Communications

Manuscripts will not be returned unless sufficient International Reply Coupons to cover the cost of their being returned. Airmail are received.

Subscriptions

Any individual may subscribe to the Journal by paying an annual subscription of A$14.00 (US$16.00 or £8.50). Suitable qualified subscribers may become members or associate members of the Australasian Association of Philosophy. (See advertisement on p. ii for details.) Fees for membership or associate membership will be deducted from the annual subscription, if a subscriber is or wishes to become a member or associate member of the Association. The annual subscription for undergraduate subscribers is A$7.00 (US$8.00 or £4.00). For libraries and other institutions the annual subscription is A$27.00 (US$32.00 or £15.00).

Subscriptions are payable in advance. Cheques should be made payable to the Association, and exchange added where necessary. Subscriptions cover the calendar year in which they are paid, and subscribers will receive the four issues of the Journal for that year.

Single copies of recent and back issues

Some single copies of recent issues of the Journal, from Vol. 55, No. 1: May 1977 to the present, are on sale at A$8.00 from the Office of the Journal. Inquiries concerning other back issues (Vol. 1 to 54) should be addressed to the Kraus Reprint Corporation, FL-949 Nendeln, Liechtenstein.

Offprints

Authors will receive five offprints of their papers gratis. Further sets of 25 offprints may be purchased by authors at A$3.00 per printed page of the article for each additional set. Authors wishing to purchase additional sets of offprints should notify the Business Manager of their requirements at least one month before the scheduled publication dates of their articles.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Kent Bach

The thesis that proper names are rigid designators (RDT) has gained currency not so much on its own merits as from the deficiencies of description theories. After all, it has yet to be shown how RDT can handle vacuous names or the occurrence of names in existential sentences and belief contexts, and these are so important to be passed off as isolated special cases. Still, the objections that Saul Kripke (1972) has brought against description theories have to be met by my description theory worth taking seriously. It happens that there is such a theory, first suggested by Bertrand Russell (1919) and recently revived by Brian Loar (1976). This is the view that a name £ means 'the bearer of N', because the description deemed semantically equivalent to a name mentions that very name and provides no information about the bearer of the name beyond the fact that it bears the name, I dub this view the nominal description theory (NDT).

NDT may seem glaringly obvious because it is shamelessly trivial. To Kripke it is so trivial that its inadequacy is glaringly obvious. In considering the suggestion that NDT explains the fact that it is trilling to be told that Socrates is called 'Socrates', Kripke observes that it is no less trilling to be told that in English horses are called 'horses' and sages are called 'sages' (1972, p. 284), as NDT is posing as a special case of a general theory of meaning. Of course such theory would be ludicrous, but this does not mean that 'There is no more reason', as Kripke has since remarked (1979, p. 274), 'to suppose that being so-called is part of the meaning of a name than of any other word'. There is a reason: there is nothing else for a name to mean! Putting the difference crudely, whereas horses are called 'horses' because they each have the property of being horse, Socrates is called 'Socrates' because he has the property of bearing the name 'Socrates'. He is called 'Socrates' because that's his name. Despite Kripke's complaint, NDT does have the virtue of accounting for the semantic fact that a name can be used literally only to refer to an individual that bears it.

After all, a name can be used nonliterally, e.g., 'Napoleon' to refer to a diminutive megalomaniac of some other name, and it seems that only a theory

1 I prefer this to the more common formulation, 'the individual called N', for 'is called' suggests not only 'is named' but 'is referred to by', thereby provoking the charge of vicious circularity discussed below. Russell suggested this description theory only for ordinary proper names, not for 'logically proper names', such as the pronouns 'I' and 'this'.

371
It is important to distinguish the semantics of names from the use of names. Indeed, I will suggest that Kripke's many insights about names are relevant to their semantics but valuable to the theory of their use. The semantics of names should specify their contribution to the meanings of the sentences in which they occur, hence to what is said in using these sentences literally. Now if a name were ambiguous in as many ways as it has bearers, any sentence in which it occurs would be equally ambiguous. If giving the meaning of an (indicative) sentence is giving its truth condition, then it might seem that a sentence like 'George Smith is thirsty' is ambiguous, with one truth condition (hence one meaning) for each bearer of 'George Smith'. But it is not the sentence that has all these truth conditions but the various statements that could be made using this sentence literally. Surely no one would suggest that the sentence 'The man is thirsty' has as many truth conditions (and meanings) as there are men; the statements made using the sentence each have a truth condition depending on which man is being referred to, not that the sentence itself has no truth condition. Its truth condition is given by Russell's theory, but anyone who used the sentence, unless he believed there to be but one man, would mean that some specific man is thirsty, even though this is not what he says. Similarly, the sentence 'George Smith is thirsty' has the truth condition that the (unique) bearer of 'George Smith' is thirsty, but again a speaker would not mean that. He would not mean what the sentence means but rather that a certain George Smith is thirsty.

