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## 4 Indirect Objects in Kinyarwanda Revisited

Matthew S. Dryer

In a recent paper, Gary and Keenan (1977) argue that Kinyarwanda, a Bantu language spoken in Rwanda and Burundi, lacks a distinction between direct objects and indirect objects. They argue that in Kinyarwanda the grammatical relations of direct object (DO) and indirect object (IO) are collapsed into the single grammatical relation of DO and that more than one NP in a clause can bear the DO relation to the verb. In this paper, I argue that, contrary to the claims of Gary and Keenan, DO and IO are distinct grammatical relations in Kinyarwanda.

### 1 Summary of Gary and Keenan's Arguments

Let me first summarize briefly Gary and Keenan's arguments. Gary and Keenan claim that in (1), both *Mariya* 'Mary' and *ibárúwa* 'letter' are DOs.

- (1) Yohaáni y-oher-er-eje    Mariya ibárúwa.  
       John    he-send-BEN-ASP Mary    letter  
       'John sent a letter to Mary.'

The structure of their argument is as follows. There exists a large set of properties possessed by DOs and IOs in Kinyarwanda that are not possessed by oblique NPs.<sup>1</sup> These include the ability to relativize, reflexivize, passivize, and, when pronominal, to be incorporated into the verb. Example (2a) illustrates reflexivization of a DO, (2b) reflexivization of an IO, (3a) passivization of a DO, (3b) passivization of an IO, (4a) incorporation of a DO pronoun, and (4b) incorporation of an IO pronoun.

Most of the data in this paper are from Kimenyi 1976. The remaining data were obtained directly from Alexandre Kimenyi in personal communication. I am greatly indebted to him for his assistance and comments. I also thank John Lawler, David Perlmutter, Rich Rhodes, and Russ Tomlin for their comments.

- (2) a. Umukoóbwa a-r-í-reeb-a.  
girl she-PRES-REFL-watch-ASP  
'The girl is watching herself.'  
b. Yohaáni y-a-yi-oh-er-eje íbáruwa.  
John he-PAST-REFL-send-BEN-ASP letter  
'John sent himself a letter.'
- (3) a. Íbáruwa y-oh-er-ej-w-e Mariya na Yohaáni.  
letter it-send-BEN-ASP-PASS-ASP Mary by John  
'The letter was sent to Mary by John.'  
b. Mariya y-oh-er-ej-w-e íbáruwa na Yohaáni.  
Mary she-send-BEN-ASP-PASS-ASP letter by John  
'Mary was sent a letter by John.'
- (4) a. Yohaáni y-a-y-oh-er-e-eje Mariya.  
John he-PAST-it-send-BEN-ASP Mary  
'John sent it to Mary.'  
b. Yohaáni y-a-mw-oh-er-e-eje íbáruwa.  
John he-PAST-her-send-BEN-ASP letter  
'John sent a letter to her.'

Gary and Keenan show that oblique NPs cannot be relativized, re-flexivized, passivized, incorporated, and so on, unless they are advanced to DO. The reader is referred to their paper for details. (A more detailed account is given in Kimenyi 1976.)

Gary and Keenan refer to their analysis as the 'Two Objects Analysis' (TOA). In defending the TOA, most of their discussion is directed against what they call the 'Promotion Analysis' (PA). According to the PA, Kinyarwanda has an obligatory dative rule which promotes IOs to DO. One argument they give against the PA is that it would predict that the underlying DO would be a *chômeur* in clauses containing an IO, and therefore lack the various object properties. As Gary and Keenan show, in sentences containing both a DO and an IO, both NPs possess the various object properties. For example, (3a) and (4a) above illustrate, respectively, the passivization and pronoun incorporation of a DO in a clause containing an IO. Example (5) below illustrates simultaneous incorporation of DO and IO pronouns.

- (5) Yohaáni y-a-yi-mw-oh-er-e-eje.  
John he-PAST-it-her-send-BEN-ASP  
'John sent it to her.'

## 2 An Alternative Analysis

In the conclusion to their paper, Gary and Keenan mention briefly a third hypothesis suggested to them by Peter Cole. According to this

hypothesis, DOs and IOs are distinct in Kinyarwanda; however, IOs happen to be very similar to DOs in their syntactic properties. It is this hypothesis that I will defend here. I will refer to it as the 'Indirect Object Analysis' (IOA). According to the IOA, DOs and IOs are distinct grammatical relations in Kinyarwanda. The TOA, in contrast, claims that what the IOA claims to be DOs and IOs are actually subcategories of the category DO, in Kinyarwanda.

