Proper Names

by

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Abstract

The problem of proper names is accounting for their meaning, that is, for their ability to provide reference to objects of the world. We want to be able to say that proper names refer directly to objects, since that is their assumed function in the use of ordinary language. But when asked to supply the meaning of a proper name, in general we are only able to supply descriptive knowledge of an assumed object to which it refers, knowledge which varies considerably from user to user. Even when the object is sensibly present, we can only appeal to knowledge of certain sensations, or of certain ideas; we cannot produce any entity which is normally thought to be, or to provide, the meaning of a proper name.

In this thesis I explore the solutions to this problem offered by various philosophers, including Mill, Frege, Russell, Strawson and Kripke, all of whom have very different approaches. I conclude that while all of these thinkers have valuable insights into how we ought to think of objects, how we actually think of objects, how knowledge of objects is obtained and shared amongst users of language, and to what extent this knowledge is required in providing the connection between a proper name and the object to which it refers, all suffer from the same basic inadequacy. This is the failure to get to grips with the problem of how the mental concept of a particular entity is abstracted from sensory experience of the world, how it is independent of any particular knowledge of the corresponding entity, how it functions to allow the idea of reference to take place in the use of proper names, and how this idea of reference is distinct from the determination of reference in practice, which is the acquisition of knowledge, of various kinds, of an object in the normal use of its name.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Generalisations of any kind are dangerous, and of such a broad and encompassing discipline as philosophy, they are perhaps doubly so. Nevertheless, I think it can be fairly said that the greater part of the Western philosophical tradition has always been united in the common cause of investigating questions of truth, even if, as Bertrand Russell points out, it is in the nature of philosophers to become disinterested in the problems of philosophy as soon as answers to them are in danger of being found.¹

A cursory glance over the history of philosophy tends to confirm that a great deal of time and effort has been spent on investigating both the nature of truthful statements about the world, and the world that makes them true. In recent times, however, science has become increasingly entrusted with investigations of the latter, while, not coincidentally, philosophy has become increasingly dominated by questions of the former. The result is that language, already the medium of the investigation, is now also its primary focus.²
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

If a philosophy of language is to account for the capability of language to express truths, it must first of all account for the capability of language to make reference to the world itself—or recognisable parts of it—about which it expresses truths. It must, in effect, account for the relationship between language and the world which justifies our speaking about the world. The most straightforward and convenient way, but by no means the only way, of referring to parts of the world is to use linguistic signs that stand in for them directly. In ordinary language, these signs are called proper names.

The study of names provides an obvious starting point for clarifying the problems associated with the relationship between language and the world. They are, if you like, the most primal of word types. The very first linguistic acts of humans are to attach names to recognisable things of interest in their environment, and this is just as true today, when each one of us starts out on the long road of learning language, as it was when as a race we started out on the much longer road of creating it.

1.1 The Problem

A name, of course, like any linguistic sign, is a sound spoken or a mark written; what makes it of interest is its meaning. What I am concerned to investigate here is the meaning, or significance, of proper names. But by this I am not concerned with the meaning of names as they might be discovered by looking in a dictionary. The name ‘Jezebel’ means, for example, according to the dictionary, ‘A shameless or immoral woman.’ But people who are shameless, immoral and female are not all given the name ‘Jezebel’, and
neither are all uses of the name applied only to people who might have those attributes; the name ‘Jezebel’ could be given to anyone or, indeed, anything. As Hobbes said, a name is ‘taken at pleasure to serve for a mark’ of the individuality of some thing. Although a word that starts out purely in that mode may come to be associated with a general meaning by association with the qualities of the thing it happens to mark out, and a word may be chosen as a name for some thing because of such a general meaning previously picked up, this adjectival use of certain words that also act as proper names should not distract us from the separate issue of accounting for the relationship between a name, as a mark, and the particular thing it is a mark of.

In investigating the meaning or significance of proper names we mean to investigate the use of names to refer to the singular things which have those names. That we have managed only to express our aim in this circular way is both testament to the difficulty of the problem at hand, and, at this preliminary stage, the extent of our ignorance of a solution.

1.2 The Strategy

In commencing an investigation of the theory of proper names, it might seem a good idea to formulate a general linguistic definition, and proceed by its analysis. However, this approach is likely to be misleading, for a definitive linguistic definition will never be found.

To begin with, a grammarian will look at the features of names as they relate to other words in language, and will fix upon surface features, such as the use of a capital letter in English, or the placement of a word or word-group
in the subject position of a sentence, that are irrelevant to the philosopher as distinguishing features. Since the philosopher is interested in studying names as they refer to objects in the world, he will have no use for a feature that does not distinguish between words that refer, and words that only appear to refer because they possess an attribute normally associated with words that do. To merely begin a word with a capital letter, or put it in the subject position of a sentence, does not make it a proper name.

Secondly, the linguist will ignore certain features, such as whether a name refers to an object of the world of the senses, or one of the world of the imagination. This distinction will be of little interest to him, since it matters not in the employment of the name, and yet it is of fundamental significance to the philosopher, who is primarily interested in the relationship between language and the world. Indeed, we see that linguists, in proceeding with their study as a science, are guilty of assuming the very relationship which philosophers are intent upon questioning.  

In any case, philosophers have no wish to become bogged down at the very start with such questions as: are proper names necessarily of singular objects; is ‘the sun’ or ‘the chauffeur’ a proper name; is ‘the north pole’ a proper name or a description; is ‘my car’ a proper name; is ‘John’ in, for example, ‘How many Johns do you know?’ a proper name; how come plurals such as ‘the Azores’ are proper names; is a surname a proper name or a common name; is ‘Vaseline®’ a proper name? Although these are interesting questions in their own right, it is of no use to begin the investigation by considering only what are essentially internal relations of language, since they will lead to consideration only of other relations within language.
It was Bertrand Russell who first saw the importance of distinguishing logical form from grammatical form, which, he says, can mislead; his advice to distinguish between them continues, in various modified forms, to be taken today. The philosophically relevant question with which to start is one that gets beneath grammar to the relation of language with the world itself: Given that there are words in the language that appear to stand in for objects directly, the most obvious and common being the names of people we know, just how is it that they do this? Or, to be more precise, how is it that we use them to do this? In answering this question, we may come to a position of being able to formulate a general account of establishing which words in language are proper names, and hence their relationship to other words, and hence to considering the above questions; but this study, which is clearly scientific, must wait until we have a better understanding of what it is that names actually do, and thereby, hopefully, a basis for proceeding scientifically.
Chapter 2

Background

The first step to clarifying the problems and issues at stake in the realm of the theory of proper names and their use in language lies in the consideration of the principal theories which have been handed down to us. This chapter is devoted to providing a concise summary and critique of the principal theories of the traditional doctrine, beginning with the arguments of J.S. Mill, who was the first thinker of modern times to seriously consider proper names in their own right.

2.1 J.S. Mill

In his *A System of Logic* Mill presents a thoroughly worked-out basis for the science of logic and its relation to metaphysics and epistemology. He considers names in general as fundamental constituents of the logical vocabulary, and asks whether they stand for our ideas of things or the things themselves. He concludes, of course, that they stand for things, because no-one, when
CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

using a name, he says, intends to refer to his idea of it, but rather to the thing which produced the idea.\(^1\) This is consistent with the logician's desire to establish the basis for his science objectively, and to see words for things as unequivocally being words for parts of the world, and not merely of parts of the subjective mind that uses them. It is also, of course, consistent with common-sense: in the use of language to communicate we make reference to the world we all share.

2.1.1 On Connotation and Denotation

The distinction between proper names and common names goes back as least as far as the ancient Greeks and the Stoic Chrysippus (c.280-207 BC).\(^2\) Common names, or general names as Mill calls them, refer to 'an indefinite number of things', while individual names, in contrast, are 'only capable of being truly affirmed... of one thing.'\(^3\) All general names are both connotative and denotative, or, in the more modern terminology, have both intension, the meaning intended in their use, and extension, those objects to which their usage extends.\(^4\) For example, the qualities, or attributes, connoted by 'man' serve to establish the range of objects denoted—or subjects in Mill's terminology, since they occur as subjects of a proposition\(^5\)—each of which is a man.\(^6\) The family of individual names may be either connotative and denotative, such as 'the sun' or 'God', which only happen to denote a single object, since we could imagine many suns or many gods\(^7\), or denotative only. The latter category is the category of proper names, by far the most extensive of the two categories of individual names.

This view of Mill's, that proper names have only a denotation, has caused
him to be frequently accused of implying that, in having no connotation, proper names have no meaning, and are thus meaningless. This, it is claimed, cannot be right. Firstly, every linguistic sign requires to have a meaning to be recognisable as a sign and not merely a *flatus vocis*. Secondly, it is obvious that proper names function to convey meaning all the time. For example, a lover’s name is imbued with meaning to the loved one, and, arguably, is at least suggestive of attributes to anyone else known to him. Names simply appear to have no linguistic function without meaningful knowledge of their bearers being associated with them in their use.

On the first point, however, it may be replied that the bare meaning of a name, distinguished as a linguistic sign, is that it is a name, and refers to some thing. By ‘connotation’ Mill does not merely mean ‘meaning’ in this sense, for connotation implies attribute, and this level of meaning implies none. The meaning of a name on this level is thus the capacity of its user to recognise it as a proper name without *ipso facto* invoking any concepts or ideas he may have of its bearer.

On the second point, it should not be thought that Mill holds that a proper name is incapable of conveying meaning, but that any particular proper name has no definitive or essential meaning, unlike the case of general names. A proper name is ‘an unmeaning mark which we connect in our minds with the idea of the object, in order that whenever this mark meets our eyes or occurs to our thoughts, we may think of that individual object.’ Though it is tempting to interpret this remark as a mistake of self-contradiction, in that an ‘unmeaning mark’ cannot connect to anything, let alone an idea, it is more likely that Mill intends to convey that a proper name acts only to
CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

associate together previously held ideas of its bearer, and to allow new ideas to join in the association. None of these ideas act to fix the identity of the denotation, since this is fixed when the name is introduced. Thus the ideas are not necessarily conveyed by the name, nor necessarily attributed to its bearer in its use, nor essential to its identity as the particular name it is.

The essential distinction between connotative and non-connotative names is not then a distinction of meaningfulness versus meaninglessness. It is rather that the denotation, or extension, of the connotative name is determined by a connotation previously set up, such that objects are brought into or out of the class of objects denoted at various times according to attributes they come to acquire or lose; a class which may have zero, one, or many members at any particular time. In contrast, proper names are freely chosen once only to distinguish a single object from a multitude of others, and "...are attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on the continuance of any attribute of the object."\(^{11}\)

2.1.2 Concluding Remarks

This view of proper names is quite an idealised one; it represents how we would expect to think of the role of proper names in language, not as words that are defined or attributive in any way, but merely as means of identifying objects independently of any attributes they might have, yet still functioning to connect an object with any known attributes of it. It is also logically ideal; the names of objects may simply be regarded as individual letter-constants in a logical system, directly representing real objects, with no analysis of their attributes, or any other separate determination of their identity, required for
their use, although more recent developments of predicate logic, inspired by the analyses of Russell, which we will consider later in this chapter, have attempted to advance beyond this assumption of the identity of individual constant-letters and proper names.

However, while this view of the properties of proper names may be quite desirable, it provides no account of how names function to provide them. Indeed, the very notion that the meaning of a name is its denotation, which is quite independent of our ideas and sensations of it is problematic on Mill's own view. He states that '...of either body or mind, further than the feelings which the former excites, and which the latter experiences, we do not, according to the best existing doctrine, know anything; and if anything, logic has nothing to do with it, or the manner in which it is acquired.' In other words, as sentient beings, we are stuck between the external world and the mind, having only sensations and ideas of either, and direct knowledge of neither. If this is so, then any knowledge we may have of a name's denotation is possessed as an idea, or a sensation, which, as Mill says, is not the thing to which a name is intended to refer, and which, if brought forth by a non-connotative name, does not provide any means of establishing the correct object to which the name refers. Then it would appear that the denotation is really unknowable as an independent object, so how are we even justified in calling it an 'object', and how are we to make reference to it at all; surely any attempt can only in the end fall back onto our sensations and ideas of it? Are we then not unavoidably led to conflate the denotation of a name with the various ideas and sensations associated with it? In short, how are we properly to distinguish the idea or sensation of the object from the object
itself, while claiming that reference is made to the object and not to our idea or sensation of it? This question, which Mill inadvertently raises, will frequently recur as a dominant theme in the subsequent discussion, as the problem of making sense of the notion of the reference of proper names, and how this is to be distinguished, if at all, from the meaning of proper names.

2.2 Gottlob Frege

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), in the preface of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, remarked that although the science of logic had not lost any ground since Aristotle's day, it had not gained any either. If anyone is to take the credit for remedying that state of affairs, it should be Frege, the founder of predicate logic. His interest in language, which came relatively late in his career, was motivated by a desire to see a scientific study of it securely founded on the logical methods he had developed, a foundation he considered philosophy would provide.

2.2.1 On Sense and Reference

Meaning, for Frege, has both objective and subjective counterparts. Ideas are private, subjective, and cannot be shared, while thoughts are objective and exist independently of our ideas. He sees this objective basis of meaning necessary in order to account for the fact that we are able to communicate with and understand each other. If thoughts had no objective existence, we would simply not be able to share them. He says that the relationship between ideas of the subjective mind and thoughts is analogous to the re-
CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

relationship between sense-data and the objects of which we are aware. We grasp thoughts by means of our ideas just as we grasp objects by means of our sensory awareness.

The extension of the logical vocabulary to include not only things and truths, but meanings as well, is consistent with a logician's desire to found an objective basis for the philosophy of language by means of the stipulation of an objective existence for all its components. Frege calls the part of the objective meaning which is possessed by a word or phrase, and which corresponds to the thought of it, its sense, or indirect reference, and maintains that every sign has a sense. The corresponding direct reference is, in the case of a proper name, a thing of the world, and in the case of a proposition, a truth of the world. Just as complex signs, such as propositions, are built up from simpler ones, such as names, so are the senses of complex signs built up, or constituted, from the senses of simpler ones. Thus Frege establishes a vocabulary of objective entities that accounts for communication between people, in the making of reference to objective, shared meaning, and for our awareness of the world, in the making of reference to things and truths of it.

In order to alleviate any doubts that proper names possess senses independently of their direct references, Frege argues that the object itself cannot possibly be a constituent of the meaning of a proposition in which its name occurs: "that part of the thought [or sense] which corresponds to the name 'Etna' cannot be Mount Etna itself; ... it seems to me absurd that pieces of lava, even pieces of which I had no knowledge, should be parts of my thought [of Etna]." Thus there must exist a sense corresponding to the use of the name 'Etna' over and above Mount Etna, which contributes to the meaning
of the proposition. Further, the revelation that two names which happen to name the same thing, for example, the mountain originally called ‘Aphla’ and ‘Ateb’ when viewed from different observation points, do in fact name the same thing, is not analytic but synthetic.\textsuperscript{26} If the senses of the names were identical with their references, the identity would be a tautology, and knowledge of it analytic. In saying ‘Aphla is Ateb’, in making the empirical discovery, the two names which are constituents of this proposition must have non-identical senses which are, respectively, the constituents of the sense of the proposition. In short, ‘Aphla’ and ‘Ateb’ are different names because they have different senses.\textsuperscript{27}

\section*{2.2.2 On \textit{Begriffsschrift}}

Frege observes that while ordinary language is such that sometimes propositions are ambiguous and possess no reference to either the ‘True or the False’, and that proper names quite often possess no actual reference to an object in the observable world, he considers this a fault of language that would not occur in a logically perfect language, or \textit{Begriffsschrift}.\textsuperscript{28} That language would be constructed just so that every sign has, corresponding to its sense, which is defined in terms of other signs, a reference. In the case of a name the reference is an object of the world,\textsuperscript{29} and in the case of a proposition it is a truth-value. Frege says only that in ordinary language reference is made because ‘the striving for truth...drives us always to advance from the sense to the reference.’\textsuperscript{30} He avoids the problem of accounting for exactly how this occurs by merely stipulating that references in a logically perfect language are a part of the definitions of names and propositions, or logically follow
in the cases of propositions which are not given as axioms of a particular linguistic system.

Frege also observes that in ordinary language proper names do not have invariable senses, since they vary from usage to usage. He concludes that 'such variations of sense...are to be avoided in the theoretical structure of a demonstrative science and ought not to occur in a perfect language.'

Although he says the variations 'may be tolerated' if the reference remains the same, again he offers no account of how such variations are to be handled, since they simply do not occur in Begriffsschrift.

2.2.3 Concluding Remarks

Although Frege provides an argument which shows that there is a definite distinctness between what a name means to us, what Mill regards as the ideas associated with it, and what we mean in our use of a name, its reference or denotation, he is unable to express precisely in what this distinction consists. Further, his argument, based on certain identity statements of names such as 'Ateb is Aphla', does not establish that such a meaning or sense is an objective entity in the way he describes. In addition, he avoids the problem that proper names have variable senses, which, if names are recognised by their senses, would appear to imply that the same name, that is, one having an invariable reference, would be different to different people, and he avoids explaining how their senses can account for the separate references, by merely stipulating that these are all problems produced by the defects of ordinary language, and would not occur, by definition, in a logically perfect language. But this solution leaves us wondering if, firstly, ordinary language is logically
unanalysable, which could just as easily be regarded a fault of logic as one of language, and secondly, if a logical language really could be constructed to solve these problems, by definition, while maintaining applicability to the actual world of things, thoughts, and truths, that is, without merely lapsing into a formal game of symbol manipulation. Beyond the contribution of the conclusion that proper names do have some kind of meaning that is independent of their reference, Frege has not provided any really tangible or workable solution to the central problems that confront us.

2.3 Bertrand Russell

Russell's theory of proper names is the most complex and involved of those we deal with in this chapter. He is one of the most encyclopedic of philosophers, both in range and extent, and to properly consider his position on names we need to consider, in conjunction with it, his overall views of knowledge and existence. The preliminary task of presenting a summary of those views is complicated by the fact that he was not afraid of changing them, and did so in marked ways as his thinking progressed. But his underlying approach to the problems he tackled remains, nevertheless, fundamentally the same throughout his work, at least as far as is relevant to the topic of proper names. It is with this approach, then, that we must start.

2.3.1 Russell's Metaphysic

Russell is reluctant to incorporate the notion of 'substance', that is, of some kind of stuff that lies behind our sensations, and hence our direct awareness,
CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

of the external world, into an explanation of our knowledge of it. This notion, he says, which provides the identity of things that enter into ordinary day-to-day conversation, is brought about by a loose way of thinking, lacking the sophistication required for philosophical discussion. In accordance with Occam's Razor, the law of parsimony, he holds that if a theory depends on such a notion it is more likely to be wrong than if it does not. On principle he disapproves of any use of it, although this is not to deny the possibility of knowledge of substance, but merely to refuse to affirm it.

