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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Names and Descriptions by Leonard Linsky

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*Names and Descriptions*. LEONARD LINSKY. Chicago: University Press, 1977. xxi, 184 p. \$13.50.\*

The text of this book is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the theory of reference, the second with quantified modal logic. In addition there is an appendix on the substitutional interpretation of quantifiers, making for a total of eight chapters. Taken as a single unit, the book suffers from a certain disjointedness. One illustration may suffice: chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4 of part I include a discussion of an argument allegedly "employed repeatedly" (61) by Saul Kripke for the conclusion that proper names are rigid designators. In chapter 7 of part II, however, we content ourselves with an objection to an argument for the thesis that names are not rigid designators, since positive arguments are said to be harder to discover in Kripke's published lectures (141). In addition to this awkwardness, there is, as the preface warns, a fair amount of "redundancy and repetition." As a result, each of the two parts and the appendix is more or less self-contained. It is better, therefore, to view the book as a collection of three independent essays on related topics.

It is part I that clearly emerges as the most interesting and important of the three essays, and I shall confine my commentary to this part of the book. Here Linsky launches a full-scale attack on Kripke's theory of the reference of proper names, relying heavily on artillery manufactured by Gottlob Frege and Michael Dummett. Part I consists of five chapters. The first two chapters set the background by presenting the theories of Frege, Meinong, and Russell, and showing how each attempts to solve certain puzzles that arise from the naive view held by Mill that proper names are merely nonconnotative appellations. The puzzles of reference are: Frege's puzzle about the informativeness of identity statements, failure of substitutivity in modal and propositional-attitude contexts, the problem of negative existentials, and the more general problem of the truth value and significance of statements involving nondenoting terms. The final three chapters of part I include Linsky's criticisms of Kripke's theory, as well as some positive views of his own which he derives from Wittgenstein.

In chapter 3 the author attempts to set out the central theses of Kripke's theory of the reference of proper names. Linsky sees the

\* I wish to thank Phillip Bricker, Tyler Burge, and David Kaplan for their helpful comments and suggestions.

main thesis to be that

(T1) Proper names, unlike definite descriptions, are rigid designators.

Kripke is depicted as arguing from this primary thesis to the following secondary theses:

(T2) Proper names are not synonymous with definite descriptions.

(T3) Proper names lack sense.

Linsky interprets Kripke as giving two sorts of arguments for his thesis T2: certain modal arguments, and certain nonmodal arguments. The modal arguments are discussed in chapter 3, the non-modal arguments in chapter 5.

The argument attributed to Kripke for his main thesis (T1) is simple and direct. Consider any nonrigid singular term, say 'the author of the *Iliad*'. We may distinguish between the *de dicto* and *de re* readings of any modal sentence in which such an expression occurs in subject position. In particular we may distinguish two readings of the sentence 'The author of the *Iliad* might have existed and not have been the author of the *Iliad*'. On the *de dicto* reading the sentence is false; on the *de re* reading it is true. But if we replace the description 'the author of the *Iliad*' in both of its occurrences by the proper name 'Homer' to obtain the sentence 'Homer might have existed and not have been Homer', we do not find this sort of ambiguity. To say that the proposition that Homer exists but is not Homer is possibly true (*de dicto*) is tantamount to saying that Homer is such that it would be possible for him to exist while not being Homer (*de re*). The reason for this is precisely that the name 'Homer' is rigid, i.e., it denotes the same thing with respect to every possible world in which that thing exists. Thus it makes no difference whether the first occurrence of the name is taken as lying within (*de dicto*) or without (*de re*) the scope of the modal adverb 'might'. Its denotation remains the same.

Linsky endorses this argument, if somewhat half-heartedly. His hesitation stems from the use made of thesis T1 in the modal arguments for thesis T2. After spuriously attributing to Kripke a rather poor argument for T2 (51–53), Linsky formulates a similar though less objectionable modal argument for T2, as follows. Kripke maintains that the sentence 'The mother of Mary might have existed without being a mother' has a contradictory *de dicto* reading and a true *de re* reading, whereas he also holds that the *de dicto* reading of the sentence 'St. Anne might have existed without being a

mother' comes to the same thing as the *de re* reading, since the name 'St. Anne' is rigid. It would follow from this that 'St. Anne' is not synonymous with 'the mother of Mary'. The argument here is little more than a particularization of the simple argument: T1; therefore T2. We have already seen the argument for T1. Despite some sympathy for Dummett's response<sup>1</sup> that the name 'St. Anne' is, for most of us, close enough in sense with 'the mother of Mary' to make it too nonrigid and that the second sentence does indeed have a contradictory *de dicto* reading, Linsky finds the initial argument for T1 overpowering.