The set of properties that distinguish DOs from IOs is rather limited. Gary and Keenan claim, without further argument, that the differences between DOs and IOs in Kinyarwanda are insufficient to justify making a distinction in grammatical category and are more naturally attributed to subcategory differences between NPs bearing the same grammatical relation to the verb. Unfortunately, this is the only argument that they give against the IOA. In the remainder of this paper, I will argue that the IOA is correct.

## 3 Distinguishing IOs from Benefactives

Now it is first necessary to note that there are two types of NPs in Kinyarwanda that might be considered IOs. The first type is illustrated in (6), the second type in (7).

- (6) a. Yohaáni y-oh-er-e-eje Mariya íbáruwa.  
John he-send-BEN-ASP Mary letter  
'John sent a letter to Mary.'  
b. Umukoóbwa a-ra-som-er-a umuhuungu igitabo.  
girl she-PRES-read-BEN-ASP boy book  
'The girl is reading the book for the boy.'  
c. Umugóre a-ra-kor-er-a umugabo.  
woman she-PRES-work-BEN-ASP man  
'The woman is working for the man.'
- (7) a. Umugabo y-a-haa-ye umugóre igitabo.  
man he-PAST-give-ASP woman book  
'The man gave the book to the woman.'  
b. Umugóre y-iim-ye abáana ibiryo.  
woman she-refuse-ASP children food  
'The woman refused food to the children.'  
c. Umugabo y-eerets-e abáana igitabo.  
man he-show-ASP children book  
'The man showed the book to the children.'

There are two differences between the sentences in (6) and those in (7). First, in each of the sentences in (6), the verb bears a suffix *-er* 'benefactive'. This suffix does not occur in the sentences in (7). Second,

the NPs which immediately follow the verb in (6) bear what can be described as a benefactive relationship to the verb, while the NPs which follow the verb in (7) are 'prototypical' IOs. For this reason, Kimenyi (1976) calls NPs like those in (6) 'benefactives' (Bens), and NPs like those in (7) 'indirect objects' (IOs). I will use Kimenyi's terminology for the remainder of this paper. The NPs which Gary and Keenan call IOs, and which I called IOs in §§1 and 2, are actually Bens according to this terminology.

Using Kimenyi's terminology, what Gary and Keenan claim to have shown is that Bens are a subcategory of DO. Kimenyi (1976) supports Gary and Keenan's conclusion and further argues that IOs are also a subcategory of DO. He shows that the arguments for considering Ben a subcategory of DO also apply to IOs. Thus, on Kimenyi's analysis, each of the sentences in (7) above contains two DOs.

The structure of the remainder of this paper is as follows. In §4, I outline differences between DOs and IOs that are consistent with either the TOA or the IOA. In §§5 and 6, I give two arguments that show that DOs and IOs are distinct grammatical relations in Kinyarwanda. In §7, I turn my attention to Bens and argue that Bens are also distinct from DOs.

#### 4 Basic Differences between DOs and IOs

Let me now examine the properties that distinguish DOs from IOs in Kinyarwanda. The first is the order of DO and IO NPs. Both tend to follow the verb immediately. In sentences with both a DO and an IO, the IO normally precedes the DO, as in (7a).

The second property that distinguishes DOs from IOs is the order of pronouns incorporated into the verb. When DO and IO pronouns are simultaneously incorporated into the verb, the order is fixed: DO precedes IO, as in (8).

- (8) Umugabo y-a-ki-ba-haa-ye.  
man he-PAST-it-them-give-ASP  
'The man gave it to them.'

It is necessary to distinguish DOs from IOs to state the order of DO and IO NPs, and the order of DO and IO pronouns incorporated into the verb. Such facts, however, are equally consistent with either the TOA or the IOA. On the IOA, they are facts about the order of DO and IO. On the TOA, they are facts about the order of the two types of DOs.

#### 5 First Argument for the IOA, Based on Causatives

The facts from the last section are relevant to my first argument that the IOA is correct and the TOA incorrect. This argument is based on morphological causatives in Kinyarwanda. Examples (9) and (10) illustrate causative sentences.

