

# Naming and Necessity Lecture 2

## Reconstruction of the Descriptivism [p.71]

- (1) To every name or designating expression 'X', there corresponds a cluster of properties, namely the family of those properties  $\phi$  such that A believes ' $\phi(X)$ '.
- (2) One of the properties, or some conjointly, are believed by A to pick out some individual uniquely.
- (3) If most, or a weighted most, of the  $\phi$ 's are satisfied by one unique object y, then y is the referent of 'X'.
- (4) If the vote yields no unique object, 'X' does not refer.
- (5) The statement, 'If X exists, then X has most of the  $\phi$ 's' is know a priori by the speaker.
- (6) The statement, 'If X exists, then X has most of the  $\phi$ 's' expresses a necessary truth (in A's language).

### (1-5) Theory of Description as fixing reference

Serviceable only for some names, e.g. Neptune, Jack the Ripper, St Anne

### (1-6) Theory of Description as giving meaning

- Properties attributed to Aristotle is contingent [Lecture 1 & p.74]
- Famous Deeds: "Important properties of an object need not be essential, [...] an object could have had properties very different from its most striking actual properties, or from the properties we use to identify it." [p.77]
- BUT, essential properties are still properties. In every possible world, Aristotle is a human being.
- Such essential properties do not suffice to pick out any person uniquely. 'Being a human' is far to general

### Detour to Leibniz's solution to the Problem of Particularity

Or is it?

## Two Epistemological Refutations

People can refer to objects that they don't have enough information about the objects to pick them out uniquely. [pp.81-82]

- Information cannot uniquely individuate the object of reference: Feynman Example
  - Info of "Richard Feynman": He is a physicist.
  - Does not distinguish Feynman from other physicists.
- Information does pick out the object uniquely, but it is circular: Einstein Example
  - Info of "Einstein": the man who discovered the theory of relativity. -> pick out Einstein uniquely
  - What is the theory of relativity? Street man: "Einstein's theory!" -> violates (C)

Against (2): While properties believed by A does not uniquely individuate the referent, they can nonetheless refer to objects;  
Against (4): While the properties/vote yields no unique object, the name still refers

Erroneous attribution of properties: People can refer to objects that they have wrong information about the objects, or that information cannot be attribute to anything at all. [pp.82-85]

- Gödel & Schmidt: People believe that Gödel proved the incompleteness theorem. But even if Gödel did not prove it himself, but stole it from Schmidt, people can still use "Gödel" to refer to Gödel.
- Peano (who did not discover the Peano Axioms of Arithmetics)
- Columbus (who was not the first European to visit the new Continent)
- Einstein (who did not invent the nuke)

Against (3): Information wrongly pick out uniquely Y, not the intended X. Yet such attempt succeeds in referring to X;  
Against (5): Even if Gödel did prove the incompleteness theorem, and A knows no more than that, it is not a priori that Gödel did so.

### Detour to Donnellan's Attributive & Referential Usages [pp.85-86, footnote 36]

Kripke is inclined to reject Donnellan's referential definite description, because when the description is discovered false, it is typically withdrawn, yet the name (being the disguised descriptions) is not withdrawn and still refers to Gödel. [p.87 footnote 37]

## Possible ways to tinker ToD?

### Kripke's Causal Theory of Reference [bottom p.90]

- (i) Reference is fixed at the initial baptism/dubbing. [p.96]
  - E.g. "Richard Feynman" is fixed to Richard Feynman because this name is bestowed upon him by his baptizer, to wit, his parents.
  - Baptizer who is acquainted with the object of reference can use descriptions to fix the reference. [Neptune Example, p.96 footnote 42]
  - Q: Does not offer any account of how "dubbing" works
  - Q: The speaker is causally related to the object, or to the baptizer?
- (ii) Name is spread within the community "from link to link"
  - A causal chain of spreading
    - E.g. We know "Richard Feynman" refers to Richard Feynman even though we are not present at his baptism, because the name is delivered to us through a complex causal chain.
    - "A certain passage of communication reaching ultimately to Feynman himself does reach the speaker" [p.91]
    - The speaker is related to the object of reference causally
    - "Maybe reference doesn't really take place at all!" [p.90] How about intention?
  - But (ii) is problematic
    - Challenge (1): Napoleon the aardvark & the neighbor George Smith
    - When A picks up a name from someone else, A inherits the reference of that name iff A intends to use the name with the same reference as the original speaker.
- Strawson's theory of Identifying Description
  - Speaker has to remember where does he learn the name from [p.92]
  - "Gödel" = the man Jones calls "Gödel"
  - Kripke's Theory: you don't need to remember from whom you learned the name
  - Q: Is this a significant difference?
  - Bugs of Kripke's Theory: "Santa Clause" & Empty name [p.93]

## Identity Statement

Identity statement involves descriptions is contingent; Identity statement involves names are necessarily true if true at all. [bottom p.97]

Kripke: What is true is necessarily true (in the highest degree) [p.99]

- ① in de re mode (modal takes a narrow scope)
- ② between rigid designators
- About natural kinds

Marcus: what is true is necessarily true, if you have a good dictionary to tell you that they have the same reference. [p.101]

Does not require empirical discovery of the sort "Hesperus is Phosphorous"

Nah, dictionary does not work!

Quine's Two Dogmas of Empiricism

Kripke's modal necessity requires empirical discovery

### Personal Identity: Kripke regards parenthood/origin as an essential property [Lecture 3 p.114]

Table made of wood/ice

Irreciprocal relation: Your identity is tied to the identity of your parents: if they decided not to have any children, you won't be here; your parents' identities are not tied to you! They can still be themselves even if they are dinks.

Challenges Humean metaphysical statement: "There is no necessary connections between distinctive existence."