

## PROPER NAMES IN REFERENCE: BEYOND SEARLE AND KRIPKE

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Two basic answers have been given to the question whether proper names have meaning, the *negative* by Mill and later developed by Kripke and the *affirmative* by Frege and later developed by Searle. My aim is to integrate the two apparently irreconcilable theories by distinguishing the two aspects of the issue. I claim that, roughly speaking, whereas Kripke's No Sense View provides a good answer to the question, "How are proper names linked to their referents?", Searle's Sense View provides a good account of the issue "What do we do when we use a proper name?". Furthermore, I claim that the speakers attend to the referent of the proper name *both* in virtue of Kripkean chain of communication *and* in virtue of Searlian occasion-relative sense. Ordinarily, the chain of communication and the Searlian sense yield the same result, i.e. lead to the same referent. In cases of conflict, which are very rare, my intuition sides with the former against the latter. It would seem, therefore, that the only necessary and sufficient condition for a successful reference with a proper name is the existence of the Kripkean chain which links it with its referent.

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*Referring* is a process whereby speakers use an expression to attend to an object and to communicate their attention to an object. Correlated to this process is the relation between the given expression and its object, namely, *reference*. There are three types of expressions that are used to do this job: proper names, descriptions and indexicals (which include demonstratives, personal pronouns, common nouns with 'the' and few other expressions). In this paper I would like to outline a theory of reference by proper names, leaving definite descriptions and indexicals for another occasion.

Historically, the role of proper names in referring has been framed in terms of meaning, namely as a question, "Do proper names have meaning?" (or "sense", the two I use interchangeably). Two basic answers have been given to this question, namely, the *negative* suggested by Mill and developed especially by Kripke, and the *affirmative* suggested by Frege and developed especially by Searle. My aim is to integrate the two apparently irreconcilable answers: First, I argue that, roughly speaking, whereas Kripke's No Sense View provides a good answer to the question, "How are proper names linked to their referents?", Searle's Sense View provides a good account of the issue "What do we do when we use a proper name?".

Secondly, I claim that the speakers attend to the referent of the proper name *both* in virtue of Kripkean chain of communication, which ultimately consists of ostensibly linked intentional contents, *and* in virtue of Searlian occasion-relative sense. In all common contexts the chain of communication and the Searlian sense yield the same result, i.e. lead to the same referent. In cases of conflict – if it ever happens outside of an artificial philosophical discourse – my intuition about the case and my intuition about the intuitions of other speakers would give precedence to the Kripkean chain. That is, I hold that the only necessary and sufficient condition for a successful reference with a proper name is the existence of the Kripkean chain which links it with its referent.

My paper is divided into two parts. In the first I provide a selective historical overview of the question, going from Mill through Frege to Searle and Kripke. In the second part I present my own integrative view and test it on some common puzzles. Since the first part of my paper anticipates much of the argumentation that comes in the second part, it is indispensable for the overall intelligibility and justification of my view.

## 1. A Brief History of the Question

### A. Mill's *A System of Logic* (1843): No Sense View/Naïve Version

Although some reflections about proper names can be found already in antiquity, let me start with the contemporary emergence of the issue. This is the famous passage from Mill's *A System of Logic*:

Proper names are not connotative: they denote the individuals who are called by them; but they do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those individuals. When we name a child by the name of Paul, or a dog by the name Caesar, these names are simply marks used to enable those individuals to be made subjects of discourse. [...] But it is no part of signification of the word John, that the father of the person so called bore the same name; nor even the word Dartmouth, to be situated at the mouth of the Dart. If sand should choke up the mouth of the river, or an earthquake change its course, and remove it to a distance from the town, the name of the town would not necessarily be changed. That fact, therefore, can form no part of the signification of the word; for otherwise, when the fact confessedly ceased to be true, no one would any longer think of applying the name. Proper names are attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on the continuance of any attribute of the object. [Mill (1843): *quoted from* Garfield – Murray (1991)]

Mill claims that proper names are not connotative. By this he means that they “do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those indivi-

duals". Why? Once a proper name is given to an individual (from whatever reason), it refers<sup>1</sup> to the individual no matter what changes the individual undergoes or might undergo. Thus, Dartmouth would be called 'Dartmouth' even if it were not situated at the mouth of the river Dart anymore. We could add, that this is, of course, in contrast with expressions like 'the town at the mouth of the river Dart' which refers to Dartmouth only insofar as it is indeed at the mouth of the river Dart. So far so good. However, Mill further claims that "[proper names] do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to [their referents]". This seems obviously false – many proper names typically do *indicate* with some *likelihood* an attribute belonging to their referents. 'Dartmouth' mostly refers to a geographical object, 'Fido' to a dog, 'John' to a person. Should we therefore conclude that Mill is wrong and that proper names have meaning or sense? It seems that the problem is partially verbal: What is the meaning of 'meaning'? In one sense, an expression has a meaning if and only if it can be used predicatively. Thus, for instance, I can say 'This dog is quite friendly' [pointing to one] and use the expression 'dog' to refer to a dog, but I can also say 'This animal is a dog' [pointing to one] and use the same expression to predicate. In contrast, conjunctions like 'and', 'or', 'if ... then ...' or articles 'the', 'a', exclamations, etc. do not have meanings *per se* although they do *contribute* to the meaning of a sentence<sup>2</sup>. If we apply this notion of meaning, then it would seem that proper names do not have meanings. In another sense, however, we could say that any symbol used in a meaningful discourse has *some* meaning. Then, trivially, proper names *do* have meanings. Is there any sense of 'meaning' in which the question "Do proper names have meanings?" is not moot? Frege thought that there were.