The nonmodal arguments for T2 discussed in chapter 5 turn out to be Kripke's epistemological arguments.<sup>2</sup> Suppose for the purpose of a *reductio* that a name such as 'Aristotle' were defined as the individual who uniquely had all (or sufficiently many) of a specified set of properties, e.g., having studied under Plato, having tutored Alexander the Great, authorship of the *Metaphysics*, etc. Then we would have the consequence that it is knowable a priori that someone uniquely had all (or sufficiently many) of these properties if and only if he was Aristotle. But surely, it is argued, we could discover by ordinary empirical means that Aristotle did indeed exist though neither he nor anyone else ever had many of these properties, and even that someone other than Aristotle uniquely had all of these properties. One way or another, we are driven to the conclusion that the name cannot be synonymous with the description.

Linsky judges Kripke's epistemological arguments, as applied to most names, to be conclusive. In any case, he finds Russell's view that each name is synonymous with some one definite description inherently implausible. Thus Linsky ultimately finds his way to accepting both theses T1 and T2.

In chapter 4 the criticism of Kripke is developed while Linsky's positive view concerning the reference of proper names is set forth and motivated. According to Linsky, Kripke's thesis T3 is a second conclusion that he draws from his main thesis T1 (66/7). Linsky is quick to point out that some argumentation is required to show how T3 is supposed to follow from T1, though Kripke provides no such argument (68). Nevertheless, Linsky believes that he can

<sup>1</sup> *Frege: Philosophy of Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), chapter 5, Appendix, pp. 110–151, at pp. 112–128.

<sup>2</sup> Linsky says (on p. xviii) that these nonmodal arguments are all concerned with negative existentials involving proper names, but, upon inspection of the arguments he considers, negative existentials turn out to be only a special case.

reconstruct the reasoning that led to T3. First, it is clear that the two terms of a true identity statement may differ in sense, as, for instance, in 'The author of *Poor Richard's Almanac* is the inventor of bifocals'. Thus it is possible to introduce a name, say 'Benjamin Franklin', into someone's idiolect for the first time without giving the name a sense, simply by conveying the fact that Benjamin Franklin is the inventor of bifocals. For, by hypothesis, the person thus acquiring the name did not already attach to it a sense, and there is nothing that requires the name 'Benjamin Franklin', any more than the description 'the author of *Poor Richard's Almanac*' to take on the same sense as 'the inventor of bifocals'. Therefore, a name *need not* have a sense (11). Moreover, definite descriptions, unlike proper names, are nonrigid designators, and it is precisely the sense of a definite description which accounts for its nonrigidity. For the sense of a nonrigid definite description determines that the referent with respect to any possible world is to be whatever uniquely has certain properties in that world, and in different possible worlds different objects have these properties uniquely. Similarly, if a name had a sense, its sense would determine that the referent with respect to any possible world is to be whatever uniquely has certain properties in that world, or whatever uniquely has some substantial portion of certain properties in that world, or something similar. The name would behave like a definite description, denoting different objects with respect to different possible worlds. It would be a nonrigid designator. But we have already seen that names, unlike descriptions, are rigid designators and, consequently, that names are not synonymous with descriptions. Hence it is true not only that a name *need not* have sense, but also that names *do not* have sense (68/9).

Here again, Linsky's attribution of a fallacious argument to Kripke is completely unfounded. Linsky's interpretation of Kripke is made all the more surprising by the admission that no explicit argument from T1 to T3 is to be found in Kripke. The fact that Kripke does not explicitly offer any such argument might be taken as an indication that he does not intend any such argument. I shall argue in a moment that Linsky has misread Kripke on this matter.