Russell begins by avoiding this assumption, saying only that all knowledge begins with the world of experience, with things with which we are directly acquainted, unmediated by language. The only things with which he is prepared to admit we are directly acquainted are sense-data. But knowledge by acquaintance is not the only kind of knowledge there is, for we also know things by description.

This kind of knowledge is required, of course, if we are to express the knowledge of things with which we are acquainted to ourselves or to others, to provide for knowledge of things with which we have no direct experience, and to infer new knowledge from old. Knowledge by description is provided by propositions which are either true or false depending on the facts of the world, and is derived entirely from knowledge by acquaintance. Thus '[e]very proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted.'

Russell brings a logical analysis to the problem of how our knowledge is built up from these constituents, and it is in considering the characteristics of these constituents that we first meet his changing views on the way to go
about understanding the nature of things.

In his earlier writings, the sense-data with which we are acquainted are elements of experience, such as those of redness, roundness, and so on, which he calls atoms. These do not depend for their existence on relations with any other thing; he imagines, for example, the logical possibility of a mind coming into existence, being aware of a patch of red, and then immediately ceasing to exist.

Since we can necessarily tell two instances of identical sense-data apart, a sense-datum is individuated not only by its qualitative distinctiveness, for example, its particular shade of redness, but also by its spatio-temporal position. Thus these elements are particular qualities, or particulars; for example, a particular shade of whiteness in a particular place at a particular time. On the other hand, a universal quality is simply the quality itself; it is not tied down to a particular location or time. Though it would be possible to take the view that the simple elements of experience are universal qualities and not particular ones, Russell rejects this idea in favour of particulars because, he argues, such a view would involve invoking some notion of substance to fix qualities in the individual places and times in which they were experienced.

The entire external world of which we are aware is constructed from many of these particulars, correlated in certain ways so as to give us the experience of the objects that we are familiar with. The only difference between a real chair and a hallucination of a chair, on this view, is the way in which various sense-data are correlated with each other. 'Real' objects, which are experienced repeatedly, whether scientific, such as electrons, or everyday,
such as chairs, are 'logical fictions' that have no objective existence, such as might be given by substance, outside either the structural accounts of the various correlations of sense-data that go to make them up, which we know by description, or the correlations themselves, which we know by acquaintance.47

These structural accounts of the existence of things are provided by propositions, as we have seen, whose constituents, ultimately, are not only references to sense-data, or particulars, but also to other unanalysable simples, universals such as relations and qualities.48 The meanings of all these constituents, not only of particulars, are incapable of being defined in any way, for example, by description; we understand them only by being acquainted with them directly.49 The facts which true propositions express, are, in contrast, known indirectly, by description, though they have no less of an objective existence in themselves, since the propositions are true when corresponding to the possible or actual correlations of sense-data which they are about.50

Russell acknowledges that the notion of a particular does not really eliminate the notion of substance, since different particulars, which are qualitatively identical, are distinguished by their spatio-temporal position. The notion of space and time, independent of qualities and functioning to distinguish individual occurrences of them, is no different in principle from a notion of substance that might act to fix location in time and space; logically speaking, a particular serves the purpose of, or rather, presupposes, a substance.51

Russell begins by rejecting an analysis which depends on the assumptions of 'substance', that is, of an individual or particular essence that is
responsible for the identity of an object—which may be nothing more than a spatio-temporal position—but which is really unknowable because it lies hidden behind the various sense-data and ideas we have of it. He then builds up a system of acquiring and expressing knowledge of the world and of objects in it that manages, by allowing only acquaintance with sense-data, to avoid the issue of identity of objects entirely. That his view affirms the identity of indiscernibles as analytic is, he says, one of its best features.\textsuperscript{52} The identity of objects is assumed, on the other hand, by Mill, in positing that the identity of a proper name is given by the identity of its denotation or reference, independent of our ideas and sensations of it, and by Frege, who holds that the identity of a name is given by the identity of its sense, which determines its reference. However, neither Mill nor Frege are successful in accounting for the ability of proper names to express this identity. We will now see if Russell is any more successful at explaining the use of proper names by rejecting the concept of the identity of objects, or ‘substance’, entirely.

2.3.2 On the Role of Proper Names

As we have seen, knowledge by description is expressed propositionally, and propositions consist, among other things, of words for things, or proper names. Russell recognises two kinds: firstly, the kind of word that directly stands in for an individual thing, which, as we have seen, is strictly the logician’s idea of a proper name, and secondly, the kind of word that stands in the subject position of a proposition, and which is thought to stand in for an individual thing, which is the everyday or linguistic idea of a proper name.\textsuperscript{53}

On Russell’s view of existence there are no things to which ‘logically’
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Proper names\textsuperscript{54} can refer other than particular sense-data, since any such thing would be a complex, constructed from those particulars, and not an individual entity or thing.\textsuperscript{55} Language, which has grown up in a haphazard and rather undirected way, has very few words that act as proper names in this sense, says Russell, which is otherwise than it would have been if logicians or philosophers had invented it for their own purposes.\textsuperscript{56}

Proper names of the everyday or linguistic variety must, then, be associated with complexes, not particulars, since the things we name in ordinary life are not simple sense-data, but complex arrangements of them.\textsuperscript{57} However, unlike in the case of names of particulars, which would be associated directly with the things they name by simply standing in for them,\textsuperscript{58} ordinary proper names cannot be associated directly with the things they name.\textsuperscript{59} If they were, it would be impossible to express anything about something to which a name referred, if in fact that thing did not exist; because in that case, any proposition employing such a name would be meaningless.\textsuperscript{60} To put it another way, a proper name could not occur without entailing a reference to some object; a word that did not refer would not be a name but just a meaningless noise.\textsuperscript{61} But non-denoting names abound in language; indeed, it is meaningful to enquire about any proper name whether it really denotes an object or not.\textsuperscript{62} Therefore, proper names represent knowledge of things indirectly, not the things themselves; there must be some intermediary definition, or description, associated with a name that allows us to analyse it and decide whether it names something or not, or indeed anything else about it. Ordinary proper names are ‘truncated’ or ‘abbreviated’ descriptions,\textsuperscript{63} or ‘denoting complexes’.\textsuperscript{64}
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In any case, we can see that on Russell's view of existence names must represent descriptions, since they are not names for the things with which we are acquainted, the sense-data, they must be names for things which we know only by description, the logical fictions which we ordinarily think of as the 'things' of the world. Proper names represent knowledge by description of correlations of sense-data, on some suitable interpretation of 'represent'.

2.3.3 On the Meaning of Proper Names

If names are abbreviations for descriptions, then when we use a name we would presumably mean to refer to an 'object', or logical fiction, by means of some description that we would be prepared to substitute for it. Yet Russell does not admit that descriptions account for their denotations by way of any meaning we ascribe to them. Consider, for example, the two descriptions that act as denoting phrases in the two propositions, 'The present king of England is bald' and 'The present king of France is bald'. The propositions are very different, since one is about someone, and the other is not, and yet this distinction cannot be made on the basis of any difference in the meanings of the denoting phrases, which are provided by the constituent signs, not the existence of something. The absence of independent knowledge about the existence of either king does not detract from what we understand by either 'the present king of France' or 'the present king of England'. How, then, would the meaning of a description account for the existence of its denotation, and hence a reference to it?

Russell's solution to this problem is not to state that meanings and denotations are formally equivalent, which would be incompatible with his view
that all complexes are 'logical fictions', but that a description, by itself, has neither a denotation nor a meaning either of which is about a denotation. For example, the indefinite description 'an author of Waverley' is not a statement about anything; it does not have a meaning that concerns any particular thing. There is no more reason to suppose that the definite description 'the author of Waverley' has a meaning or denotation either, since it is merely equivalent to the indefinite description with a uniqueness condition attached. Although we may associate some psychological concept or meaning with the description if we so wish, corresponding to the meanings of its constituents, it has no logically relevant meaning in the sense of having an intension that determines an extension.

Russell provides a logical analysis of descriptions which shows that an intended object only becomes apparent when a description is embedded in a proposition that expresses some fact concerning it. A meaning is then evident, but only in the narrow sense of the concept of the possible existence of an object with certain properties, but once this analysis is completed, the description that we started out with is seen to have become completely broken up and absorbed into the proposition.

Consider, for example, the minimal proposition containing 'the author of Waverley' which is simply 'the author of Waverley exists'. This reduces to, on Russell's analysis, 'It is not always false of x that x wrote Waverley, that it is always true of y that if y wrote Waverley, y is identical with x.' The description 'the author of Waverley has supplied some properties, and a possible object in the form of an open variable, namely 'x', but we have lost any reference to the such-and-such, which is the mark of a definite
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description. Thus names which do not refer reduce to descriptions which either describe something, if the propositions concerning them are true, or do not describe anything, if the propositions concerning them are false. Nowhere in the interpretation of the proposition is there an appeal either to a 'meaning' or to a 'denotation' of the name, or any description it abbreviates. In this way we can understand propositions concerning some named object even when we are not acquainted with the object, and can assert things of objects which do not exist, since no appeal need be made to the existence of anything, except as the verification of a proposition.

The analysis that Russell proposes reduces Frege's examples of identity statements between proper names, which he supposes to prove that names have senses distinct from their references, to statements that there is some unique entity with such-and-such properties which is also an entity with such-and-such other properties, which syntheticity shows nothing more than that we can construct statements asserting empirically verifiable properties of possibly existent objects. As far as meaning is concerned, Russell allows only for a psychological concept, corresponding to Frege's subjective idea, which is given by the constituent signs of a denoting phrase. Thus there is no such thing as the objective sense of a name, and reference is broken up into a series of qualities asserted to apply to some object, and which only occurs when the name is used in a proposition. Names and descriptions thus have no significance when standing alone.

Russell's denial of a logically relevant objective meaning is reflected in his claim that the ambiguity and imprecision of the ideas expressed by language is entirely desirable, and, in fact, quite necessary for communication to take
place, since no two people share exactly the same experiences and thus never have exactly the same ideas. This is to be contrasted with Frege’s view that the independent existence of meaning, objectively construed, is required to account for the communication of thoughts.

2.3.4 On the Reference of Proper Names

We saw how Russell began by refusing to make use of any notion of substance in accounting for knowledge of the external world, preferring to leave the question of its existence open. Instead, he affirms, the only things we can truly know are qualities as they appear to us in the form of sense-data. He goes on to build a logical account of language structure that mirrors, in its construction of logical fictions, the structure of the correlations of sense-data, with facts expressed by truthful propositions which successfully match those correlations.

On this view, ordinary proper names are entirely superfluous, and the descriptions they abbreviate do not refer to anything, but are used in propositions only to assert that certain kinds of correlations of sense-data possibly or actually exist. Thus, says Russell, the use of ordinary proper names as if they refer to individuals ‘embod[ies] a false metaphysic.’ In other words, he begins by refusing to affirm that there is any such thing as substance that lies behind our experience of objects, and which would account for their individuality, and ends by rejecting any possible meaningful use of it.

We might be excused for being immediately suspicious of such a move. Objects as ordinarily thought of, says Russell, are logical fictions, and he then goes on to show that when we think we are referring to things in using
proper names we are really making assertions about certain kinds of correlations of sense-data, such that reference to an object is completely impossible, all references to the external world being merely internal references to experienced sense-data. But to say that common-sense intuitive notions of the unity of the things we perceive are oversimplifications of the true state of affairs is one thing; to say they are downright false is quite another. Apparently, we only ever make assertions that some entity exists and has the qualities ascribed, the entity being represented by the open variable on Russell’s analysis. But we may well ask: What is the nature of existence that this variable represents? What kind of a word could ever replace it?

If we were naïve about what Russell is really doing, we would simply say that we could replace it with the name of whatever object satisfies the truth conditions of the proposition in which it appears; ‘Scott’, for example, in the above analysis. But of course, if we were to do that, we would have to effect Russell’s analysis and unearth some definite description that we think the name abbreviates, and rewrite the proposition to incorporate the qualities that the name ascribes. This, of course, does not eliminate the open variable from the proposition: it merely adds more qualities that are asserted to belong to some entity represented by it. So the substitution of ordinary proper names for the open variable brings us no closer to establishing the nature of existence that the open variable represents.

But we already know what Russell’s view of existence entails; that only sense-data exist, or can be known to exist, and the only name that could be substituted for the open variable would be of the logically proper variety that names our sense-data directly. There are very few names in language
that are logically proper in the required sense; in fact, Russell can find only one: the word 'this'.

This word, he says, has no definition; it is a pure demonstrative, naming whatever is sensibly present to our awareness and attention; a particular sense-datum, or a complex of sense-data that may be regarded as a particular if perceived, unanalysed, as a singularity. There are, in fact, other logically proper names. There are what he calls the 'egocentric particulars': 'that', 'here', 'there', 'now', 'I', 'you', and so on, words that all name some immediate object of attention relative to the speaker. And there are words for universals with which we are acquainted, such as qualities and relations. However, all of these reduce, upon analysis, to a definition that uses the word 'this' in a particular kind of recognisable context. In other words, the word 'this' acts as a lexical pointing device to whatever is present at a certain moment, and so acts in the process of naming anything with which we may be acquainted: 'this is red' or 'this is me' or 'this is to the left of that'.

Ultimately, then, the only word which could be substituted for the open variable in his analysis of descriptions is 'this', and if we did so we would be founding our knowledge by description upon knowledge by acquaintance, as Russell originally intended we should, to confirm empirically our general propositions about the correlations of sense-data.

Yet we do not, for example, mean that in saying, 'the author of Waverley exists and this is he', that a certain sense-datum or bundle of qualities wrote Waverley, as this is clearly impossible, and is not what is meant. What Russell really wants to say is that the statement reduces to a statement about certain kinds of correlations of sense-data that exist, from which substance
might be inferred, and although the correlations cannot be named, only asserted to exist, the individual sense-data can, one of which, perhaps, is this. But in that case all the constituents of the sentence would have to be analysed into complicated expressions using only the word 'this' as a means of reference, which is obviously absurd; even if a logically proper name at all, 'this' is not a logically proper name in the language, for the simple reason, as Russell himself acknowledges, that it names something different upon every occasion of its use. Its reference does not persist beyond the moment of its use; it is applicable only in a particular context, and so would lack reference when substituted into propositions which are context-independent and assert general truths, which analysis would require many different logically proper names whose references are invariable.

As long as Russell continues to insist that no use can be made of 'substance' or 'particularity' beyond the particularity of particular sense-data, he is unable to carry through his logical analysis of descriptions to establish, by sensible acquaintance, the verity of the facts which the propositions in which they occur express, because the language we speak lacks the kind of proper names that could be substituted into the open variables that result from that analysis. In short, his analysis lacks application for want of a vocabulary, and cannot be imposed upon our ordinary use of language.

The truth of the matter is that in using language we don't make reference to sense-data and assert that such-and-such correlations of them exist at all: we refer to things, and give them names.
2.3.5 Concluding Remarks

Russell attempts to avoid the problem of committing himself either to the assumption that a proper name is non-attributive of qualities of something, the thing being named directly, or to the assumption that a name has an independent meaning which determines what particular thing it names. His strategy is to deny that names have either meanings or denotations; indeed, he says they are theoretically unnecessary, only being used to assimilate partial descriptions of the world, and would not occur if our knowledge was complete. But Russell himself says that when logic and the practices of ordinary language disagree, it is logic that must give way. Analysing names right out of the picture with a logical account that replaces them with assertions of relations of experienced qualities, and replaces things with experienced relations of qualities, does not work, in this case, because the logic that he uses has no effective vocabulary that enables it to be successfully applied to the world of experience, which is where all knowledge, for Russell, must begin.

The difficulties we have met in applying Russell's logical analysis seem more to do with his rejection of the concept of substance, and his alternative metaphysic of particular sense-data, than the logical analysis of descriptions itself. However, if we reject his metaphysic of experienced particulars as the only allowable entities to which reference can actually be made, we reject also the original motivation for his introduction of the analysis of descriptions, which was to remove reference to an underlying entity, or substance, and replace it with the existential assertion that there exists only certain correlations of empirical qualities.

Nevertheless, it is possible to interpret his logical analysis without buying
into his metaphysical assertion that only qualities exist, by rehabilitating the
notion that there is a plurality of unified things lying behind the fractured
and disjointed picture of the world that our senses provide, to which reference
is made with the open variable in his analysis. This analysis would still
eliminate proper names from the picture; the difference is that it would
not replace them with some other kind of referring word. If we only go so
far as to assume that there are such individuals, without ever isolating any
particular ones, then we can rest assured that although we have abandoned
Russell's result that the existence of unobservable entities that lie behind our
experience of the world is to be rejected, we are at least keeping to the spirit
of Russell's original contention that reliance upon such unobservable entities
should not actually be required, since we are never put into the position of
having to isolate any particular ones.

This kind of analysis of the use of proper names and the definite descrip-
tions they abbreviate is provided, for example, by Quine. But this analysis
cannot ultimately provide an explanation for the use of proper names to re-
fer, for reasons similar to the ones already described. It permits that the
only true names are the names for qualities and attributes; in other words,
for the names of predicates that are predicated of the open variable in the
analysis, which is, of course, never eliminated. As we have already seen,
if, in the process of acquiring empirical knowledge of the world, we allow
that the word 'this' can only refer to qualities, we can never be put into
the position of making any other kind of assertion of existence other than of
qualities, or correlations of them. If we never have an example of what an 'x'
might be which displays certain qualities, we can never have the subsequent
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concept of what an ‘x’ might be which could be predicated with a quality. In other words, we need to have the possibility of empirical confirmation of the existential statements in order to have the possibility of expressing them in the first place. Equivalently, the statements are meaningless without the possibility of their confirmation; without the possibility of situations arising in which we can say ‘such-and-such a statement is true and here (or this) is the object which confirms it.’ We cannot hope to do away with Russell’s metaphysic by simply denying that knowledge by description depends on, or is derived from, knowledge by acquaintance. As Strawson says, the analysis of descriptions purely as existential assertions is ultimately circular; ‘...we cannot both accept the invitation to look on the expressions which replace the ‘F’s and ‘G’s [the properties] in the quantified sentences [of existential assertions] as ordinary predicate-expressions and at the same time acquiesce in the total dissolution of subject-expressions [the descriptions abbreviated as proper names, or, in Quine’s terminology, singular terms] into the forms of the quantified sentences.’91 Once this point is acknowledged and carried through, then the names that abbreviate descriptions do so, ultimately, by being connected to individuals through such uses of the word ‘this’, not to refer to qualities, but to refer to individuals. Of course, then there is nothing to prevent us from concluding that names refer to individuals by means of descriptions that they abbreviate. In that case, Russell’s analysis of the meaning of names is no longer applicable, since we can say that names mean, in one sense of the word ‘to mean’, the objects to which they refer. It becomes necessary once again to account for the relationship between the sense of a name, supplied by the definite descriptions associated with it, and its
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reference, the object, or unknowable entity, to which it refers.92

Russell tries to avoid the problem of accounting for the special status of proper names by rejecting the notion of the identity of objects and thus of proper names as meaningful linguistic signs in their own right, and tries to replace them with an alternative which is simply incompatible with the normal use of language. However, his theory is invaluable in replacing the vague notions of the 'idea' of an object, or the 'sense' of a name, with a more tangible and precisely designated linguistic entity: the definite description. In addition, although Russell did not himself consider names as being other than pre-defined abbreviations for descriptions, he is probably responsible, because of his extensive analyses of the word 'this', for invoking the idea that ordinary proper names can be given directly to manifest objects by saying something like, 'This is so-and-so.' We have yet to consider in what, exactly, such an act consists.

