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Saul Kripke : Reference of a name is not determined by its sense

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Abstract

The concept of essence has played an important role in the history and development of philosophy; and in no branch of the discipline is its importance more manifest than in metaphysics. Its significance for metaphysics is perhaps attributable to two main sources. In the first place, the concept may be used to characterize what the subject or at least part of it, is about. For one of the central concerns of metaphysics is with the identity of things, with what they are. But the metaphysician is not interested in every property of the objects under consideration. In asking ‘what is a person?’, for example, he does not want to be told that every person has a deep desire to be loved, even if this is in fact the case. What then distinguishes the properties of interest to him? What is it about a property which makes it bear, in the metaphysically significant sense of the phrase, on what an object is? It is in answer to this question that appeal is naturally made to the concept of essence. For what appears to distinguish the intended properties is that they are essential to their bearers and what makes it accidental?

Keywords: De dicto, de re, rigid designators, non-rigid designator, transworld identity

1. Introduction

The concept of essence has played an important role in the history and development of philosophy; and in no branch of the discipline is its importance more manifest than in metaphysics. Its significance for metaphysics is perhaps attributable to two main sources. In the first place, the concept may be used to characterize what the subject or at least part of it, is about. For one of the central concerns of metaphysics is with the identity of things, with what they are. But the metaphysician is not interested in every property of the objects under consideration. In asking ‘what is a person?’, for example, he does not want to be told that every person has a deep desire to be loved, even if this is in fact the case.

What then distinguishes the properties of interest to him? What is it about a property which makes it bear, in the metaphysically significant sense of the phrase, on what an object is? It is in answer to this question that appeal is naturally made to the concept of essence. For what appears to distinguish the intended properties is that they are essential to their bearers.¹

But the concept of essence is not merely of help in picking out the properties and concepts of interest to the metaphysician; it is itself one of those concepts. It plays not only an external role, in helping to characterize the subject, but also an internal role, in helping to constitute it. In one respect, this internal role is simply a consequence of the external one. For if a given property is essential, then so is the property of essentially having that property; and hence an interest in the given ‘lower level’ property will transfer to an interest in the derived ‘higher level’ property.

However, in addition to these derivative uses of the concept, there are other more significant uses. For the metaphysician may want to say that a person is essentially a person or that having a body is not essential to a person or that a person’s essence is exhausted by his being a thing that thinks. And there is no natural way of seeing any of these claims as arising from some general essentialist function of a corresponding non-essentialist claim.

Furthermore, the concept is not only of use in the formulation of metaphysical claims. It is also of use in the definition of metaphysical concepts. An obvious example is the concept of

1. ¹ Fine K, ‘Essence and Modality’, *Metaphysics : An Anthology*, (ed)Jaegwon Kim, Daniel Z. Korman and Ernest Sosa, Blackwell Publishers, 2012

an essential being; for an essential being is one whose essence includes its own existence. But there are other less obvious cases. Two, of great significance for the subject, are the concept of substance and ontological dependence. For a substance (at least in one sense of the term) is something whose essence does not preclude it from existing on its own; and one object depends upon another (again in one sense of the term) if its essence prevents it from existing without the other object.

Given the importance of the concept of essence, it is not surprising that philosophers have attempted to get clear on what it is; and as we survey their endeavours, we find that two main lines of thought have been pursued. On the one hand, essence has been conceived on the model of definition. It has been supposed that the notion of definition has application to both words and objects---that just as we may define a word, or say what it means, so we may define an object, or say what it is. The concept of essence has then been taken to reside in the 'real' or objectual cases of definition, as opposed to the 'nominal' or verbal cases.

On the other hand, the concept has been elucidated in modal terms. It has been supposed that the notion of necessity may relate either to proposition or to objects---that not only may a proposition be said to be necessary, but also an object may be said to be necessarily a certain way. The concept of essence has then been located in the 'de re' as opposed to the de dicto, cases of modal attribution.

Both lines of thought go at least as far back as Aristotle. The definitional approach is trumpeted throughout his metaphysical writings; in the *Metaphysics* 1031a12, for example, he writes 'clearly, then, definition is the formula of the essence.' He does not give a modal account of essence. But he does provide a modal account of two cognate notions. For his preferred definition of 'accident' is as 'something which may either belong or not belong to some self-same thing'. And he follows Plato in taking things to be 'prior and posterior..' in respect of nature and substance. When the prior 'can be without the other things, while the others cannot be without them' (*Metaphysics*, 1019a1-4)

Similar accounts, though sometimes with an admixture of both elements, recur throughout the history of philosophy. To take but two examples, Locke follows the definitional tradition in taking an essence of a thing to be 'the being of anything, whereby it is what it is' (*Essay*, bk 3, ch3, 15), while Mill is closer to modal tradition in treating the essence of a thing as 'that

without which the thing could neither be, nor be conceived to be' (system of Logic bk I chap vi,2)²

