

Naming and Necessity Lecture 3

Attribution of Essential Properties [p.106 onwards]

"a is F" ≡ "If Isobel is a human, then Isobel is necessarily (and essentially) human."

expresses a necessary truth

can be a posteriori, because we need empirical investigation to find out whether 'a' does in fact have the property 'F'.
"One might very well discover essence empirically." [p.110]

this statement is a priori

BUT, it takes empirical effort to determine if Isobel is actually a human, rather than a cleverly disguised robot.

(necessary a priori claim)-(contingent a posteriori claim) => (contingent a posteriori claim)

1. The object before me is a human being.
2. a is the object before me.
3. a is a human being. (1,2)
4. $\forall x(x \text{ is a human being} \rightarrow \Box(x \text{ is a human being}))$
C. Necessarily, a is a human being. (3,4)

(1) & (2) are contingent statements that are only knowable a posteriori.
(3) is made necessary by (4)

Two Principles of obtaining Essentiality

- Essential by Origins [pp.111-114]
If a material object has its origin in a certain hunk of material matter, then it could not have existed without having that origin in any other matter. [p.114 footnote.56]
For humans, this origin is our parenthood [Printed in Lecture 1 in example of "Aristotle" and "Nixon"]
Table out of a different block of wood, or out of ice from Thames River would be a different table! [pp.113-114]
- Essential by Material Constitution [pp.114-115 footnote.57 & pp.126-127]
Q: Could an object composed of molecules have been that very thing without being composed of molecules?
Kripke: No!
Putnam: Yes!

Identical Statements [p.116 onwards]

Proper Names: 'Aristotle' is associated with the description 'the famous greek philosopher', 'Stagirite teacher of Alexander the Great' etc.

Natural Kind Terms: 'Gold' associated with 'yellow metal', 'Heat' associated with 'the cause of sensation S', 'Water' associated with 'the clear drinkable liquid'

Natural kind terms are not synonymous with the descriptions, just like that of the proper names!

Similar to proper names, the descriptions can be used to fix the reference of natural kind terms, but need not be known by later users in the causal history

"Water" might be introduced by 'the clear drinkable liquid over there', but this description does not give the meaning to the natural kind term, nor it need to be known by later user. The later users could recognize the term differently as 'the substance with molecular formula H2O'

Kripke on Mind-body Problem [p.144 onwards]

An identity theory of mental phenomena is a theory that says that mental phenomena are identical to some physical phenomena.

Three Types of Identity Theories [p.144] (anti-Cartesian theories)

- Person-body identity theory
A person with his body
Possibly, this person ≠ this body. (Cartesian-flavored possible world: I exist without this body, or this body exists without me.)
This person = this body
- Token identity theory
(A particular sensation/event or state of having the sensation) with (a particular brain state)
E.g. Jones's pain at 6:00 was his C-fiber stimulation at that time
Let 'A' be the name of a particular pain sensation, and let 'B' name the brain state with which A is claimed to be identical. Think of 'A' as meaning 'this pain.' [p.146]:
Possibly, A ≠ B.
(Consider this possible world: this very pain sensation exists without this very brain state, or this brain state exists without this pain sensation.)
A ≠ B
- Type-Type identity theory
(Types of mental states) with the corresponding types of physical states
E.g. pain is the stimulation of C-fibers
Possibly, pain ≠ C-fiber firing.
(Consider this possible world: some creatures experience pain without their C-fibers firing, or some creatures have C-fibers which fire but no pain.)
Pain ≠ C-fiber firing

Type-type identity theory is analogous to scientific/theoretical identity statements [p.148]

necessarily true if true at all

This seeming analogy fails [pp.153-154]

"Heat is the motion of molecules" vs "Pain is the stimulation of C-fibers"

"Heat" = the phenomenon that give rise to sensation S
To create heat, God just need to create molecular movement

To create this phenomenon (C-fiber stimulation), God need only create beings with C-fibers capable of stimulation
whether the beings are conscious or not is irrelevant here.

But to make the identity between "heat" and "molecular motion" a necessary a posteriori truth, "God must create some sentient beings to insure that the molecular motion produces the sensation S in them." [p.153]

But to make the identity between "pain" and the "C-fiber firing" a necessary a posteriori truth, God must let the creatures feel the C-fiber stimulation as pain, and not as a tickle, or as warmth, or as nothing. [p.154]

Different

Kripke's (unwilling) supports to Cartesian theory

Although Kripke's theory lend support to the identity theory, which in tern helped the Cartesian/dualist sects, Kripke himself does not support the Cartesian view. [p.155 footnote 77]

if dualism is true, that the person and the body are two distinct existences, then why is there a necessary connection between the person and some particular material objects, such as a particular sperm and a particular egg?

"Theoretical identities, according to the conception I advocate, are generally identities involving two rigid designators and therefore are examples of the necessary a posteriori." [p.140]

Natural kind terms behave similar to rigid designators.

Water is H2O. Heat is molecular motion. Cats are animals. Lightning is electricity. Gold is the element with atomic number 79. A tiger is quadrupedal.

Are necessary a posteriori truth if true at all

However, treating theoretical identities as identity statements could be problematic!

(1) They appear to be different statements

Identity statements like "Hesperus is Phosphorus" mean that the object of reference of 'Hesperus' IS the object of reference of 'Phosphorus'. They should have overlapping extensions.

Theoretical identity statements like 'Cats are animals' are not like 'Hesperus is Phosphorus', because not all animals are cats.

(2) By rigid designators we mean that they rigidly refer to the same thing in all possible worlds. Then what does it mean for a general term like 'water' to be rigid designator?

Does not work because there are possible worlds in which there are no cats

Might not make the statement necessary

Can you find in a possible world that something is essentially a cat and essentially a non-animal?

Formulation 1: A predicate is a rigid designator iff it has the same reference with respect to every possible world.

Formulation 2: A predicate is a rigid designator iff if the predicate applies to an object in at least one possible world, it applies to that object with respect to every possible world.

Kripke's paragraph on gold [pp.123-125] make it sounds like a necessary truth, but we also know that it will be weird if we treat such statements as rigid designators. What makes the statement necessary?

Modal Illusion of Contingency in theoretical identities

It seems clear that gold can turned out not to be the 79th element, and heat could turned out not to be the molecular movement. [p.141]

The appearance that theoretical statements are contingent is an illusion

what we imagine when we imagine it's turning out that gold does not have atomic number 79 is a situation qualitatively identical to our actual one, in which someone discovers that some stuff with has the same superficial identifying marks as gold is a compound rather than an element. But, if we think carefully about this situation, we will see that we are not really inclined to say that this is a scenario in which gold is a compound. Rather, we are inclined to say that it is a scenario in which the stuff which looks like gold is not really gold.

Kripke: H2O ≠ XYZ

Kripke's response: The loose and inaccurate statement that gold might have turned out to be a compound should be replaced (roughly) by the statement that it is logically possible that there should have been a compound with all the properties originally known to hold of gold." [pp.142-143]