### B. Frege's *On Sense and Reference* (1892): Sense View/Fixed Sense Version

Frege's thinking about proper names is scattered in several of his writings but let me deal here only with his argument in the treatise *On Sense and Reference*. Frege notices that some identity statements are informative, such as, e.g., "Phosphorus is Hesperus" – it was an important astronomical accomplishment to figure this out. On the other hand, there is nothing interesting about the statements "Phosphorus is Phosphorus" or "Hesperus is Hesperus"

<sup>1</sup> To say that a proper name or another expression refers is a shorthand for more precise 'can be used to refer by a competent speaker of the language'.

<sup>2</sup> In the context of model-theoretic semantics it is precisely logical constants which are said to have a fixed meaning. This is a different meaning of 'meaning'.

rus" which we know a priori to be true. Therefore, it would seem, there must be more to "Phosphorus" and more to "Hesperus" than just the fact that these are signs "attached" to the planet Venus. As Frege put it, "it is plausible to connect with a sign (name, word combination, expression) not only the designated object [...] of the sign, but also the sense (connotation, meaning) of the sign *in which is contained the manner and context of presentation*." Frege takes this to be true of both proper names and definite descriptions and therefore the two are not really very different. The only peculiarity of proper names is that different speakers attach different meanings to the same names, which is merely an unpleasant imperfection of ordinary language<sup>3</sup>.

The view that proper names have meanings gives further advantage in dealing with *existential statements* (especially the negative ones). The argument goes as follows: Let us take a sentence like 'Cerberus does not exist'. Is this sentence meaningless? Certainly not. Then, however, what contribution does the expression 'Cerberus' make to the meaning of the sentence? It cannot be something merely "attached" to its referent since the point of the sentence is precisely to deny that there is any referent of 'Cerberus' (unless we accept an ontologically odd view that Cerberus is a non-existent entity to which 'Cerberus' refers). The solution lies – if Frege is right – in acknowledging that 'Cerberus' has a meaning, which amounts to a description of what it is for something to be Cerberus. In saying 'Cerberus does not exist' we mean that there is no such thing that would satisfy the description of Cerberus or, to put it differently, that the meaning of 'Cerberus' does not apply to anything.

Still, to come back to Mill, if proper names have meanings in some non-trivial sense, why are we not able to use them predicatively?<sup>4</sup> Also, intuiti-

<sup>3</sup> "In the case of genuinely proper names like 'Aristotle' opinions as regards their sense may diverge. As such may, e.g., be suggested: Plato's disciple and the teacher of Alexander the Great. Whoever accepts this sense will interpret the meaning of the statement "Aristotle was born in Stagira" differently from one who interpreted the sense of 'Aristotle' as the Stagirite teacher of Alexander the Great. As long as the *nominatum* remains the same, these fluctuations in sense are tolerable. But they should be avoided in the system of a demonstrative science and should not appear in a perfect language." Frege (1892): *quoted from* Garfield – Murray (1991).

<sup>4</sup> It might be claimed that proper names can be used predicatively in at least three types of sentences: (1) 'This is John'. (2) 'Cicero is Tully'. (3) 'John is (an) Einstein'. In order to predicate, however, it is necessary to say something (predicate) *about* something else (subject). We see that none of the three sentences satisfies this condition: (1) communicates a name to somebody who does not know it or it imposes a name by "baptism"; (2) expresses the fact that two different names, namely 'Cicero' and 'Tully' both refer to one and the same person; (3) is an ellipsis for 'John is as smart as Einstein'. It might also be claimed that the definite descriptions

vely, it seems that Mill is right in asserting that names are somehow directly attached to the objects and that they do not refer in virtue of their meanings as, for instance, the singular definite descriptions do. Both Mill's No Sense View and Frege's Sense View have some support in our intuitions about what proper names are and what we do with them. Skipping some other advantages and disadvantages of the two views (and contributions by Russell, Strawson and others to the debate), we proceed to Searle and Kripke, which have developed the two views to the greatest detail<sup>5</sup>.