When we come to the contemporary period in analytic philosophy, we find that, as a result of a sustained empiricist critique, the idea of real definition has been more or less given up (unless it is taken to be vestigially present in the notion of a sortal). But the idea of understanding essence in terms of de re modality has lived on. The first philosopher from this period to provide a rigorous account of the connection between essence and modality appears to be G.E.Moore. in his famous paper External and Internal Relations, he defines what it is for a property to be internal (which I take to be the same as the property's being essential)

However, it is only in the last twenty years or so that the modal approach to essentialist metaphysics has really come into its own. For with the advent of quantified modal logic, philosophers have been in a better position to formulate essentialist claims; and with the clarification of the underlying modal notions, they have been better able to ascertain their truth. These developments have also had a significant impact on our understanding of metaphysics. For there would appear to be nothing special about the modal character of essentialist claims beyond their being de re. The subject becomes, in effect, a part of applied modal logic.

2. Kripke's Account of Essence in Naming and Necessity

Here I shall argue that the traditional assimilation of essence to definition is better suited to the task of explaining what essence is. It may not provide us with an analysis of the concept, but it does provide us with a good model of how the concept works.

Though in 1970, Saul Kripke gave a series of arguments challenging traditional descriptive analysis of ordinary propernames, and suggesting an alternative picture. He attacked both the view that the meanings of names are given by descriptions associated with them by speakers, and the view that their referents are determined (as a matter of linguistic rule) to be the objects that satisfy such descriptions. Assuming that meaning determines reference, kripke takes the latter view, about reference, to follow from the former view about meanings, but not

² Locke, J. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book II (P. H. Nidditch, Ed.). Clarendon, Oxford, 1971

vice versa. Thus, propernames are also arguments against descriptive theories of their meanings, but some of his arguments against the latter do not apply to the former.

I begin with the more narrowly focused arguments, which are directed against two corollaries of the Frege-Russell thesis T4. Let n be a proper name, D be a description or family of descriptions associated with n by speakers, and $\dots D \dots$ be a sentence that arises from $\dots n \dots$ by replacing one or more occurrences of n with D . When D is a description, let $D = D$, and when D is a family of descriptions $D_1 \dots D_K$, let D be the complex description the thing of which most or a sufficient number of the claims: it is $D_1 \dots$, it is D_K are true. Kripke attacks the following corollaries of descriptivism about the meanings of names.

3.1 Kripke's argument against Frege-Russell thesis

Kripke's arguments against T4 is known as the modal argument. Here is particular version of it. Consider the name Aristotle, and the descriptions the greatest student of Plato, the founder of formal logic, and the teacher of Alexander the Great. Although Aristotle satisfies these descriptions,

1. If Aristotle existed, then Aristotle was D

Is not a necessary truth, where D is either any description in this family, or the complicated description the individual of whom most or a sufficient number of the claims...are true, constructed from descriptions in the family.

On the contrary, Aristotle could have existed without doing any of the things for which he is known. He could have moved to another city as a child, failed to go into philosophy, and never been heard from again. In such a possible scenario the antecedent of (1) is true, since Aristotle still exists, while the consequent is false, since he does not satisfy any of the relevant descriptions. But then, since (1) is false in this scenario, it is not a necessary truth, which means that the description in the family do not give the meaning of Aristotle.

According to Kripke, this is no accident, there is, he suggests, no family D_a of descriptions such that (1) the referent of Aristotle is the unique individual who satisfies most, or a sufficient number of the descriptions in D_a . (ii) ordinary speakers associate D_a with the name, believing its referent to be the unique individual who satisfies most, or a sufficient number, of the descriptions in D_a , and (iii) (1) expresses a necessary truth when D is the complicated description constructed from D_a . If this is right, then both T4 and its corollary T4(i) are false, as is the view that names are synonymous with descriptions associated with them by speakers.

Why does this argument work? According to Kripke, there was a certain individual x ---the person who actually was Aristotle--- such that a sentence, Aristotle was F is true at an arbitrary world-state w iff at w , x had the property expressed by F . what does it mean to say that a sentence is true at w ? it means that the proposition we actually use the sentence to express is a true description of what things would be like if the world were in state w . so, Kripke's view is that there was a unique individual x such that for any predicate F and world state W , the proposition we actually use Aristotle was F to express would be true, if the world were in w , iff had the world been in state w , x would have had the property (actually) expressed by F . This is the basis of his doctrine that Aristotle is a rigid designator.

Kripke's view on proper names has broadly speaking two aspects: one is, its positive aspect and the other is its negative aspect. Kripke in his search for the referential mechanism operative in natural languages, sharply differs from the classical Fregean standpoint. Kripke's view of propernames delineating typical features of naming offers a theory of linguistic communication to rival Frege's view on the subject. The anti-fregean aspect of Kripkean view is taken to represent the negative side of this view. From Kripke's perspective we shall subsequently come to see that according to him the semantic content of a name is exhausted by its referent, reference of a name is fixed by something external to the speaker. Kripke is of the opinion that those who think that the reference of a propername is determined by the properties associated with a name fail to provide any theory that will be universally acceptable. In this connection we find that kripke elaborately criticizes two version of description theories, calling one the description theory of names and the other the cluster concept theory of names. In this regard kripke aligns himself with J.S Mill who long before kripke declared that proper names are non –connotative. Frege struck a blow to this view by propagating his theory of sense and reference with regard to proper names. Frge's views on this topic has been variously discussed and it is needless to dwell in detail on this matter. The Kripkean view of proper names, may be tagged as pro-Millian and anti-Fregean , thus focusing upon the affirmative aspect of this theory and its negative aspect respectively.