It is Linsky's contention that T3 is in fact false, though T1 is true. Thus, of the three theses, it is T3 that proves to be the major bone of contention. Linsky argues, compellingly, that something like Frege's notion of sense is required to solve the puzzles of reference and to account for the cognitive role played by names, i.e., for what we know (believe, etc.) when we know (believe, etc.) that

Homer wrote the *Iliad*, that Socrates drank the hemlock, and so on, and for our understanding of sentences containing names. In particular, Linsky argues, something like Frege's notion of sense is required to account for our understanding of ostensive "definitions" and other means of introducing names into someone's idiolect, and even for our understanding of counterfactual statements like 'Nixon might have been a democrat', where the rigidity of the name becomes important.

The sense of a name, for Linsky, is a mode of presentation. It conveys information which provides a criterion for identifying the referent of the name, thereby determining who or what the referent of the name (with respect to any possible world) is to be. The sense of a name is something which a speaker *grasps* and which forms a part of any belief whose expression involves the name. It is a conception of some individual, and the referent of the name is whoever or whatever uniquely fits the concept. But ordinarily, according to Linsky, this concept is not fixed and unequivocal; it is vague and imprecise. On Searle's view, the sense of a name is a *cluster concept*; it determines that the referent of the name is to be whoever or whatever uniquely *best satisfies* a certain set of criteria. The referent need not satisfy all the conditions in the set, only a sufficiently large portion. Still, the set in question is fully determinate. Linsky distinguishes this view from Wittgenstein's in that, on Wittgenstein's view, which he endorses, there is no such determinate cluster of conditions. Even a cluster concept is fixed and precise in a way that the sense of a name, as Linsky conceives it, is not. He maintains that, except in cases where the user has very little information to attach to a name ('St. Anne', 'Homer', 'Thales'), when someone uses a name there is an indefinite number of descriptions that the user vaguely associates with the name, and it is not fixed in advance which of these provides *the* criterion of identification. The name is vague and shifty, but for most purposes, quite adequate. When vagueness presents a problem, according to Linsky, we simply sharpen the sense by fiat (88/9).

It is this shiftiness in the sense of a name which is supposed to rescue the theory from Kripke's epistemological arguments. Since the sense of a name like 'Aristotle', on any particular occasion of its use, is indeterminate between "Plato's most famous student," "the tutor of Alexander the Great," "the author of the *Metaphysics*," and so on, it is impossible to apply the notions of a-priority and a-posteriority to the knowledge that Aristotle wrote the *Metaphysics*. Where most ordinary proper names are involved, accord-

ing to Linsky, "there is no clear line between what we know *a priori* . . . and what is known only *a posteriori*, if at all" (87). Indeed, the epistemological arguments are seen by him to lend further support to his positive view.

Whether the name is shifty or fixed, on Linsky's view, the sense of the name is always such as to determine that the referent of the name with respect to any possible world is to be whoever or whatever from that world uniquely fits the concept *in the actual world*. Thus, though names and descriptions alike have sense, names are intrinsically different from descriptions in having a built-in mechanism for rigidity. It is the very sense of a name, on Linsky's view, which makes Kripke's main thesis T1 true.<sup>3</sup>

The sense of a name, for Linsky, is the *sort* of thing that Frege says it is, but has the *nature* that Wittgenstein says it has, and behaves in accordance with Kripke's thesis T1. It satisfies simultaneously the most important aspects of several theories: it fulfills its Fregean functions with Wittgensteinian shiftiness but Kripkean rigidity.

Many of Linsky's criticisms of Kripke are compelling. Some are familiar, but perhaps they bear repeating.<sup>4</sup> Considerations favoring a Fregean theory that posits a sense distinct from the reference of a name are considerably powerful. Theorists such as Keith Donnellan and Kripke and their followers can ill afford to remain silent in the face of these objections. Some of the standard objections, however, betray a misunderstanding of the view held by the opponents. Many are aimed entirely at a straw-man theory. At least part of the blame for this lapse in communication may rest with the propounders of the new theory of reference, though part also rests with their critics. It is my view that the new theory of reference propounded by Donnellan, David Kaplan (on indexicals), Kripke, and Hilary Putnam (on natural-kind terms) is largely correct *as far as it goes*. I shall attempt here to answer some of

<sup>3</sup> Many of Linsky's remarks concerning the rigidity of proper names strongly suggest that he would regard at least some proper names (e.g., 'St. Anne', 'Homer', 'Thales') as strictly synonymous with certain definite descriptions involving the word 'actual', e.g., 'the *actual* mother of Mary', or perhaps as strictly synonymous with the result of prefixing a certain definite description with Kaplan's *dthat* operator. Such remarks occur, for instance, on p. 84.

