

PHIL 4233: Philosophy of Language  
Prof. Funkhouser  
Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Lecture 3

- Pages 106–110 provide a summary of what has been accomplished up to now.

- Kripke addresses *de re* modality with his discussion of the case of the Queen. (110–111)

- Kripke: The Queen necessarily has these parents. There could be a possible world in which a woman who (almost) exactly resembles the Queen had Mr. and Mrs. Truman as parents, but that would be a different person. Her origin is essential to her.

Kripke generalizes this point about essentiality of origins. Recall his story about the table. A table made from a different block of wood would have been a different table. (113)

Origin Essentialism:

If a material object has its origin from a certain hunk of matter, it could not have had its origin in any other matter. (p. 114, footnote 56)

- As an aside, let's distinguish 3 standard types of essential properties:
  1. Trivial essential properties: These are properties that every thing necessarily possesses, because they are trivial. For example, every thing necessarily has the property *having mass of 5 kg. or not having mass of 5 kg.*
  2. Sortal essential properties: More substantively, we might think that every thing is essentially the sort of thing that it is. For example, it is plausible to think that every human being is essentially a human being.
  3. Individual essences: Particular things might also necessarily have special properties that make them the individuals that they are. These

special properties are individual essences. For example, Socrates might have the individual essence *Socratizing*. Alternatively, individual essences can be thought of as *haecceities* (see Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, §4.4).

- Kripke then shifts his discussion to theoretical identifications – like water = H<sub>2</sub>O – and natural kinds.

- Kant took it to be analytic that gold is a yellow metal. Kripke disagrees with this. Suppose, for some strange reason, that vision is distorted in the presence of what we call ‘gold.’ The substance is really blue, but it appears yellow. Eventually this vision distortion is lifted and we correctly see the substance as blue. Do we then conclude that gold does not exist, since gold must be a *yellow* metal? Kripke says of course not. Instead, we discovered that gold is not yellow after all, but blue. So, it is not analytic that gold is a yellow metal.

Kripke argues that gold has empirically discoverable essential properties. Thus, he accepts Lockean real essences.

- Compare this with Kripke’s comments about proper names like ‘Godel.’ Just as it is not analytic that Godel proved the incompleteness of arithmetic, it is not analytic that gold is a yellow metal. Similarly, some other kind might satisfy the “identifying marks” of gold (e.g., being a yellow metal, etc.), but that would not make it gold. Similarly, some other person might have proved the incompleteness of arithmetic, but that would not make that person Godel.

- Tiger example: Just like we could be mistaken about the properties of gold, we could be mistaken about the properties of tigers. Maybe tigers are never 4-legged, just as gold might not be yellow. Kripke goes so far as to say that tigers might not have any of the cluster properties we initially identify them with. (121) Compare: Aristotle might not have done any of the deeds we identify with him. Also, other things that match the superficial description of ‘tiger’ (e.g., the nominal essence for tiger) are not necessarily tigers. Kripke claims that *all along* we thought that tigers were a natural kind:

Even though we don’t *know* the internal structure of tigers, we suppose – and let us suppose that we are right – that tigers form a certain species or natural kind. We then can imagine that there should be a creature which, though having all the external appearance of tigers, differs from them internally enough that we should say that it is not the same kind of thing. (120–121)

- Kripke and Putnam on natural kinds:

The original concept of cat is: *that kind of thing*, where the kind can be identified by paradigmatic instances. It is not something picked out by any qualitative dictionary definition. (122)

With regard to these examples, Kripke's emphasis thus far has been epistemological. Recall from Lecture I (see our Lecture I notes) that Kripke uses 'analytic' to refer to those truths that are both *a priori* and necessary. It is not analytic that 'gold is a yellow metal' or 'cats are animals' because these cannot be known *a priori* – they have to be discovered. So, in an epistemic sense, cats might not be animals. (I.e., for all we know, cats might not be animals.) However, if cats are animals, this could still be *metaphysically necessary*. On p. 123, Kripke shifts to this metaphysical question.

Kripke does think that if gold truly has the atomic number 79, then it is metaphysically necessary that gold have this atomic number. Anything that superficially resembles gold but lacks this number is *not* gold. (124–125) Possessing this atomic number is part of the real essence of gold. Similarly, it is part of the real essence of cats that they are animals.

These points about essences hold not only for kinds – like gold and cats – but also for individuals. For example, particular material things made of molecules are essentially made of molecules. (126–127)

o Kripke considers the following theoretical identities:

Water = H<sub>2</sub>O

Light = a stream of photons

Heat = the motion of molecules

Lightning = flashes of electricity

Originally we identified each of the kinds on the left side by their superficial phenomenological features (e.g., light by the visual impressions it makes on us). But these features merely serve to *fix the reference* of those kinds. For example, light is *whatever in fact* causes those visual impressions in us. Compare: one meter is however long stick S is as a matter of fact. We must emphasize that though the length of stick S is different in other possible worlds, one meter remains the same length *even in those other possible worlds*. In every possible world one meter is the length of stick S in the actual world. Similarly, in every possible world light is whatever causes these visual impressions *in the actual world*. (This is another example illustrating the important distinction between providing the meaning and fixing the reference. Re-read pages 129–131 to make sure this is clear to you.)