Granting that a name with many bearers is not ambiguous, one might suggest treating it as an indexical, with different uses referring to different bearers of the name. Just as 'He is thirsty' has no truth condition independently of the context of utterance, although a statement made using the sentence does have a truth condition, so with the sentence 'George Smith is thirsty'. Accordingly, so the suggestion goes, to specify the meaning of such a sentence is not to specify its truth condition but only how it contributes to the truth conditions of statements made using it literally. Two versions of the indexical proposal have appeared. Tyler Burge (1973) treats names as predicates with, when they occur in sentences, implicit indexical prefixes, so that 'George Smith is thirsty' means 'This George Smith is thirsty'. Burge offers some interesting arguments for his proposal, but Steven Boët (1975), relying partly on strong syntactic considerations, seems to me to have refuted them. The other version is that N means 'this/that bearer of N' and, like NDT, it has the virtue of implying that a name can be used literally only to refer to something bearing the name. On this view the sentence 'George Smith is thirsty' has no semantically determined (context-independent) truth condition, but its semantics determines that a

---

Footnotes:

1. Notice that in uttering 'The man is thirsty' to state that a certain man is thirsty, one is using each of one's words literally but not the sentence as a whole, which is being used elliptically for a longer sentence.

2. There is really no point in saying that such a sentence has context-dependent truth conditions either, since that is at best a misleading way of saying that statements made in using the sentence are context-dependent. After all, sentence types not tokens are the subject of semantics.

3. It is hard to see how this difference could be put without ascribing some sort of linguistic meaning to names. Thus when Kripke says that 'the linguistic function of a proper name is completely exhausted by the fact that it names its bearer' (1979, p. 240), he would be correct by 'linguistic function' he means 'linguistic meaning' rather than 'use to refer'. But then he would be opting for NDT instead of RDT.

4. Description theories other than NDT falsely imply that names with many bearers are semantically ambiguous, since a different description is associated with each bearer of a name. RDT also has this false implication, but for a different reason.
Kripke's Counterarguments

Kripke presents two arguments against description theories generally and one against NDT in particular. When applied to NDT, Kripke's modal argument and his argument from ignorance and error prove ineffective. And his charge that NDT is circular is unfounded. We will look at each argument in turn.

Kripke holds that the function of names is merely to fix reference and that they do this without having senses, specifically not the senses of definite descriptions. He relies on the following modal argument, as schematized by Loar (1976, p. 373). The individual N is assumed to be the actual F, and 'the F' is the description putatively synonymous with N.

1. If N were to mean 'the F', then 'N might not have been the F' would be false. But

2. 'N might not have been the F' is true.

Therefore,

3. N does not mean 'the F'.

This pattern of argument is formally valid, at least if the occurrences of singular terms have consistently wide or narrow scope from line to line. However, as Loar (1976, p. 373) has objected, the argument trades on an illegitimate shift of scope, and since 'names are normally read as having wider scope than modal operators', (2) is true but (1) false on the normal wide scope reading, for so read 'The F might not have been the F' is true. And, we may add, if names can be given narrow scope readings (as NDT would allow), then line (2) begs the question. In any case, let us consider how well this argument holds up when applied specifically to NDT, i.e., with 'the F' replaced by 'the bearer of N'. To do this we must first examine Kripke's definition of rigid designation.

Moreover, a description can be underspecified without being used demonstratively. For example, in a conversation about Gary Gilmore's execution one might say 'The chair must have looked gruesome', using 'the chair' to refer to the electric chair in which Gilmore was executed. If no previous reference to the chair had been made, it would have been inappropriate to say 'This/that chair must have looked gruesome'.

Kripke is well aware that names do not have to be used as they are literally used and that the connection between names and their bearers is not inherent but merely conventional. Thus he stipulates, 'When I say that a designation is rigid, and designates the same thing in all possible worlds, I mean that, as used in our language, it stands for that thing, when we talk about counterfactual situations' (1972, p. 289). Well and good, but by the same token line (2) above would be false when 'the F' is replaced by 'the bearer of N'. For it would be false that N might not have been the bearer of F if, as Kripke's stipulation seems to require, we consider only those counterfactual situations in which N is the bearer of N. Since we can use 'the bearer of N' literally to refer to whatever we can use N literally to refer to (and conversely), if N is a rigid designator then so is 'the bearer of N'. However, if, in using N as we do to refer only to the actual bearer of N, we nevertheless use it to refer to that very individual in a counterfactual situation where that individual does not bear N, then (1) is false. For then 'N might not have been the bearer of N' is true, and N would be no more a rigid designator than 'the bearer of N'.