### C. Searle's *Speech Acts* (1962): Sense View/Fluctuation Sense Version

As an element in his general theory of reference, Searle formulates *The Principle of Identification*: "If a speaker refers to an object, then he identifies or is able on demand to identify that object for the hearer apart from all other objects" (79 – 80). Applied to proper names it goes as follows:

[A]nyone who uses a proper name must be prepared to substitute an identifying description (remembering that identifying descriptions include ostensive presentations) of the object referred to by a proper name. If he were unable to do this, we should say that he did not know whom or what he was talking about ... (168)

Notice that Searle construes his identifying description quite broadly – including ostensive presentations, which are not really "descriptive". Furthermore, not every user of a proper name refers on every occasion in virtue of the same identifying description:

if both the speaker and the hearer associate some identifying description with the name, then the utterance of the name is sufficient to satisfy the principle of identification, for both the speaker and the hearer are able to substitute an identifying descrip-

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cannot be used predicatively either and that similarly as proper names they can be used only in identity statements. Think, however, of a person who talks about George W. Bush, unaware that he is the U.S. President. We point out to her: "George W. Bush is the U.S. President". Here it would seem that we say something (being a U.S. President) *about* something else (George W. Bush). Thus, proper names and definite descriptions do seem to have different uses.

<sup>5</sup> A note on bibliography might be in place here: In this paper I have avoided drawing on the vast secondary literature concerning proper names and reference. I draw primarily on Searle and Kripke since I have found them most insightful with respect to this issue. The confirmation of my impression I find in Kellewessel's (1996) bibliography where (besides Russell) Kripke and Searle are the two most discussed authors. There are 56 items for Kripke on proper names and 28 for Searle on proper names. Altogether there are 266 items on proper names out of 2114 items on reference. Other major contributors to the discussion are as follows: Russell (72), Donnellan (24), Wittgenstein (21), Quine (19), Kaplan (18), Plantinga (12), Mill (6). Unfortunately I do not know how much Frege and Evans are discussed in this context as there were missing pages in my copy of Kellewessel (1996) and I was not able to get hold of another one.

tion. The utterance of the name communicates a proposition to the hearer. It is not necessary that both should supply the same identifying description, provided only that their descriptions are in fact true of the same object. (171)

Searle's view on proper names could be put into two theses: first, that proper names refer in virtue of identifying descriptions (meanings, senses); second, that proper names cannot be used to describe their referents (like descriptions) because the associated meaning of a given proper name "fluctuates" from speaker to speaker and occasion to occasion.<sup>6</sup> In the first thesis Searle agrees with Frege. The second thesis is an improvement over Frege since it enables to explain why the proper names are not predicable (everybody would predicate something different)<sup>7</sup>.

### D. Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* (1980): No Sense View/Chain Version

Kripke makes a distinction between theories of *meaning* and of *reference*. According to the descriptive theory of *meaning* of proper names, for any given proper name there is one or more description (their disjunction, cluster, "family") which is synonymous with it. In other words, the descriptions capture the meaning of proper names. According to the descriptive theory of *reference* of proper names,

... even though the description in some sense doesn't give the meaning of the name, it is what determines its reference and although the phrase 'Walter Scott' isn't synonymous with 'the man such that such and such and such and such', or even maybe with the family (if someone can be synonymous with a family), the family or the single description is what is used to determine to whom someone is referring when he says 'Walter Scott'.

The descriptive theory of reference of proper names is weaker than the theory of meaning. Kripke, however, thinks that both of them are wrong. His elaborate criticisms could be summarized into two major points:<sup>8</sup>

(1) *Modal*. If the descriptive theory of proper names (the Sense View) is true, the referents of proper names have to have some apparently contingent

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<sup>6</sup> "My answer, then, to the question, "Do proper names have senses?"—if this asks whether or not proper names are used to describe or specify characteristics of objects—is "No". But if it asks whether or not proper names are logically connected with characteristics of the object to which they refer, the answer is "Yes, in a loose sort of way". (170) This "loose sort of way" is further specified as follows: "I wish to argue that though no single one of [the meanings] is analytically true of Aristotle, their disjunction is" (1962: 169)

<sup>7</sup> It could be pointed out that impredicability is a syntactic feature. However, I would say that the deeper reason to explain this syntactic feature lies in the semantics: impredicability is the result of what we mean when we use a proper name.

<sup>8</sup> This way of characterizing Kripke's project I got from John T. Kearns.

properties necessarily. Thus, if we claim that 'Walter Scott' *means* "the man who wrote Waverly or did *x* or *y* or *z*" then, necessarily, Walter Scott had to do at least some of these things. Similarly in case we claim that "the man who wrote Waverly or did *x* or *y* or *z*" fixes the reference of 'Walter Scott'.

(2) *Epistemic*. According to Kripke, even if all the users of a proper name were mistaken about all the descriptions linked with it, we could still successfully use it to refer. Thus, for instance, we could discover one day a papyrus which shows that Plato died in fact as an adolescent but that his affluent parents gathered a group of Socrates' followers and charged them with writing the dialogs and ascribing them to Plato. This would be a situation where present users of the name 'Plato' would connect with the name false identifying descriptions (meanings) but would still refer to Plato<sup>9</sup>.

