Kripke's Theory of Reference

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1. Initial baptisms

> Someone, let's say, a baby, is born; his parents call him by a certain name. They talk about him to their friends. Other people meet him. Through various sorts of talk the name is spread from link to link as if by a chain. A speaker who is on the far end of this chain, who has heard about, say Richard Feynman, in the marketplace or elsewhere, may be referring to Richard Feynman even though he can't remember from whom he first heard of Feynman or from whom he ever heard of Feynman… A certain passage of communication reaching ultimately to the man himself does reach the speaker. He then is referring to Feynman even though he can't identify him uniquely… a chain of communication going back to Feynman himself has been established, by virtue of his membership in a community which passed the name on from link to link, not by a ceremony that he makes in private in his study: "By 'Feynman' I shall mean the man who did such and such…". (p. 299)

> A rough statement of a theory might be the following: An initial "baptism" takes place. Here the object may be named by ostension or the reference of the name may be fixed by a description. When the name is "passed from link to link," the receiver of the name must, I think, intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from whom he heard it. If I hear the name "Napoleon" and decide it would be a nice name for my pet aardvark, I do not satisfy this condition. (p. 300)

The initial baptism attaches the name to its bearer initially—by ostension (pointing) or by description. (If the latter, the description merely fixes the referent; it doesn't give a synonym.)

2. The chain

The "chain" is a series of *uses* of the name—occasions on which the name is uttered, written down, or whatever. Uses are "properly linked" only if the second user intends to refer to the same thing as the first user.

3. The theory

> A use U of a proper name N refers to an object x iff there is some chain of uses of N in which i) adjacent members of the chain are properly linked, ii) U is the final member, iii) the first member is an initial baptism of N as a name for x.

Concerns (Gareth Evans): babies mixed up shortly after birth; Madagascar.

4. Names are rigid designators

4.1 Necessary a posteriori

  (H) Hesperus $=$ Phosphorus

(H) seems a posteriori because we needed to do experiments to know it was true. But it's necessary because both names are rigid designators, and thus refer to the same thing that they refer to in the actual world—Venus—in every world. But wait: couldn't it have turned out the other way, if the experiments had indicated that Hesperus wasn't Phosphorus? No, Kripke says:

> …given the evidence that someone has antecedent to his empirical investigation, he [the astronomer] can be placed in a sense in exactly the same situation, that is a qualitatively identical epistemic situation, and call two heavenly bodies "Hesperus" and "Phosphorus", without their being identical. So in that sense we can say that it might have turned out either way. Not that it might have turned out either way as to Hesperus's being Phosphorus. Though for all we knew in advance, Hesperus wasn't Phosphorus, that couldn't have turned out any other way, in a sense.… we, using the names as we do right now, can say in advance, that if Hesperus and Phosphorus are one and the same, then in no other possible world can they be different. (p. 302)

5. Contingent a priori

  (B) Bar b is one meter long

It's a priori because you know it's true just by knowing that 'meter' had its reference fixed by the description "the length of bar b". It's contingent because 'meter' is a rigid designator, and thus denotes the same length in each world, even if that length no longer satisfies the description in that world.