1. Indexicals and demonstratives

Words that refer to different things, depending on the context in which they’re used. Demonstratives require a demonstration, e.g. pointing. ‘That’, ‘he’, etc. Indexicals don’t: ‘I’, ‘now’, ‘here’.

2. Puzzles about indexicals and demonstratives

They have descriptive meanings but also seem to be rigid designators:

I might not have existed
I might never have spoken
It might have been the case that no one was ever here.
In three hundred years everyone who is now alive will be dead.
There/that/you/her/he might never have been addressed or pointed at.

3. Direct reference

…certain singular terms refer directly without the mediation of a Fregean Sinn as meaning. (“Demonstratives”, p. 483)

The propositional contribution of a directly referential term is not a Fregean sense that determines a referent, but rather the referent itself.
Fregean Picture

LANGUAGE (singular term) expresses denotes

PROPOSITIONAL COMPONENT
Sense (a concept, something like a description in purely qualitative language)

INDIVIDUAL

Direct Reference Picture

LANGUAGE (singular term) expresses refers

PROPOSITIONAL COMPONENT
identity

INDIVIDUAL

(This relation is determined by the conventions or rules of the language)

(This relation is defined as the product of the other two relations)
For me, the intuitive idea is not that of an expression which *turns out* to
designate the same object in all possible circumstances, but an expression
whose semantical *rules* provide *directly* that the referent in all possible
circumstances is fixed to be the actual referent. In typical cases the seman-
tical rules will do this only implicitly, by providing a way of determining
the *actual* referent and no way of determining any other propositional
component. ("Demonstratives", p. 493.)

4. **Singular propositions**

If I may wax metaphysical in order to fix an image, let us think of the
vehicles of evaluation—the what-is-said in a given context—as propositions.
Don’t think of propositions as sets of possible worlds, but rather as
structured entities looking something like the sentences which express
them. For each occurrence of a singular term in a sentence there will be a
corresponding constituent in the proposition expressed. The constituent
of the proposition determines, for each circumstance of evaluation, the
object relevant to evaluating the proposition in that circumstance. In
general, the constituent of the proposition will be some sort of complex,
constructed from various attributes by logical composition. But in the
case of a singular term which is directly referential, the constituent of the
propoposition is just the object itself. ("Demonstratives", p. 494)

5. **Circumstances vs. contexts**

We should be aware of a certain confusion in interpreting the phrase
‘designates the same object in all circumstances’. We do not mean that
the expression *could not have been used* to designate a different object. We
mean rather that given a *use* of the expression, we may ask of *what has
been said* whether it would have been true or false in various counter-
factual circumstances, and in such counterfactual circumstances, which
are the individuals relevant to determining truth-value. Thus, we must
distinguish possible occasions of *use*—which I call *contexts*—from possible
circumstances of *evaluation* of what was said on a given occasion of use...A
directly referential term *may* designate different objects when used in
different *contexts*. But when evaluating what was said in a given context,
only a single object will be relevant to the evaluation in all circumstances.
("Demonstratives", p. 494)
Circumstances of evaluation are possible situations with respect to which a proposition can be true or false. Contexts of utterance are possible situations in which one might utter a sentence, and determine which proposition would be expressed by the sentence if it were uttered.

i) ‘I’ is directly referential; on any occasion of use its propositional contribution is just its referent (on that occasion of use)

ii) There is a semantical rule governing ‘I’ that each competent speaker masters: In each possible context of use it refers to the agent of the context

6. Two kinds of meaning: character and content

According to Kaplan, indexicals have two sorts of meaning.

Content A sentence’s content (with respect to a context) is what is said by that sentence (relative to that context)—the proposition it expresses. The content of an expression other than a sentence (with respect to a context) is the propositional contribution it makes (relative to that context).

Character The character of a sentence or other expression is the rule that determines what its content is in any given context. For example, the character of ‘I’ is the rule that associates with any context whose agent is a the object a

7. Frege’s puzzle again