Given these problems with the descriptive theory of proper names (the Sense View), Kripke concludes similarly as Mill that proper names do not refer in virtue of their meanings ("do not have meanings"). Unlike Mill, however, Kripke is aware of the need to show *how* the proper names attach to their referents. This is the picture he offers:

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. (96)

Kripke does not say much about the nature of the chain and how exactly it works (he calls his view 'a picture' not 'a theory' since it is not laid out in precise details). We see, however, that in his theory the chain of communication ('causal' link) plays the key role.

### E. Searle's *Intentionality* (1983): Sense View/Fluctuating Sense Version

Searle is unimpressed by Kripke's criticisms:<sup>10</sup>

(1) Reply to the Modal Criticism: Kripke overlooks the simple operation whereby any definite description can be turned into a rigid designator by in-

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<sup>9</sup> Although some might disagree and claim that when they use the expression 'Plato' they refer to whoever wrote the dialogs. This is certainly possible but it is a non-standard way of using a proper name. See p. 10, including nn. 16 and 17.

<sup>10</sup> Searle characterizes the difference from Kripke in terms of whether proper names refer in virtue of setting *internal* conditions of satisfaction (descriptive theory), or in virtue of some *external* causal relation (causal theory). In my opinion, Searle both modifies his earlier account and misrepresents Kripke's views. Concerning the former, it had not been clear before that an *identifying description* may be something inexpressible in words. Concerning the latter, Kripke nowhere excludes from his theory/picture intentional content (cf. the last quote in the previous section).

dexing it to the actual world. Let us take “the man who invented bifocals” as one of the meanings of ‘Benjamin Franklin’. It seems to Kripke that if somebody else has invented bifocals “the man who invented bifocals” would be no more applicable to Benjamin Franklin. Consequently, it cannot be a part of the meaning of ‘Benjamin Franklin’. However, what we mean in fact by ‘the man who invented the bifocals’ is “the man who, in the actual world, invented bifocals”. Thus, the descriptions indexed to the actual world are uniquely identifying and they can give meaning to proper names.

(2) Reply to the Epistemic Criticism: The intentional content (originally called ‘identifying description’) must be understood quite broadly. Searle claims: “The counterexamples I have seen to the descriptivist theory fail in general because the authors look only at what the agent might say and not at the total Intentional content he has in his head [...]” (250)<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Searle brings his own complaints against Kripke:

1. The “external causal chain does not actually reach up to the object, it only reaches to the baptism of the object, to the name introduction ceremony, and from that point on what fixes the reference is an Intentional content” (235)
2. The causal chain is not purely causal, unless intentionality is understood as a form of causality: the speaker has to have an intention to use the proper name as the one from whom he has picked it.
3. The causal theory does not give sufficient conditions of successful reference: the name ‘Madagascar’ originally referred to a part of (mainland) Africa. Marco Polo, however, referred by it to the island off the coast of Africa. Although the terminus of the causal chain differs from the object that satisfies the intentional content associated with this name, we refer to the latter not to the former.
4. The causal theory does not give necessary conditions either: For instance, we can refer to Rameses VIII even though there is no causal chain going to him. (We do it in virtue of knowing that he lived after Rameses VII and before Rameses IX).
5. “[T]he “causal chain of communication” is simply a characterization of the parasitic cases seen from an external point of view.” “The external causal chain plays no explanatory role whatever in either Kripke’s or Donnellan’s account” (244 – 5)

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<sup>11</sup> Moreover, it would be even less plausible that *the whole linguistic community* is completely mistaken about a referent but still be successfully referring to it by using a given proper name.

6. According to Kripke's theory "the chains of communication, when they do occur, the only Intentionality which secures reference is that each speaker intends to refer to the same objects the previous speaker." In fact, however, there is a lot of other information which gets transferred, e.g. the type of thing named by the name.

### F. Evaluation of Searle – Kripke Exchange

In my view, Searle is right on some points while wrong on others. Searle is obviously right that descriptions as indexed to the actual world are uniquely identifying<sup>12</sup>, that chains of communication are not purely causal (1), that they reach only to the initial "baptism" (2) and that much more information is usually linked with a proper name than just an intention to use it as the one from whom I got it (6). (We leave aside whether Kripke ever claimed otherwise in *Meaning and Necessity*).

More problematic is Searle's answer to Kripke's epistemic criticism. It is true that on Searle's broad understanding of intentional content one can always bring in something like, "the man called X by my linguistic community" (251). Moreover, Searle admits that there might exist chains of speakers (i.e. of intentional contents). Consequently, it should also be possible to go back to the people who fixed the reference (imposed the name). These people, of course, could not be quite mistaken about the referent. They might be wrong, for instance, as to what kind of object they are naming but not that they are giving the name to "this object in front of us". Unfortunately, this way out is for Searle closed, since in his view the chains of communication plays "no explanatory role whatever". (I return to this point shortly.)

There are further problems with Searle's charges (3), (4) and (5).