In particular, kripke does not agree with Frege for he does not think that Fregean arguments are all convincing. Pro-Fregeans maintain that the referent of a name is determined by the

property that is associated with names.³ This view seems to rely on certain very easy equations between a name and its associated property. In actual cases it is not at all uncommon to find that more than one description is associated with a name. of the various properties or descriptions associated with a proper name which particular description is to be considered as the sense of a proper name?

As the Fregean view of proper name is not accepted in all its details, it is replaced by Strawson's cluster concept theory of names. The Fregean model of description or its substitute, the cluster concept theory of proper names are however, very much similar in their spirit. According to Strawson, more than one property is associated with the name. Searle is also another supporter of this cluster concept theory of proper names. Kripke has doubts about the acceptability of the cluster concept theory of proper name as according to it a number of properties or descriptions is associated with names, one may quite reasonably ask as to whether all of these properties are of equal importance in respect of proper names? If it is accepted that all the properties are not of the same importance then it may further be asked as to what is the criterion for selecting the more important properties from the less important one. This theory does not suggest any explicit or even implicit criterion for performing the said task.

One may say that the property of being the philosopher is the most important property of Aristotle, and the property of being extra-ordinarily cruel is the most important property of Hitler. But it is quite conceivable about Aristotle to be devoid of the property of being a philosopher or Hitler to be devoid of the property of being tyrant. Again it may happen that the properties that are considered to be important for an object are not really satisfied by that object at all.

Thus Kripke draws our attention to the fact that the properties that are associated with a name may not be satisfied in one unique object. Secondly, it may also happen that all the properties that are associated with a name are never satisfied in any instance whatsoever. Are we to say in that case that name has no reference? From Kripke's denial of Frege's thought driven picture of language, it is quite clear that according to him this is not correct to say that the name connects to the referent in virtue of certain conceptual associations. In Kripke's

³ Russell .B, "On Denoting" Munitz K. M Contemporary Analytic Philosophy,' Pearson College, London,1960

semantics, which does not require any cognitive fix to get hooked to reality, names are admitted to be rigid designators.

3.2 Kripke's account of proper names

According to Kripke, the vast majority of proper names have their reference semantically fixed not by a family of associated descriptions, but by a historical chain of reference transmission. Typically, the chain begins with an ostensive baptism in which an individual is stipulated to be the bearer of a name *n*. Later, when *n* is used in conversation, new speakers encounter it for the first time and form the intention to use it with the same reference as those from whom they picked it up. Different speakers may, of course, come to associate different descriptions with *n*, but usually this does not affect reference transmission. As a result, speakers further down the historical chain may use *n* to refer to its original referent *o*, whether or not they associate descriptions with *n* that uniquely denote *o*.

So Kripke does have an apparently plausible alternative to descriptivist theories of reference determination. What about meaning? On his account, it would seem that the only semantic function of a name is to refer, in which case one would expect ordinary proper names to be Russellian logically proper names (without Russell's epistemological restrictions on their bearers). However, Kripke does not draw this, or any other, definite conclusion about the meaning of names, or the propositions semantically expressed by sentences containing them. Along with nearly everyone else, he recognizes that one can understand different co-referential names without knowing that they are co-referential, and certainly without judging them to have the same meaning. However, this doesn't show that the names don't mean the same thing unless one accepts the highly questionable principle that anyone who understands a pair of synonymous expressions must recognize them to be synonymous---something upon which Kripke never definitely pronounces.

In *Naming and Necessity*⁴, he does argue that the proposition that Hesperus is Phosphorus is not knowable a priori, whereas the proposition that Hesperus is Hesperus is and that one can know that Hesperus is Phosphorus. These views together with natural assumptions about

⁴ Kripke S, *Naming and Necessity*, Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts 1980

meaning, compositionality, propositions and propositional attitude ascriptions could be used to argue that the names Hesperus and Phosphorus differ in meaning, despite being coreferential. However Kripke neither gives such an argument, nor draws such a conclusion. Moreover, he has no account of what, over and above their referents, the meanings of these names might be. Finally, in 'A Puzzles about Beliefs', he maintains that no definite conclusions should be drawn about the meanings of names from apparent failure of substitution of coreferential names in belief ascriptions.