2.4 P.F. Strawson

Although Strawson continues in the vein that Russell pioneered, exploring the theory of proper names according to the use of definite descriptions that we associate with them, he accuses Russell of being entirely wrongheaded in his analysis of the way we use descriptions as referring expressions.

2.4.1 On Referring Expressions

Strawson begins by affirming, against Russell, that the form of the ordinary subject-predicate sentence reflects the underlying way that we think about
the world. Thus in ‘Napoleon was the greatest French soldier’ he says that we attribute certain things of an individual, not that there was someone whose name was ‘Napoleon’ and someone who was the greatest French soldier, and that they are identical. The assumption, that there exists individuals to which we make reference, is not one that we can eradicate, and lies at the heart of all discourse that makes use of referring expressions.

However, there is a distinction to be made between sentences and the statements they make on a given occasion, and referring expressions and their use to refer on a given occasion, according to the ways that this assumption of reference is made. Just as the word ‘I’ has a general meaning, which is that it is to be used as a means of referring to the person who is using it, and also has a particular meaning-in-use, which is the reference to the actual person in question using it, so all referring expressions have a general meaning, which provides general criteria for making use of them, and meanings-in-use, which are the references they make on particular occasions. In the first case, we assume reference can be made in certain situations; in the second we actually make the assumption of a particular reference.

One of Russell’s mistakes in introducing his analysis of descriptions for solving the problem of non-referring expressions which nevertheless contribute to the meaning of propositions in which they occur, is, according to Strawson, not to recognise this distinction and the different analyses it entails. For example, the general meaning of ‘the present king of France’ is invariable throughout the period from the reigns of Louis XIV to Louis XV to the present day, but the reference made in its use, in a proposition say, at the time of Louis XIV is different from a use made at the time of Louis XV
or today. The general meaning is given by an explication of how the expression should be used, that is, the criteria for correct referring use. It does not guarantee that it will be used to refer at any given time of its usage, although it does, of course, assume that it could be.97 If it is not used correctly, for example if 'the present king of France' is seriously used to refer today, or if we point at a blank blackboard and say 'This dot is white', we may be greeted with bafflement and surprise, with 'Whom do you mean?' or 'You are mistaken, the person you mean does not exist' or 'There is nothing on the blackboard!' However, we would not be greeted with 'Your statement is false, for there is no such person/thing.'98 Such expressions are used with the presupposition or implication that they refer, but they do not in themselves make existential assertions that there is such-and-such a person or object, although an assertion may be made by way of the reference, an assertion about some object.99 This is not to deny the separate and independent status of the kinds of statements that really do make uniquely existential assertions, such as those Russell provides as the result of his analysis.100

Reference, or meaning-in-use, requires the accompanying existence of particular conditions which can satisfy the criteria of correct use that are provided by the general meaning of a referring expression. This is given by the context of use, that is, by '...the time, the place, the situation, the identity of the speaker, the subjects which form the immediate focus of interest, and the personal histories of both the speaker and those he is addressing.'101 For example, in interpreting Russell's remark about the difference between 'the present king of England' and 'the present king of France' one allows, from the consideration of the context of a particular kind of philosophical discussion
at a certain time, for the fact that at the time the remark was made, there was a king of England, even if one comes across the reference in a book and is oblivious to the actual time in which it was written.\textsuperscript{102}

\section*{2.4.2 On Proper Names}

A referring expression, or a definite description, is, of course, composed of words which, by virtue of their independent meanings, gives it the general meaning that it has. It is their general meaning which acts to establish the correct conditions of their use in conjunction with the context in which they are used, to provide a meaning-in-use.

Proper names, on the other hand, are not composed of other words; they have no definitions because they do not come into use, initially, by means of any pre-assigned meaning, but in direct association with some object. Any descriptions we come to associate with a name do not define it but are picked up in the course of its use. Thus '... we do not speak of the meaning of proper names,' because they are not in themselves descriptive, '[b]ut it won't do to say they are meaningless,' because we use them to refer.\textsuperscript{103}

The reference of a name must be supplied, in the individual case, by the 'backing of descriptions' that have become associated with it in the course of its use; without an identifiable describable reference, a name is entirely useless; that is, meaningless.\textsuperscript{104} In the case of an object that has never been sensibly present to the user, then descriptions of it are passed to him along with its name from other users, while in the case of an object that has, then the descriptions originate from a combination of direct knowledge of it and the descriptions of others.
However, we cannot in general be sure that the qualitative descriptions that are supplied to us, or that we have generated ourselves, are sufficient to apply uniquely to one extant object; there might always be some close copy of a part of the world that one is unaware of. Indeed, there may even be a close copy that one is aware of; for example, one may have met identical twins separately on two different occasions without being able to tell them apart. On Strawson’s account, we require the additional identity criteria based on each person’s immersion in the spatio-temporal framework, which relates him to every other language user, and to all the objects of the world to which language makes reference. In the identical twins example, the person will not only remember their appearance but the time and place in which he met them, which relates each of them to him uniquely; in the case of names that are passed to us by way of other speakers, we have the person or other source from which is received the name and any descriptions of the object to which it refers. All of the descriptions that each person possesses for any given name, assuming they are correct, thus fit together in a common story, united by the one spatio-temporal system in which we are all situated.

Strawson thus identifies two distinct families of descriptions that are associated with the use of a name.

First, there are the known qualitative descriptions of the object to which a name refers, to which each user must have some access in order to know something about the object to which he is making a reference; he presupposes that there is such-and-such object, although without knowing that there is only one object which satisfies the descriptions he himself possesses.
there is a group of people talking about the same object, then there must be some minimal collection of descriptions, perhaps consisting of only one description, which each member of the group possesses, out of the entire collection of descriptions that the group possesses, and which is required so that the group as a whole has a common presupposition about the same such-and-such object that everyone is talking about.  

Secondly, there are the descriptions which supply the uniqueness conditions of reference; they enable the qualitative descriptions to be interpreted as making a unique reference. These represent the source of the name for each user; they are not descriptions of the object itself, but the way in which the person concerned has come to know of the object. These, of course, will turn on similar descriptions used by other speakers from whom the name was supplied, and which further depend on other descriptions, and so on; but this regress is not infinite, since it will stop with those people who had or have direct knowledge of the object in question, indicated by the use of a demonstrative.  

We do not, in fact, generally carry out this regress to be sure that we are actually making reference in the use of a name, but we assume, on the basis of our general knowledge and situation in the spatio-temporal network of people and objects to which they refer, that such a regress could be carried out if required. Reference of a name is assumed, or presupposed, as long as all the various stories about its denotation fit together; if a discrepancy is found which throws the presupposition into question, then reference is withheld until the discrepancy is resolved.  

On this view, a proper name has no general meaning in the way that a
definite description has a general meaning, because any meaningful use of it presupposes that it has a reference; a proper name cannot be considered to be a name without being the name of something from which it derives its meaning. But meaningful use of a name has, nevertheless, two distinct aspects.

The first is represented by its association with descriptions of the objective attributes of the presupposed object it names, which is a part of the common pool of descriptions associated with all uses of that name. But in order for these to be interpreted as making a unique reference to the presupposed object, they are interpreted in the context of a second aspect of the meaning of the name, which is the user's implied knowledge of the relationship between the object and himself. This is assumed, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to individuate the object uniquely by accounting for the relation the user has with that part of the overall spatio-temporal framework which the object, and the user of its name, have both participated in creating.

Thus a name has no general meaning, because, firstly, it is not defined, or composed in any way of other words, all descriptions of its denotation being associated with it ad hoc through its use. Secondly, those descriptions which are of unique attributes of the object in question are only partial; they do not represent all knowledge of the object but only contribute to it in a small way, and of course may be different for each user. Although it is theoretically possible to have such complete knowledge of an object associated with its name, it is not necessary to use its name meaningfully. Thirdly, those descriptions do not have relevance in connection with the name unless they are being used to refer or attribute properties to the object whose
name it is, and cannot do so without being used in conjunction with those descriptions which account for the particular relationship the user has with the object whose name he is using, descriptions which must exist by virtue of their respective immersion in the same spatio-temporal framework. Taken together, this is the meaning of a proper name, but it is only relevant as a meaning-in-use; proper names have no general meaning.

2.4.3 Concluding Remarks

Strawson's view is quite reasonable and common-sensical, and it is hard to see how it can be faulted for its explanation of the day-to-day use of names. But really it has avoided the dilemma of proper names by accounting only for how knowledge of their bearers is transmitted from person to person in the form of descriptions; the role of the name itself is unclear. It is almost as if we could leave mention of proper names out of the account altogether, without diminishing its content; Strawson has explained their use only as links between various descriptions which together provide a 'common story'. Clearly, however, a name is not merely an abbreviation for descriptions; it is something over and above that, since it is introduced, initially, as a meaningful linguistic sign, without definition in terms of them. Descriptions come to be associated with a name through its use. And yet, if the name is somehow directly representative of its bearer independently of knowledge we associate with it, and knowledge of the relation it has in the network of language users, then this representation must be accounted for separately, an account which Strawson does not provide; an appeal to the 'presupposition' of a reference is not enough, since this presupposition is required for the use
CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

of descriptions to refer just as well. Strawson, then, has failed to account for the significance of proper names per se.

In addition, one might want to argue that Russell does in fact make the kind of distinction between the general meaning and the meaning-in-use of a referring expression; that, analogically, general meaning is his ‘psychological’ meaning, directing the correct interpretation of descriptions in the logical analysis he outlines, to provide the meaning-in-use. Indeed, he even provides a similar account to Strawson’s of understanding meaning according to context and language-habits.\textsuperscript{114} I do not wish to be drawn into commenting on the worth of that view, since obviously Russell does differ from Strawson in attempting to eliminate the concept of substance, the inherent particularity of perceived objects; but it does help to show that Strawson’s refutation of Russell is based on his affirmation, against Russell, of the presupposition of the existence of an object, and hence the subject-predicate relation of constituents of propositions, as an assumption, or merely an appeal to what appears to be the normal, intended use of language. Strawson offers no separate argument against Russell’s elimination of the identity of objects.

2.5 Summary and Conclusions

Why do proper names present a particular problem of reference, and hence, of meaning? Really it is because we expect two different and conflicting things of them, as Searle points out. On the one hand, we expect to use them to uniquely identify objects all by themselves; appearing in the subject position of a subject-predicate sentence, we use them as nothing more than invisible
'pegs on which to hang descriptions,' associating the contingent attributes of the objects they are supposed to represent directly. Indeed, it would seem we need to be able to identify and refer to an object first, in order to consider various attributes of it. In this use, names have essentially a reference and only contingently a sense. On the other hand, when questioned about our knowledge, or when learning new knowledge, we seem to use names as nothing more than 'containers' in which to carry around various descriptions, picking them up or throwing them away as is convenient, without identifying anything more essential than the collection considered together. In this use, names have essentially a sense, some sense, though no particular sense for any particular name, it seems, and only contingently a reference.

This apparent dichotomy is only made more acute by the way we think of names of objects with which we are personally acquainted, when we are tempted to follow the former way of thinking, and those objects with which we are not—and cannot ever—be personally acquainted, when we are tempted to follow the latter way of thinking. Are they fictional or not? we may well wonder. And then there are all those names of things we have never known personally, but which we might some day: do they occupy the former camp, or the latter? Or are they somewhere in between? And yet, for all that, a proper name is still a name; what is essential to one is common to all.

Mill was the first to present the dilemma clearly: we have the thing itself, though, on his own view, essentially unknowable; we have our ideas and sensations of it, which are private and which we do know; and we have the proper name. Somehow the name is connected directly to the object,
so we can rest assured in being able to use it to refer, when we need to, independently of our knowledge of it, and yet it also manages to connect in our mind all our ideas of the object, without, of course, depending in any way on those ideas for the mechanism of reference. But Mill offers no explanation of our ability to use names in this way.

Frege, however, does; his solution is to set up an alternative artificial language with these problems already ironed out beforehand. As if one unknowable entity wasn’t enough, he introduces another: that of objective meaning, or ‘sense’, something every word has, though we can only be satisfied with knowing our private, subjective ideas which are, at best, vague distorted impressions of it. Nevertheless, it is supposed to provide the means of reference for every name; it is attached to its own unique reference when the name is introduced into the language; one objective entity matched in one-to-one correspondence with another, with each producing a subjective version in the minds of all who apprehend them: ideas of senses, and sensations of references.

Unfortunately, our own rather messy natural language is not so neatly accounted for: even if ideas are called up by the use of names, they or their objective counterparts do not define them, they are not the same for everyone or even one person on different occasions, and many apparently meaningful names, or rather, names that can be used meaningfully, simply do not have references. So Frege only replaces one mysterious connection—between a name and its bearer, with another—between an objective meaning, which no-one can essentially know, to a mysterious object, which no-one can essentially know either. And although Frege shows that at least some names do
conjure up ideas in the minds of those who use them, and that the ideas can be different for different names of the same object, he by no means conclusively shows that all uses of a name entail a corresponding idea, or, if we are sympathetic to his account of meaning, objective sense.

Russell invents his own solution, inspired by the neatness of logic, as is Frege's, and attempts to impose it on our existent use of language somewhat arbitrarily, again like Frege. But it is quite a different solution, rejecting entirely any notion of objects, and dissolving away both meaning and reference of proper names into an ontology of sense-data which admits only that names represent incomplete knowledge of correlations of them, and only when incorporated into propositions. Names would disappear completely if we ever had 'complete' knowledge, whatever, exactly, that might be.

He attempts to get to grips with the problem of accounting for the notion of an object and how it is connected with the use of proper names, and presents a real insight into the nature of knowledge of objects as consisting in knowledge by acquaintance or knowledge by description built up from knowledge by acquaintance. However, his method of bringing his insights to fruition in his logical analysis of definite descriptions—even if it is not rejected to begin with as being intuitively unacceptable, despite protestations to the contrary—cannot be applied in any case, because language is not supplied with the logical vocabulary that is required. Once this is admitted, we are faced with the original problem, although now with a more definite idea of 'idea', the definite description, and a more definite way of introducing a name of a sensibly present object into the language, with a 'this'.

The grain of truth in Russell's theory is that we only have knowledge
of sensations and ideas built up from them, and not of objects, which are inferred, or perhaps just assumed, to exist. However, this observation only exacerbates the problem of accounting for the apparent ability of names to stand in directly for these assumed entities, whose existence, it seems, we just cannot reject or ignore. This problem is especially bewildering in light of his observation that we may apparently make meaningful reference to things which do not exist, or might not; we can ask, for example, ‘Did Socrates exist?’ This is a point which Mill does not acknowledge, and which Frege deals with in an unsatisfactorily revisionist way, with his appeal to Begriffsschrift.

Strawson breathes some welcome common-sense into the debate, convincingly showing how descriptions are accumulated and associated with names as they are used, all fitting together in a ‘common story’ to provide reference for any given name in virtue of the fact that we all share a common spatio-temporal framework that links every object with every possible use of its name. Descriptions of the object provide reference only within the context of the relationship between the object and the user of its name.

Still, that account fails to explain the special character of proper names, that they don’t merely act to gather together descriptions that have been passed from one language user to the next from some original sighting or association. When we use a name we make a direct association with, granted, some assumed object, and only extract descriptions from it if we are challenged about what we really know, or associate descriptions with it if we are learning something new.

The principal conclusion that follows from our brief look at the principal
theories relating to the way proper names are used, and the significance of that use, is that the connection between a name and its bearer, which allows us to think about an object, and which allows us to refer to an object in the making of statements, independently of any particular ideas of it, remains as mysterious as the general nature of objects themselves.
Chapter 3

The Causal Theory

More recent developments in the philosophy of language have tended to favour causal explanations of meaning and reference. In this vein, Saul Kripke was the first to put forward an alternative and cogent theory of proper names that overturns all those which rely on the use of the direct association of names with definite descriptions of the objects they denote.

3.1 Saul Kripke's Causal Chain Theory

Kripke's view has been generally called the causal chain theory of reference, because of its reliance on 'causal chains' of the use and re-use of names.

To start with, a name is brought into the language through the 'baptism' of some object, whereby it is asserted that such-and-such an object will be referred to with such-and-such a name. With baptism, reference is stipulated by the user introducing the name, who either refers ostensively to a manifest object, or uses a definite description to pick out either a manifest object, or
one which is not sensibly present,\(^2\) according to ‘contingent marks’ that it has.\(^3\) However, on Kripke's view, a definite description used for this purpose merely fixes a reference; it is not a part of the meaning of the name, nor will it necessarily be used to fix its reference in future. The reasons for this will become clearer when we deal with his objections to the use of descriptions in this way; for the moment note that ‘baptism’, for Kripke, provides the reference of a name directly, with no intermediary description incorporated as a definition of the name. This name refers to that object.

Next, the name is propagated in a chain of use and re-use, not only of subsequent uses of the name by the person who introduced it, but also by uses of the name by anyone else who uses it to refer to the same object.\(^4\) However, the bare use of a word that sounds the same as a word previously heard to be used to refer does not automatically mean that this use is one that makes a reference as the previous use did. Not only could this use not be the use of a name—it could, for example, just be a noise, or a word homonymous with the name previously heard—it could be the use of a name to refer differently. For example, someone may think that ‘Aristotle’ is a nice name for his cat.\(^5\)

So in order for the chain to be successfully propagated for a given name, it is necessary that each person who uses it does so with the intention to refer to the same object, or, rather, the same intention to refer to the named object, as the person from whom he learned the name intended to refer. Certain words are thus designated as names, i.e. as referring to some thing, and the many names which sound the same but which refer to different objects are thus correctly distinguished from one another.\(^6\)

Kripke calls this chain of use and re-use a ‘causal chain’, and, although it
CHAPTER 3. THE CAUSAL THEORY

is not exactly clear what this notion of causality consists in, with an appeal to causality rather than to the use of descriptions he avoids entirely the problem which has been at the centre of our attention throughout this work, the puzzle that names seem to both require that we consider an object to consist of all the descriptions, or more precisely, qualities described by the descriptions, which we associate with it, so that the name merely collects all or some of those descriptions together, and that we consider an object to be some unknowable particular, referred to directly by name, which acts as the source of all the descriptions we come to associate with it. Instead, Kripke's view means that the name is simply the end product of the interaction between the causal relationship that its referent has with all its users, and the users' intentions to refer to the object that is the referent of the name.