(3) The Madagascar counterexample can be handled by Kripke's No Sense View without difficulty. If Marco Polo used a word to refer to something else than it did previously, we can understand it as a "re-baptism", i.e. the end of one chain of communication and the beginning of another. If Marco did it intentionally, then it is clearly a case of "re-baptism". If not and he did so by mistake, which means that he would correct his mistake upon discovery of it, then the "re-baptism" took place at a later time. There was certainly a time  $t_1$  when 'Madagaskar' referred to (mainland) Africa; if speakers thought otherwise they would accept the correction if it were poin-

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<sup>12</sup> The indexed descriptions *could* be taken as the meanings of proper names. Such meanings, however, would be somewhat bizarre since they would grow with the unfolding life of the referent. To endorse eternalist ontology to avoid this consequence seems is a high *ontological* price for a *semantic* theory.

ted out to them. There was another time  $t_2$  since which 'Magadaskar' has been clearly referring to the island off the coast of Africa and no correction is possible. The "re-baptism" must have occurred between  $t_1$  and  $t_2$ . True, since we are dealing here with linguistic intuitions of a group of people, there is some vagueness involved – not all our intuitions are clear and not all people share them. There is, however, no reason why Kripke's No Sense View should disallow vague "re-baptisms".

(4) According to Searle proper names do not refer in virtue of a causal chain of communication, i.e. the chain is not necessary for the reference. This holds true even for the names which are put forward by opponents of the descriptive theory (the Sense View), such as 'Rameses VIII' about whom nothing is known.

Searle's claim is problematic in at least four respects. First, it is not necessary, as Searle seems to assume, that the chain of communication reaches back to the times of the actual existence of the referent. I do not know where the name 'Rameses VIII' comes from but I suspect that it was given by modern Egyptologists. If it is so, "baptism" of Rameses VIII took place thousands of years after his death. If it is not so and it was already in the times of Rameses VIII that he was called 'Rameses VIII', then the chain of communication is longer. Either way, however, it is there. Second, even if Searle was right and there were no chain of communication going to Rameses VIII, the proponent of the No Sense View could simply point out that Rameses VIII is not an ordinary proper name but a shorthand description for 'a person that rules between Rameses VII and Rameses IX'. Third, the defender of No Sense View can acknowledge 'Rameses VIII' as parasitic on other proper names – it does not refer in virtue of an independent chain of communication but is parasitic on communication chains of 'Rameses VII' and 'Rameses IX'. Finally, Searle is right that it is not *always* necessary to take avail of a chain of communication. In one special case I do not need it – in case it is me who has imposed the name ("baptism").

(5) Searle characterizes Kripke's chain as external and explanatorily superfluous. Neither seems to be the case. First, the chain is not external (if it means non-intentional) since its "joints" are intentional<sup>13</sup>. Person P1 adopts the name from P2, P2 from P3, etc. where each one *intends* to use it to refer to the same referent as the previous person, going back to those who imposed the name. Kripke's criticisms are directed against descriptivism in the old sense, in which the notion of description excludes ostension, not in the

<sup>13</sup> This is actually one of Searle's complaints against Kripke, namely that it is not purely "causal". Did Kripke ever claim that his chain of communication must be purely causal?

new (Searle's) sense, in which it is included. Obviously, the chain of communication needs ostension. Consequently, Kripke's views are not completely anti-descriptivist in this new sense. Second, the charge that the chain is explanatorily superfluous is not plausible. Let us recall the Plato example. Do *we*, the present speakers, refer to Plato, when we use 'Plato', because of what *we* believe about him? No. Although most or all of the things we believe about Plato may be true, they may be false. It is rather the intentional content of the ones who knew him best which determine authoritatively the referent of 'Plato'. Of course, we do not know who they were. But we do not need to know this. All we know is that there is a chain of communication going from them to us. It is this chain which warrants that 'Plato' refers to Plato no matter what we believe about him (of course, assuming that the chain does indeed reach him).

## 2. How Do Proper Names Actually Work?

In the above given historical sketch the contours of my own view on proper names has already emerged: I agree with Kripke that it is the chain of communication which warrants success in reference, but I also applaud Searle's stress of the importance of intentional content. Its role is twofold (a) the chain of communication itself consists in ostensibly interrelated intentional contents; (b) it helps to a given speaker (or the audience) to attend to the referent of a proper name in a better way. In the first function the intentional content is minimal, in the second it is typically much richer (depending how well the speaker or the audience knows the referent). In the second function, however, it is not necessary for the success of reference. We could also say that Kripke and Searle each address somewhat different issues. Kripke's No Sense View provides an answer to the question, "How are proper names linked to their referents?", whereas Searle's Sense Theory to the question "What are we doing when we use proper names?". This part of the paper is divided into two sections, the first dealing with what the chain is and how it works, the second with some of the standard puzzles concerning proper names.