<sup>4</sup> Similar objections may be found in Diana Ackerman's dissertation, *Proper Names, Natural Kind Terms and Propositional Attitudes*, University of Chicago, 1976; Tyler Burge, "Belief *De Re*," this JOURNAL, LXXIV, 6 (June 1977): 338-362; at p. 344n; Dummett, *op. cit.*; and Alvin Plantinga, "The Boethian Compromise," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, xv, 2 (April 1978): 129-138. Of course, all the criticisms raised by these writers and by Linsky have their origins in Frege.



Linsky's criticisms. But discussion of these matters cannot proceed in a fruitful way unless the new theory of reference is sharpened and its scope clearly delineated. My main aim in what follows is to set the record straight. I shall try to say briefly just what the new theory of reference is and, perhaps more importantly, just what it is not.

It is neither helpful nor illuminating to see the issue as a question of whether proper names have sense. As Linsky points out, the Fregean concept of *sense* "is a notion with [considerable] structure and part of a rather elaborately articulated theory" (75). Tyler Burge (*op. cit.*, p. 356) has discerned three distinct functions that Frege's concept of sense was designed to fill. Among these three, even finer distinctions may be drawn. Roughly following Burge's trifurcation, at least the following three attributes of a term ought to be distinguished:

*sense*<sub>1</sub>. The purely conceptual representation of an object which a fully competent speaker associates in a particular way with his or her use of the term. *Sense*<sub>1</sub> is a psychological or mentalistic notion. The *sense*<sub>1</sub> of a term is something that a subject "grasps." It includes only purely qualitative properties; external things cannot "occur as constituents" of *sense*<sub>1</sub>, but only conceptual representations thereof.

*sense*<sub>2</sub>. The mechanism by which the reference of the term (with respect to a possible world) is secured and semantically determined. *Sense*<sub>2</sub> is a semantical notion.

*sense*<sub>3</sub>. The information value of the term; the contribution made by the term to the information content of sentences containing the term. *Sense*<sub>3</sub> is a cognitive or epistemic notion. The *sense*<sub>3</sub> of a term forms a part of any belief expressed by means of the term, and is relevant to the epistemological status (a priori, a posteriori, trivial, informative) of sentences containing the term.<sup>5</sup>

On any Fregean theory, including Linsky's, these three attributes of terms are conflated. For any meaningful singular term, it is assumed that the *sense*<sub>1</sub> of the term is the *sense*<sub>2</sub> of the term is the *sense*<sub>3</sub> of the term. A single thing is postulated to be all three at once. This three-way identification, though perhaps natural and satisfying, constitutes a very strong theoretical claim, a claim that warrants at least some careful consideration before it is given our unqualified approval. There are certain singular terms, to be sure, for which an identification of *sense*<sub>2</sub> and *sense*<sub>3</sub> seems unquestion-

<sup>5</sup> This trifurcation does not coincide precisely with Burge's. Burge's *sense*<sub>1</sub> combines our *sense*<sub>1</sub> with at least part of our *sense*<sub>3</sub>.