On the right hand side of these identities are the empirically discovered satisfiers of these phenomenological roles. For example, we discovered that a stream of photons is what causes the visual impressions in us. This is light. And this identity is necessary. It is necessary that 'light = a stream of photons', but it is contingent that a stream of photons is what makes these visual impressions in us. (See p. 133) Compare: It is necessary that a meter is 39.37 inches long, but it is contingent that stick S is 39.37 inches long.

○ On pages 134–139 Kripke summarizes his 5 main points about natural kinds and general terms:

1. General terms for natural kinds are more similar to proper names for individuals than is commonly acknowledged.
  2. With general terms for natural kinds, as for proper names, we must be careful not to confuse the contingent properties used to fix the reference of a kind as being part of the meaning of the general term for that kind.
  3. Certain properties, perhaps discovered by empirical investigation, are used to classify new members (e.g., members that were not in the original sample population) of a kind. The properties originally associated with a kind might be *neither* necessary nor sufficient for membership in that kind. E.g., it might not be necessary that gold be yellow, and being a yellow metal might not be sufficient for being gold.
  4. Scientific investigation is the proper path to discovering the essence of natural kinds.
  5. General terms for natural kinds apply to new samples, and the reference of a general term is determined by a historical chain of language users as in the case of proper names.
- On pages 140–144 Kripke does a good job of explaining his distinction between epistemic and metaphysical possibility.
  - Kripke concludes this book by considering the possibility of theoretical identities in the philosophy of mind. (144–155)
- We can distinguish type-type and token-token identity theses:

Mental/Physical Type Identity: Mental state types (e.g., properties), like *being in pain*, are identical to physical state types, like *having C-fibers fire*. (Whenever anyone is in pain they must have their C-fibers firing.)

Mental/Physical Token Identity: Particular mental states, like my being in pain now, are identical to particular physical states, like my being in brain state 1023 now. (Other people might be in pain in virtue of different types of physical states.)

○ Some identity theorists in the two decades preceding Kripke's lectures claimed that mental state types are contingently identical to brain state types. But we know that Kripke does not accept contingent identities. If such type identities were to hold, they would be necessary. [Q: Does Kripke's complaint hold against *both* type and token identity theories?]

○ Kripke argues that for any particular mental state, say a pain, that pain could exist without the corresponding brain state. Conversely, Kripke also speculates that the brain state could exist without the pain. (146–148) Since it is possible for there to be one token without the other, they are not *necessarily* identical. But if they were identical, the identity would have to be necessary. (Why? The names for these states are rigid designators.) So, the token identity thesis is false.

○ Now consider the type-type identity claim. Does pain = C-fibers firing (or some other physical type), just as light = a stream of photons? Just as the latter is a necessary truth, the mental-physical type identity, if true, would be necessary as well. Kripke thinks that he can imagine pain without C-fibers firing, and so deny the identity theory.

● But the type identity theorist might respond as follows: “You, Kripke, think that light is necessarily identical to a stream of photons. Of course, both of us can imagine a possible world in which people have visual experiences that are not caused by streams of photons. But that would not be light, because ‘light’ refers to whatever type of thing causes visual experiences in the actual world. So, ‘light’ (which is a rigid designator) refers to a stream of photons in every possible world. Similarly, C-fibers firing are what cause pain in the actual world. You think you are imagining a world in which someone has pain without C-fibers firing, but ‘pain’ refers to whatever in fact causes that sensation in the actual world. So, ‘pain’ (which is a rigid designator) refers to C-fibers firing in every possible world. Just as imagining a world with visual impressions not caused by a stream of photons is *not* to imagine a world with light, imagining a world with pain sensations not caused by C-fibers firing is not to imagine a world with pain.”

○ Kripke thinks that the attempted mind-body theoretical identification is not analogous to the successful reductions discussed earlier. Kripke thinks it is contingent that heat causes heat sensations in us. For example, there could be heat without any heat sensations. Similarly, there could be light without

anyone undergoing visual experiences. Heat and light are mind-independent qualities that exist independent of human perceivers, but happen to cause these effects in us. But pain is different. There cannot be pain without pain experiences. It is not a contingent truth that pain causes a certain sensation in us – it is necessary. (See the bottom of p. 152.)

◦ Some possible individual could be in the same epistemic position that we are in with respect to water or heat or light, but yet not be surrounded by water or heat or light. That is, in some possible world a person is surrounded by a substance that is wet, relatively clear, found in lakes, etc. The superficial qualities of this substance are identical to water. However, that possible individual is not surrounded by water because that substance has a different chemical makeup. Kripke argues that a parallel story can *not* be told about pain. If some possible individual is in the same epistemic position that we are in with respect to pain, then that possible individual *is* in pain. If that possible individual has pain sensations, then that possible individual is in pain:

To be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain if one had a pain *is* to have a pain; to be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain in the absence of pain *is* not to have a pain.  
(152)

In short: There is no appearance/reality distinction for pains.