4.1 : Kripke's distinction between rigid & non-rigid designators

The positive aspect of Kripkean semantics of proper names implies a distinction between designators on the ground of their rigidity or non-rigidity. The expression, 'rigid designators' and non-rigid designators are very much technical concepts as introduced by Kripke and are sufficient to combat Frege-Russell model of semantics. So what do these terms mean? As an example of a non rigid designator, I can give an expression such as 'the inventor of bifocals', I can give an expression such as 'the inventor of bifocals'. Let us suppose it was Benjamin Franklin who invented bifocals, and so the expression, 'the inventor of bifocals' designates or refers to a certain man, namely Benjamin Franklin. However, we can easily imagine that the world could have been different, that under different circumstances someone else would have come upon this invention before Benjamin Franklin did, and in that case, he would have been the inventor of bifocals. So in this sense, the expression 'the inventor of bifocals' is nonrigid; under certain circumstances one man would have been the inventor of bifocals, under other circumstances, another man would have. In contrast, consider the expression 'the square root of 25'. Independently of the empirical facts, we can give an arithmetical proof that the square root of 25 is in fact the number 5 and because we have proved this mathematically, what we have proved is necessary. If we think of numbers as entities at all, and let us suppose, at least for the purpose of the lecture, that we do, then the expression 'the square root of 25' necessarily designates a certain number, namely 5. Such an expression I call 'a rigid designator'. A term that designates the same object in all possible worlds. For example, the expression 'the inventor of bifocals' might have been used by inhabitants of this planet always to refer to the man who corrupted Hadleyburg. This would have been the case, if, first, the people on this planet had not spoken English, but some other language, which phonetically overlapped with English; and if, second, in that language the expression 'the inventor of bifocal' meant the 'man who corrupted Hadleyburg'. Then it

would refer, of course, in their language, to whoever in fact corrupted Hadleyburg in this counterfactual situation. That is not what I mean. What I mean by saying that a description might have referred to something different, I mean that in our language as we use it in describing a counterfactual situation, there might have been a different object satisfying the descriptive conditions we give for reference. So, for example, we use the phrase ‘the inventor of bifocals’, when we are talking about another possible world or a counterfactual situation, to refer to whoever in that counterfactual situation would have invented bifocals, not to the person whom people in that counterfactual situation would have called the inventor of bifocals.’

They might have spoken a different language which phonetically overlapped with English in which ‘the inventor of bifocals’ is used in some other way. I am not concerned with that question here. For that matter, they might have been deaf and dumb, or there might have been no people at all. (There still could have been an inventor of bifocals even if there were no people—God, or Satan, will do.)

Second, in talking about the notion of a rigid designator, I do not mean to imply that the object referred to has to exist in all possible worlds, that is, that it has to necessarily exist. Somethings, perhaps mathematical entities such as the positive integers, if they exist at all, necessarily exist. Some people have held that God both exists and necessarily exists; others, that He contingently fails to exist; and others, that He necessarily fails to exist. All four options have been tried. But at any rate, when I use the notion of rigid designator, I do not imply that the object referred to necessarily exists. All I mean is that in any possible world where the object in question does exist, in any situation where the object would exist, we use the designator in question to designate that object. In a situation where the object does not exist, then we should say that the designator has no referent and that the object in question so designated does not exist.

Another example that one might give relates to the problem of essentialism. Here is a lectern. A question which has often been raised in philosophy is : what are its essential properties? What properties part from trivial ones like self-identity are such that this object has to have them if it exists at all, are such that if an object did not have it, it would not be this object. For example, being made of wood, and not of ice, might be an essential property of this lectern.

Let us just take the weaker statement that it is not made of ice. That will establish it as strongly as we need it, perhaps as dramatically. Supposing this lectern is in fact made of wood, could this very lectern have been made from the very beginning of its existence from ice, say frozen from water in the Thames? One has a considerable feeling that it could not, though in fact one certainly could have made a lectern of water from the Thames, frozen it into ice by some process and put it right there in place of this thing. If one had done so, one would have made, of course, a different object. It would not have been this very lectern, and so one would not have a case in which this very lectern here was made of ice, or was made from water from the Thames. So it would seem, if an example like this is correct---and this is what advocates of essentialism have held---that this lectern could not have been made of ice, that is in any counterfactual situation of which we would say that this lectern existed at all, we would have to say also that it was not made from water from the Thames frozen into ice. Some have rejected of course any such notion of essential property as meaningless. Usually, it is because (what Quine would say) they have held that it depends on the notion of identity across possible worlds, and that this is itself meaningless. We can talk about this very object, and whether it could have had certain properties which it does not in fact have. For example it could have been in another room from the room it in fact is in, even at this very time, but it could not have been made from the very beginning from water frozen into ice.

4.2 : Kripke's argument on a priori and a posteriori necessity

If the essentialist view is correct, it can only be correct if we sharply distinguish between the notions of a posteriori and a priori truth on the one hand, for although the statement that this table, if exists at all, was not made of ice, is necessary, it certainly is not something that we know a priori. What we know is that first, lecterns usually are not made of ice, and they are usually made of wood. This looks like wood. It does not feel cold and it probably would if it were made of ice. Therefore, I conclude, probably this is not made of ice. Here my entire judgement is a posteriori. I could find out that an ingenious trick has been played upon me and that, in fact, this lectern is made of ice; but what I am saying is, given that it is in fact not made of ice, in fact is made of wood, one cannot imagine that under certain circumstances it could have been made of ice. So we have to say that though we cannot know a priori whether this table was made of ice or not, given that it is not made of ice, it is necessarily not made of ice.