Notice that this view divorces all use of descriptions from the referring uses of names; hence names have no meaning other than the objects to which they are meant to refer on particular occasions. It represents an attempt to reintroduce the 'logically' proper name, that is, a name which merely stands in for some particular without any intermediary use of descriptions, either as a definition that would provide a meaning which would determine a reference to an object, as in Frege's notion of 'sense', or as the necessary association of some kind of idea of an object—though not any particular descriptions for any particular name—provided by the association of descriptions in the use of a name, which would enable reference to be determined ad hoc for that use, such as provided by Strawson's account. However, this appears to be achieved at the expense of introducing the mental act of intention, which is not easily circumscribed by logic.
CHAPTER 3. THE CAUSAL THEORY

We will return later to consider the problems that this view introduces, and the adequacy of the solutions it offers. First, however, we will consider the reasons why Kripke thinks it is necessary to provide an alternative account to the ones we have already looked at, which depend, in some form or other, on the use of descriptions to refer in the use of proper names.

3.2 Against the Referring Use of Descriptions

Kripke brings two separate attacks against what he calls the 'descriptivist' position: one which depends on a particular formulation of possible worlds and the way names are used in conjunction with them, and one which depends on his observation of how names are used to refer in the actual world.

This double-edged attack is brought against his precise formulation of what is meant to be the essential aspects of the theory that descriptions may be used either to give the meaning or to give the reference of proper names. It takes the form of a number of theses that relate 'clusters' of definite descriptions with the denotation, or referent as he calls it, of the name in question. While Russell was the first to advocate the use of descriptions in the analysis of names, merely as their unabbreviated forms, he did so in the simplified way of considering only one description for any given name. In fact, nowhere did he suggest that he did not consider that his theory could be extended to cover the more realistic situation that names really abbreviate groups of descriptions, and that various users of the same name would operate with different, but overlapping, groups. Russell's idea of the use of descriptions, though not necessarily his method of analysing them,
has been extended in this fashion by others after him, such as Strawson, whose theory we have already considered. However, we will not consider Kripke’s precise formulation in the way he sets it out, since it is not clear that it encapsulates fairly all the aspects of the theories which make use of descriptions. Instead, we will consider his general remarks against the use of descriptions which underpin his attack on the cluster theory, bringing out his inaccurate or unfair renditions of the ‘descriptivist’ model as we encounter them.

3.2.1 Reference in Possible Worlds

Kripke argues against any notion that in the ordinary use of language we talk about possible worlds, or rather, possible counterfactual situations of the actual world, in such a way that the objects to which we refer as if they existed in the possible world are identified there on the basis of qualities they possess, stipulated as a part of the description of the possible world, the objects being matched by corresponding qualities displayed by the corresponding objects in the actual world. Such a view would give rise to the problem of providing ‘criteria of trans-world identification’ for objects of the actual world, based on the reappearance of essential properties of the objects in the possible worlds, that is, properties of them which are present in all possible worlds, in which reference to them is made.

This is a bogus problem, he says, because although counterfactual situations are given in a descriptive fashion, all unmentioned attributes of the actual world that are relevant to the situation—the rest can be ignored—are assumed to be the same as in the actual world. Names are stipulated along
with the descriptions, so that objects are given to be the same except for
such-and-such attributes, not rediscovered to be the same such that the use
of some name is really justified.\(^{15}\)

Of course, Kripke is quite right to point out that we neither need to
know the essential properties of objects in the actual world in order to be
able to refer to them by name, nor need to know them to refer to objects
by name in the description of possible counterfactual situations.\(^{16}\) But I do
not think we should be tempted to conclude from this that descriptions are
associated with names in a way which is not relevant to determining their
reference; on the contrary, it is because we associate descriptions with the
use of names that stipulating their use in a possible world—barring certain
explicitly described counterfactual attributes—contributes to the description
of that possible world. For example, in saying ‘Nixon might have lost the
1968 election’ we are implying, merely by using the name ‘Nixon’, that we
are talking about the U.S. presidential election of that year.

It would appear that not only are descriptions associated with the use
of names, but that some descriptions are so well-known in that association
that knowledge of them can be assumed in the use of the name in a coun-
terfactual situation, the name being suggestive of the attributes specified by
these descriptions—in this case, that Nixon was president of the U.S.—not
as an essential property, since we can, as this very example shows, construct
possible worlds in which Nixon was not, or did not become, president of the
U.S., but as a property that can be assumed to apply to the referent of the
name in the possible world unless stated otherwise.

So much, then, for Kripke’s apparent view that proper names are non-
suggestive of attributes, or non-connotative, in the non-technical use of that word.\(^{17}\) Although it is obviously going too far to say that such connotations are of essential properties of a given name, as he is right to point out, they do exist. Connotations may be merely contingent, conventional and \textit{a posteriori}; an argument that convincingly shows that they are neither \textit{a priori} nor necessary does not show that they do not exist, and Kripke does little justice to the ‘descriptivist’ position in committing it to the view that they are either.\(^{18}\)

\textbf{On Rigid Designation in Possible Worlds.}

In all possible worlds where names refer, says Kripke, they refer to the same object that they refer to in the actual world. He calls this property of proper names \textit{rigid designation}. Really it follows from the fact that names are used in the construction of possible worlds, as we have seen,\(^{19}\) and from the criterion of the identity of names: for two names to be the same, they must refer to the same thing. If a name is the same in a possible world as it is in the actual world, it must have the same referent as it does in the actual world. There seems to be no good reason for taking issue with Kripke’s conclusion that names do refer rigidly in ordinary language use, according to the way we talk about what might have happened under such-and-such a situation, or what might yet happen in the future.\(^{20}\) If they did not, we would not be able to use names to contribute to the descriptions of possible worlds; as having such-and-such implicit descriptions implied along with their use, barring so-and-so explicitly mentioned ones. So the notion of rigid designation is not inconsistent with the use of descriptions being implicitly associated with the
use of names.

So far so good. Now Kripke attempts to show that the mere concept of rigid designation proves that the use of referential descriptions belonging to names is inherently faulty. For any given name, he says, it is always possible to imagine a counterfactual situation in which the object denoted by that name has none of the properties that are currently associated with it. Thus, he says, in the absence of knowing essential properties of any given named object, we can always imagine a counterfactual situation, indeed any number of counterfactual situations, in which none of the properties that we know ordinarily apply to the object, and which determine our reference, would apply to it. And since the knowledge of essential properties has never been a requirement for any theory of reference based on the use of descriptions, nor should it be, since we need to be able to first refer to an object in order to ask what its essential properties are, the referent of a name cannot in general be identified by the descriptions we associate with that name. The use of descriptions to refer does not preserve rigid designation in possible worlds, and so there must be some other way of preserving rigid designation in possible worlds.

On the Use of Descriptions in Possible Worlds.

That such a straightforward yet devastating objection to the use of descriptions in the theory of proper names would go for so long without being noticed is very surprising.

What characterises the use of names in Kripke's description of possible worlds is a possible change in the actual state of affairs. In other words, the
reason why names are able to refer merely by being stipulated in a possible world is precisely because they already exist in the language as referring names; no question is raised by their reference in a possible world if no question is raised by their reference in the actual world. In addition, the possible world must be plausibly connected to the actual world, and this, of course, is what makes it possible. The change the actual world would—or would have—undergone in order to effect the possible world must be a realistic one, at least to all the users of the name who are in agreement that it may be used to refer in the possible world in question.

The idea that reference in possible worlds is de facto according to reference in the actual world is brought out clearly in Kripke’s alternative causal theory, which, he claims, is not susceptible to the above objection since it does not rest on the use of descriptions; it stipulates that all references in possible worlds occur by causal chains of the use of a name emanating from the identification of its referent in the actual world; no descriptions, no qualitative accounts, are required to recognise it in the possible world because it has already been successfully identified—and named—in the actual world. We can see that any use of a name in a possible world that did not have a plausible connection with the use of one in the actual world would have to be accounted for descriptively; it would, in fact, be a fictional name, on Kripke’s view.

If this account of rigid designation is correct, then a theory, like Strawson’s, which makes use of descriptions to determine reference can be maintained, if the descriptions are not restricted to describing attributes of the object concerned, but also include an account of the relation between the
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object and the user of its name; an account of how the user acquired the knowledge he possesses. For example, if our identification of Aristotle is, let's say, that he was the last great philosopher of antiquity, and that he was the teacher of Alexander the Great, and we consider the possible world in which Aristotle decided to become a warrior instead of a philosopher and teacher, we can be confident that our two descriptions successfully identify Aristotle for the purposes of the possible world in which neither of them apply, if our descriptions could conceivably be used to tell a story about the young Aristotle and what he might have done, that he grew up to become the warrior and not the philosopher. Of course, in order to plausibly do that, we would require more information about the actual Aristotle than the two descriptions provide, but if we can be reasonably confident that our knowledge of where those descriptions come from in the language community could supply that information then we are justified in imagining such a possible world, even if we do not have the information to hand. If the descriptions we possess in conjunction with our knowledge of how we come to learn the name 'Aristotle' really do isolate the Aristotle of the actual world, then there should be no problem imagining what might have happened to him had the world turned out differently, or if he had decided to live his life differently.

In general, all we need to say to preserve the identity of the object in the possible world in which all of the attributes that are used to identify it in the actual world no longer apply, is that it is the object that used to have some such attributes that enabled its identification to originally take place. We may not know these attributes, but we can be confident that the attributes we do know could at least be theoretically used to identify them. And if this
is our account of the correct use of descriptions, it hardly implies that we first specify the qualities of possible worlds before attempting to reidentify objects from the actual world in them; on the contrary, it follows from the fact that we stipulate objects to exist there by already referring to them by name, so that the stipulations entail that it is the same object that has—or used to have—the qualities we now could, in theory, use to identify it, even if we don’t know what they are.

Once we have successfully identified the referent of a name by means of descriptions, which of course might only be possible by obtaining further descriptions, we do not need to consider the original description as being in any way necessarily associated with the object, which is what Kripke suggests using descriptions to provide reference implies.24 Neither do we need to think of descriptions as applying a priori to the referents of names, as Kripke believes if descriptions provide the meanings of names;25 it is an empirical fact that any descriptions are used with a name. If descriptions appear to have an a priori association with a name, then that is an appearance only; the name is really just stimulating our recall of descriptions we must have learned in conjunction with that name as an a posteriori association at some time in the past. Then if we use descriptions to identify the referent of a name, this is by virtue of empirical knowledge of it, since no name is defined according to the descriptions associated with it, which are merely brought to the name on an ad hoc basis, as Strawson points out.
Concluding Remarks.

Kripke's attack on the referring use of descriptions is misguided because it assumes that such a view entails that there is some set of minimal descriptions that is necessarily associated with any given use of a name. And yet, as we have seen, there is no contradiction in holding that descriptions are used to establish reference, and that we may never know of any essential—necessary—properties of the objects we name, as long as we know, as a matter of empirical fact, some descriptions which do identify the referent in the actual world, not only according to its objective features, but also according to the relation between it and our use of its name in the language community.

Although it is possible to imagine, for any given object, a possible world in which the referring descriptions we possess do not apply to it, it is not possible to imagine a possible world in which all the known descriptions do not apply to it. If there are descriptions which identify the referent in the actual world, then any possible world in which reference is made, that is plausibly connected to the actual world, must have access to some of those descriptions by virtue of its origination in the actual world. The stipulation of the use of names in possible worlds implies an accompanying suggestion, or, loosely, connotation, of these descriptions, which are implicit and unmentioned. Indeed, they may even be unknown to the user of the name, as long as he believes his own descriptions provide a means of finding them, and thus a means of speaking about the same object. If this were not the case, then the counterfactual situation would not be connected to the actual one by a chain of plausible descriptive references that originate in the actual world. And the fact that possible worlds are often only incompletely described shows
that the names stipulated as a part of their descriptions do contribute to that description by means of implicit, unmentioned descriptions.

3.2.2 Reference in the Actual World

The foregoing refutation of Kripke's argument, that reference cannot be accounted for in possible worlds through the use of descriptions, would be insufficient, if, in any case, reference really was not established in the actual world by means of descriptions. The second part of Kripke's attack against the use of descriptions concerns the ability of descriptions functioning as reference criteria in the use of a name in the actual world.

On the Use of Vague and Circular Descriptions.

Kripke argues that a person may use a name meaningfully without being sure that he can really use the descriptions to isolate the referent of the name in question.26 The description may be too vague; for example, Einstein might simply be known as 'the famous physicist', or even 'that famous person called “Einstein”'. Alternatively, the description could be circular; for example, if Einstein is known as 'the man who discovered the theory of relativity' and the theory of relativity is known as 'Einstein’s theory'.27 However, Strawson’s account of the reference of names is sufficient to explain how reference is made in this case, by the referential use of descriptions according to the context and the relationship between the speaker and the people from whom he heard the name, and so, ultimately, the object itself. In the case of Einstein, the speaker may interrogate other users of the name with his circular or vague descriptions in order to obtain non-circular or non-vague descriptions: he
need not, but the fact that he could is sufficient to be sure of a reference.

Now, Kripke provides no justification how the user is able to use the name meaningfully in this case; if he says that it is because there is a 'causal chain' of reference he is begging the question of accounting for the meaningful use, because he wants to say that there is a causal chain of reference, or, at least, some kind of reference other than one given by descriptions, which follows from the fact that the name is being used meaningfully. However, Strawson's account is able to provide an account of how the user is using the name meaningfully: he is using it meaningfully just in case the descriptions he possesses enables him, in conjunction with descriptions other people possess and which he is able to discover, to find out more about the object, in this case, Einstein, if he needs to. He is using the name meaningfully if he knows how he might tell stories about 'Einstein'.

In the case of a very famous name, the name itself might just provide enough of a description: 'the person called "Einstein"', or rather, 'the person called "Einstein" by very many people', since one would have to be able to take advantage of the fact that it is a famous name.

Kripke extends the example to the situation where everyone in the language community possesses only circular descriptions. The situation would be similar if everyone had only vague, indeterminate descriptions. And we have to agree that if indeed this were possibly the case, then the name in question would be meaningless. But the example is artificial, and specious: if the referent existed and the name was used as the product of the kind of chain of propagation that Kripke advocates, then, since we are here maintaining that descriptions exist to back up every meaningful use of a name,
beginning from the very first use of it, there must be a non-circular ‘trail’ of descriptions that lead back to its referent. In other words, if a name is being used meaningfully, that is, to refer, *ipso facto* the user must possess enough knowledge of its bearer to have the potential of finding out more about it by virtue of his immersion in the language community. In fact, ‘determining the reference’ of a name very often just consists in building up a description of its referent, and can consist in nothing more if there is no possibility of acquainting ourselves with it, because, for example, it no longer exists.

Consider the example of ‘Einstein’ taken a little further. Suppose a person knows someone whose nickname is ‘Einstein’, perhaps because he is a whiz at Trivial Pursuits®. Suppose also that he is writing a research project on Einstein the famous physicist, and, without thinking about his friend, writes on a piece of paper: ‘Don’t forget Einstein’s birthday!’ He puts the note in his wallet to remind himself to make a reference to Einstein’s date of birth in his paper the next time he visits the library. He forgets about the note, and later, on his way to the library, he has an unfortunate accident and wakes up in hospital with partial amnesia. He finds the piece of paper in his wallet but it seems wholly mysterious: Why on earth did he write it? What does it mean? Now of course when he originally wrote the note he was referring to the famous physicist. The speck of truth in Kripke’s account is that upon waking up he can think, ‘I wonder who I meant by Einstein? Which Einstein?’ and form a concept of the person to whom he made the original reference; an intention, if you like, to refer. But he cannot in any sense refer to the physicist in connection with that note, since he does not know which Einstein that ‘Einstein’ is; no association can be made in his mind,
nor does any association have the possibility of being made. That use of the name is meaningless, to him, and to anyone else who considers it, despite the existence of a 'causal chain' of reference, because it lacks a meaningful context of reference and a corresponding association of descriptions of its referent. This example suggests that there are situations in which no sense can be made of a particular use of a name despite the fact that Kripke's conditions of successful reference are satisfied.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{On the Use of Mistaken Descriptions.}

Kripke says that a description may isolate the wrong object, that is, an object not denoted by the name it is associated with, or no object at all, and yet the name may still be used meaningfully to refer.\textsuperscript{31} He gives several examples, all of essentially the same form, one of which concerns the famous mathematician Gödel. Suppose that, counterfactually, Gödel did not discover the incompleteness theorem of arithmetic, but that he surreptitiously stole it from someone else, and that in attributing it to him people are under a general misapprehension. Even if 'the person who discovered the incompleteness theorem of arithmetic' is the only description that a person has of Gödel, he is nevertheless referring to Gödel when using his name, and not whoever actually proved the incompleteness theorem, or nobody, if nobody did.\textsuperscript{32} This must be true, of course, otherwise we could not discover the error and say something like, 'It turns out that Gödel did not actually prove the incompleteness theorem; someone else did (or nobody did).'</ref> But this does not show that descriptions cannot, or do not, determine reference, but merely that sometimes they are wrong. It does not preclude that in general
there are other descriptive criteria in existence for determining the referent of 'Gödel', and that the user of the name is aware that these criteria exist, and are potentially available to him by virtue of his placement in the common spatio-temporal framework of language users, and intended, by 'Gödel', to mean the person who is isolated by them.

The intentions of language users, which the above example shows are necessary for reference in some situations at least, can work in more ways than one when associating a description with a name, and simultaneously, a description or a name with a referent. Kripke discusses the example of a man called Smith glimpsed in the distance raking leaves. If I say to myself, 'Look at Jones raking the leaves', then am I referring to Jones or to Smith? The answer, of course, is that I am referring to both the man raking the leaves, and to Jones; my mistake is not in making either reference but in assuming the identity of them. Using the name 'Jones' I intend to refer to Jones, either by my own previous acquaintance with him, or by descriptions that I know or know other people know; and by 'the man raking leaves' I intend to refer to that man over there I see raking leaves. And this would be true too if I were mistaken and the man is only bending down to pick up litter. In this case, the intention to refer overrides the lack of reference—or the incorrect reference—provided by the description. A similar analysis applies in the case of saying something like, 'Gödel relied on the diagonal argument in this step of the proof', in the example where Gödel is not really the author of the proof.