A definite description is not rigid because it might not apply in a counterfactual situation to the thing it applies to in fact. This is so because the description might have been used differently but because the thing might have been different — the F might not have been F. But equally, the bearer of N might not have borne N. In any world in which N would not be designated by 'the bearer of N', it would not be designated by N. Thus, the only way to make the case that N would be designated, as RDT claims, by N in all possible worlds (in which it existed), is arbitrarily to ignore these counterfactual situations in which it does not bear N. On the other hand, if our actual use of N refers to the actual bearer of N allows us to refer to that very individual even in a world in which that individual does not bear N, then so does our actual use of 'the bearer of N'. Either way, Kripke's modal argument fails, since (1) and (2) cannot both be true.

Kripke's formulation of RDT relies on the notion of how a name is actually used. This notion is complicated by the fact that names can have many bearers, and that requires relativising RDT to particular uses. So D. Ackerman proposes (1979, p. 61).

A singular term 'T' (as used in a particular way) is a rigid designator of entity x iff 'T' (in that use) designates x in every possible world where x exists, and there is no possible world where 'T' (in that use) designates an entity distinct from x.

But here RDT has lapsed into triviality. If each use of a name is to be individuated by each thing the name is used to refer to, yielding one use per object referred to with that name, no wonder that a name, as used in a particular way, rigidly designates! This way of individuating uses renders RDT so trivial as to be true of definite descriptions. For example, 'the first man on the moon' would rigidly designate Neil Armstrong, since if he had not been the first man on the moon and Buzz Aldrin had been instead, the use of 'the first man on the
moon' to refer to Aldrin would count as a different use. Of course, no one would dream of individuating uses of descriptions in this way, but then why should uses of names be individuated in this way either? Only on the question-begging supposition that names lack senses and cannot be semantically equivalent to definite descriptions.

Relativising RDT to uses of names renders it not only trivial but misdirected. For if we were to individuate uses by bearers while recognising, as noted earlier, that names with many bearers are not thereby ambiguous, RDT so relativised would no longer be a thesis about the semantics of names but one about uses of names to refer. Nothing about the semantics of a name tells us anything about which bearer of the name it is used to refer to on a given occasion. How that is determined is a question for the theory of speech acts. The semantics of a name tells us only that if it is used literally to refer, it must be used to refer to something whose name it is. NDT accounts for this semantic content; the relativised version of RDT, not being semantic, is not even a rival to NDT.

Kripke’s argument from ignorance and error is illustrated by his celebrated Gödel/Schmidt example. It is designed to bring out an absurd consequence that allegedly follows from description theories of names. If the name ‘Gödel’ means ‘the man who discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic’ (the DIA for short) — the argument does not depend on this particular choice of description — what if, unbeknownst to everyone but Gödel, the real DIA was a man named ‘Schmidt’ whom Gödel had murdered and whose work Gödel took credit for? According to Kripke, the description theory implies that ‘when our ordinary man uses the name “Gödel”, he really means to refer to Schmidt because Schmidt is the unique person satisfying the description’ (1972, p. 294). ‘the DIA.’ Kripke insists, however, that a user of the name, despite the murderous fraud, would still mean to refer, and indeed succeed in referring, to Gödel rather than to Schmidt. To be sure, a person could decide, even getting others to go along with him, to use the name ‘Gödel’ to mean ‘the man whoever he is, who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic’ and ‘just stick to that determination’. But as Kripke rightly remarks, ‘that’s not what most of us do’ (1972, p. 298). Rather, he suggests, even if we associate a name with a description (it does not particularly matter which one), when we use the name to refer, what we are referring to does not depend on which individual satisfies the description. Instead, supposedly, the name picks out the referent directly ‘Gödel’ picks out Gödel directly, even when, unlike in Kripke’s fictional situation, Gödel is in fact the satisfier of the description ‘the DIA’.

