

**KRIPKE**  
*NAMING AND NECESSITY*

Presented by  
Hunter Green

# FROM SIMPLE DESCRIPTIVISM TO CLUSTER DESCRIPTIVISM

- Problems associated with simple descriptivism

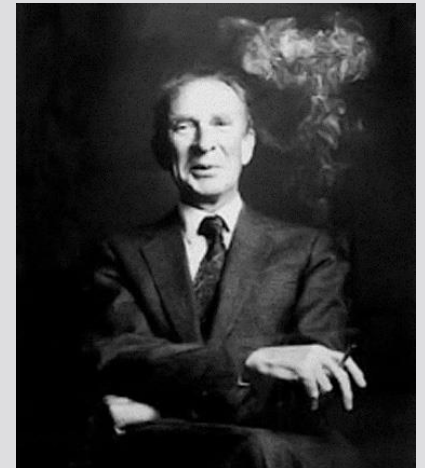
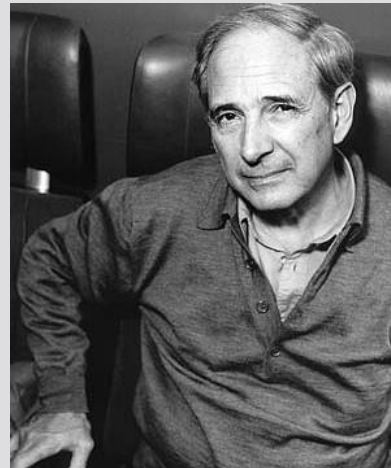
“The most common way out of this difficulty is to say ‘really it is not a weakness in ordinary language that we can’t substitute a *particular* description for the name; that’s all right. What we really associate with the name is a *family* of descriptions.’” (Kripke 195-196)

- John Searle

- “Proper Names?” (1958)

- P.F. Strawson

- *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (1959)



# “ON MOSES”

- “On Moses” from *Philosophical Investigations* by Ludwig Wittgenstein

“Consider this example. If one says, ‘Moses did not exist’, this may mean various things. It may mean: the Israelites did not have a *single* leader when they withdrew from Egypt – or: their leader was not called Moses – or: there cannot have been anyone who accomplished all that the Bible relates of Moses - . . . But when I make a statement about Moses, - am I always ready to substitute some *one* of those descriptions for ‘Moses’? I shall perhaps say: by ‘Moses’ I understand the man who did what the Bible relates of Moses, or at any rate, a good deal of it. But how much? Have I decided how much must be proved false for me to give up my proposition as false? Has the name ‘Moses’ got a fixed and unequivocal use for me in all possible cases?” (Wittgenstein)

- “The referent of a name is determined not by a single description but by some cluster or family. Whatever in some sense satisfies enough or most of the family is the referent of the name.” (Kripke 196)

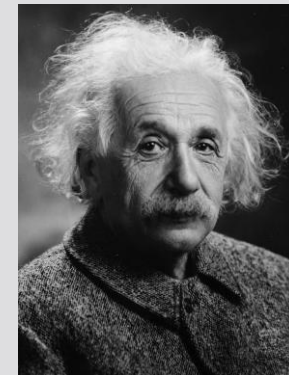
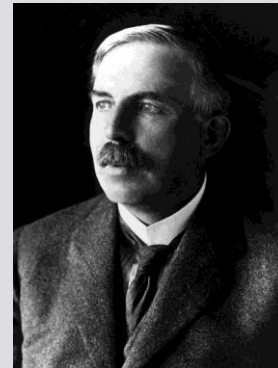
# CLUSTER DESCRIPTIVISM THESES

- 1. To every name or designating expression 'X', there corresponds a cluster of properties, namely the family of those properties  $\phi$  such that A believes ' $\phi X$ '.
- 2. One of the properties, or some conjointly, are believed by A to pick out some individual uniquely.
- 3. If most, or a weighted most, of the  $\phi$ 's are satisfied by one unique object  $y$ , then  $y$  is the referent of 'X'.
- 4. If the vote yields no unique object, 'X' does not refer.
- 5. The statement, 'If X exists, then X has most of the  $\phi$ 's' is known *a priori* by the speaker.
- 6. The statement, 'If X exists, then X has most of the  $\phi$ 's' expresses a necessary truth (in the idiolect of the speaker).

# SECOND THESIS

- One of the properties, or some conjointly, are believed by A to pick out some individual uniquely.