There is no contradiction in the observation that it is possible to be mistaken about the descriptions which might be used to determine the references
of names, and that descriptions nevertheless act to determine the referents of names; Kripke is wrong to suppose that such mistakes imply that there is no possible means of determining the reference other than that which abandons the use of descriptions. Descriptions are picked up in the use of a name and transmitted from user to user; for any given object that has a proper name there are a multitude of descriptions associated with it. Generally people are aware of this and do not necessarily allow any particular description to unconditionally dominate the criteria of reference, because they know that their particular descriptions are only a very small subset of all the descriptions that might apply, and that they could be wrong about any or all the descriptions they associate with any particular name.

Concluding Remarks.

Kripke does consider the possibility that the 'causal chain' idea could be combined with the use of descriptions, and attributes such a view to Strawson. He concludes, however, that this view would provide the incorrect reference on occasion, for example, if someone forgot or was mistaken where he had obtained a description, as opposed to his own view, which would provide the correct reference in such a case by means of the actual 'causal chain'. It is true that if he truly forgot all means of connecting his descriptions with those of other people, assuming he does not know the object in question personally, then, as we saw with the 'Einstein' example, he could no longer meaningfully use the name. But the possibility of incorrect use of referring expressions is not inconsistent with the actual correct use of them; it is just being wrong in the use of descriptions that are intended to describe an object that is the
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referent of a name, rather than the use of descriptions to pick out the wrong object. The possibility of being shown to be wrong confirms that reference is provided in the use of other descriptions, for it is only with the use of descriptions that we could discover the error—through inconsistencies in the 'stories' about the referent in question—and put the referring descriptions right, at best, or withhold reference if there is no apparent possibility of determining it, at worst. And of course, the mistake may never be discovered, as many unimportant mistakes are not.

Strawson's view does not entail that a speaker need trace the actual 'causal chain' of reference in order to use a name meaningfully, but rather that the evidence of a causal chain, if we consider it such, be potentially available; evidence of its path through the language community in the form of descriptions residing with other speakers. That a speaker actually follow this path is not necessary, but he should in principle be able to. The process of following it may in fact occur as a part of the normal process of simply finding out more about the referent of the name in question. And as we have seen, none of this precludes that a speaker may simply be wrong about the source of the descriptions of the names he uses, or the descriptions themselves.

'In general,' Kripke writes, 'our reference depends not just on what we think ourselves, but on other people in the community, the history of how the name reached one, and things like that. It is by following such a history that one gets to the reference.'39 This is a reasonable conclusion; it is only inconsistent with the view that descriptions are indispensable to the meaningful use of names if it is thought that the descriptions associated with a name act as its definition, which is the view surely 'wrong in its fundamentals'40 since
no description is ever associated a priori with a name. It is not inconsistent with the view that descriptions are associated ad hoc with names and thereby help to establish reference when required.

Kripke's account is invaluable in emphasising the extent to which each user is dependent on the arbitration of the language community and the history of use of a name; however, although the descriptions any one of us possess are partial and may be incorrect, nevertheless, partial and incorrect descriptions play no less a vital role in the determination of the correct references of proper names. Kripke's account does not provide us with sufficient reason to eliminate descriptions altogether. But even if it did, we would not succeed in eliminating them, at least not in the way he advocates, as we shall now see.

3.3 The Elimination of Descriptive Reference

As we have already seen, Kripke advocates the consideration of the 'causal chain' of the use of a name, which originates in the baptism of its referent, and is passed 'from link to link' through the language community up until the use in question. A necessary and sufficient account of reference does not involve either qualitative accounts of the referent or descriptions of the causal chain, since neither of these can properly account for the reference of all possible uses of a name in all possible worlds, and use of them in the actual world can be mistaken and would, if followed according to the 'descriptivist' model, determine the identity of the referent incorrectly in certain cases. This is Kripke's justification for the introduction of the alternative 'causal
chain’ view, which, he claims, determines reference correctly in all cases of meaningful use, although we have seen why his reasons for rejecting the use of descriptions should be doubted. Why the ‘causal chain’ theory is able to determine reference correctly is, then, because it does not rely on descriptions of distinctive marks of the referent, or descriptions of the causal chain itself, either of which may be incorrect, or missing.

3.3.1 In Baptism

Kripke’s chain of reference begins at baptism, when an object is given a name by stipulative reference. He does not suggest that the notion of causality should be invoked at this stage, even though we know that there is, in some sense, a causal connection between an object and the person naming it if it is sensibly present to his perception.

Kripke allows, however, that a name may be given in baptism even when the object is not present, such as in giving a name to ‘the first person born in the 20th century’, or, an actual case, calling the assumed perpetrator of certain gruesome murders ‘Jack the Ripper’, before he was actually found. There is a problem in such cases, however. We cannot in general be completely certain that the description used to pick an unknown object out is a rigid designator. We can always invent possible situations in which they are not. Suppose, for example, that there were two people born at the same time and both claiming to be the first-born of the 20th century, or that there were more than one person responsible for the murders taken to be the work of the Ripper, and so on. The descriptions will either pick out all of the objects satisfying them, or none if there is a uniqueness condition attached
to them. The only case when these kinds of descriptions are rigidly designating is when we know that they pick out only one object, and we only know that for certain when the object concerned is or has been sensibly present, when it is stipulated to refer to this one. It is only then that the description can be partly demonstrative, picking out that object independently of any subsequent determination that the description does apply uniquely to that object, correctly to that object, or correctly to any object. Thus it is only when the object is sensibly present that any stipulation of a name can really be independent of any descriptions used, such that the name merely denotes that object, and no other; and this is the situation prevailing, in any case, in most introductions of a name into every-day use. Indeed, most people, I believe, would not intuitively feel that a name was being properly used to name some individual thing unless there was good reason to believe that the thing had been made manifest to someone, at some time, referring to it by its name.43

Thus we can conclude that baptism does invoke a causal relationship, of perception at least, between the object and the stipulation of its name. In any case, if we are not prepared to go that far, we can confirm that the first step on the causal chain theory is the identification of some object with a name independently of the use of any particular description, which although it may be used to fix a reference, is in no way essentially associated with that reference. This view of Kripke's reflects the intuition, held by Mill and Strawson, that a name is introduced primarily to designate some object, and only secondarily to associate ideas or descriptions with it, which come later, as a result of the use of the name to designate the object. But Kripke is in
no better a position to account for exactly how this is possible, merely by repudiating the use of descriptions. He does not invoke the causal theory as an account of reference in the case of the first use of a name, and even if he did, the account would be at best, incomplete, and at worst, confused. For what exactly is the agent of causation? The object, for causing a percept in the mind of the perceiver? Or the perceiver, for causing his attention to become focussed on the object, and for intending to refer to it with a name? Kripke’s casual theory does not shed any light on the problem of proper names considered in their first use, to a manifest object.

3.3.2 In Reidentificaton

In the reidentification of a named object at a sighting subsequent to its baptism, again, no descriptions need be associated with the name in order for successful reidentification to take place, though they might be so used. I may be the witness of a mugging and make no mental note of any description of the assailant, and be totally incapable of giving any coherent description to the police. Yet I might be able to recognise the assailant either through the use of the Identikit®, or on an identification parade. This kind of reference shows that a name could conceivably be used to refer without ever being associated with any descriptions, if the name is only used to refer by the person who originally introduced it. Again, Kripke gives no account as to how this is possible: he merely eliminates the use of descriptions from his account of reference. And again, this is no solution: an account of reference that makes use of descriptions is not in contradiction with the above observations, concerning the possibility of reidentification, which merely show that
descriptions are associated with a name ad hoc, and if used for establishing reference, do so on an ad hoc basis.

3.3.3 In the Communication of Names

We saw that if a name is not being communicated to another person, it is possible to make no use of descriptions in picking out its referent, either at baptism or at a subsequent reidentification. As soon as the name is communicated to another person, however, the picture changes. Either the object is present, or it is not. There is a case to be made for saying that if the object is present, then descriptions are still not required, since the object can be picked out by ostension or by use of a demonstrative. There is, however, a problem with that view. No ostension is completely immune to ambiguous interpretation by another person present; if enough knowledge that both parties are normally assumed to have is brought into question, the act of pointing at something can be construed as pointing at any number of things; an object, a part of an object, the colour or shape of an object, and so on. A demonstrative is no better; effective use of it requires that the user be able to back up his use of it with clarifying descriptions in case he is required to explain what he means. Although the use of an ostension or demonstrative does not involve explicit use of descriptions, they seem to involve descriptions implicitly understood by both the user and anyone interpreting his use, which could be made explicit if required. Thus, it is hard to see how a use of an ostension or demonstrative in communication is not partly descriptive; there appears to be no such thing as a 'pure' ostension or demonstrative.

In the case when the named object is not present, it is even harder to see
how the communication of a name could effectively take place without, as Strawson says, 'a backing of descriptions', unless the object was previously present to both speakers, in which case the foregoing remarks concerning mutually and implicitly understood knowledge of the object apply. That there is a chain of communication involving the use of a name that connects its baptism to any given use of a name cannot be doubted, for there is no other way that anyone could be entitled to know the name of the object to which it refers. Who could doubt that names, or any words, are propagated through the language community in this way? But knowing the name and knowing to what it refers are quite different things; knowing the name is not the same as knowing to what it refers, no matter how well-intentioned is one's use of it.

What in fact accompanies a chain of uses of a name at each use is an explanation of the meaning of that use; if this is not satisfactorily achieved by the speaker, then the hearer is entitled to ask just exactly what he means. Very often, if both speaker and hearer have sufficient knowledge, from previous explanations, there will be no explicitly given explanation, such as 'by so-and-so I mean the such-and-such'. Nevertheless, if the conversation is a productive one, if communication really does take place, at least one of the users of the name will learn more about its bearer, or learn more about what other people think about its bearer.

If Kripke's account was sufficient to determine reference then it would account for the meaningful use of a name on any given occasion, but as we can see, it can only account for the use itself; for meaningful use we need to consider the transmission of knowledge about the referent together with
transmission of its name.

If this were not the case, then a user of a name should be able to establish reference on any given occasion merely by considering the 'causal' chain that accounts for his use of it. But if determining a reference of a name amounts to increasing one's knowledge of its referent, either descriptively, or by personal acquaintance with it, mere consideration of the 'causal' path of communicated names that connects one's use of the name, ultimately, with its referent is not going to increase one's knowledge of it.

For we may ask: What is the specific nature of this causal chain? What is the agent of causation, and what is its effect? How may we observe them in action? But we see immediately that there is no analysable causation taking place: I am not 'caused' to use a name merely from having previously heard it; no speaker has induced an effect in me by using a name; I make a free choice to use a name on a particular occasion. And so we see that there is no causal path to find in making an attempt at the determination of a reference. One will find, instead, a path of descriptions, residual knowledge that resides with each speaker who has used the name, the name having acted to associate all knowledge to be about the same object. It is by following this path of transmitted, descriptive knowledge that one gets to the referent.

3.3.4 Concluding Remarks

There is something to be said for the idea that a name may be known to refer to an object in the absence of descriptive knowledge, if the object is personally known to the user. There is even something to be said for the idea that a name may be communicated to another person in the absence of
explicitly described knowledge of its referent, if they have a mutual implicit understanding stemming from a present or previous acquaintance. However, the knowledge implicitly understood in these cases must be made explicit, by description, if anyone who has not been acquainted with an object is to make meaningful use of its name. Hence meaningful use is, in general, accounted for by a referring chain of descriptions, explicit or implicit, stemming from knowledge of the object by acquaintance and associated together by a corresponding chain of uses of a certain name. A chain of propagated uses of a name by itself can only account for the ultimate use in question; meaningful, or referring, use requires, if not knowledge of the object, at least the potential for acquiring knowledge of it.

3.4 The Use of Intentions to Refer

Kripke is careful to acknowledge the need for incorporating an account of the intentions of speakers using names, in order that the causal chain can proceed from one user to the next while preserving reference. That this is necessary must surely be seen as disappointing for anyone hoping for a purely logical or scientific account of our ability to refer when using a name.

3.4.1 Intentions are Necessary but not Sufficient

We have already seen why intentions are required for reference in some individual cases of using names. Firstly, they are required to account for reference in the case when a name is associated with incorrect, vague, or circular descriptions in its use; an intention to refer as the language community in
general does, or at least as the users from which one has heard the name do, is required in order that the name refers correctly. Secondly, they are required in the case where reference is to a manifest object, when the description used to isolate it does not truly apply to it; in which case the intention to refer with a description that happens to be faulty acts as a pointer directly to the object, enabling the description to act, despite its incorrectness, as a demonstrative. Thirdly, they are required in the general cases of baptism and reidentification of manifest objects, when knowledge of the object, that allows its identification and naming to take place, is not necessarily made explicit in the use of descriptions at all. Now, because the speaker may not know that his descriptions do not correctly apply to the named object, or are insufficient to identify it, then in any of these three cases such intentions are required, in general, in all uses of a name to refer. Indeed, this is what is meant by having an object ‘in mind’ when using its name; it is having the intention to refer to it.

By themselves, however, such intentions cannot determine reference, since they are effectively invisible. That this is so is shown by the lack of attention paid to intentions by people in authority who require a system of reference which is objective and repeatable. Legal authorities, for example, will consider only reference interpreted in a conventional way, irrespective of the individual intentions used. This conventional reference, of course, still requires intentions to refer, but they are intentions we can all agree to have in using certain individuating references correctly. This is why a proper name must have unambiguous descriptive information associated with it, such as an address or a date of birth. And if a legal document arrives at someone's
address but with his name mis-spelled, he is entitled to ignore it, even though it is obviously intended for him.52

Consider, too, Gareth Evans’ example of a deviant causal chain, which Kripke mentions, and which may be generalised as follows.53 Person A names, by ostension or description, an object $x$, and calls it ‘$N$’, with person $B$ present. Person $B$ misunderstands what $A$ meant by his ostension or description, and instead considers ‘$N$’ to be the name of object $y$, even though his intention was to refer with ‘$N$’ as $A$ referred with it. He subsequently communicates his intention, successfully, to refer to object $y$ with the name ‘$N$’ to the rest of the language community, such that ‘$N$’ in fact becomes the name for object $y$.

In this case we see that the intention to refer as someone else refers is not sufficient to establish reference because the ostension or description brought out by the intention is misunderstood, with the result that future intentions point to the wrong object. Intentions can only be brought out, publicly, by descriptions; they can act at the time of the use of a name as pointers back toward assumed implicit descriptions held by other speakers or the language community in general, or to a manifest object itself, so long as the speaker has enough knowledge to bring his intention out by means of descriptions if that is required of him, or to successfully recognise the object if it is presented to him. Otherwise we are entitled to say that he does not know what he is talking about.

It might be thought that it is not always true that an intention to refer is insufficient to establish reference all by itself, if we consider the case of very famous names. Kripke uses these to show that intentions are suffi-
c)ient to establish reference, where an intention to refer 'as everyone does' is sufficient. However, there is the minimal description that the bearer is famous. Of course, there can only be one famous person with such a name, otherwise the intention is ambiguous to those to whom the reference is communicated, though it is not, of course, to the user of the name. And if one is talking to a group of people for whom some other generally less well-known person with the same name is also well-known, then the intention again becomes ambiguous. So it is not possible to say that even for very famous names an intention is always sufficient, since it depends on the members of one’s audience and the assumption that the name is the one well-known to them.

3.4.2 Intentions and Descriptive Reference

The way in which intentions play a role in the determination of whether a name refers to someone real or not, independently of the applicability of descriptions of him, is clearly brought out in Kripke's two examples of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and the prophet Jonah of the Bible. The descriptions associated with both these names apply to no-one, and yet we consider Sherlock Holmes to be a fictional character, and would continue to do so, even if it was discovered that coincidentally there existed someone called Sherlock Holmes with many or all of the attributes associated with Doyle's Holmes. On the other hand, the prophet Jonah is considered by biblical scholars to have existed, even though his actual name was not 'Jonah', and he did none, or very few, of the things attributed to him in the Bible. The difference can only be in these uses of the intention to refer in the
use of the name and in the use of descriptions in association with that name on the part of the authors of them.\textsuperscript{66} Doyle intended Holmes to be a fictional character; as far as we know his character was not inspired by anyone real. If in fact it was now discovered that Doyle had been inspired to create Holmes by some obscure English amateur detective that he knew about, or that he knew personally, we might indeed be tempted to say, ‘Sherlock Holmes really existed!’ On the other hand, we believe Jonah was based on a real prophet; the author of the part of the Bible in which he appears intended to write about someone real, even though the descriptions he associated with ‘Jonah’ are false, or exaggerated, and the name was changed.

However, the fact that the descriptions apply to no-one in the case of Jonah, and might apply, co-incidentally, in the case of Sherlock Holmes, only reaffirms that intentions are necessary, and should not be taken to conclude, as Kripke is tempted, that descriptions are not necessary. The fact that we know that Jonah refers to someone is just that we know that the relevant biblical author had intentions to refer to someone whom he decided not to describe correctly; his intentions point to real knowledge of Jonah which we believe exist, or existed, in descriptive form, we just don’t know what the descriptions are—although presumably a certain amount of research is currently being devoted to the effort of discovering what they are.

Similarly, we know that Doyle had the intention not to be pointing, with his intention to refer with the name ‘Sherlock Holmes’, to descriptions which apply to some actual person, or directly to some person he knew personally.

Again, in the above example of a ‘deviant causal chain’, we can see that the mere possibility of discovering that there has been this kind of mistaken
intention to refer in a particular case, and hence, by abstraction, the possibility of 'deviant causal chains' in general, is only allowed because descriptions, and the proper understanding of them, are required in order to maintain reference when a name is communicated from person to person.

3.4.3 Concluding Remarks

Because it is possible to refer correctly to an object even when one's knowledge about it is incorrect, and because it is not possible, in general, to know if one's knowledge is correct or not, intentions to refer, or rather, having 'an object in mind' independent of particular knowledge of it, must be required for correct reference which, as Kripke shows, does occur in such cases.

In some cases descriptions are not even explicitly required; when one has been acquainted with an object personally and is able to reidentify it, or when one refers in the presence of an object and thus passes its name on to someone else, or when referring to an object that is well-known among a group of people. It is tempting to conclude from these observations that while for correct reference intentions are necessary, descriptions are not, so that a descriptive theory of reference might be replaced by an intentional theory of reference.