### A. The Chain of Communication and Proper Names in Reference

Here is an example of how chains work: suppose Joseph and Mary name their baby 'John'. Since Joseph's parents live far away they cannot come to visit their son at this occasion. Joseph communicates to them the news by saying 'Your newborn grandchild is named 'John', was born at such and

such time and weighs so and so'. This enables Joseph's parents to use the name effectively. Joseph's parents pass on the name to their friend Peter. Peter does not know much of the detail, except that John is an infant and that it is the first grandchild of his friends. Still, this is sufficient for Peter to pass on the name further to one of his neighbors who do not know either Joseph or Mary or Joseph's parents. Peter can say, for instance, that his good friends have had a first grandchild named 'John' and that they are very excited about it. Even this little information enables Peter's neighbors to use the name effectively. (They can, for instance, ask 'Is John healthy?') Now, we see that each person when using the proper name 'John' attends to John though different intentional content. Peter's neighbors attend to John through the intentional content involving Peter (e.g. "it is a grandchild of Peter's friends"). Peter refers to the child through the intentional content involving "these good friends of mine". Joseph's parents refer to the baby in virtue of what they were told about the baby by Joseph. Finally, Joseph and Mary refer to the baby in virtue of a far richer intentional content, including all their experiences with the birth and baptizing the baby as 'John'. At each stage, however, we may notice, that the crucial part of the intentional content involved in the reference points to the source from which the name came, going back to those who imposed the name. The success of the reference is warranted by this chain of intentional contents. All other elements in the intentional content are helpful but they are neither necessary nor sufficient for the reference to succeed.<sup>14</sup>

To put my view in more general way: Whenever speakers use a proper name X, they attend to its referent (a) in virtue of chained intentional contents going back to the imposition of the name, (b) in virtue of a richer speaker-relative intentional content (depends on the beliefs about and experiences of the referent). Typically the two coincide, in case of conflict (a) takes precedence<sup>15</sup>. The name is applied to its referent with retrospective validity. As Geach has put it, "Octavian was not known as 'Augustus' till quite later in his career; but once it became an established usage to employ the name

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<sup>14</sup> Searle on the other hand thinks that chaining is something accidental. "My reference to an individual may be parasitic on someone else's but this parasitism cannot be carried on indefinitely if there is to be any reference at all" (1983:170). Its true that the parasitism is not indefinite. In fact it always ends with those who imposed the name. Besides those cases, however, all referring with a proper name has its "parasitic" foundation.

<sup>15</sup> I reject Searle's claim that degrees of acquaintance are relevant (1983). It is true that for a given person some referents are well-known, others less, still some virtually unknown, in all cases, however, it is only the chain of communication which is necessary and sufficient for the success of the reference.

with that reference, it could be used by anybody at any time, in relation to any stage of Octavian's career [...] (1969: 59). This holds true even for the referent which has since long passed out of existence. For instance, the paleontologists have given the name 'Lucy' to an individual whose skeleton they found in Ethiopia. It is 3.4 million years old. Related to this is the capability of chains to be interrupted and re-established. Thus it happens that a civilization disappears from the world stage but that its texts are uncovered and deciphered and some proper names picked up by scholars again. In this situation I would say that the chain goes directly from the writers of the texts to the scholars living hundreds of years later. Chains can furthermore split and merge and in this respect they typically look more like 'a web' rather than 'a chain'.

Symbolically we may represent the chain as follows:

- $r$  – an arbitrary referent
- $x, y, x_1, y_1$  – variables ranging over intentional contents;
- $CH(x, y)$  – a relation of *being chained with*;  $CH$  is irreflexive, anti-symmetric;
- $FIX(x, r)$  – a relation of *imposing a name to* or *fixing the reference to*.

Definition of Reference:

$$REF(x, r) \equiv \exists x_1 \dots x_n [CH(x, x_1) \& CH(x_1, x_2) \& \dots CH(x_{n-1}, x_n) \& FIX(x_n, r)]$$

for a given natural number  $n$

Note: Intentional content is dependent on the existence of persons, therefore the reference is from an ontological point of view a relation between a person and a referent.

John T. Kearns (personal communication) points out that the difference in how the speaker and the referent are situated is relevant for the theory of reference. He distinguishes three possibilities: 1. The object is present in the perceptual field of the speaker (and the audience); 2. the object was experienced in the past; 3. the object was never experienced, (which can happen in three ways: the referent does not exist anymore, it exists but is outside of my experiential access, it is a future existing object.). I agree that the epistemic access is relevant. However, I would group the cases differently:

1. *Imposing the Name Case*: I attend to the referent in virtue of my own experience. I also know in virtue of my own experience that the name attaches to the referent.
2. *Experienced Case*: I attend to the referent in virtue of my own experience (past or present) but that the name attaches to the referent I know in virtue of the chain of communication.

3. *Non-experienced Case*: I attend to the referent in virtue of what I was told about it and in virtue of the chain of communication. That the name attaches to the referent I know in virtue of the chain of communication.

In the Experienced Case it sometimes happens that when I use a proper name I attend to the referent in virtue of my own experience but I use for the referent a wrong name. For instance, I was introduced to a family with seven children. I remembered what they looked like (and therefore I could mentally attend to them) but for a while I was using wrong names<sup>16</sup>. A similar error can happen in the Non-experienced Case: I could be told that Caesar was a great military leader and that he conquered today's France. Then, however, I mistakenly use the name 'Cicero' when I speak about Caesar. These errors are sometimes only incidental (I know that Caesar was not called 'Cicero'), sometimes systematic (I did not learn the name properly), sometimes the audience is able to spot the mistake from the context, sometimes it is not.