From the standpoint of NDT, the trouble with Kripke’s argument is his choice of descriptions. A description like ‘the DIA’ does not mention the name whose meaning is under consideration, and thus a description theory relying on that choice of descriptions is in no position to explain the fact that to use a name literally to refer, one must intend (except for the special cases that are given below) to refer to something whose name it is. So we must use as the candidate descriptive equivalent of ‘Gödel’ the nominal description ‘the bearer of Gödel’ and see how it fares against Kripke’s argument.

Varying Kripke’s story, suppose that the man who discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic was in fact named ‘Gödel’ but that he was murdered by a man who has since successfully passed himself off as the DIA and as named ‘Gödel’. A speaker ignorant of all this would, as Kripke might rightly insist, use the name to refer to the murderous impostor, not to the real Gödel. But that does not show, even though Kripke would argue, that the name ‘Gödel’ does not mean ‘the bearer of Gödel’. Although the speaker would not be unwittingly referring to the real Gödel, still he would be using ‘Gödel’ to mean ‘the bearer of Gödel’. Alas, however, he would not be referring to the bearer of ‘Gödel’ but to the man he mistakenly takes to be the bearer of ‘Gödel’. The situation is analogous to, indeed on NDT effectively identical to, a referential use of a definite description. All that is involved in such a use, as I argue elsewhere (Bach, forthcoming), is that the speaker think of the individual he is referring to in some other way than as the satisfier of the description he is using to refer to it. Ordinarily one thinks of the intended referent as satisfying the description one uses, even if one is using the description referentially but, as illustrated by some of K. Donnellan’s (1966) familiar examples, this is not necessary for using a description referentially. That is why, when used referentially rather than attributively, a description can be used to refer to something that does not satisfy it. Similarly, one can use a name to refer to what one mistakenly takes to be its bearer. Indeed, it is only because the name is semantically equivalent to the description that mentions it, ‘the bearer of N’, that it can be used in this way, and used literally. As I will explain later, names are commonly used referentially (relying on NDT we can extend the referential/attributive distinction to names), and a large part of the reason for this is that we almost always think of the bearer of a name in some other way than as the bearer of the name, not surprisingly because names provide so little information about their bearers.

Here and before I have insisted that an adequate account of the meaning of names must provide a basis for distinguishing literal from nonliteral uses of a name. When, as in the above case, a speaker uses a name literally to refer, he can succeed in referring to something he takes to bear the name even if in fact it does not bear the name. The situation, I suggested, is just like that which can occur when one uses a definite description referentially to refer to something that does not in fact satisfy the description used: one is still using the description literally. This is true even if one does not believe the referent to satisfy the

See note 2. Notice that even if the name has more than one bearer, it is still being used literally. However (see note 4), the sentence containing it is being used elliptically.

However, if the speaker thinks, and intends the hearer to think, of this individual in a way that includes the description used, the use is attributive. That is, where ‘F’ is incomplete in the sense of having (or at least being believed to have) more than one satisfier, a speaker could use ‘the F which is G’ and intending the hearer to take him as talking about whatever fits that description.

Even when a speaker uses a name to refer to something he believes not to bear the name, he intends the hearer to rely on this semantic equivalence in order to identify the referent.
Kripke’s complaint is illustrated by a speaker’s use of the name ‘Socrates’. Kripke asks, ‘How are we supposed to know to whom he refers?’ (a question he never even tries to answer from the standpoint of RDT11, and represents NDT as giving the answer. ‘By using the description which gives the sense of it, . . . the individual called “Socrates”’.12 Kripke charges that this “tells us nothing at all . . . it seems to be no theory of reference at all. We ask to whom does he refer by ‘Socrates’ and then the answer is given as, well he refers to the man to whom he refers” (1972, p. 284).

Notice first that the charge that NDT is ‘no theory of reference at all’ is simply irrelevant, since NDT is a theory of the meaning of names, not a theory of the use of names to refer. For that the help of speech act theory is required. Secondly, Kripke seems to be implying that if NDT were correct, then someone who utters ‘Socrates drank hemlock’ is stating nothing more than that the man he is referring to drank hemlock. But surely the speaker is providing more information to enable the hearer to identify the referent than that he is referring to. From the standpoint of NDT the utterance is semantically equivalent to ‘The bearer of ‘Socrates’ drank hemlock’. Since there may be more than one bearer of the name (the nominal description is not semantically complete but capable of being satisfied by more than one individual), the speaker is stating not merely that the bearer of ‘Socrates’ drank hemlock but that the bearer of ‘Socrates’ who was an ancient Greek philosopher drank hemlock or simply that the only famous bearer of ‘Socrates’ drank hemlock. Such a referential qualifier is not, of course, part of the meaning of the name but is, rather, part of how the speaker thinks of the individual he intends his audience to take him to be talking about.13