In other words, if P is the statement that the lectern is not made of ice, one knows by a priori philosophical analysis, some conditional of the form 'if P, then necessarily P.' if the table is

not made of ice, it is necessarily not made of ice. On the other hand, then, we know by empirical investigation that p , the antecedent of the conditional, is true—that this table is not made of ice. We can conclude it by modus ponens : $P \supset Q, P / Q$

The conclusion is that it is necessary that the table not be made of ice, and this conclusion is known a posteriori, since one of the premises on which it is based is a posteriori. So, the notion of essential properties can be maintained only by distinguishing between the notions of a priori and necessary truth, and I do maintain it.

Let us discuss the question of identities. Concerning the statement ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ or the statement ‘Cicero is Tully’, one can find all of these out by empirical investigation, and we might turn out to be wrong in our empirical beliefs. So it is usually argued, such statements must therefore be contingent. Some have embraced the other side of the coin and have held ‘because of this argument about necessity, identity statements between names have to be knowable a priori, so, only a very special category of names, possibly, really works as names; the other things are bogus names, disguised description or something of this sort. However, a certain very narrow class of statement of identity are known a priori, and these are the ones which contain the genuine names.

If names are rigid designators, then there can be no question about identities being necessary, because a and b will be rigid designators of a certain man or thing x . then even in every possible world, a and b will both refer to this same object x , and to no other, and so there will be no situation in which a might not have been b . that would have to be a situation in which the object which we are also now calling x would not have been identical with itself. Then one could not possibly have a situation in which Cicero would not have been Tully or Hesperus would not have been Phosphorus.

Let us take an another example which may be clearer. Suppose someone uses ‘Tully’ to refer to the Roman orator who denounced Cataline and uses the name ‘Cicero’ to refer to the man whose works he had to study in third-year Latin in high school. Of course he may not know in advance that the very same man who denounced Cateline wrote these works, and that is a contingent statement. But the fact that this statement is contingent should not make us think that the statement that Cicero is Tully, if it is true, and it is in fact true, is contingent. Suppose, for example, that Cicero actually did denounce Cateline, but though that this political achievement was so great that he should not bother writing any literary works. Would we say that these would be circumstances under which he would not have been Cicero? It seems to me that the answer is no that instead we would say that, under such circumstances, Cicero

would not have written any literary works. It is not a necessary property of Cicero—the way the shadow follows the man---that he should have written certain works, we can easily imagine a situation in which Shakespeare would not have written the works of Shakespeare, or one in which Cicero would not have written the works of Cicero. What may be the case is that we fix the reference of the term ‘Cicero’ by use of some descriptive phrase, such as; the author of these works’. But once we have this reference fixed, we then use the name ‘Cicero’ rigidly to designate the man who in fact we have identified by his authorship of these works. We do not use it to designate whoever would have written these works in place of Cicero, if someone else wrote them. It might have been the case that the man who wrote these works was not the man who denounced Cataline. Cassius might have written these works. But we would not then say that Cicero would have been Cassius, unless we were speaking in a very loose and metaphorical way. We would say that Cicero, whom we may have identified and come to know by his works, would not have written them, and that someone else, say Cassius, would have written them in his place.

Such examples are not grounds for thinking that identity statements are contingent. To take them as such grounds is to misconstrue the relation between a name and a description used to fix its reference, to take them to be synonyms. Even if we fix the reference of such a name as ‘Cicero’ as the man who wrote such and such works, in speaking of counterfactual situations, when we speak of Cicero, we do not then speak of whoever in such counterfactual situations would have written such and such works, but rather of Cicero, whom we have identified by the contingent property that he is the man who in fact, that is, in the actual world, wrote certain works.

5.1 : Reference of a name is not determined by its sense

Now, let us suppose that we do fix the reference of a name by a description. Even if we do so, we do not then make the name synonymous with the description, but instead we use the name rigidly to refer to the object so named, even in talking about counterfactual situations where the thing named would not satisfy the description in question. Now, this is what I think in fact is true for those cases of naming where the reference is fixed by description. But, in fact, I also think, contrary to most recent theorists, that the reference of names is rarely or almost never fixed by means of description. And by this I do not just mean what Searle says : ‘ its not

a single description, but rather a cluster, a family of properties which fixes the reference.⁵ I mean that properties in this sense are not used at all. But I do not have the time to go into this here. So, let us suppose that at least one half of prevailing views about naming is true, that the reference is fixed by descriptions. Even were that true, the name would be used to name an object which we pick out by the contingent fact that it satisfies a certain description. And so, even though we can imagine a case where the man who denounced Cataline, we should not say that it is a case in which Cicero did not write these works, but rather that Cassius did. And the identity of Cicero and Tully still holds.