However, this attempt is misguided because, in fact, intentions and descriptions, or, let's say, intentions and knowledge of the referent of a name either by acquaintance or by description, in conjunction with knowledge of how one might come by knowledge either by acquaintance or description, work together: intentions need tangible knowledge in order to be made manifest, while descriptions and particular acquaintances distributed amongst
the language community require the unifying effect of a single intention to refer to an object which is ‘in mind’, in order to unite them in determining a reference, and which safeguards against the possibility of some of the knowledge being wrong.

3.5 Consequences of Kripke's Theory

Kripke presents some surprising consequences of his view of causal chain reference, which we shall examine individually below.

3.5.1 Necessary a posteriori Knowledge

As we have seen, Kripke’s picture makes no use of qualitative descriptions in the ad hoc determination of reference, nor could it, if he were right about the inability of descriptions to determine reference in all possible worlds, and all situations of the actual world. Reference is, for him, determined purely by the chain of use and re-use of a name, originating in its original stipulation to refer to some object. In that case, then, possible worlds in which a name appears to refer must be connected by a plausible chain of use and re-use of the name from some use of the name in the actual world. Normal use, or stipulation, of a name in a counterfactual situation of course implies that it has the required plausible connection with the actual world, if it is stipulated as being the same name. Indeed, this is what makes the possible world possible, and not fantastical; any use of a name in a counterfactual situation which had no such plausible connection would need to rely, instead, on qualitative attributes of the object it named in order for its identification to be matched by some
object in the actual world, and as we have seen, for Kripke, this is not a sufficient, nor even a necessary, criterion of identification.

That Kripke advocates the use of only the ‘causal chain’ has the consequence, however, that the identity of a name is given by its original baptism and direct association with some object, since any other means of identification, of reference, would be descriptive. In other words, if two names can be traced back to the same baptism, and hence the same object, then they are the same name. An obvious trivial example is in any two different uses of the same name; a slightly more interesting example is when a name has changed its form over time, such as ‘Lunden’ and ‘London’, or when a name has been translated, such as ‘Livorno’ and ‘Leghorn’ or ‘Σωφρόνης’ and ‘Socrates’. Another example is that of a person’s first and second given name, or his first name and his nickname; the latter rides ‘piggyback’ on the former and would be considered as having been introduced as a replacement for its use in certain contexts, and not as a separate name with a separate baptism.

Now, if two names have different baptisms and hence different ‘historical chains’ but refer to the same object, they are different names, although of the same thing. A well-known example is that of ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’, which were introduced unintentionally to refer to the same object, namely, Venus. Because of the strictly necessary and sufficient condition of the causal propagation of names from baptism, Kripke can only consider the identity of names when they have the same baptisms; the identity of referents is necessary, but it is not sufficient. This is so because the identification of two separate baptisms can only be accomplished qualitatively. Thus the strongest claim to the identity of names that he can make is that the sufficient
condition of the diversity of two names is that they have different referents. 69

To see that Kripke can identify named objects only according to the corresponding identities of their baptisms, consider that if two names with different baptisms were ever to be identified as the same, then the identity would have to be on the basis of respective descriptions that are shown to apply to the same object. The familiar identity of 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' is a case in point; on Kripke's theory, though he assumes otherwise, these could never be identified, since to do so would involve matching identical descriptions of both objects. Indeed, Kripke is unable to account for the meaning of this proposition that identifies them, because, as we can see, he is unable to account for its being true. 60

It might be replied that Hesperus and Phosphorus could be identified by ostension, that the propagation of the two names through the language community could converge to a single use as one name with the empirical discovery that they refer to the same object. This is strictly true, but it entails making the unreasonable restriction that the identity of an object commonly believed to be two objects with separate names, could only be made when it is sensibly present, as with Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde. So, for example, if Venus had been obliterated by a collision with a comet before the identity had taken place, on Kripke's view, that would prohibit the possibility of the identification being made forever. In any case, an ostensive context of identity is not able to explain the significance of the statement that 'Hesperus is Phosphorus'; the statement could be made, but it would not be worth making. As Frege showed, the statement has significance only if it concerns something distinct about the names 'Hesperus' and 'Phospho-
rus' over and above the mere identity of their referents. In other words, the statement shows that not only are the names associated with their referents, they are associated with knowledge of their referents. If this is true, then the constituents of the identity statement, in order to make it significant, must be brought out of a purely ostensive context into a descriptive context. But this is disallowed on Kripke's theory; as we have just seen, it is not possible to assert the identity descriptively, for it would be to associate descriptive knowledge of the referents with their names as the meanings of the names.

Now, Kripke manages to conclude that any identity between names is necessary, since there is no possible world in which, for example, 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' do not refer to the same thing if the names are used as we use them 'in our language', in the actual world from where they derive their reference. They rigidly designate the same object. But because the identification cannot be made on an a priori basis, since it does not follow logically from any properties that the names themselves possess, nor is it true by definition, but can only be empirically discovered to be true, it represents necessary a posteriori knowledge.

Firstly, however, Kripke's own theory, while correct in asserting that the identity is true in all possible worlds, cannot provide any possible situation in which the identity could actually be successfully made, since any such identification would have to invoke reference by description in order to explain the significance of the statement 'Hesperus is Phosphorus'. Therefore, on his own view, the statement cannot represent any knowledge, either a posteriori or of any other kind.

Secondly, while it is correct to say that the identity is true in all possible
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worlds, this does not imply that it is necessary. Certainly what is necessary is true in all possible worlds, that cannot be doubted. But unless we arbitrarily stipulate 'necessity' to mean 'true in all possible worlds', the converse is not entailed.

The trouble is that Kripke's construction of possible worlds depends, as we have seen, on the construction from certain initial conditions of the actual world, which may or may not themselves be necessary. In the case of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' these were the baptism of Venus with the name 'Hesperus', and, coincidentally, the baptism on a separate occasion of Venus with the name 'Phosphorus'. These are not necessary by any means; they are contingent events. Either we accept Kripke's theory, that is, his renunciation of descriptive reference and his assumption of the coextensiveness of 'necessary' and 'true in all possible worlds', in which case his example of 'necessary a posteriori knowledge' is necessary but is not properly knowledge about anything, the identity only being made a posteriori in certain limited (ostensive) contexts. Or we reject his belief that descriptions are inadequate for determining the reference of proper names, and with it his formulation of possible worlds and that 'necessary' means 'true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds', in which case the example does represent knowledge, is a posteriori, but is only 'contingently true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds', i.e., it is contingent.63

3.5.2 Contingent a priori Knowledge

Kripke's view of baptism and subsequent reference to an object by a 'causal chain' also leads him to conclude that we can have contingent a priori
knowledge. At the baptism of some object, he says, we can apply a description that applies to it with a priori certainty. For example, we may say that the 'metre' is 'the length of bar S at time t₀', corresponding roughly to the definition of that standard of length made in Paris in 1872. In another example, Leverrier is believed to have said, more or less, 'let "Neptune" be the planet which is the cause of disturbances in the orbits of certain other planets at the moment, in such-and-such a position," whence it was subsequently discovered by the astronomer Galle. Because these descriptions have been stipulated to apply without depending on their empirical confirmation, says Kripke, they represent a priori knowledge. But, nevertheless, the descriptions pick out their referents by contingent marks; we can easily imagine the world having turned out in a different way: bar S might not have been the length it actually was at t₀, perhaps because of a temperature fluctuation, and hence not one metre long at that time; or Neptune might not have ended up in the position where Leverrier accurately predicted it was, perhaps because it was knocked off course millions of years earlier, and so would not have been the cause of the disturbances of the orbits of anything. Thus these descriptions express contingent facts; the knowledge we apply to the objects to pick them out and name them is contingent and yet a priori.

However, assuming for the moment that it is possible to say of an object at its baptism that it has such-and-such a property without checking, so that genuine a priori knowledge of a singular object in the empirical world of our senses is possible, we ought to ask, in what kind of a possible world would that knowledge be false of the object? Not any of Kripke's possible worlds, or 'Kripkean possible worlds', because, as we have seen, his construction
of possible worlds depends upon their description from a change in a given situation of the actual world, which is what makes the idea of reference by only a causal chain a plausible one. In particular, proper names which are stipulated as part of any possible world must already exist, with a reference and hence with a baptism, in the actual world. Thus any possible world, on Kripke's view, which uses the name 'metre' or 'Neptune' as they are used in the actual world, 'in our language', will be associated with the objects they name by means of the baptisms he has already described; thus it is not possible to postulate any possible world using those names in which the \textit{a priori} properties applying at baptism do not apply in the way he describes. Thus those properties are true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds in which those names have reference.

This is precisely what tempts us to think that such knowledge is \textit{a priori}, because, having got the names, with the objects in our minds or in front of us, we cannot construct a subsequent possible world in which the properties do not apply. Now the properties in question really only apply \textit{a priori} at baptism; we can construct possible worlds in which the properties no longer apply, at subsequent times, although they will always be remembered, in any of those possible worlds, as applying \textit{a priori} at the time of baptism. So, for example, the metre stick may undergo a temperature change and change its length, although it will still be the metre stick that was one metre long at time \( t_0 \). And Neptune may be knocked off its course by a comet, though it would still be the object that caused disturbances in the orbits of certain other planets when Leverrier named it.

We can see, then, that the 'possible world' in which Kripke asks us to
consider that the metre stick was not the length that it was at time $t_0$, and the ‘possible world’ in which he asks us to consider that Neptune may have been knocked off course before Leverrier named it, are not possible worlds at all on his own view, because the objects in them called ‘metre stick’ and ‘Neptune’ cannot be identified with objects in the actual world by a ‘causal chain’ of reference; they can only be identified by means of matching qualitative descriptions, which is disallowed on his view. What Kripke hypothesises as these ‘possible worlds’ are really possible worlds with names originating in other possible baptisms, not the actual baptisms of the real world, which provide the identity of names. In the case of Neptune, we need to consider a possible world in the past, prior to its baptism with the name ‘Neptune’.

By extension of Kripke’s theory, any postulated possible world prior to the baptism of an object whose name is used as a part of the description of the possible world must be connected to the actual world of the actual baptism by a plausible causal link; there must be a subsequent plausible causal evolution of the possible world which would result in the actual situation of the actual baptism, which, in the case of the counterfactual situation of Neptune, is not possible.

The difference between this example of imagining Neptune in the possible world where it was knocked off course millions of years earlier, before Leverrier discovered it, and the example of Aristotle, where we imagined him having grown up to be a warrior instead of a philosopher\textsuperscript{68} is not apparent if we accept that objects may be identified descriptively in possible worlds. But whereas the possible world in which Aristotle is a warrior is a Kripkean possible world, since we can imagine his name propagated through the language
community from the time of his actual birth, if things had been different, the possible world in which Neptune had not been the cause of the disturbances in the orbits of other planets is not a Kripkean possible world, since there can be no such propagation of its name.

The knowledge Kripke asks us to consider is not, then, on his use of the word, contingent, since it is true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds, though if we do not define 'contingent' and 'necessary' as Kripke does, there is no contradiction in calling it 'contingently true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds'.

But we also have to go back and question our original assumption: is it possible to have a priori knowledge by description of sensible objects, as Kripke holds? We have already seen that no description can be known to apply to an object independently of knowledge of the existence of that object, since there might always be, for any description given, more than one object satisfying it; unlike a name, a description qua description is not a rigid designator. This is the reason why Strawson advocates the use of descriptions of the relation between an object and a particular use of its name, which can supply the uniqueness conditions of the referent of any given name one uses; a relation that is ultimately made up of all the intermediate uses of its name in the language community. If the object is sensibly present, then a demonstrative, that object, can take the place of this relation. In that case, we can never have a priori knowledge about a sensible object except for knowledge that follows logically from a description that is already known empirically to apply to it. In Kripke's parlance, definite descriptions of sensible objects are never rigid designators because we can always construct a possible world in which the description picks out a different object. So we
cannot have knowledge by description of sensible objects without looking, i.e., a priori.

In the case of Neptune we see that the description that Leverrier possessed could not be known to apply only to a single object, it could not be described as knowledge about any particular thing, until Neptune had been actually discovered, when we are able to say that Neptune means that object. It is at this time that the baptism of Neptune occurs, at which point the description becomes empirically true of something—and indeed, possibly false of it.

In the case of the metre stick a similar analysis applies; although the definition of the 'metre' is stipulative, it is known to apply to a thing in particular only empirically. We could not imagine the definition, the length between two engraved marks on a stick, being constructed without the empirical knowledge of two particular marks on a particular stick.69

Thus this knowledge is not a priori in the true sense, which is knowledge independent of empirical knowledge of the existence of particular things. Authentic a priori knowledge involves abstraction from particular experiences to a general case. The applicability of descriptions to particulars is dependent on knowledge of the existence of those particulars, which can only be known empirically; and the knowledge they express is concerned with the contingent relations of universal concepts and sensible particulars. This is not the same as the necessary, a priori relations of certain universal concepts, which is the notion of a priori knowledge in the traditional epistemological sense.70

Of course, this general result is not true of objects which are not of the kind which can be sensibly present. For example, we may know many things
about \( \pi \) a priori, but of course these all follow logically from the definition that introduces it; and it is a separate philosophical debate whether \( \pi \) exists apart from a name which collects all the a priori relations of certain universal concepts together, precisely because it is not the kind of object which can present itself sensibly to us.\(^7\)

Analogically with the conclusion of the previous section, either we accept Kripke’s non-descriptive causal chain as sufficient for reference in all possible worlds, in which case his ‘contingent a priori knowledge’, when knowledge about something, is not a priori, and is true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds; i.e., necessary, according to his usage. Or, if we reject his conclusion that non-descriptive causal chains are adequate for reference in all possible worlds, then we allow the construction of possible worlds, by description, in which ‘causal’ reference of names is not possible, in which case, the knowledge, when knowledge about something, is empirical and not true in all possible worlds, i.e., it is contingent, on anybody’s usage, as one would expect.\(^2\)

3.5.3 Essential Properties

Accounting for the essential properties of singular objects is not easy; we have already met this problem when considering why no particular property should be essentially associated with any name in identifying its referent, since we have to be able to refer to an object before we can ask what its essential properties are. The difficulty is that, in general, when we have got the thing in front of us, sensibly present or considered in the mind, we can imagine the same thing but with any one of its particular properties different from what it actually is. However, though we might consider any one of
properties F, G and H of object z to change with the preservation of the identity of z, taking them all together to be different might be too much to stomach. The ‘nobleman’s sock’ of Hume is a famous example: if the sock is darned once, we are not too troubled in considering it to be still the same sock. But darn it so many times that none of the original wool is left; is it still the same sock? If not, when exactly does it become a different sock? Similarly, does ‘London’ today refer to the same thing as the name did 10 years ago? 100? 500? 1000? There are no clear answers. But if we agree that the nobleman’s sock is the same sock after any number of darnings, then it appears not to have any essential properties at all. Here Kripke claims that something like ‘being a sock’ is a necessary attribute of the thing, but even this is doubtful: if I stretch my nobleman’s sock and fit it over my head to wear as a hat, is it not now a hat, and no longer a sock? We are left thinking that essential properties, and identities of things, lie as much in our attitude to them as in the things themselves. Objects do not seem to have identities beyond those we give in the individual uses of proper names to refer: a form of nominalism.

I do not pretend to have any solution to this problem, but I do want to consider Kripke’s solution in order to reveal, by way of the absurdity of the conclusions to which it commits itself, the baselessness of a view which rejects identification by description in the way he describes.

Kripke considers the question in the light of his causal chain theory, and since necessary properties are those, for him, which are true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds, he defines essential properties in the same way. Thus he considers the source of an object as its essential property, that is, the
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identification of its source at baptism, when we first come to know of it; it is by considering the source of an object that we can come to know of those properties which it must have in all possible worlds.76

However, the source of an object is not really a property of it; it is not a quality, which is what we want. Kripke tries to show how it can yield essential properties, for example, the sperm and egg from which a particular person is conceived, or the particular lump of material that was worked to produce the artifact in front of us. However, this strategy turns the essential properties of something on the essential properties of some other thing which produced it, and this regress can be continued indefinitely.

For example, in saying that the particular sperm and egg from which a person is conceived is an essential property, we can ask what are the essential properties of the sperm and egg. It cannot be the particular genetic code they carry, since that implies that all of the inherited attributes of a person are equally essential. And if we consider the source of the sperm and egg, we turn the question onto the identity of a person’s particular parents as his essential ‘properties’, for whom we can ask the same question, and so on, ad infinitum. We are actually getting farther away from considering the essential properties of the person we started with, and no closer to establishing how consideration of the source of an object can yield them. A similar conclusion results from considering the particular lump of material from which a certain artifact is made.77 So it appears that merely considering the source of an object per se cannot result in the identification of essential properties.

Kripke, in fact, fails to identify the true nature of the view of essential properties to which his theory is committed. If he insists on maintaining
that his causal view of reference is divorced from the consideration of qualitative attributes of objects, then no qualities can be essentially identified with names, and thus singular objects do not have essential properties. This is, as we have seen, a form of nominalism, which makes philosophers uncomfortable because it attributes the identity of objects purely to our mode of reference to them.

Moreover, Kripke's focus on distinctness and sameness of the source of objects as being unequivocally identified with the identity of those objects can actually produce an incorrect identification in some cases; that is, an identification of a diversity of distinct objects when in fact there are no qualitative reasons for identifying a diversity, which is, in considering essential properties, the kind of reasons we need.

Take, for example, a picture, or piece of text, or design, produced with the aid of a computer program. Computers, because of their great mechanical efficiency, provide useful examples of the kind of thing we are looking for, as they are able to produce sensible objects that are qualitatively indistinguishable, and yet produced by distinct causal processes; that is, they have different sources.

We can take an extreme but simple example for the purposes of illustration: a single character typed onto a computer screen. When we write characters by hand, or even type them on a typewriter or produce them by means of a mechanical printing press, we can rest fairly well assured that different occurrences of the same character are qualitatively distinguishable, even if only microscopically, because of the slightly different causal process and materials that have produced them.
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With computers, however, the story is different. If I type a character on a computer screen, then press the backspace key to delete it, then retype it, the two characters produced are qualitatively indistinguishable. They are, in effect, the same: there is no qualitative distinction to be made between saying that the second character is a new character typed in, or that it is the old one called back. And as far as the causal process invoked by the computer is concerned, there is no distinction to be made either. The distinction between them as separate objects can only be made in the mind of the person who produced them as separate objects, since one precedes the other, but the distinction can be dissolved in the same mind just as easily by considering the second character to be the first one re-typed. Thus we see the danger inherent in relying on one's attitude to objects in determining their identity—the lack of objective criteria. And yet Kripke's theory commits us to saying that the two characters are distinct objects—we could even name them 'Fred' and 'Harry' respectively—merely by virtue of their distinct histories. They were each produced as a result of different causal processes, since, on Kripke's view of 'causal chains' the intentions of the person naming them is a part of the causal history of a name. But, as we can see, those distinct sources will never be able to produce ways of making any qualitative distinction, because there is none to make.