That NDT violates Kripke’s noncircularity condition does not show that it is circular, for the condition Kripke lays down is not one of noncircularity. Rather, it stipulates that a theory of names cannot employ an ineliminable notion of reference. However, NDT does not even purport to be a theory of using names to refer. It is nothing more than a modest theory of the modest meaning of

11 Kripke addresses only the question of what a name refers to (as opposed to what a speaker uses a name to refer to) without even asking how one is supposed to know what a name refers to. Champions of RDT have, as Schiffer (1978, p. 175) has observed, “ignore[d] the connection between semantics and psychology. Not one of these theorists” has ventured a theory of the thought in the mind of a person using a singular term as a rigid designator1.

12 Unlike “the individual called ‘Socrates’”, “the bearer of ‘Socrates’” does not even suggest circularity (see note 1). Bearing a name does not imply being referred to by that name. There was an ancient Hebrew statute against referring to God by a certain name, but this did not prevent Him from bearing that name. Fortunately, transmitting the sense from generation to generation required only mentioning the name, not using it.

13 Two disclaimers need to be made here and will become clearer later when it is explained how ordinary uses of names can be assimilated to reference uses of definite descriptions. First, the speaker can think of the referent in a de re way rather than under a description. Second, it need not be part of his referential intention that the hearer think of the referent in the way that he does. It is sufficient for the hearer to identify the correct individual as the one being talked about, however he the hearer may think of it.
names, whose uses to refer are generally not explained merely by their meaning, as illustrated above and as demonstrated by the fact that they can (and commonly do) have many bearers. Still it might be objected that NDT is, if not circular, viciously regressive, for surely not everyone who has ever referred to Socrates by name could have relied on the semantic equivalence claimed by NDT. The original sources of the use of 'Socrates' to refer to the man we refer to by 'Socrates' had to be in a position to think of Socrates in some other way than as the (or even a) bearer of 'Socrates', and surely his parents, not to mention his fellow Athenians, were in that position. However, as Loar has pointed out (in reply to M. Devitt (1980), who charges NDT with being viciously regressive), just like RDT, NDT can 'help itself' to the notion of 'referential dependence on sources' (1980, pp. 86-87). I would put Loar's point as follows. Like the charge of circularity, the charge of vicious regressiveness is predicated on the false assumption that for a name to be used to refer to its bearer, its bearer must have been previously referred to by that name. But this is absurd. Indeed, in order for an individual to have acquired the name in the first place, it had to be referred to in some other way than by name, or at least in some other way than by that name. Otherwise, it could not have been given that name. However, once it has acquired the name (the property of bearing the name), people other than the original sources of the name can use the name to refer to whatever the original sources use(d) the name to refer to. Thus Loar (1980, p. 86) can remark, 'The description theory of names, as it treats those cases that involve reference to others' references, is the causal theory made self-conscious', provided, of course, that the causal theory is conscious of the difference between the meaning of a name and its use to refer.

**Using Names Without Referring**

NDT stands up against the arguments directed at description theories generally and against the charge of circularity. Moreover, as is well known, vacuous names, existential sentences, and belief contexts require no special treatment for description theories but pose special problems for RDT. For example, Donnellan's (1974) theory of 'blocks' illustrates the contortions RDT must go through to deal with vacuous names and negative existential sentences. Donnellan himself realises how much refinement his theory needs to handle such cases, which he acknowledges can be treated straightforwardly by description theories in the fashion of Russell.

Peacocke's formulation of RDT to handle these cases implies that a general uniformity of treatment of both denoting and non-denoting names in both existentials and other contexts is impossible (1975, p. 129). For Peacocke a name is a genuine singular term only if it denotes. Its occurrence in subject position licenses existential generalisation, as in first-order logic, but obviously the occurrence of a vacuous name cannot. Peacocke recognises that from this follows that the logical form of a sentence containing a name depends on whether or not the name denotes, but instead of acknowledging the problem he created for his position, he asks rhetorically, 'Why should we not say that there are some sentences such that only when we know whether the names in them denote do we know their logical form?' (1975, p. 130). Then he goes on to assert that an existential containing a denoting name, such as 'Uranus exists', is a first level predication of an object', and he laments the fact that there is no adequate account of negative or positive existentials containing non-denoting vacuous names. Ignoring his suggestion that existentials containing denoting names are predicative, I cannot but wonder why Peacocke does not answer his rhetorical question. If knowing whether a name denotes is necessary for knowing the logical form of sentences containing it and if, as no one would deny, the logical form of a sentence is a semantic property, then one cannot know the meaning of such a sentence unless and until one knows whether or not the name it contains denotes. But surely lacking such knowledge is not a mark of deficient linguistic competence any more than, as noted earlier, not knowing who all the bearers of a name are.