In the Non-Experienced Case, a deeper mistake can occur when a speaker individually or the whole community of speakers at a certain time<sup>17</sup> collectively hold beliefs about the referent which turn up to be all wrong. It seems that in real life this hardly ever happens. Nevertheless, philosophers are fanatics and so they press the question what if everything (or almost everything) one believes about a referent of a given proper name was false? What if all we believe about Plato is false but there is the chain of communication going back to his parent who gave him his name? Would we still say that we have been referring to Plato? Ordinarily, we do not have to decide such dramatic cases. My intuition sides with the chain of communication and I would expect this to be the case with most competent speakers: the existence of the chain of communication is the sole necessary and sufficient condition for a successful reference with a proper name (used as proper name). Whether my claim about the intuitions of other speakers is in fact true or not is an empirical question which would have to be further investigated by sociologists.

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<sup>16</sup> This might remind us of Kripke's distinction between speaker's reference and semantic reference – my intention was to refer to Monica (though I did not know it is her name) but instead I was using the name 'Helen'.

<sup>17</sup> One cannot include all speakers since some of them imposed the name and those cannot be mistaken. There is also a possibility that the imposition of a name occurs mistakenly. I can, for instance, point to my wife and say 'This is člověk'. Somebody might take this to mean that her name is 'Člověk' and spread this usage. (In Czech 'člověk' means "human being"). This idea emerged from discussions with Michael Gorman.

It is no objection to my view to point out that the proper names might be used as disguised definite descriptions as well. Suppose I am interested in the theory of soul of Plato's *Republic* and discuss it with a friend. He points out to me, "Haven't you heard the news? Plato did not write the *Republic*." I may answer, "All right, don't interrupt me, when I say 'Plato' I mean whoever wrote the *Republic*." I would be aware, however, that this way of using the word 'Plato' is non-standard<sup>18</sup>. Precisely, if I believed my friend, I would know that 'Plato' used in a standard way refers to somebody who did *not* write the *Republic*.<sup>19</sup>

It could seem to some that what I have said about the proper names is true for all words: to use the words 'cat' or 'and' properly I have to intend to use them as the person from whom I got them, etc. back to the people who used them first in the same sense. The difference, however, is that although the chain of communication is necessary for the successful use of any word, it is not sufficient. In addition to it, I have to be able to know what these words *mean* and provide further ostensive or descriptive information on demand. If it showed up that I cannot do that, nobody would say that I use the word successfully. In contrast, I can use proper names successfully and be wrong just about everything I think about its referent.

To sum up: Concerning the proper names we need to distinguish different questions: (1) What do we do when we attend to the referent by using a proper name? (2) How is the proper name linked to its referent?<sup>20</sup> I defend

<sup>18</sup> I could use a word in any grammatical category as a proper name but it would be unusual (non-standard) to do so – recall e.g. Mr. Nobody from *Alice in Wonderland*. Conversely, I could use 'Hitler' or 'Einstein' as disguised definite descriptions or perhaps in some other way as well. Clearly, these cases would be non-standard and it is the standard way of using proper names that we are here concerned with. Notice also that the non-standard use may become standard and so, for instance, what was a proper names in the past becomes a common name in the present.

<sup>19</sup> If it turned out that Plato did not write any of the dialogues and we would not know anything about their real author, we would probably call their real author 'Pseudo-Plato'. There is a precedent for this with Dionysius Areopagita (mentioned in Acts, 17, 34) and with other authors as well. Since for a long time it was thought that Dionysius is the author of a bunch of treatises and letters, of which he in fact is not (they were written five hundred years after his death), we call their real author 'Pseudo-Dionysius'.

<sup>20</sup> Gracia (1988) makes a somewhat similar claim, namely that there are to be distinguished three aspects of the issue: (a) What is the function of proper names? (b) How do we use proper names effectively? (c) How is the reference established? Gracia claims that Mill's Reference View is an appropriate answer to (a), Searle's Descriptivist View to (b), and Kripke's Causal View to (c). My understanding of (b) and (c) differs. Furthermore, I do not think that the question (a) requires a *theory* – it is too elementary.

the following answers: (1) When using a proper name speakers attend to the referent (a) by means of various identifying descriptions, (b) by means of the chain of communication. (2) The proper name is linked to its referent by the chain of communication going back to the moment of imposing the name ("baptism"). I claim that the existence of this chain is both necessary and sufficient condition for a successful reference with a proper name used as a proper name and not as a definite description. The "joints" between the users of a name in the chain of communication consist in an intention to use the name for the same referent as does the person from whom I got the name, going back to the person(s) who imposed the name. No other intentional content besides the one responsible for the chain of communication is either necessary (one can be wrong about everything) nor sufficient (it would be a mere happy coincidence for me to use a correct name which has not been passed on to me from the imposition-moment).

