Three paragraphs ago I sketched a metaphysical picture of the structure of a proposition. The picture is taken from the semantical parts of Russell's *Principles of Mathematics*.[21] Two years later, in "On Denoting,"[22] even Russell rejected that picture. But I still like it. It is not a part of my theory, but it well conveys my conception of a directly referential expression and of the semantics of direct reference. (The picture needs *some* modification in order to avoid difficulties which Russell later noted—though he attributed them to Frege's theory rather than his own earlier theory.)[23]

If we adopt a possible worlds semantics, all directly referential terms

[21]Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1903).

[22]Bertrand Russell, "On Denoting," *Mind* 14 (1905): 479–93.

[23]Here is a difficulty in Russell's 1903 picture that has some historical interest. Consider the proposition expressed by the sentence, 'The centre of mass of the Solar System is a point'. Call the proposition, 'P'. P has in its subject place a certain complex, expressed by the definite description. Call the complex, 'Plexy'. We can describe Plexy as "the complex expressed by 'the center of mass of the solar system'." Can we produce a directly referential term which designates Plexy? Leaving aside for the moment the controversial question of whether 'Plexy' is such a term, let us imagine, as Russell believed, that we can directly refer to Plexy by affixing a kind of *meaning marks* (on the analogy of quotation marks) to the description itself. Now consider the sentence '^{m}the center of mass of the solar system^{m} is a point'. Because the subject of this sentence is directly referential and refers to Plexy, the proposition the sentence expresses will have as its subject constituent Plexy itself. A moment's reflection will reveal that this proposition is simply P again. But this is absurd since the two sentences speak about radically different objects.

(I believe the foregoing argument lies behind some of the largely incomprehensible arguments mounted by Russell against Frege in "On Denoting," though there are certainly other difficulties in that argument. It is not surprising that Russell there confused Frege's theory with his own of *Principle of Mathematics*. The first footnote of "On Denoting" asserts that the two theories are "very nearly the same.")

The solution to the difficulty is simple. Regard the 'object' places of a singular proposition as marked by some operation which cannot mark a complex. (There always will be some such operation.) For example, suppose that no complex is (represented by) a set containing a single member. Then we need only add $\{\ldots\}$ to mark the places in a singular proposition which correspond to directly referential terms. We no longer need worry about confusing a complex with a propositional constituent corresponding to a directly referring term because no complex will have the form $\{x\}$. In particular, Plexy $\neq$ $\{$Plexy$\}$. This technique can also be used to resolve another confusion in Russell. He argued that a sentence containing a nondenoting directly referential term (he would have called it a nondenoting 'logically proper name') would be meaningless, presumably because the purported singular proposition would be incomplete. But the braces themselves can fill out the singular proposition, and if they contain nothing, no more anomalies need result than what the development of Free Logic has already inured us to.