One might say that the proper way of identifying the characters produced on the screen is not as distinct characters but as distinct occurrences of the same character, which resides in the computer's memory as a part of its total permanent store of alphanumeric characters. But in fact, if one looks inside a computer, one will find no characters at all, only sequences of character codes,
which are different things, just as when one looks inside a typewriter, one finds no characters, only rows of type. Intuitively, we might want to say that the individual characters on a computer screen are the same, if they occupy the same position on the screen, whereas the individual characters typed on a page are different, even if they occupy the same position on the page, if one is typed in the position already or previously occupied by another. Yet the respective causal processes involved are analogous; the only difference is in the respective qualities of the results, due to the different mechanical efficiencies of computers and typewriters.

We are imagining here two distinct causal processes resulting in two objects that are qualitatively indistinguishable and which occupy the same spatio-temporal position. If a distinctness is to be drawn between them, it can only be done in the mind of the person who has participated in producing them, according to the attitude he has to the importance of the particular actions he performed contributing to the identity of the object that is the end result. It seems unreasonable to have to be committed to a view that they are distinct objects merely as a result of Kripke's causal theory.

The only way in which qualities can be identified with an object corresponding to its source, on Kripke's view, is in fact, at baptism. And we have already seen how Kripke's view commits him to holding that any properties which are identified correctly as applying to the object at its baptism, are true in all possible, that is, subsequently possible, worlds, and are hence necessary, that is, essential. Thus, on this view, that Neptune was identified as the planet causing disturbances in the orbits of certain other planets at that particular time is an essential property of Neptune. And this is obviously
absurd, and suggests that we should reject the idea that Kripkean possible worlds are co-extensive with all possible worlds, which means, in effect, that the notion of descriptive or qualitative identification should be restored.

3.5.4 Concluding Remarks

The problem with Kripke's theory is that it incorporates two separate notions of a causal history. One is the causal chain of a name as it is passed from user to user in the community of language users, which must originate in the original baptism of an object in the actual world, but which can be extended by plausible propagations from the actual baptism into possible worlds. This kind of possible world, which I have referred to as 'Kripkean', accounts for all possible cases of non-descriptive reference, since we can conceive of the propagations of names merely through their referring use, without associating any descriptions with them.

The other kind is the causal evolution of the named object itself, which is much less restricted; it can take the form of any plausible description of the object, and any plausibly described causal evolution. The consideration of all metaphysically possible worlds in the traditional sense is the consideration of these kinds of possible worlds, and not possible worlds of plausibly transmitted names. The actual world is one particular metaphysically possible world, and coincides with the Kripkean possible worlds at baptism, when an object is observed and named, and at subsequent manifestations and reidentification of the object, when it is observed and its name correctly used to refer to it.

To begin with, Kripke interprets his theory to allow only for reference to
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the actual world and subsequent possible causal evolutions of it that would accompany, in parallel, the possible evolutions of Kripkean possible worlds. Any other case would involve a name referring not according to its propagation through a series of Kripkean possible worlds stemming from the actual one, but according to being matched descriptively with a description of an object in a metaphysically possible world. But this would be a reference by description only, which he rejects as inadequate for the explanation of the reference of names. Descriptions may accompany names, he acknowledges, but only incidentally; they may not account for their reference.

From this point of view two inconsistent assumptions are made. One is that since knowledge by description of an object is unreliable, the only metaphysically possible worlds of objects that he will allow are Kripkean ones, which, of course, do not exhaust the possible range of metaphysically possible worlds. On that basis he takes 'necessary' to mean 'true in all (Kripkean) possible worlds' but 'contingent' to mean 'what is false in some metaphysically possible world.' Of course, what is necessary will be true in all Kripkean possible worlds, since they are a subset of the metaphysically possible ones. But the converse is not true, as he assumes. In effect, he conflates the Kripkean possible worlds for the metaphysically possible ones. Thus he arrives, by conflation, at the conclusions of contingent a priori knowledge and necessary a posteriori knowledge, and that the essential properties of an object, properties which are present in all (Kripkean) possible worlds, are represented by its source in the actual world at baptism.

However, in divorcing descriptive knowledge from the identity of the referents of names, he effectively prevents the possibility of the latter two con-
conclusions revealing anything useful about the referents; that is, any properties of them, and even if they could, they would not represent anything necessary or essential in the conventionally metaphysical sense. Additionally, the third conclusion implies that any qualities that are found, contingently, to apply at the identified source of an object are essential, which is a direct result of the conflation just described, and the first conclusion does not represent a priori knowledge in any conventionally epistemological sense, since it would require an empirical relation between a sensible object and its observer to be confirmed as holding true.

3.6 Summary and Conclusions

We have seen that Kripke’s reasons for rejecting descriptive reference in the use of names are specious. All of his objections stem from the notion that the referential use of descriptions implies that a particular name has particular properties necessarily associated with it in every use, a kind of definition, whereas in fact the referential use of descriptions only requires a much looser form of knowledge associated ad hoc, that a given use of a name is backed up either with knowledge of the referent, or knowledge of how knowledge of the referent could be obtained from the context of that use, although the knowledge may not be of an explicitly descriptive form if the referent is known personally to the user of its name, so that he is able to recognise it when acquainted with it. Only in the case when a user is not able to reidentify the referent by acquaintance, and has no ability to contextualise the use of the name, that is, make a connection between his use of it and that of his
language community in general which would lead to further knowledge of the referent, can he be truly said to be using the name meaninglessly.78

Kripke's theory, on the other hand, appears to support meaningful use of a name in all cases where a 'causal' connection and an intention to refer are present, which is absurd, because it would warrant meaningful use of a name when the user knows nothing whatever about it, except that it is a name, or its assumed referent, and has no apparent means of increasing that knowledge. Further, it is unclear in what such a 'causal' connection consists; mere consideration of a chain of transmitted names, from an original to an ultimate use, does not help to supply the reference of that name, it only accounts for its use, meaningful or not, on that occasion.

Kripke's stipulation of the use of intentions to refer does not add anything helpful to the problem of determining reference, because an intention to refer requires knowledge of the object, either by acquaintance or by description, in order to be brought out and made explicit, and thus to establish a reference. However, Kripke's account does help to confirm that the use of an intention to refer is a necessary requirement of reference, since it allows for the use of mistaken or unknown descriptions without the disruption of reference. In other words, it provides for the demonstrative use of a name, not only in uses where its referent is sensibly present, but in all uses, although it only manages to do by virtue of existent knowledge of the referent, either explicit, or implicit, or assumed to reside with the language community. Thus if appealing to a chain of transmission from the original use of a name to a subsequent use when determining reference, the chain will be found to consist in transmitted knowledge of the referent, identified in the use of its name,
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and not merely a transmission of uses of names.

Kripke's theory is invaluable in showing the method by which names are propagated in their use, and the extent to which arbitration by a language community helps to establish reference, but cannot be used to account for reference itself, firstly, because it lacks any practical application, and secondly, because it restricts the consideration of possible worlds to those which are related to the actual world by plausible propagations of the uses of names from their recognised use in the actual world. In other words, it allows only possible worlds that contain, as a part of their implicit descriptions in the form of stipulated uses of names, some known and observed features of the actual world. Although such worlds form a subset of all the possible worlds in which reference is commonly made, they do not represent all of them; Kripke's theory precludes the use of possible worlds which are given purely as hypothetical constructions with parts that are not explicitly or implicitly recognised as plausible evolutions of known states of the actual world, but which are nevertheless commonly recognised as representing metaphysically possible worlds.

However, he assumes that his formulation of the possible worlds is comprehensive and is adequate for all possible descriptions of counterfactual situations, which indeed it must be if his descriptionless theory of reference provides sufficient identity conditions of the referents of names. However, that this is not so is brought out most clearly of all in his ensuing fallacious conclusions of the existence of contingent a priori knowledge, necessary a posteriori knowledge, and the either empty or absurd consideration, depending upon which way you look at it, of the identifiable source of an object
as its essential property. This conflation of distinct types of possible worlds, and the conclusions that result from it, should be reason enough, if enough reasons were not already provided, for rejecting Kripke's theory of descriptionless reference, and restoring the notion of descriptive reference in the form which has already been described, loosely following Strawson, which effectively deals with Kripke's objections to the notion, and reduces his epistemological conclusions to ordinary and unsurprising statements about the nature of our empirical knowledge of the world.

I do not think a mere theory of reference of proper names will ever yield profound metaphysical and epistemological conclusions; rather, as Russell clearly saw, it is advisable to sort out one's metaphysics and epistemology first, before attempting to fill in the details of an account of the somewhat more superficial though related difficulties of accounting for the meaningful use of ordinary language in all possible situations of its use.
Chapter 4

Conclusion

4.1 The Solution

Our journey so far has taken us through quite a diverse landscape of approaches to the problem of how words make reference to the world. We began with a puzzle: how to account for the generally well-accepted ability of proper names to refer to the things which have those names, which we called the problem of the meaning of proper names. It would certainly be good if we were able to finish with a solution; but, alas, if the basic inadequacies of the various theories we have considered has taught us anything at all, it is that, despite the formidable range of their sweep, and the depth of their various insights, we will be lucky to conclude with an explanation of why the problem is so difficult, of why certain ways of thinking about it are misguided, and of the best way of formulating it clearly and sensibly.

We have seen that names do not have any meaning by definition; their reference is not determined as logically following from a pre-assigned meaning
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according to objective features of some object. Rather, names are introduced into the language according to a reference they are stipulated to make. We think of the identity of a name as being provided by the identity of the object to which we assume, or presuppose, it refers, not any linguistic meaning, that is, any meaning that is given by formations of other words, that it might be identified to have.

This is not to say that proper names do not have meanings, independently of their references to objects, since names may be used meaningfully independently of knowledge of the existence of their bearers; indeed, sometimes they don't have bearers that are or could be sensible objects, a fact which does not disrupt their recognition as proper names. A name we know to be fictional, such as 'Hamlet', or the name of a number, such as '8' or 'π', does not have any special or independent status by virtue of the fact that it does not refer to a sensible object. It is the referents that are distinguished, not the names, although we might not be happy about the status of a proper name until the status of its referent is settled, such as in the case of the uncertain status of 'Jack the Ripper' mentioned previously (see §3.3.1 p. 65); a name must have a corresponding reference, just not necessarily one of a particular kind. Additionally, the discovery that two different names refer, coincidentally, to the same object, is a genuinely significant discovery, not an a priori truth, and is independent of their referring capacity as names. And it is not too trite to say that names are often used just to stimulate the recall of old thoughts, feelings, or ideas about their bearers.
4.1.1 The Type Identity of Proper Names

An account of the meaning of proper names first has to provide an explanation of how it is that the identity of a name appears to be at once tied up with the identity of the object to which it refers, and yet somehow independent of it. And this of course is the fundamental problem that has accompanied us throughout our journey, and which has derailed, to greater and lesser extents, all of the various theories we have encountered. It is a problem which is as acute when considering the name of an object that is right before our eyes as it is when considering one that ceased to exist millions of years ago.

A hint at the reason for the difficulty can be seen in the extent to which a nominalist account of reference can interfere with an account of reference that attributes the identity of an object, and thus to the name we contingently give to it, wholly to attributes of the object itself, rather than to the contingent context of naming, and the attitudes and beliefs of the person carrying out the naming: the answer is that it always can. The problem of the nobleman's sock has no general solution; we can give different and conflicting answers depending on the frame of discourse in which we intend to make reference to the sock, quite independently of its objective attributes.

When we identify an object in front of us, we can do so independently of any descriptive knowledge of it, and yet the identification involves the abstraction of a particular, an entity, existing in the world independently of us and our ideas of it. The object is not merely presented to us; we must abstract the idea of an object from the evidence presented to our minds by means of our senses, and impose this idea, the identification of the entity, by means of the use of language, in making a reference, back into the external
world that presents a certain appearance of continuous change and flux, and is not, on the face of it, populated by particulars. The extent of our success in attributing the identifications of wholes, of unities, gives us good reason for supposing that the existence of the various unities is not merely stipulated or invented by us, but is a correct inference of an objective reality underlying our sense perception.

But this success should not obscure the importance of the observation that the initial identification is made possible by a process of abstraction, and the ensuing concept of an entity, or a particular, or an object, call it what you will. It is the fact that this concept is in the mind that allows us to create in the imagination the idea of an object, such as Hamlet, and give it a proper name, just as we see sensible objects, and give them proper names, and, indeed, hear about objects from others, that might or might not only exist in the imagination, by means of the use of proper names.

A proper name is just a linguistic sign that is intended to be used to make reference to an object which is identified in the formation of this concept of particularity, or individuality. This level of meaning does not attribute anything else to the sign other than that it is this special type of sign. This specialness may sometimes be marked off in some way, such as in the use of a capital letter, but it makes no ontological commitment to the status of the kinds of objects to which proper names refer, other than that it is the kind of thing to which we can form this concept of particularity about. We could conceivably identify, literally, anything and give it a proper name, just in case its own individual concept of particularity can persist for at least as long as the proper name persists in the language.
CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION

The minimal meaning of a proper name is just this general concept of assumed particularity, the formation of which is necessary not just for the recognition of an object, but also, consequently, for the recognition of a sign as a proper name which makes reference to such an object. However, this level of meaning is not sufficient to account for the meaningful use of any particular proper name to refer correctly to an object.

4.1.2 The Token Identity of Proper Names

In order to use a particular proper name meaningfully, we must, in addition to recognising that it is a proper name and forming the concept of particularity just discussed, know something about its bearer. ‘Having knowledge’ in this sense may be interpreted quite loosely. It includes direct knowledge by acquaintance, if we have been acquainted with the object in the past, descriptive knowledge of properties of the object, if that has been passed to us in the use of a name, or otherwise obtained, for example, on the basis of personal acquaintance, and knowledge of the context in which the name is being used.

For sensible objects, none of this knowledge is a priori (or necessary); it is either knowledge by acquaintance of the object, knowledge by description of the object originally abstracted from knowledge by acquaintance, or knowledge of the situational context of use, which is not knowledge of the object itself, but merely knowledge of how to connect the use of the name with knowledge of the object.

I am very reluctant to be drawn into commenting on what counts as sufficient knowledge for meaningful, that is, correctly referring, use of a name,
and I am not sure that any general account really exists. What counts as meaningful use depends on the individual context, since understanding the meaning of a word is nothing more than using it correctly according to context; at least, demonstrating to one's peers that one understands a word can consist in nothing more than this, and therefore, objectively, there can really be nothing more than this, although each user might associate all manner of concepts, ideas, thoughts, memories and feelings with the use of any particular word. Thus the minimal level of knowledge required is demonstrated by the ability to use the name coherently when contributing to discussion about its bearer, which may require very little knowledge of the thing itself in some contexts, and the ability to identify the object if re-acquainted with it, if previously acquainted with it. However, both these criteria are vague to the point of useless as stated, and it is always possible to invent scenarios that are exceptional, that outwit a normally competent user of a name.

What is important to note, I think, is that 'determining a reference' is the activity of increasing our knowledge of the object, by description or by acquainting or re-acquainting ourselves with it if possible, thus increasing our certainty that recognition of the particularity which is the bearer of the name is within our grasp. Obviously one's ability to carry this out successfully depends on the existing knowledge we have; thus, in spite of the fact that it is all essentially contingent, *ad hoc* and empirical, and often contextual, it still counts to be considered as the meaning of a name, since it contributes to one's ability to use the name meaningfully.

However, in the ordinary use of a name, we can only *assume* that we have
this knowledge, as knowledge of a particular thing, even if we have had direct acquaintance with the object itself, since the particularity of the bearer of a proper name is itself a conceptual assumption. Hence the knowledge cannot itself provide the identity of the name, no matter how comprehensive; which is just as well, of course, since no particular knowledge is essentially associated with the name of a sensible object. The knowledge only counts as helping to provide the identity in conjunction with the concept of particularity, and it is this conjunction which provides our ability to have a particular object in mind when using the name, the ‘that-ness’, or intention to refer to the specific unique thing.

All correct and meaningful use of a name is, then, in effect, the determination of a reference which is assumed in its use, and there is nothing over and above successful use of a name, even by philosophers, which could be determination of a reference. ‘Direct reference’ is really a myth, if it is thought to be a direct connection between a name and the object, independently existing in the world, which is its bearer.

4.1.3 Concluding Remarks

I have attempted to formulate both the necessary and sufficient conditions of the identity of proper names and the meaningful use of proper names. The rather vague way in which this has been done reflects the vagueness of language itself; I have sacrificed precision for what I hope is accuracy. Whether a referring ‘tag’ is a name or a description depends on our use of it in a particular context. Although no proper name is intended, in its use, to be descriptive of its bearer, nevertheless a certain amount of knowledge, most
of it usually descriptive, is required for that use. When a name starts being
descriptive, it stops being a proper name; an example might be 'Jezbel'
mentioned in the Introduction (p. 2), or 'Napoleon' in 'He's a right little
Napoleon!' Conversely, descriptions may cease to be used as descriptions and
take on the use of a proper name; an example might be 'The Holy Roman
Empire', which was, I think it is safe to say, neither particularly Holy, nor
Roman, nor an Empire.

The fact that the identity and meaningful use of a proper name is provided
by the non-attributive concept of particularity along with a stipulative in-
tention to refer, which are independent of particular knowledge of its bearer,
though act in conjunction with knowledge of its particular bearer or knowl-
edge of how to obtain knowledge of its particular bearer, means that logical
or epistemological analysis of known attributes of an object, normally asso-
ciated in the use of its name, will never provide sufficient identity criteria
of what we 'have in mind' in the meaningful, referring use of a name, if one
is looking for something more than what we have already described as the
activity corresponding to that use. What is actually required is an account
of the mental act of forming a concept of the existence of a particular, and
especially how this is distinct from the concept of a universal, if indeed there
is a proper distinction to make, and of the corresponding mental act of the
intention to refer, plus an account of the notion of the metaphysical partic-
ularity which is assumed to lie behind our sensory experience, and of the
relationship between the concept, the intention, and the particularity itself,
which is presumably made explicit in the use of a proper name. This task is,
I believe, required before attempting to provide an account of the problem of
how knowledge, or worse, information, is successfully transmitted and shared in the normal use of names, a problem which is derivative, and somewhat less profound.
Notes and References

Notes to Chapter 1

1. Russell, PLA.281.


5. For example, after a long discussion, Sørensen manages to produce a definitens formula for the meaning of proper names which merely stipulates a definite description of some thing existing at some time and place, contradicting an earlier remark that a linguist need make no distinction between fictional and non-fictional proper names. See Sørensen, 87. In a similar vein he states that the determination of the actual denotations of names is not the concern of linguistics, but of empirical science. See Sørensen, 59.