Let me turn to the case of heat and the motion of molecules. Here surely is a case that is contingent identity! If it is a case of contingent identity, then let us imagine under what circumstances it would be false. First, of course, it is argued that ‘heat is the motion of molecules’ is an a posteriori judgment; scientific investigation might have turned out otherwise.

To state the view succinctly: we use both the terms ‘heat’ and ‘the motion of molecules’ as rigid designators for a certain external phenomenon. Since heat is in fact the motion of molecules, and the designators are rigid, by the argument I have given here, it is going to be necessary that heat is the motion of molecules. What gives us the illusion of contingency is the fact we have identified the heat by the contingent fact that there happen to be creatures on this planet—(namely ourselves) who are sensitive to it in a certain way, that is, who are sensitive to the motion of molecules or to heat—these are one and the same thing. And this is contingent. So we use the description, ‘that which causes such and such sensations or that which we sense in such and such a way, to identify heat. But in using this fact we use a contingent property of heat, just as we use the contingent property of Cicero as having written such and such works to identify him. We then use the term ‘heat’ in the one case and ‘Cicero’ in the other rigidly to designate the objects for which they stand. And of course the term ‘the motion of molecules, never for any other phenomenon. So, as Bishop Butler said, ‘everything is what it is and not other thing’. Therefore, ‘Heat is the motion of molecules’ will be necessary, not contingent, and one only has the illusion of contingency in the way one could have the illusion of contingency in thinking that this table might have been made of ice. We

⁵ Kripke S, *Naming and Necessity*, Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts 1980

might think one could imagine it, but if we try, we can see on reflection that what we are really imagining is just there being another lectern in this very position here which was in fact made of ice. The fact that we may identified this lectern by being the object we see and touch in such and such a position is something else.

There is another important point to note about rigid designator. To consider an expression as a rigid designator is not to admit the existence of its designator in all possible worlds. For names to be rigid designator it is not required that its designatum be necessarily existent. It is quite conceivable that some entities are necessarily existent. Some hold that mathematical objects are necessarily existent. In the opinion of many God is a necessarily existent being. Thus, it is clearly seen, according to Kripke as proper name is thought of as devoid of descriptive content, reference in this view is understood not in the model of describing but in the model of pointing. Ruth barcan marcus one of the strongest propounder of the new theory of reference says, that proper names are ‘the long finger of ostension.’ Thus according to Kripke and other propounders of anti-Fregean semantics proper names refer not by expressing concepts, but in some more immediate and direct way.

5.2 Kripke’s account on Proper name

If a proper name has a sense then the reference of the proper name is determined by its sense, i.e., there is associated with a proper name a certain condition, whatever that condition may be, and an object is designated by the name if and only if it satisfies that condition. If this is how the reference of a proper name is determined then a proper name cannot be a rigid designator; at least it cannot in general be a rigid designator. For, there is no guarantee that the object which satisfies the condition associated with proper name in the actual world would also satisfy it in all other possible worlds. It may well be that some other object satisfies the condition in another world. In fact, if the reference of a proper name is determined by its sense, it will be a non-rigid designator and behave exactly like ‘the president of the USA in 1970’. But a proper name does not have any sense.

So if the reference of a name is determined by its sense, if, that is, a name designates an object if and only if it satisfy a certain condition, then it cannot be a rigid designator. This premise is really doubtful, especially in view of certain things which Kripke himself has said. As Kripke has pointed out, some designators which are of this kind are rigid designators, e.g., ‘the square

root of 4'. It is not the case that this designator stands for one number in the actual world and a different number in another possible world. The square root of 4 is not really a proper name, and for the next, what it designates is not one of those things which are usually supposed to be designated by proper names---persons, things and places—and it is extremely doubtful whether they can be said to have any essential properties. (recall the well-known philosophical theory that no proposition about a particular –it is only a particular which can be designated by a proper name—can be necessary, that all such propositions are contingently true, if true at all.) but this way out of the difficulty is not open to Kripke himself, because he has not only maintained but has actually argued at length that particular persons and things, typical bearers of proper names, can be said to have essential properties. To quote two of his examples, the property of being born to the parents to whom he is in fact born is an essential property of Nixon, and the property of being made of the block of wood of which it is actually made is an essential property of a wooden table.

Being a rigid designator is an essential characteristic of a proper name, and that lying emphasis on this and showing its various important implications are Kripke's major contribution to the subject. Another basic insight into the nature of proper names was captured quite early by Russell, and is now developed in great detail by David Kaplan in the context of demonstratives in his brilliant monograph 'Demonstratives'. It is that a proper name refers to its referent directly, and not via any characteristics. I think that the idea that a designator stands for the object directly and that it stands for the object itself are strictly logically equivalent with each other: a designator stands for the object itself if and only if it refers to it directly. proper names stand for the object itself, or, equivalently, that it refers to the object directly.

