well, we may admit that some expressions are quasi-rigid designators in the sense outlined above. But we have seen that such expressions cannot refer directly. What a non-rigid designator refers to, "varies according to contingent matters of fact"; what a quasi-rigid designators refers to, varies according to linguistic matters of fact. Anyway, in both cases there is something interfering in the reference relation. So the two sorts of designators have something in common – they are not capable to refer directly. Quasi-rigid designators are neither rigid nor directly referring.

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