

Kripke, "Naming and Necessity"

1.
Kripke's Critique of the Description Theory of Names

Recap from his Lecture I:

Against (DN6): Even if we assume that the referent of a name like 'Aristotle' is fixed by means of a definite description, we cannot assume that Aristotle *must* have the features given by that description.
Suppose that I associate 'Aristotle' with the following ϕ s: Most famous student of Plato, most famous teacher of Alexander the Great, author of the *Metaphysics*....
Still, I think that all of these properties are contingent properties of Aristotle. I think that Aristotle could have failed to have every single one of these.
Consider the possible world where Aristotle gets run over by a chariot on his way to his first lesson with Plato. Such a world is one where Aristotle isn't the most famous student of Plato or the most famous teacher of Alexander the Great or the author of the *Metaphysics*.

Now, Lecture II:

Let's grant (DN1). It is a definition, after all.

Against (DN2): "Most people, when they think of Cicero, just think of a famous Roman orator." — And they don't suppose that that description picks out anyone uniquely.

But Kripke insists that were someone to associate 'Cicero' with only a famous Roman orator (and surely that's possible), they would still succeed in referring to Cicero with the name.

Against (DN3): Suppose that the only description we have for the name 'Gödel' is that he is the person who first proved the incompleteness of arithmetic. But, contrary to popular belief, Schmidt is the person that first proved the incompleteness of arithmetic.

Does 'Gödel' refer to Schmidt? Clearly not. 'Gödel' refers to Gödel.

Other examples: Peano and Dedekind, Columbus.

Against (DN4): The objection to (DN2) shows that a name can refer even if the description associated with it does not pick out a unique individual.

This objection shows that a name can refer even if the description associated with it picks out no one.

Suppose that no one proved the incompleteness of arithmetic. (The proof just appeared as a result of... or the 'proof' is defective.). Still, 'Gödel' refers to Gödel.

Other example: Jonah.

Against (DN5): Even if (DN3) and (DN4) happen to be true, it isn't the case that speakers know *a priori* that they are.

2.
Kripke's Positive "Picture": The Causal Theory of Names

Kripke does not present necessary and sufficient conditions for reference. Rather, he presents a "picture" of what is going on when a name refers/we use the name to refer.

With this picture, Kripke has departed from the target of the Description Theory of Names—namely, meaning. But the fact that the Description Theory takes into account how we learn the reference of names was one reason for finding it attractive. So, he hasn't changed topics. He just has no more to say about meaning.

So, how do names manage to refer? According to Kripke, there is an initial baptism (of sorts) where the name is introduced. The name is then passed from speaker, forming a (causal?) chain in which speakers are 'links'. If a speaker's use of a name goes back via that chain to the initial baptism, then that speaker succeeds in referring to the person of that name.