The challenge to descriptive analyses of meaning and reference is not limited to proper names. In addition, both Saul Kripke and Hillary Putnam challenged descriptive analysis of natural kind terms like gold, tiger, water, heat, light, colour and red. These philosophers, whose views were broadly similar, maintained that, like proper names, natural kind terms are not synonymous with descriptions associated with them by speakers; and like names, they may acquire reference in two ways. One way involves direct presentation of samples, together with the stipulation that the term is to apply to all and only instances of the unique natural kind (of a certain sort) of which nearly all members of the sample are instances; the other involves the use of a description to pick out a kind by some, usually contingent, properties. Later, when the

kind term is passed from speaker to speaker, the way in which the reference was initially established normally doesn't matter—just as with proper names.

The contrast between properties and sets must not be confused between properties as intentional and sets as extensional. Properties are intensional in that they may be counted as distinct properties even though wholly coinciding in respect of the things that have them. There is no call to reckon kinds as intensional. Kinds can be seen as sets, determined by their members. It is just that not all sets are kinds.

The traditional doctrine that the notion 'meaning' possesses the extension/ intension ambiguity has certain typical consequences. The doctrine that the meaning of a term is a concept carried the implication that meanings are mental entities. Frege, however rebelled against this 'psychologism'. Feeling that meanings are public property—that the same meaning can be 'grasped' by more than one person and by persons at different times—he identifies concepts (and hence 'intensions' or meanings) with abstract entities rather than mental entities. However, 'grasping' these abstract entities was still an individual psychological act. None of these philosophers doubted that understanding a word (knowing its intension) was just a matter of being in a certain psychological state.

Secondly the timeworn example of two terms 'creature with a kidney' and 'creature with a heart' does show that two terms can have the same extension and yet differ in intension. But it was taken to be obvious that the reverse is impossible: two terms cannot differ in extension and have the same intension.

For philosophers like Carnap, who accepted the verifiability theory of meaning, the concept corresponding to a term provided (in the ideal case, where the term had 'complete meaning') a criterion for belonging to the extension (not just in the sense of 'necessary and sufficient condition', but in the strong sense of way of recognizing whether a given thing falls into the extension or not). So theory of meaning came to rest on two unchallenged assumptions:

1. That knowing the meaning of a term is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state (in the sense of ' psychological state', in which states of memory and belief are 'psychological states', no one thought that knowing the meaning of a word was a continuous state of consciousness, of course.)
2. That the meaning of a term determines its extension (in the sense that sameness of intension entails sameness of extension).

What Hillary Putnum says, I point to a glass of water and say ‘this liquid is called water’. My ostensive definition of water had the following empirical presupposition : that the body of liquid I am pointing to bears a certain sameness relation (say, x is the same liquid as y, or x is the same as y) to most of the stuff I and other speakers in my linguistic community have on other occasions called ‘water’.

Kripke calls a designator ‘rigid’ (in a given sentence) if (in that sentence) it refers to the same individual in every possible world in which the designator designates. If we extend this notion of rigidity to substance names, then we may express Kripke’s theory and mine by saying that the term ‘water’ is rigid. The rigidity of the term ‘water’ follows from the fact that when I give the ‘ostensive definition’: ‘this (liquid) is water’, I intend (2’) that (for every world W) (for every x in w) (x is water = x bears same I to the entity referred to as ‘this’ in the actual world w1)

I call this a ‘scope’ difference because in (1’) the entity referred to as ‘this’ is within the scope of ‘for every world w’---as the qualifying phrase in w’ makes explicit---whereas in (2’) the entity referred to as ‘this’ means ‘the entity referred to as ‘this’ in the actual world’, and has thus a reference independent of the bound variable w.

We may also say, following Kripke, that when I give the ostensive definition ‘this’ (liquid) is water,’ the demonstrative this is rigid.

What Kripke was the first to observe is that this theory of meaning (or use or whatever) of the word ‘water’ (and other natural-kind terms as well) has startling consequences for the theory of necessary truth.

Kripke refers to statements that are rationally unrevisable (assuming there are such) as epistemically necessary statements that are true in all possible worlds he refers to simply as necessary (or sometimes as ‘metaphysically necessary’) in this terminology, the point just made can be restated as: a statement can be (metaphysically) necessary and epistemically contingent. Human intuition has no privileged access to metaphysical necessity.

Words like ‘now’, ‘this’, ‘here’ have long been recognized to be indexical, or token-reflexive---i.e., to have an extension which varies from context to context or token to token. For these words, no one has ever suggested the traditional theory that ‘intension determines extension’.

To take our twin Earth example: if I have a Doppelganger on twin earth, then when I think ‘I have a headache’, he thinks ‘I have a headache’. But the extension of a particular token of I in his verbalized thought is himself (or his unit class, to be precise), while the extension of the token of I in my verbalized thought is me (or my unit class, to be precise). So the same word, ‘I’ has two different extensions in two different idiolects; but it does not follow that the concept I have of myself is in anyway different from the concept my Doppelganger has of himself.