As for belief contexts, only lately has Kripke (1979) come to address the problem they pose for RDT. He imagines a man Peter who, having learned 'Paderewski' as the name of a famous pianist, assets to 'Paderewski had musical talent'. Later, Peter learns 'Paderewski' as the name of a Polish statesman and assents to 'Paderewski had no musical talent', mistakenly thinking that this time 'Paderewski' does not refer to the pianist. Kripke's puzzle is whether we should infer, by what he calls the 'disquotational principle', not only that Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent but also that Peter believes that Paderewski had no musical talent. This is a puzzle for Kripke because, in denying that proper names are semantically equivalent to definite descriptions, which would be differently qualified for each of Peter's uses of 'Paderewski', Kripke has no way to account for the fact that Peter is not guilty of a contradiction but is merely the victim of ignorance. Kripke has no way available to express what Peter is ignorant of. Peter is not ignorant that Paderewski = Paderewski, but Kripke has no better way to describe Peter's ignorance.

Kripke ignores S. Schiffer's (1977) treatment of this problem (in a paper appearing in the same volume as Kripke, 1977). As Schiffer points out, a sentence like 'Peter believes that Paderewski had musical talent' does not fully specify the content of the belief ascribed. What is missing is a specification of the 'mode of presentation' (Schiffer borrows this phrase from Frege) under which Peter is thinking of Paderewski. Moreover, there are distinct modes of presentation, expressed by different descriptions, for Peter's two beliefs. Now Kripke does seem to consider this obvious solution in discussing (1979, pp. 259-262) the view that a believer associates 'uniquely identifying properties' with the names he uses but these, according to Kripke, 'description theorists have regarded as defining proper names' (p. 261). But sophisticated description theorists have not done this. Schiffer nowhere says that the meaning of a name is the individual concept, as expressed by a definite description, under which one thinks of what the name names, and Loar (1976) is explicit on
this point. As Schiffer, Loar, and originally Frege have made abundantly clear, the linguistic meaning of a sentence containing a proper name does not fully determine the content of a belief expressed in its utterance.

Belief contexts pose no problem for NDT, on which a name $N$ means the bearer of $N$. When $N$ has many bearers, this description is incomplete, so that a full specification of the content of a belief involving $N$ would be of the form, ‘$S$ believes that the bearer of $N$ who/which is $F$ is $G$’. Peter’s two beliefs are that the bearer of ‘Paderewski’ who was a statesman had no musical talent and that the bearer of ‘Paderewski’ who was a pianist did have musical talent, in short, that Paderewski the statesman had no musical talent and that Paderewski the pianist did. In this way a sophisticated description theory like Loar’s can treat only ‘the bearer of $N$’ as semantically equivalent to $N$ while construing other descriptions under which one has beliefs (or makes statements) about a certain bearer of $N$ merely as cognitively (or contextually) associated with particular uses of $N$. In this way NDT can distinguish Peter’s two beliefs without assuming anything about whether ‘Paderewski’ has two bearers, one bearer, or none.

The Illusion of Rigidity

As merely a theory of the semantics of names, NDT is glaringly simple. But it is not embarrassingly simple, for it does not pose as a theory of uses of names to refer. That is one reason why, unlike RDT, it does not get in the way of explaining uses of names not to refer, as in the contexts just treated. From the standpoint of NDT, uses of names to refer are explained partly by the semantic equivalence of names to descriptions that mention them and partly by the fact that uses of names to refer are like referential uses of definite descriptions. The referential/attributional distinction is, as I argue in another paper (Bach forthcoming), not semantic but instead can be explained by speech act theory in terms of the speaker’s intentions. Here I suggest that the appeal of RDT rests largely on a confusion of the theory of the meaning of names with the theory of uses of names to refer. We saw at the outset that theories (not only RDT but also most description theories) which imply (falsely) that a name with more than one bearer is semantically ambiguous suffers from the confusion. The same is true of the arguments we considered against description theories generally and NDT specifically. Once this confusion is cleared up, it appears that the appeal of the view that proper names are rigid designators consists simply in the fact that uses of names to refer are readily assimilable to referential uses of definite descriptions. For what a referential use does is to fix the referent (if I may borrow a phrase from Kripke) independently of what the expression used, be it a description or a name, applies to in virtue of its meaning.