- (9) a. Abáana ba-ra-som-a ibitabo.  
children they-PRES-read-ASP books  
'The children are reading books.'  
b. Umugabo a-ra-som-eesh-a abáana ibitabo.  
man he-PRES-read-CAUS-ASP children books  
'The man is making the children read the books.'
- (10) a. Abaantu ba-r-úubak-a inzu.  
people they-PRES-build-ASP house  
'The people are building the house.'  
b. Umugabo a-r-úubak-iish-a abaantu inzu  
man he-PRES-build-CAUS-ASP people house  
'The man is making the people build the house.'

Kimenyi argues that causative sentences are another case of object "doubling" in Kinyarwanda. In other words, he claims that both *abáana* 'children' and *ibitabo* 'books' are DOs in (9b). Now according to Perlmutter and Postal 1974 (and others), the normal result of causative clause union in universal grammar will be as follows: the subject (SU) of an embedded transitive clause will become the IO of the resultant clause, and the DO of the embedded clause will become the DO of the resultant clause. Thus it should not be surprising that causative sentences in Kinyarwanda should be candidates for object doubling.

Now the TOA makes no prediction about the order of the two object NPs in causative sentences, nor about the order of pronouns incorporated into the verb. The IOA, however, predicts that the SU of the embedded clause should have the properties of an IO in the resultant clause, and the DO in the embedded clause should have the properties of a DO in the resultant clause. In other words, the IOA predicts that the SU of the embedded clause should precede the DO of the embedded clause in the resultant clause. This prediction is confirmed by (9b) and (10b). In (9b), *abáana* 'children' is the SU of the embedded clause and hence the IO in the resultant clause, and should therefore precede *ibitabo* 'books'.

The IOA also predicts, correctly, the order of pronouns incorporated into the verb.

- (11) Umugabo a-ra-yi-b-ubak-iish-a.  
man he-PRES-it-them-build-CAUS-ASP  
'The man is making them build it.'

In (11), *-yi-* 'it' is the DO of the embedded clause and hence DO of the resultant clause. The element *-b-* 'them' is the SU of the embedded clause and hence IO of the resultant clause. The fact that *-yi-* precedes *-b-* is explained by the IOA: incorporated DO pronouns precede incorporated IO pronouns.

Thus the IOA correctly predicts these facts about Kinyarwanda causatives, whereas the TOA makes no prediction at all.

## 6 Second Argument for the IOA, Based on Locative Advancement

The second argument for the IOA over the TOA is stronger than the first argument. In this second case, not only does the IOA make the correct prediction, but furthermore, the TOA makes the wrong prediction.

Kinyarwanda has a rule, mentioned by Gary and Keenan, but discussed at much greater length by Kimenyi (1976), which advances locatives to DO. This rule relates (12a) to (12b) and (13a) to (13b).

- (12) a. Umwána y-a-taa-ye      igitabo mu máazi.  
child he-PAST-throw-ASP book in water  
'The child has thrown the book into the water.'  
b. Umwána y-a-taa-yé-mo      amáazi igitabo.  
child he-PAST-throw-ASP-in water book  
'The child has thrown the book into the water.'
- (13) a. Umwáalimu y-oohere-je igitabo kw-iishuuri.  
teacher he-send-ASP book to-school  
'The teacher sent the book to the school.'  
b. Umwáalimu y-oohere-jé-ho ishúuri igitabo.  
teacher he-send-ASP-to school book  
'The teacher sent the book to the school.'

When a locative NP is advanced to DO, the underlying DO loses its object properties, as predicted by the Relational Annihilation Law of Perlmutter and Postal 1974 (and the Chômeur Condition of Perlmutter and Postal 1977). Thus of the two postverbal NPs in (13b), only the underlying locative NP *ishuuri* 'school' possesses the various object properties. This is demonstrated by the examples in (14) through (16). Example (14) demonstrates it with passivization, (15) with pronoun incorporation, and (16) with relativization. The grammaticality of the a-examples in (14) through (16) demonstrates that the underlying loc-

ative NP *ishuuri* 'school' has acquired the various object properties. The ungrammaticality of the b-examples demonstrates that the underlying DO *igitabo* 'book' has lost the various object properties.

