Week 8 Handout

The Metaphysics of Linguistic Expressions:
Anaphora and Tokening-Recurrence Structures

ISA semantics: Inference, Substitution, and Anaphora

Two transcendental questions:
1)   There are two actual forms of tokening-recurrence structures: cotypicality equivalence classes and anaphoric trees. Need a language exhibit both of these forms? Could there be any other such forms?
2)   Within the anaphoric form of TRS: Generate a chart of 8 possible roles expressions can play in such structures. It is easy to find examples of 7 of them. Looking closely at the 8th yields a surprise!

#A man in a brown suit approached me on the street yesterday and offered to buy my briefcase. When I declined to sell it, the man doubled his offer. Since he wanted the case so badly, I sold it to him.#
Two anaphoric chains are intertwined here, one corresponding to the buyer, and one to the briefcase:
A man in a brown suit ... the man ... he ... him
and
my briefcase ... it ... the case ... it.
The phenomenon may be indicated pre-systematically by saying that the reference of later elements in such chains (here 'it' and 'the man') is secured only by the relations these elements stand in to the singular terms that initiate the chains in which they appear. This is the word-word (token-token) relation of *anaphoric reference* or *anaphoric dependence.*

Chastain's first point, on indefinite descriptions:
Since Russell's discussions early in the century, indefinite descriptions have been treated as though they were not singular referring expressions at all, but rather to be understood by means of a quantificational paraphrase. The presence of an indefinite description often does signal existential quantification rather than singular reference as the proper semantic construal, but Chastain points out that the role of indefinite descriptions in anaphoric chains indicates that these expressions can also have a purely referential function. As in the example above, an indefinite description can initiate an anaphoric chain, which may then be continued by pronouns or definite descriptions. And it seems clear that, in the context in which it occurs above, 'a man' purports to refer to a unique individual, namely the man in the brown suit who approached me on the street yesterday and eventually purchased my briefcase.

Chastain's second point, on intersubstitution:
The reason that apparently nonquantificational uses of indefinite descriptions have not been thought of as straightforwardly referential is that they do not behave enough like proper names, the paradigm of singular terms. Except under deviant circumstances, if a proper name is used somewhere in a discourse invoking a particular referent, then other tokens of that same type which appear elsewhere in the discourse will be coreferential with it, in a sense that can be explained in terms of intersubstitution.

Anaphoric Initiators	Lexically Simple	Lexically Complex
Cotypical Tokens Intersubstitutable:	*Ideal* (e.g. logically) *Proper Names*: 'Leibniz'	*Russellian Definite Descriptions*: 'the natural satellite of Earth', 'the even prime number'
Cotypical Tokens NOT Intersubstitutable:	*Basic Indexicals* and *Demonstratives*: 'this','that','I','now','here'	*Compound Indexicals* and *Demonstratives*: 'my mother's favorite color', 'next Wednesday's lottery number' *Indefinite Descriptions*: 'A Republican Senator'

Anaphoric Dependents	Lexically Simple	Lexically Complex
Cotypical Tokens Intersubstitutable:	*Ideal Proper Names*: 'Leibniz'	??? [Anaphorically Indirect (Russellian) Definite Descriptions: 'the poet referred to on p. 275 of *MIE*']
Cotypical Tokens NOT Intersubstitutable:	*Basic Pronouns*: 'he', 'she', 'it'	*Improper, Dependent Definite Descriptions*: 'the Republican Senator', 'the man'