ably correct. These are definite descriptions in attributive use. If in addition the description does not contain any proper names or indexicals (e.g., “the shortest spy”), a full three-way identification of sense<sub>1</sub>, sense<sub>2</sub>, and sense<sub>3</sub> may be warranted. But these are very special sorts of expressions. In the absence of any justification for an across-the-board three-way identification for singular terms generally, Fregean arguments that demonstrate the need to acknowledge such a thing as the sense<sub>3</sub> of a proper name as distinct from its reference do nothing toward showing that we must also countenance something that is simultaneously the sense<sub>1</sub> and sense<sub>2</sub> of a proper name. Faced with Frege’s identity puzzle, it is difficult indeed to maintain that the names ‘Hesperus’ and ‘Phosphorus’ make precisely the same contribution to the informational content of sentences that contain either one. Such a claim would be, in my opinion, extremist. But Kripke’s theory of reference, or at least the theory defended by him in “Naming and Necessity,” does not commit him to accepting such a claim. The theory is not even entirely friendly to such a claim, since Kripke insists that “Hesperus is Phosphorus” is necessary and a posteriori whereas “Hesperus is Hesperus” is necessary and a priori. Criticisms that focus on the need to acknowledge any one of these three kinds of “sense” for proper names betray a serious misunderstanding of the main thrust of the new theory of reference. *In point of fact, the central theses of the new theory of reference do not include a denial of any one of the three kinds of “sense” as distinct from reference for proper names.* The new view is not primarily concerned with opposing any one of these three kinds of “sense” for proper names or the ordered triple consisting of all three. Insofar as the central theses are opposed to admitting sense at all, they oppose the full-blown Fregean notion of *sense* as applied to proper names, the idea that that which fills one of these three functions for a proper name fills the other two as well. If that is the sort of thing that the *sense* of a term is supposed to be, then perhaps *some* definite descriptions do indeed have sense. Proper names, on the other hand, certainly do not.

Isn’t a concession of any one of these three kinds of “sense” as distinct from reference for proper names just a Fregean theory after all? If Kripke’s theory does not oppose sense<sub>1</sub>, sense<sub>2</sub>, or sense<sub>3</sub>, in what significant respect is it anti-Fregean? I propose to answer this question by introducing a certain technical notion. Let us say that a singular term  $\alpha$  is *descriptive in the Carnap way* if there is associated with  $\alpha$  as part of its sense a set of properties such that

the denotation of  $\alpha$  (with respect to a possible world  $W$ ), if any, is determined by semantics alone to be whoever or whatever uniquely has all these properties in  $W$ . This definition does not literally accord with either Searle's or Linsky's theory of proper names. In order to accommodate Searle's "cluster" notion of sense, we have to allow the possibility that the denotation is identified with whoever or whatever has "sufficiently many" of these properties, though perhaps not all. In order to accommodate Linsky's notion of sense, we need to consider also the possibility of *fuzzy sets* of such properties, or perhaps fuzzy sets of sets of such properties, together with a clause allowing that the denotation with respect to a possible world  $W$  is to be whatever has these properties *in the actual world*, and some sort of indeterminacy as to precisely which of these properties determines reference. (One sees here, by the way, how Linsky's notion of sense needs to be filled out in considerably more detail than he gives. How is the reference determined when the shifting senses determine different objects?) We shall say that a singular term is *descriptive* (simpliciter) if it either is descriptive in the Carnap way or functions in accordance with any one of these different variations on the original Carnapian theme. A descriptive term is a term that denotes by way of properties. The paradigm is a definite description in attributive use.

Among descriptive terms we must distinguish those which are thoroughly descriptive (if such exist) from those which contain nondescriptive elements. If  $\alpha$  is a nondescriptive name denoting Bertrand Russell, then the description 'the father of  $\alpha$ ', though descriptive, is not thoroughly so. The property expressed is not a property like *being a father of someone who uniquely invented the Theory of Descriptions*. It is a property that involves direct reference to Russell; it is one in which Russell himself, to use his phrase, "occurs as a constituent," the property of *being a father of this very individual*. Thoroughly descriptive terms, on the other hand, (e.g., perhaps, 'the shortest spy') express only purely conceptual properties, properties that do not involve direct reference to an individual.<sup>6</sup>

A descriptive theory of singular terms would hold that all

<sup>6</sup> The distinction between a thoroughly descriptive term and a term that involves direct reference can, I believe, be made more precise in a noncircular way, though I shall not do so here. The interested reader is referred to the first part of my dissertation, *Essentialism in Current Theories of Reference*, University of California at Los Angeles, 1979.

singular terms, and in particular even proper names and demonstratives, are descriptive. Frege seemed to hold a particularly strong version of this theory. Whether he held that all proper names are synonymous with definite descriptions is a moot point.<sup>7</sup> Whatever his view about the matter, it seems clear that he held that *all proper names are thoroughly descriptive*. On Frege's theory, if 'St. Anne' is analyzable as 'the mother of Mary', it must be in some sense analyzable even further, since the name 'Mary' is also supposed to be descriptive, whether or not it has a synonym in some definite description. But even 'the mother of the mother of Jesus' must be, in this sense, further analyzable, in view of the occurrence of the name 'Jesus', and so on. Refinements of Frege's original theory, such as those suggested by Searle or Linsky, do not make any significant departure from this fundamental Fregean thesis. Thoroughly descriptive terms are precisely the sorts of terms for which the three kinds of "sense" collapse. So it is that any Fregean theory of the reference of proper names involves the positing of a highly structured and theory-laden notion of *sense*.

