

## **The Possible World Framework and a Puzzle about Rigidity**

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Various semantic features of natural language expressions can be explained in terms of possible worlds. In particular, proper names (as well as some other kinds of expression) are usually claimed to be rigid designators meaning that they designate the same object with respect to all possible worlds and fail to designate anything else relative to any possible world. Moreover, it is sometimes claimed that proper names are special in being obstinately rigid (and rigid de jure) meaning that they designate the same object with respect to all possible worlds regardless of the object's existence, or non-existence, in those worlds. Now if the assumption that proper names are obstinately rigid is coupled with some other quite natural assumptions pertaining to the possible world framework, one may derive certain mutually inconsistent conclusions. The assumptions are: (i) properties of individuals are explicated as a certain kind of intensions, namely functions mapping possible worlds to sets of individuals; (ii) for every possible world there is a certain universe which need not be identical with other possible worlds' universes. The three assumptions lead to the following pair of conclusions: (i) for all properties  $P$  and for all possible worlds  $w$  it holds that an object,  $o$ , exemplifies  $P$  with respect to  $w$  only if  $o$  exists in  $w$ ; and (ii) there is at least one property  $P$  and at least one possible world  $w$  such that  $o$  exemplifies  $P$  with respect to  $w$  even though  $o$  fails to exist in  $w$ . My aim in the talk is to show how the problematic pair of conclusions is derived, spell out their background and review possible ways out.