

KRIPKE'S PUZZLE ABOUT BELIEF

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1. Kripke: "A Puzzle About Belief"

2. Summary of the debate over names

1. Mill: names have no senses
2. Frege/Russell: names do have senses (perhaps varying from speaker to speaker)
3. Mill's view seems to imply that substitution of co-referential names preserves truth value in any context, including:
 - (a) Modal contexts: "Necessarily: Hesperus = Hesperus" vs. "Necessarily: Hesperus = Phosphorus"
 - (b) Attitude contexts: "Lois believes that Superman can fly" vs. "Lois believes that Clark can fly".
4. This seems wrong, which lends plausibility to the Frege-Russell view
5. Now Kripke argued that co-referential proper names are rigid designators, and so *are* intersubstitutable in modal contexts after all
6. Also, Kripke gave other arguments (epistemic, knowledge) against the Frege/Russell view
7. But Kripke did not argue in *Naming and Necessity* that co-referential proper names are intersubstitutable in attitude contexts. (Indeed, some things he says suggests otherwise: he says that "Hesperus = Phosphorus" is aposteriori; but "Hesperus = Hesperus" is obviously apriori.)
8. So we're in a quandary: Kripke's arguments favor Mill; attitude contexts favor Frege/Russell

3. Substitution in attitude contexts

Disquotational principle If a normal English speaker reflectively and sincerely assents to ‘ p ’, then she or he believes that p

Strengthened disquotational principle A normal English speaker who is not reticent will be disposed to sincere reflective assent to ‘ p ’ if and only if she or he believes that p

Logical principle No logically competent person believes contradictory things

The anti-Mill argument:

1. Lois assents to ‘Superman can fly’
2. If 1 is true then Lois believes that Superman can fly
3. Lois assents to ‘Clark cannot fly’, and does not assent to ‘Clark can fly’
4. If 3 is true then Lois does not believe that Clark can fly
5. If Mill’s view is true then Lois believes that Superman can fly if and only if she believes that Clark can fly
6. Therefore, Mill’s view isn’t true.

4. Pierre

Suppose Pierre is a normal French speaker who lives in France and speaks not a word of English or of any other language except French. Of course he has heard of that famous distant city, London (which he of course calls ‘*Londres*’) though he himself has never left France. On the basis of what he has heard of London, he is inclined to think that it is pretty. So he says, in French, “*Londres es jolie.*”...

Later, Pierre, through fortunate or unfortunate vicissitudes, moves to England, in fact to London itself, though to an unattractive part of the city with fairly uneducated inhabitants. He, like most of his neighbors, rarely ever leaves this part of the city. None of his neighbors know any French, so he must learn English by ‘direct method’, without using any translation of English into French: by talking and mixing with the people

he eventually begins to pick up English. In particular, everyone speaks of the city, 'London', where they all live... Pierre's surroundings are, as I said, unattractive, and he is unimpressed with most of the rest of what he happens to see. So he is inclined to assent to the English sentence:

(5) London is not pretty.

He has *no* inclination to assent to:

(6) London is pretty

(pp. 442–43)

Now consider:

1. Pierre assents to '*Londres es jolie*'
2. If 1 is true then Pierre believes that London is pretty
3. Pierre assents to 'London is not pretty' and does not assent to 'London is pretty'
4. If 3 is true then Pierre does not believe that London is pretty

These lines form a paradox: they are mutually contradictory. But they're nearly exactly parallel to the first four lines of the anti-Mill argument. The only difference is that the sentence assented to in 1 is in French. So, to argue for 2, first speak French and use the disquotation principle in French to get:

Pierre croit que Londres est jolie

Then use the following principle to get that Pierre believes that London is pretty:

Translation principle if a sentence of one language expresses a truth in that language, then any translation of it into any other language also expresses a truth (in that other language)