The illusion of rigidity seems to stem primarily from the fact that names are used mainly to refer and not to describe. As Kripke makes comments like, ‘unlike a definite description, a name does not describe its bearer as possessing any special identifying properties’ (1979, p. 240; my emphasis), he neglects the fact that a name used literally to refer describes the referent as bearing the name. To be sure, there is nothing ‘special’ about bearing a certain name, and so far as anything can bear any name (at least in principle), the property of bearing a certain name is not a particularly informative thing to know about an individual if one is concerned to identify it uniquely. Besides, a name can have many bearers. But none of this shows that names do not describe at all.

A name describes what it is used literally to refer to as bearing that name. Contrary to what Kripke seems to assume, however, a description theory of the meaning of names does not have to imply that the meaning of a name determines which individual it is being used to refer to on a particular occasion. Precisely because a name provides so little information about the referent, a speaker who uses a name is likely to have some referential qualifier in mind which, as Loar (1976) notes, is intrinsic to what the speaker means but not to what he says (as determined by the meaning of his words). Moreover, in using a name to refer to an individual, one is likely to be thinking of the individual in some way that does not entail its bearing the name. That is, one commonly thinks of an individual not primarily as the (or even a) bearer of a certain name but under some other description or, even more commonly, in some de re way. Thinking of the individual under that description or in that way, one thinks that it bears the name. So when one refers to an individual by name, the individual one has in mind and intends one’s audience to identify as the individual one has in mind is determined by how one thinks of it, not by its bearing the name. Ordinarily the referent does bear the name, but it need not.

The situation is like the referential use of a definite description: the description plays an essential role in enabling the audience to identify the referent, but this

1 Another factor contributing to this illusion, I suspect, is an uncorrected transfer of perspective from formal systems to natural languages. In standard, first-order logic individual constants denote one individual object, or so can replace variables in universal instantiation, license existential generalization, and forestall equiva
cence. An interpretation of a formal system enumerates the denotata of all such constants and that is that. In natural languages, however, a name can have one, many, or no bearers and neither its sound, its shape, nor any other linguistic feature tells us which. All that a literal use of a name to refer requires is that the speaker intend (ostensibly) to refer to a bearer of the name. If the name has more than one bearer, to enable the hearer to identify the referent the speaker must either use a referential qualifier or rely on readily identifiable contextual information.

2 The meaning of the name can on occasion determine the referent, and in such a case the speaker might think of the referent in no other way than as the bearer of the name. He might notice the name ‘Pierre Pernier’ in a phone book and say, ‘Pierre Pernier (whoever he is) must be French’. Our assimilation of ordinary uses of names to referential uses of definite descriptions must thus not be construed as excluding the possibility of using a name attributively.

3 Commonly we think of individuals we refer to by name in de re ways. A formulation of the difference between that and thinking of an individual under a description appears in Bach (1981).

4 Not only does Schiffer distinguish the description under which one thinks of an object from the meaning of the name one uses to refer to it, he claims that one can think of it only under a description. In Bach (1981) I argue against this description theory of de re thought.
What's In A Name

is not the role of being true of that individual.\(^8\) Similarly, whenever one uses a name to refer to something that one thinks of in some other way, one can succeed in referring to that individual even if it does not bear the name, as in our Gödel example.

If uses of names to refer can be assimilated to referential uses of definite descriptions, the illusion of rigidity is readily explained: the meaning of the expression used to refer does not determine the referent. Rather, the identity of the referent is fixed by the way in which the speaker thinks of the individual he intends the hearer to take him to be talking about. Whether or not the intended referent satisfies the expression used to refer to it, the statement made is about that individual, not about whatever satisfies that expression. Successful reference consists in the audience's identifying the intended referent. It does not matter how the audience identifies this individual so long as it is the right one, the one the speaker has in mind.

Interestingly Kripke does consider, though all too briefly, the suggestion that "a name is associated with a 'referential' use of a description" (1972, p. 348) but argues that such a description is typically withdrawn when the speaker realises that it does not apply to its object. If a Gödelian fraud were exposed, Gödel would no longer be called 'the author of the incompleteness theorem' but he would still be called 'Gödel'. The description, therefore, does not abbreviate the name. (p. 349)

But suppose the description in question is, as NDT stipulates, 'the bearer of a Gödel'. If that description did not apply to the individual one refers to by 'Gödel', that individual would not be called 'Gödel' either! Thus Kripke has failed to show that a nominal description, like "the bearer of Gödel", does not abbreviate the name, much less that uses of names to refer cannot be assimilated to referential uses of definite descriptions.