- (14) a. Ishuuri ry-oohere-j-w-é-ho      igitabo n-úmwaalimu.  
school it-send-ASP-PASS-ASP-to book by-teacher  
'The school was sent the book to by the teacher.'  
b. \*Igitabo cy-oohere-j-w-é-ho      ishúuri n-úmwaalimu.  
book it-send-ASP-PASS-ASP-to school by-teacher  
(The book was sent to the school by the teacher.)

- (15) a. Umwáalimu y-a-ry-oohere-jé-ho      igitabo.  
teacher he-PAST-it-send-ASP-to book  
'The teacher sent the book to it.'

- b. \*Umwáalimu y-a-cy-oohere-jé-ho      ishúuri.  
teacher he-PAST-it-send-ASP-to school  
(The teacher sent it to the school.)

- (16) a. Umugabo y-a-tw-eerets-e      ishúuri umwáalimu  
man he-PAST-us-show-ASP school teacher  
y-oóhere-jé-ho      igitabo.  
he-send(REL)-ASP-to book  
'The man showed us the school to which the teacher sent the book.'

- b. \*Y-a-tw-eerets-e      igitabo umwáalimu  
he-PAST-us-show-ASP book teacher  
y-oóhere-jé-ho      ishúuri.  
he-send(REL)-ASP-to school  
(He showed us the book that the teacher sent to the school.)

These facts are consistent with both the TOA and the IOA.

The TOA and the IOA make different predictions, however, about what will happen in clauses with an IO in which a locative NP gets advanced to DO. This possibility is illustrated in (17).

- (17) a. Umugabo y-eerets-e      umukoóbwa ibiryo mw-iishuuri.  
man he-show-ASP girl food in-school  
'The man showed food to the girl in the school.'  
b. Umugabo y-eerets-é-mo      ishúuri umukoóbwa ibiryo.  
man he-show-ASP-in school girl food  
'The man showed food to the girl in the school.'

Both the IOA and the TOA predict that in (17b), the underlying DO *ibiryo* 'food' will be a *chômeur* and lack object properties. However, the IOA predicts that *umukoóbwa* 'girl' in (17b) will still possess the object properties because it is an IO, not a DO. Since the locative is

being advanced to DO, not to IO, only the DO should become a chômeur. The TOA, however, predicts that *umukoóbwa* 'girl' should also be a chômeur in (17b), since according to the TOA, both *ibíryo* 'food' and *umukoóbwa* 'girl' are DOs in (17a). The examples in (18) through (20) show that it is the IOA that makes the correct predictions. Example (18) shows that the underlying DO *ibíryo* 'food' has lost its ability to be advanced to SU by Passive, but that the IO *umukoóbwa* 'girl' and the locative advanced to DO *ishuúri* 'school' can both be advanced to SU by passive. Examples (19) and (20) show analogous facts for pronoun incorporation and relativization, respectively.

- (18) a. *Ishuúri ry-eerets-w-é-mo umukoóbwa ibíryo n-úmugabo.*  
 school it-show-PASS-ASP-in girl food by-man  
 Lit.: 'The school was showed-in food to the girl by the man.'

- b. *Umukoóbwa y-eerets-w-é-mo ishuúri ibíryo*  
 girl she-show-PASS-ASP-in school food  
 n-úmugabo.  
 by-man

'The girl was shown food in the school by the man.'

- c. \**Ibíryo by-eerets-w-é-mo ishuúri umukoóbwa n-úmugabo.*  
 food it-show-PASS-ASP-in school girl by-man  
 (The food was shown to the girl in the school by the man.)

- (19) a. *Umugabo y-a-ry-eerets-é-mo umukoóbwa ibíryo.*  
 man he-PAST-it-show-ASP-in girl food

'The man showed food to the girl in it.'

- b. *Umugabo y-a-mw-eerets-é-mo ishuúri ibíryo.*  
 man he-PAST-her-show-ASP-in school food  
 'The man showed food to her in the school.'

- c. \**Umugabo y-a-by-eerets-é-mo ishuúri umukoóbwa.*  
 man he-PAST-it-show-ASP-in school girl  
 (The man showed it to the girl in the school.)