6. See Gardiner, Chaps. IV–IX for a discussion of these examples and others.

7. Gamut, §1.5.1–2; Russell, HK.311: ‘...to allow grammar to dictate our metaphysic is now generally recognized to be dangerous.’

Notes to Chapter 2


2. Dionysius Thrax (±100 BC) compiled the first recorded systematic grammar of language. See Gardiner, Chap. II; Gamut §1.4, p. 11.

3. Mill, 27. Note that although the idea that proper names refer to singular objects, or a group considered as a singularity, is not generally disputed, Gardiner has argued that some proper names in Classical Greek are of multiple objects. See Gardiner, Chap. VIII.

4. Joseph regards the equivalence of these terms as unfortunate, preferring to see extension apply to a range of particulars, a species, keeping denotation to mean individual particu-
NOTES AND REFERENCES to Chapter 2

1. Lars, and preferring intension to correspond to what we directly intend in the use of a term, keeping connotation to mean subsidiary, non-essential meaning. See Joseph, 121 & 131. See also Stebbing, 28, who thinks that the use of 'intension' represents 'an unfortunate intrusion of psychology into logic.'

5. Mill takes adjectives to be logically equivalent to nouns as subjects of propositions, noting that in Latin 'round' and 'a round object', for example, are equivalent. See Mill, 25.

6. Mill, 31: 'A connotative term is one which denotes a subject, and implies an attribute.'

7. Mill, 34

8. A satus vocis is a 'blowing of the voice', a mere sound. Every linguistic sign requires a meaning to be identified, that is, interpreted, as a sign. See Sørensen, Chap. I and p. 27; Joseph, 137. Cf. Russell, PLA.187: 'A name can just name a particular, or, if it does not, it is not a name at all, it is just a noise.' See also Russell, RUP.130.

9. Joseph, 138: 'The doctrine that proper names have no connotation is refuted by every criminal who assumes an alias.'


11. Cf. Joseph, 136: Names are initially non-connotative but acquire a connotation in their use. This is a different, non-essential kind of 'connotation' from the connotation that Mill associates with general names.

12. In predicate logic, an individual letter-constant such as 's' might act to identify 'Socrates' in the expression 'Hs → Ms', for example, the translated form of 'If Socrates is a human, then he is mortal.' See Gamut, §3.1 p. 65-69.

13. See p. 29 below, and Gamut §5.2 pp. 158-164.


17. Frege, SR.26, T.43-44.

18. Frege, SR.44-5.

19. Frege, SR.27.

20. Frege, SR.26, T.38, 45 n.7 ff, 51, 55.


23. Frege, SR.29.

24. This is called Frege's principle, or the principle of compositionality. See Gamut, pp. 15, 16.

25. Frege, LJ.43.

26. Frege, LJ.44.
27. Frege, SR.44.
28. Frege, SR.35. His Begriffsschrift was originally intended as a metamathematical language. See Gamut, 16.
29. Frege, SR.35: 'A logically perfect language (Begriffsschrift) should satisfy the conditions, that every expression grammatically well constructed as a proper name out of signs already introduced shall in fact designate an object, and that no new sign shall be introduced as a proper name without being secured a reference.'
30. Frege, SR.29.
31. Frege, SR.24 n.4.
32. For example, on neutral monism. See introduction to 'On the Nature of Acquaintance' by R.C. Marsh, Russell, NA.125.
34. Russell, PLA.280
41. Hence the title of his lecture course, 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism.' See PLA.178.
42. Russell, NA.148, PLA.201–2.
43. Russell, RUP.112–3.
44. Russell, RUP.107, 110, 118, 120.
46. Russell, NA.149, PLA.258, 274–6, EW.93.
47. Russell, EW.96.
49. Russell, PLA.195, 201.
50. Russell, PLA.182–4. Facts are never false; however, a proposition may be true or false. Every fact thus corresponds to two propositions, one of which is false to it, and another which is true to it. See Russell, PLA.187.
51. Russell, RUP.123: '...particulars...are entities which can only be subjects of predicates or terms of relations...they are (in the logical sense) substances.' In his later writings, Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits and An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, Russell abandons the notion of a particular entirely, and replaces it with the notion of a quality,
which, as we have seen, is normally regarded as a universal. Qualities may exist in more than one place at one time, and may exist at different times. Russell solves the problem of accounting for the diversity of spatial and temporal position with only qualities by defining 'point' and 'instant' in terms of the way qualities combine in experience, both possible and actual. Thus Russell finally eradicates all notion of substance from his theory of knowledge. See Russell, RUP.124: The later theory 'has the merit of logical parsimony.' [Note added in 1955.]

52. Russell, MT.127.
54. It appears that it was Stebbing who introduced the term 'logically proper name' as meaning a demonstrative symbol directly representing sense data. See Stebbing, 25.
57. Russell, PP.92, PLA.190.
60. Russell, OD.46, IMP.178.
64. For example, 'Mont Blanc' in 'Mont Blanc is more than 4,000 metres high.' See Letter to Frege, 12 December 1904, in Frege, FRC.57.
65. Russell, OD.46. This was written at a time when there was a present king of England, namely, Edward VII.
66. Russell, IMP.179.
68. Russell, IMP.168.
70. Russell, OD.43, RUP.147, NA.147, PLA.253.
71. Russell, KAKD.29.
72. Russell, OD.51, PLA.250, IMP.177.
75. Letter to Frege, 12 December 1904, in Frege, FRC.57.
79. The argument is based on the observation that any attempt at a definition, such as this one, is inherently circular; it must use the word ‘this’. See Russell, MT.136.
82. Russell, PP.170.
83. Russell, PP.92, PLA.188: ‘You can never put the sort of thing that makes a proposition to be true or false in the position of a logical subject. You can only have it there as something to be asserted or denied or something of that sort, but not something to be named.’
84. Russell, PLA.210, 203, MT.137.
85. This insight of Russell’s into the special status of the word ‘this’ is not without worth: it is certainly true that when learning language, much use is made of it, since it acts as a pure demonstrative, indicating whatever is identifiably present without need for an explicit description, or definition. However, whatever is identifiably present has to be made identifiable first, which may require the use of descriptions of some kind. It may not be true that some uses of ‘this’ are unanalysable, that there are particulars in the sense he means, or at least, if there are, Russell has presented no argument to show that there are. More importantly, while it is undeniable that language is built up over a long period of time by fundamental building blocks of ‘names’ for all manner of ‘things’, it is not clear that it can be analysed or reduced back to those constituents later, nor is it clear that the attempt would be edifying, since it looks like it represents an analysis of how language is learned, which is not the same thing as what language means, or how it makes reference to the world, or what are the truth criteria for statements in it.
86. Russell says the same thing of Principia Mathematica; that it lacks a vocabulary and could only be private to one speaker even if it had one. See Russell, PLA.198.
87. It seems that Russell himself cannot escape this assumption in the use of language. Consider for example, in this statement, whether by ‘Socrates’ he really means some abbreviated definite description in his use of the name: ‘Socrates himself, or any particular thing just by itself, does not make any proposition true or false.’ Russell, PLA.182. Wittgenstein’s private language argument is a different kind of attack on the same theory, that we cannot name, even in principle, what is essentially private to our sensation. It reduces Russell’s view to one of a kind of universe of individual solipsists, who not only cannot share their experiences by means of communicating them, but cannot express their experiences in language to begin with. See Wittgenstein, §243–315.
88. Russell, HK.98, 325. It is hard to imagine what form such knowledge would take, however.
89. Russell, PLA.198: ‘... the needs of logic are so extra-ordinarily different from the needs of daily life. One wants a language in both, and unfortunately it is logic that has to give way, not daily life.’
NOTES AND REFERENCES to Chapter 2

90. See Quine, §§36, §37, and especially the conclusion to the latter on p. 224.

91. Strawson, I.187.

92. It is worth emphasising again that Russell never intended his analysis to provide the meaning of a name or referring expression, nor its reference, a point that has been lost in some criticisms of his theory. See, for example, n. 90 to this chapter, and §2.4.3 p. 39.

93. Strawson, OF.56.

94. Hence his refutation of Quine's analysis of descriptions as referring expressions that we saw on p. 30.

95. Strawson, OF.62–3.

96. Strawson, OF.63–4. Strawson says Russell does not recognise that the meaning in the referring use of an expression is 'the set of rules, habits, conventions for its use in referring.' See Strawson, OF.64. Interestingly, Russell himself makes a very similar claim in The Analysis of Mind (1921): 'Understanding words does not consist in knowing their dictionary definitions, or in being able to specify the objects to which they are appropriate. Such understanding as this may belong to lexicographers and students [and to philosophers?] but not to ordinary mortals in ordinary life. Understanding language is more like understanding cricket: it is a matter of habits, acquired in oneself and rightly presumed in others.' See Russell, AM.197.

97. Strawson, OF.63, 65.

98. Strawson provides a definition of 'this', in contradiction to Russell. See Strawson, OF.69; Russell, MT.136.

99. Strawson, OF.68. Strawson is in direct opposition to Russell, who holds that propositions are either true, false, or meaningless; Strawson, of course, holds that they may be neither true nor false but still meaningful if the presupposition of the existence of something is not fulfilled. See Strawson, OF.57–9. Cf. Russell, PLA.187–8.

100. Strawson, OF.69.

101. Strawson, OF.72.

102. See n. 65 p. 111 above.

103. Strawson, OF.74.

104. Strawson, I.20, 181.


107. Strawson, I.38.

108. Searle also identifies this kind of a presupposition. See Searle, 157–9.


110. Strawson, I.25, 29.
NOTES AND REFERENCES to Chapter 3

111. Strawson, L.182 n.1, 193, 212.
112. Strawson, L.24, OF.72: For making reference to something there is '...the requirement that the thing should be in a certain relation to the speaker and to the context of utterance.' Knowledge of this relation is '...never part of what is stated, though it is...implied...'  

113. Strawson, OF.76.
114. See n. 96 to this chapter.
115. Searle, 160; Fellesdal, 237–8. Cf. Russell HK.311: 'The notion of a substance as a peg on which to hang predicates is repugnant...'

116. Searle, 157. Searle points out that in this attitude toward names is found the view that reference can only be a kind of existential assertion.

117. Russell, PLA.280: '...I think the longer one pursues philosophy...the less willing one is to be quite sure that an argument is valid if there is anything about it that is at all subtle or elusive, at all difficult to grasp.' Compare PLA.193: '...the point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it.' One wonders if Russell has not taken his own advice too seriously.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. The term 'baptism' in connection with the introduction of proper names seems to originate with Wittgenstein. See Wittgenstein, §38.

2. Kripke, NN.96, 97.

3. Kripke, NN.107


5. Or he may prefer 'Napoleon' if he has an aardvark. See Kripke, NN.96–7.

6. Kripke does not explicitly say that an intention is necessary for the individuation of a proper name, but of course it must be if it is necessary for the use of a sign to refer as a name. See Kripke, NN.96–8.


8. Cf. Russell's 'causal chain' account of the use of the word 'this', which explains its use as a kind of stimulus response to the presence of something, making it explicitly devoid of meaning. See Russell, MT.139-141. A causal chain can explain someone's exclaiming, 'There's Jones!' but only in an ostensive context, and cannot explain the reason for his believing it. See Russell, MT. 374–5.


10. See also Searle, 160, Wittgenstein, §79.

11. In particular, the stipulation that it makes use of the notions of necessity and a priority
NOTES AND REFERENCES to Chapter 3

in the use of descriptions. See §3.2.1 p. 50 and §3.2.1 p. 55 below.

12. Kripke agrees that 'possible world' is possibly misleading and is not the best term, preferring 'possible counterfactual situation', although he continues to use the term because of its associations with modal logic. See Kripke, NN.3, 48 n.15. Note that Kripke's idea of the possible world is not in itself in contradiction with Russell's, which, like William James's, is based on the idea of possible experiences stemming from actual ones. See Russell, RUP.144, EW.89, MT.314–5, 373–83, 423.

14. Kripke, NN.16–18, 44.
15. Kripke, NN.44, 49.
16. Kripke, NN.47, IN.179 n.13 Russell has no problem with this idea, either. See Russell, MT.90.
17. Kripke appears to hold that possible worlds are not described qualitatively merely because names are stipulated in their construction. See Kripke, IN.174.
18. See the outline of the 'cluster' theory, Kripke, NN.69 ff.
23. Kripke, NN.53.
24. This is shown in his formulation of the 'cluster' concept: descriptions can only determine a reference of a name we are already using meaningfully if we know that they will necessarily pick it out successfully. See Kripke, NN.71 ff.
25. It depends, of course, what one means by 'meaning.' Here I am not suggesting that the connotation of names as they are ordinarily used provides the identity criteria of the name. But Kripke believes that if descriptions provide the meaning, any meaning, they are a priori. See Kripke, NN.71 ff.
27. Kripke, NN.82.
30. This example, however, raises the question if the name 'Einstein' is entirely devoid of meaning or not in this case, and in doing so raises the question of providing a general account of the meaning of proper names. In this case there does not appear to be any justification for saying that the name is entirely meaningless; the patient is, after all, able to recognise the sign as a proper name. The lack of meaning, or loss of meaning, is effected by a contingent context of its use. We are provided, in fact, with an antecedent context in
which the name does have a meaningful use, and could imagine a change in context—for example, the patient regains his memory completely—in which the name is again made meaningful. The question of meaning really depends on the level of meaning for which we wish to provide an account: that a sign really is a proper name and refer to something, although we don’t know what, or that it refers, in the use in question, to some object we can identify, on some adequate account of identification. See Chapter 4, §4.1.1 and §4.1.2.

31. Kripke, NN.106.
33. Kripke, NN.25 n.3.
34. Kripke, NN.25, 86, 106.
35. Kripke, NN.85 n.36.
36. Kripke, NN.90.
37. Kripke, NN.93.
38. We saw this with the ‘Two Einsteins’ example, §3.2.2 p. 59 above.
39. Kripke, NN.95.
40. Kripke, NN.93.
41. Kripke, NN.91.
42. Kripke, NN.79, 96 n.42.
43. Strawson, for example, states that every expression involving reference to a particular must carry an empirical presupposition. See Strawson, I.193, 198.
44. These are equivalent. See Whitehead, 7.
45. Ziff, §105, Whitehead, 10, Stebbing, 15, 16. The actual act of pointing, with a finger, or a walking stick, or something of that nature, is not itself always necessary for ostension to take place if the object to which reference is intended is obvious enough, such as when a bus-driver calls out the names of stops. In such cases we can interpret ‘the act of pointing’ metaphorically; the actual act is really just a manifestation of an intention to bring another person’s awareness to the existence of something which is present to the senses; it is just the communication of an intention to refer.
46. Whitehead, 10.
47. Strawson, I.20, 181.
48. We saw this in the ‘Two Einsteins’ example, §3.2.2 p. 59 above.
49. See §3.2.2 p. 60 above.
50. See §3.3.1 p. 67 above. See also NN.25–6, 87 n.37.
51. See n. 45 p. 116 above.
52. MacLachlan, 171–2.
NOTES AND REFERENCES to Chapter 3


56. The sense of ‘about’ of course, consists in the intention to refer. See Kripke, NN.157–8.

57. Kripke, NN.8 n.9.

58. The example would be unaffected if both names had coincidentally been, e.g., ‘Hesperus’ instead of ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’.

59. NN.8 n.9.

60. Kripke, NN.21.

61. Kripke, NN.108–9, 109 n.51.

62. Kripke, NN.6, 100–1, 102–5, 109.

63. Kripke makes a particularly obfuscatory remark in this connection. He says, Kripke NN.159: ‘Philosophical analysis tells us that [these statements] cannot be contingently true, so any empirical knowledge of their truth is automatically empirical knowledge that they are necessary.’ This seems really to be really nonsensical; even if it were true that we know a priori that they are not contingently true, that is a priori knowledge and is quite unrelated to the empirical knowledge of their truth, which mode of knowing could not in itself tell us that there was anything necessary about it.

64. Kripke, NN.15.

65. Kripke, NN.54–6, 75–6.

66. Kripke, NN.79 n.33.


68. See §3.2.1 p. 54.

69. In the case of the metre stick example, there is also the additional observation that since the stick is defined, in the alleged a priori statement of knowledge about it, to be the standard of measurement, it cannot itself be measured; hence to independently attribute length to it in any world, possible or actual, is strictly nonsensical. This is consistent with the scientific use of the ‘metre’ as an abbreviation of an elaborate definition, not as a proper name in Kripke’s sense. See Wittgenstein, §50.

70. Kripke admits this, but says he doesn’t know what else to call the stipulative knowledge he outlines, except as a priori. See Kripke, NN.63 n.26. Russell says that ‘No fact concerning anything capable of being experienced can be known independently of experience.’ He postulates that, as a general principle, ‘All a priori knowledge deals exclusively with the relations of universals.’ He continues, ‘...the difference between an a priori general proposition and an empirical generalisation does not come in the meaning of the proposition; it comes in the nature of the evidence for it. In the empirical case, the evidence consists in the particular instances.’ See Russell, PP.164, 162, 166 respectively. Similarly,
NOTES AND REFERENCES to Chapter 3

Mill states that what we know a priori we know ‘...by the constitution of our rational faculty.' See Mill, 8.

71. Cf. Kripke, NN.60.

72. The separate objection to the metre stick example is unaffected, however. See note above.

73. This separate problem is called 'the bald man paradox', or 'the paradox of the heap', or 'the sorites paradox', from the Greek for 'heap'. See R.M. Sainsbury, Paradoxes, Cambridge, 1988. See also Kripke's mention of vagueness, NN.51 n.18.

74. See the essential property of a table, 'being a table' in Kripke, NN.115 n.57.

75. Kripke, NN.42, IN.179 n.13.


77. In this case we either trace the causal history of all things that produced it endlessly, which gets us nowhere, or, proceeding reductively, we end up trying to establish the qualitative identity of the constituents on a smaller and smaller scale. Eventually we arrive at considering the identities of subatomic particles, which are not sensible objects and have no individual identities. In any event, the latter option is not available in the consideration of animate objects, which replace their material constituents on a regular basis, and there is no good reason why we should think it applicable to inanimate objects either, since they may also replace their material constituents with a preservation of identity, as the nobleman's sock shows.

78. Additionally, while Kripke faults the descriptive theory for being unable to provide an account for the meaning of singular existential statements and the identity statements of names if descriptions are used to supply the meaning of a name, he admits that his own theory is unable to do any better. See Kripke, NN.33, 59 and NN.6, 21, 109–110.
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