As I have suggested, the reason that uses of names can be so assimilated is that anything one knows by name one thinks of in some other way than as the bearer of the name. A hearer who does not know an individual by name or is not even familiar with the name (imagine being told, 'Thorncrown Kropotkin is bald') can still think of the individual being referred to as the individual the speaker has in mind. Indeed, one could proceed to use the name oneself, intending to be talking about the individual one's source of the name had referred to. Chains of reference could be forged in this way, link by link. Just the sort of causal-historical picture as Kripke's applies here. As he says (1972, 302), "When the name is 'passed from link to link', the receiver of the name, I think, intends when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the one from whom he heard it'. This picture can be seen to be perfectly compatible with NDT ('the causal theory made self-conscious', as Loar (1980) says) once we distinguish the meaning of a name from a particular use of it to refer. Indeed, since using a name to refer ordinarily involves thinking of the referent in a de re way and the causal-historical picture is, as I have suggested (1981), essential to an understanding of de re thought, combining this feature with NDT yields an account not only of the meaning of names but also of the use of names to refer. As we have seen, the description giving the meaning of a name generally does not determine the identity of the individual being referred to by that name. For this reason Kripke's arguments against description theories of the meaning of names are misdirected. Their proper target, I suggest, is description theories of de re thought, against which cases can be constructed that exactly parallel Kripke's Gödel/Schmidt example.\(^9\) They apply to the theory of reference only insofar as names (or other expressions, for that matter) are used to express de re thoughts, but are, as we have seen, utterly irrelevant to the theory of the meaning of names, in particular to the nominal description theory. According to that theory what's in a name is the name itself.

San Francisco State University

Received November 1980

REFERENCES


Other references cited in the text.

\(^8\) Even if the description is not true of the referent, the speaker uses it to enable his audience to identify the referent as the individual which he could reasonably intend to be reasonably taken as reasonably intending to be referring to in using that description. As explained in Bach (forthcoming), if a speaker uses a description referentially, there must be some way other than under the description used by which he thinks of the individual being referred to. That other way, not the description used, is decisive in determining the intended referent, although the speaker need not intend his audience to think of it in that way.

\(^9\) The same argument appears later in Kripke's 'Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference' (1977, p. 261, p. 274). Ironically, this distinction could have helped considerably his earlier treatment of proper names.

\(^9\) In Bach (1981) it is argued that the object of a perceptual belief is not determined by any description under which it is being thought of but by its being the object of attention.
FUNCTIONALISM AND ABSENT QUALIA

Gary Doore

In 'Functionalism and Qualia' Sydney Shoemaker defends functionalism as a theory about the nature of mental states from an objection raised by Ned Block and Jerry Fodor in their 1972 paper, 'What Psychological States are Not' - an objection that Block calls elsewhere the 'absent qualia argument', and which he regards as raising legitimate doubts about the adequacy of functionalism as a philosophical theory. Shoemaker also thinks that the absent qualia argument, if sound, would be a serious objection to functionalism in general and not merely to certain restricted versions of the theory (as are some of the other objections raised by Block and Fodor). Therefore, since these philosophers agree that the absent qualia argument deserves to be taken seriously, and since functionalism has been widely considered to be a viable theory in the philosophy of mind, it seems worthwhile to examine Shoemaker's attempted defence of functionalism against the alleged problem raised by the absent qualia argument. As I shall argue in what follows, there are a number of difficulties with Shoemaker's defence which make it unsuccessful. Whether the absent qualia argument constitutes a decisive reason for rejecting the theory of functionalism is a question I shall not attempt to decide here.

Functionalism 'in the broad sense' is characterised by Block and Fodor as the general doctrine that the type-identity conditions for mental states can be given exclusively by reference to their relations to inputs, outputs and to each other. This is the general version of functionalism that Shoemaker attempts to defend.

A more restricted version of functionalism would be, according to Block and Fodor, the doctrine that any organism or 'system' capable of having mental states can be uniquely described as a 'probabilistic automaton' or 'machine of a special type such that each of its mental states is identical with some abstract 'machine table' or 'programme' under that description'. One might have hoped for a more precise statement of the general thesis of

---


The *Philosophical Review*, LXXXI (1972), pp. 159-181.
Since this paper was written Block has published an article which deals with many of the same issues examined here, but in a much different way. See 'Are Absent Qualia Impossible?', *The Philosophical Review*, LXXXIX (1980), pp. 257-274.
Block and Fodor, op. cit., p. 173.