- (20) a. *N-a-boon-ye ishuúri umugabo y-eérets-é-mo*  
 I-PAST-see-ASP school man he-show(REL)-ASP-in  
*umukoóbwa ibíryo.*  
 girl food

'I saw the school in which the man showed food to the girl.'

- b. *N-a-boon-ye umukoóbwa umugabo y-eérets-é-mo*  
 I-PAST-see-ASP girl man he-show(REL)-ASP-in  
*ishuúri ibíryo.*  
 school food  
 'I saw the girl to whom the man showed the food in the school.'

- c. \**N-a-boon-ye ibíryo umugabo y-eérets-é-mo*  
 I-PAST-see-ASP food man he-show(REL)-ASP-in  
*ishuúri umukoóbwa.*  
 school girl

(I saw the food which the man showed to the girl in the school.)

These facts are completely mysterious under the TOA but are explained naturally by the IOA, in conjunction with the Relational Annihilation Law: the advancement of a locative NP to DO should place an underlying DO en chômeur but leave an IO unaffected. It is necessary to conclude that DOs and IOs are distinct grammatical relations in Kinyarwanda.<sup>2</sup>

## 7 Benefactives

Let us turn now to Kinyarwanda benefactives, which Gary and Keenan refer to as 'putative IOs' and which they use as the basis of their argument that Kinyarwanda lacks a distinction between DOs and IOs. Since I have demonstrated that DOs and IOs are in fact distinct in Kinyarwanda, Gary and Keenan's claim must be modified to say that DOs and Bens are not distinct in Kinyarwanda. Thus on this modification of their analysis, in (21), both *umugabo* 'man' and *ibíryo* 'food' would be DOs and *imbwa* 'dog' would be IO.

- (21) *Umugóre a-ra-hé-er-a umugabo imbwa ibíryo.*  
 woman she-PRES-give-BEN-ASP man dog food  
 'The woman is giving food to the dog for the man.'

Kimenyi (1976) shows that all three of the postverbal NPs in (21), *umugabo* 'man', *imbwa* 'dog', and *ibíryo* 'food', possess the various 'object' properties. For example, all three can be incorporated into the verb as pronouns, as in (22).

- (22) *Umugóre a-ra-bi-yí-mu-he-er-a.*  
 woman she-PRES-it(DO)-it(IO)-him(BEN)-give-BEN-ASP  
 'The woman is giving it to it for him.'

It is possible to show that Bens are distinct from DOs, just as IOs are distinct from DOs. As Kimenyi shows, locatives can be advanced to DO in clauses containing Bens but only if the clause lacks an underlying DO. Thus locative advancement relates (23a) to (23b).

- (23) a. *Umwána y-iicar-i-ye umugabo kuú ntebe.*  
 child he-sit-BEN-ASP man on chair  
 'The child is sitting on the chair for the man.'  
 b. *Umwána y-iicar-i-yé-ho íntebe umugabo.*  
 child he-sit-BEN-ASP-on chair man  
 'The child is sitting on the chair for the man.'

It is crucial that the advancement in (23) does not cause the Ben to lose its 'object' properties. Example (24) shows that Passive can apply to either of the postverbal NPs in (23b). Examples (25) and (26) show the same for pronoun incorporation and relativization, respectively.

- (24) a. Íntebe y-íicar-i-w-é-ho umugabo n-uúmwáana.  
 chair it-sit-BEN-PASS-ASP-on man by-child  
 'The chair is sat on for the man by the child.'

- b. Umugabo y-íicar-i-w-é-ho íntebe n-uúmwáana.  
 man he-sit-BEN-PASS-ASP-on chair by-child  
 Lit.: 'The man is sat-on-the-chair-for by the child.'

- (25) a. Umwáana a-mw-íicar-i-yé-ho íntebe.  
 child he-him-sit-BEN-ASP-on chair  
 'The child is sitting on the chair for him.'

- b. Umwáana a-y-íicar-i-yé-ho umugabo.  
 child he-it-sit-BEN-ASP-on man  
 'The child is sitting on it for the man.'

- (26) a. N-a-boon-ye íntebe umwáana y-íicar-i-yé-ho  
 I-PAST-see-ASP chair child he-sit(REL)-BEN-ASP-on  
 umugabo.  
 man  
 'I saw the chair that the child was sitting on for the man.'