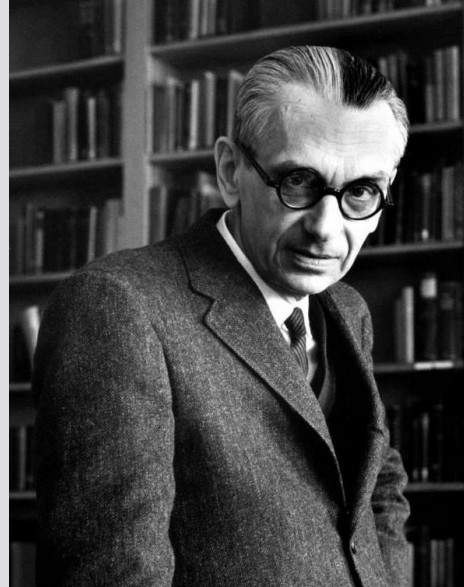
- Richard Feynman



# THIRD THESIS

- If most, or a weighted most, of the  $\varphi$ 's are satisfied by one unique object  $y$ , then  $y$  is the referent of 'X'.
- Kurt Gödel and the incompleteness of arithmetic

“So, since the man who discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic is in fact Schmidt, we, when we talk about ‘Gödel’, are in fact always referring to Schmidt. But it seems to me that we are not. We simply are not.”  
(Kripke 208)



# FOURTH THESIS

- If the vote yields no unique object, 'X' does not refer.
- Biblical account of Jonah

“Biblical scholars, as I said, think that Jonah really existed. It isn't because they think that someone ever was swallowed by a big fish or even went to Nineveh to preach. These conditions may be true of no one whatsoever and yet the name 'Jonah' really has a referent.”  
(Kripke 209)



# FIFTH AND SIXTH THESES

- 5. The statement, ‘If X exists, then X has most of the  $\phi$ ’s’ is known a *priori* by the speaker.
- 6. The statement, ‘If X exists, then X has most of the  $\phi$ ’s’ expresses a necessary truth (in the idiolect of the speaker).
- Aristotle
  - “It just is not, in any intuitive sense of necessity, a necessary truth that Aristotle had the properties commonly attributed to him. There is a certain theory, perhaps popular in some views of the philosophy of history...according to [which] it will be necessary, once a certain individual is born, that he is destined to perform great tasks and so it will be part of the very nature of Aristotle that he should have produced ideas which had a great influence on the western world. Whatever the merits of such a view may be as a view of history or of the nature of great men, it does not seem that it should be trivially true on the basis of a theory of proper names. It would seem that it’s a contingent fact that Aristotle ever did any of the things commonly attributed to him today, any of these great achievements that we so much admire.” (Kripke 204).



**KRIPKE DOESN'T JUST CRITICIZE...**



# RIGID DESIGNATION

- “We will use the term ‘name’ so that it does *not* include definite descriptions of that sort, but only those things which in ordinary language would be called ‘proper names’.” (Kripke 192)
- Names as rigid designators
  - “One of the intuitive theses I will maintain in these talks is that *names* are rigid designators.” (Kripke 200)
- Definition of a rigid designator
  - “Let’s call something a *rigid designator* if in every possible world it designates the same object” (Kripke 200)
- Definition of a strongly rigid designator
  - “A rigid designator of a necessary existent can be called *strongly rigid*.” (Kripke 200)

# NIXON

- Nixon was the U.S. President in 1970.
- “The U.S. President in 1970” is a non-rigid designator.
- “Nixon” is a rigid designator.



# HESPERUS IS PHOSPHORUS

- “There certainly is a possible world in which a man should have seen a certain star at a certain position in the evening and called it ‘Hesperus’ and a certain star in the morning and called it ‘Phosphorus’; and should have concluded - should have found out by empirical investigation - that he names two different stars, or two different heavenly bodies...And so it’s true that given the evidence that someone has antecedent to his empirical investigation, he 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, that couldn’t have turned out any other way, in a sense. But being put in a situation where we have exactly the same evidence, qualitatively speaking, it could have turned out that Hesperus was not Phosphorus; that is, in a counterfactual world in which ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ were not used in the way that we use them, as names of this planet, but as names of some other objects, one could have had qualitatively identical evidence and concluded that ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ named two different objects. But 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.” (Kripke 214-215)

# DISCUSSION

- 1. Are the names of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' rigid designators?
- 2. Suppose an individual in another possible world refers to Saturn as 'Hesperus' and Pluto as 'Phosphorus' thus invalidating the claim that Hesperus is Phosphorus. How does Kripke and your answer to question 1 help to solve this problem?
- 3. With your answers to questions 1 and 2 in mind, what can you say metaphysically about the claim "Hesperus is Phosphorus"?
- 4. Is the claim "Hesperus is Phosphorus" *a priori* and why or why not?