Now then, we have maintained that indexicality extends beyond the obviously indexical words and morphemes (e.g., the tenses of verbs). Our theory can be summarized as saying that word like ‘water’ have an unnoticed indexical component : ‘water’ is stuff that bears a certain similarity relation to the water around here. Water at another possible time or another place or even in another possible world has to bear the relation samel to our ‘water’ in order to be water. Thus the theory that (1) words have intension, which are something like concepts associated with the words by speakers; and 2 intension determines extension---cannot be true of natural-kind words like ‘water’ for the same reason it cannot be true of obviously indexical word like ‘I’.

The theory that natural-kind words like ‘water’ are indexical leaves it open, however, whether to say that ‘water’ in the twin earth dialect of English has the same meaning as ‘water’ in the earth dialect and different extension---which is what we normally say about ‘I’ in different idiolects—thereby giving up the doctrine that ‘meaning (intension) determines extension’, or to say, as we have chosen to do, that difference in extension is ipso facto a difference in meaning for natural-kind words, thereby giving up the doctrine that meanings are concepts or indeed, mental entities of any kind.

So it is clear that kripke’s doctrine that natural-kind words are rigid designators and our doctrine that they are indexical are but two ways of making the same point.

According to Kripke, ‘one meter’ may be defined as ‘the length of stick s at t’, still the two expressions are not synonymous. ‘if the name’,he says,’means the same as that description or cluster of descriptions, it will not be a rigid designator. If definite descriptions designates as rigidly as proper names, his observation hardly has any force.

If the claim is that a definition may not always give a synonym, it is all right. A definition at times is in order not because we can perform the same speech-act with the definiendum, as with the definiens, but because the definition provides a criterion of application for the definiendum. For instance, the definition

(6) x is a valid deductive argument = df. X is a deductive argument and the premises of x entail the conclusion

Does not provide a synonymous definition for the definiendum, it might be said, 'valid' being a value expression not reducible to descriptive ones. But the question is whether it is true also in the case of a meter that the definition does not give the synonym of the expression 'one meter'. 'the length of stick s at t ' is a rigid designator is so far as it has been used to designate a particular length (by that it certainly is not meant that the expression could not possibly be used on some other occasion to fix a different things) and to that extent the identity between one meter and the specific length holds necessarily. And in so far as the identity has been given by way of definition, it provides synonymy. The fact, viz., that the expression 'the length of the stick s at t ' may be true of a different length in a different possible world is of relevance here, then it has no merit as a definition. Similarly about other cases of uses of definite descriptions. If the reference to the world concerned is not given at least implicitly, there is a break-down in communication. It is in this sense that definite descriptions are rigid designators, as proper names are. This fact of a rigid use of definite description is quite compatible with the fact that a definite description of the form the Q is not necessarily true of the same object in all possible worlds.

Kripke argues at several places that 'one meter' is not synonymous with the definiens 'the length of S at t ' even though the definiens fixes the reference of the definiendum. The only argument that Kripke seems to advance to show that the definition does not provide synonymy is that the definition does not give the meaning of 'the meter', but is used to fix the reference of it. Granting that the definition serves the purpose of fixing the reference of the expression, it still need not follow that the definition does not give the meaning of the meter, but is used to fix the reference of it. Granting that the definition serves the purpose of fixing the reference of the expression, it still need not follow that the definition does not give the meaning of the expression concerned, for one may not be committed to a premise such as:

If a definition is given to fix the reference of an expression, it does not provide the meaning of the expression concerned. This of course does not commit us to accepting the position that whoever understands the sentence 'x is a meter long' understands it to be synonymous with the sentence 'x is of the same length as the stick s at time t' for one may very well be unaware of the definition. So this expression has an essential difference with the ordinary proper names, in that the name John, for example, can be shared by more than one individual at the same time.

Conclusion

So the principal idea of Kripke was that if something is necessarily such and such in this actual world, then we must designate the same object in all conceivable world in which it exists. Kripke extended the idea of essence beyond individuals to kinds of things such as gold and water. For Kripke it is not just a law or regularity that water is H₂O but rather the essence of the natural kind. These ideas were already there in Aristotelian Essentialism. Kripke brought back names to their original non-descriptive status. He departs from both Frege and Russell, for whom proper names were reduced to definite descriptions (for different reasons) and from Quine for whom necessity (reduced to synonymy) was specific to a particular conceptual scheme – it did not have any space for a truth that is necessary in all possible worlds. Kripke by bringing back names to their original non-descriptive status opens up a way of rehabilitating essence and necessity. Kripke thinks that Mill rightly pointed out proper names to be non-connotative- they are arbitrary labels of an individual, they do not describe any of its property. For Mill however a common name does describe an abstract property or stands for a group of individuals. Kripke holds that proper names refer rigidly and nondescriptively to the same object in all possible worlds; so proper names are rigid designators'. According to Kripke, even if the object does not exist in the actual world, that particular object, if there be any, will designate the same object in all other possible world and not via any properties. Thus Kripke made a wide-range of utilization of the idea of a possible world in defending the eloquence of modality both *de re* and *de dicto*.

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