- b. N-a-boon-ye umugabo umwáana  
 I-PAST-see-ASP man child  
 y-íicar-i-yé-ho íntebe.  
 he-sit(REL)-BEN-ASP-on chair  
 'I saw the man that the child was sitting on the chair for.'

These examples show that locative advancement does not cause a Ben to lose its 'object' properties. This contrasts with the fact, demonstrated in §6, that locative advancement does cause a DO to lose its 'object' properties.<sup>3</sup> As in the case with IOs, these facts can be naturally explained if we interpret the benefactive NP in (22) as a Ben rather than as a second DO, as claimed by Gary and Keenan. The advancement of a locative NP to DO should place an underlying DO (if there is one) en chômage but leave a Ben unaffected. This is exactly what happens, as demonstrated above.

## 8 Conclusion

We must conclude then that, contrary to the claims of Gary and Keenan, both IO and Ben are distinct from DO in Kinyarwanda, and that Kinyarwanda does not provide evidence against the Stratal Uniqueness Law of Perlmutter and Postal (1977), which states, in effect, that no more

than one NP in a clause can bear the same grammatical relation to the verb at a single point in the derivation. The host of properties shared by DOs, IOs, and Bens are not properties that characterize DOs alone, but rather properties that characterize a continuous segment of the relational hierarchy that includes DOs, IOs, and Bens. The properties shared by DOs, IOs, and Bens include the ability to passivize, reflexivize, relativize, and, when pronominal, to be incorporated into the verb.<sup>4</sup> The properties that distinguish DOs, IOs, and Bens include their word order, the order of pronouns incorporated into the verb, the effect of locative advancement, and, in the case of Bens, the presence of a benefactive suffix on the verb.

I hope that I have shown that the fact that DOs and IOs are very similar does not mean that they are the same. Although DOs and IOs may share a host of properties, a single argument, such as the one given in §6, is enough to show that the two are distinct.

I do not claim to have solved all the mysteries of grammatical relations in Kinyarwanda. Kimenyi (1976) discusses many other examples of phenomena in Kinyarwanda that appear to bring into question many of the claims of relational grammar. I only claim to have shown that one set of facts is consistent with the theory when examined with greater scrutiny.

## Notes

1. I use the terms 'direct object' (DO) and 'indirect object' (IO) to refer to those NPs which are underlying DOs and IOs if I am correct that the two are distinct. Even in Gary and Keenan's analysis, there exist two subclasses of DO, which they refer to by the terms "patient" and "recipient." My use of the terms DO and IO is the same as that in Kimenyi 1976.

2. A possible rejoinder might be as follows: The TOA allows there to be two DOs in a clause; hence when a locative is advanced to DO, only one of the underlying DOs need be placed en chômage. One of the underlying DOs could remain a DO, since that would leave two DOs in the clause, which is consistent with the TOA.

The most obvious problem with this is that the TOA would still fail to predict which DO would become a chômage. The IOA correctly predicts that the NP which the IOA claims is the DO, not the IO, will become a chômage.

Worse still, the hypothesis that there can be two DOs in a clause completely fails to make the correct predictions elsewhere in the language. As Kimenyi shows, it is possible for there to be three NPs in a clause all possessing the various object properties. (Sentences (21) and (22) in this paper are examples of such.) Furthermore, the hypothesis would seem to predict that the application of locative advancement in a clause with only one DO would not cause that DO to become a chômage. But this is false, as illustrated by the examples in (14) through (16) of this paper.

3. Note that I cannot illustrate this fact as neatly as I could illustrate the fact that locative advancement causes DOs to lose their 'object' properties but

does not cause IOs to lose their 'object' properties. It is possible to illustrate the latter fact by demonstrating the effect of locative advancement in a sentence containing both a DO and an IO, as I did in (18) through (20). This is not possible in the case of Bens, since locative advancement is not possible in a clause containing both a DO and a Ben. Instead, I have had to illustrate the effect of locative advancement on DOs in (14) through (16) and the effect of locative advancement on Bens separately in (24) through (26). The logic of the argument is just as strong with Bens as it is with IOs, although it may not be as pleasing aesthetically.

4. It follows that the rule I am calling Passive is actually a rule that advances any of DO, IO, or Ben to SU.

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## Part 2

Edited by  
**David M. Perlmutter**

# Studies in Relational Grammar

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