### B. Solutions of Some Puzzles

1. *Function of Proper Names.* One datum to be explained by theory of proper names is why unlike, for instance, definite descriptions or common nouns which can be used both predicatively and referentially (as Donnellan noticed), proper names can only be used to refer. Thus, for instance, I can say 'The English queen is quite friendly' and use the expression 'English queen' *to refer* and I can also say 'This woman is the English queen' [pointing to Elisabeth II] and use the same expression *to predicate*. I cannot do this with proper names, at least not typically: True, we could say 'John is Aristotle' or rather 'John is an Aristotle' but what we actually mean here is "John is as good a philosopher as Aristotle." So what seems to be a predicative use is in fact an ellipsis.<sup>21</sup>

On my view, the explanation of this phenomenon is simple: we cannot predicate proper names since their sense is attached to them only incidentally – it is helpful but not really necessary for them to function as proper names. Moreover, their sense fluctuates from person to person and occasion to occasion. Only the chain of communication is for proper names essential and it is impredicable since it consists from ostensions and these are impredicable.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Similarly, with the sentence 'There are two Paul Newmans in the city of Kolín'. Here the proper name can be taken to be a shorthand for 'two people who are called 'Paul Newman''. See also above n. 5.

<sup>22</sup> At this point, there lurks the topic of whether some predicates – notably natural kinds – are essentially different from proper names. If they were not, much of what I have said about proper names (fluctuation of the sense, ostention, etc.) would hold about those predicates as well.

2. *Informativeness of Identity Statements.* Another problem associated with proper names concerns identity statements. The argument looks like this:

1. Some identity statements are informative.  
(E.g. 'Hesperus is Phosphorus')<sup>23</sup>
2. If proper names simply (immediately) stand for their referents, then no identity statements should be informative.
- C. Proper names do not simply (immediately) stand for their referents.

How do we attend to the referent when we use a proper name? According to Frege, proper names refer in virtue of fixed meaning (sense), whereas according to Searle in virtue of fluctuating meaning (identifying description, intentional content). As we have seen, according to my view, proper names refer (a) in virtue of the chain of communication, but we attend to the referent also (b) in virtue of the fluctuating intentional content. Usually the two coincide, in case of conflict, however, (a) takes precedence. How to explain that some identity statements are informative? There are in fact two reasons: (1) Different names can have different chains going back to different moments of imposing the name. To those speakers which take the sentence 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' as a news, it could be paraphrased as "The names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus', although related to you through different chains, are linked to the same object."<sup>24</sup> (2) People attend to the referent of a proper name also through various identifying descriptions based on beliefs and memories they have of the referent. If this speaker-relative intentional content associated with one name is not identical with the intentional content associated with another name, it may be a surprise for a speaker to learn that both leads to the same referent.

3. *Existential Propositions.* The problem here is especially with negative existential statements, i.e. with how to deny that something exists (with proper name as grammatical subject). It seems as if statements like 'Peter does not exist' could not be true: for if it were, 'Peter' would fail to have reference, and so no predication would have been made. The solution is to understand that those statements are in a metalanguage, i.e. that they are statements about the names. Thus, we can reformulate the sentence 'Peter does

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<sup>23</sup> This is in fact an awkward sentence. Nobody would talk this way – we would rather say 'Hesperus and Phosphorus are one and the same star' (John Kearns's observation).

<sup>24</sup> Of course, those which take 'Phosphorus' simply to mean "a planet or star yonder there in the morning", the identity sentence does not involve proper names but definite descriptions. Frege's choice of such borderline examples of proper names is unfortunate.

not exist' as 'The name 'Peter' does not refer to anybody'. This solution would also explain how the proper names of fictional objects work. 'Cerberus' can be used since it has in fact a chain of communication and there are various descriptions associated with this name. However, the chain of communication through which this name has been passed to us originates not in a genuine imposition of a name to a real object but in fantasy.

### 3. Conclusion

With respect to how proper names work I have distinguished the following philosophical positions:

*Sense View:*

1. Fixed Sense Version [Frege] – proper names have senses like common names do;
2. Fluctuating Sense Version [Searle] – proper names have occasion-relative senses.

The sense (meaning) includes according to various versions one or more of the following either individually or disjunctively or in weighted clusters: (a) non-indexed descriptions, (b) ostensions, (c) indexed descriptions. The sense might further be taken either as a sense (meaning) of a proper name, or as fixing the reference only.

*No Sense View:*

1. Naïve Version [Mill] – proper names attach to the objects themselves, not through the sense, but it is not explained how;
2. Chain Version [Kripke] – proper names attach to the objects in virtue of the chains of communication;

My view combines the insights of both Sense and No Sense View. With Kripke I hold that proper names refer in virtue of the chain of communication, with Searle I hold that attending to the referent of a proper name is typically accomplished through the sense *as well*. Kripke is wrong in that he neglects the role of intentional content within the chain and in that he seems to deny that with proper names we attend to the referents in a non-chained way *as well*. Searle is wrong in that he considers chains irrelevant for the reference with proper names. I have argued that my view integrates the advantages of both theories while it does not suffer from their difficulties.

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