The primary and central thesis of the new theory propounded by Kripke and others is precisely that

(T4) Proper names are entirely nondescriptive.

This thesis does not entail a rejection of any one of the three kinds of "sense" for proper names, but it is significantly anti-Fregean. Fregean theories involve the strong thesis that singular terms are not only descriptive, but thoroughly so. Against this, Kripke shows that proper names not only are not thoroughly descriptive, they are altogether nondescriptive.<sup>8</sup> An immediate consequence of this is that even a great many definite descriptions, perhaps even most, fail to be thoroughly descriptive, since so many contain proper names.

<sup>7</sup> Linsky sharply criticizes Kripke for claiming without textual support that Frege shared Russell's view that names are synonymous with descriptions. Linsky claims (6, 42/3), on the contrary, that Frege held the opposite view that names, for the most part, are *not* synonymous with descriptions, though Linsky also fails to support his case with any textual evidence.

<sup>8</sup> The clearest statement of Kripke's view, to be found in "Naming and Necessity," in D. Davidson and G. Harman, eds., *Semantics of Natural Language* (Boston: Reidel, 1972), pp. 253–355, 763–769, is at pp. 322 and 327. Note 66, p. 353, is also important for an understanding of the view Kripke is opposing. The emphasis on the relevance of properties in these passages and in the surrounding text indicates that Kripke's arguments are aimed primarily at something like T4.

Thesis T4 is significantly stronger than T2. Names are not only not *synonymous* with definite descriptions; they are not even similar. The relation between theses T3 and T4 is less clear. Thesis T3, as Linsky intends it to be taken, is hopelessly ambiguous. If "sense" is something that fills some one of the three functions mentioned above to the exclusion of the other two, then Kripke does not argue for any such thesis from his T4, and it is doubtful that he would want to. If "sense," on the other hand, is something that is simultaneously the conceptual content, the semantical method of determining reference, and the cognitive content, then Kripke clearly endorses the thesis that names do not have "sense," but T4 puts the view in a much more directed way.

T1 is indeed a thesis held by Kripke, but it is a serious mistake to see this as his primary thesis. The inference is not the fallacious: T1; therefore T4. As Ruth Marcus points out in her review,<sup>9</sup> the inference, if anything, is just the other way around. Since names do not denote by, so to speak, rummaging through the individuals in a possible world seeking anyone or anything uniquely meeting certain conditions, there remains no reason to expect their denotations to vary from one world to the next. It is not a rich and amorphous semantical structure that makes for the intensional monotony of a proper name, but the absence of semantical structure altogether.

There are at least three different kinds of arguments for T4. The modal arguments are the easiest to dodge. By building rigidity into his notion of sense for proper names, Linsky maneuvers around these arguments, though his steps are epicyclic. I fail to see, in any case, how his version of the Fregean theory is supposed to escape the epistemological arguments. His theory predicts that it is indeterminate whether it is knowable a priori or only a posteriori that, for example, Aristotle wrote the *Metaphysics*. Yet he agrees without hesitation that one could discover *by ordinary empirical means* that Aristotle did not have this or any other property generally ascribed to him. This seems to me flatly inconsistent. If a discovery that Aristotle did not write the *Metaphysics* could be made empirically, and is not ruled out automatically by mere reflection on the concepts involved, then the knowledge that he in fact did write that book is *determinately* a posteriori. The epistemological arguments do not support Linsky's view; they refute it.

Linsky neglects to consider the strongest and most persuasive of

<sup>9</sup> *Philosophical Review*, LXXXVII, 3 (July 1978): 497-504.

the three kinds of arguments for (T4) offered in plenitude by Kripke, as well as by Donnellan, Kaplan, and Putnam. These are the *semantical arguments*. One shining example is Donnellan's example concerning Thales.<sup>10</sup> Consider the set of properties that might be associated with the name 'Thales' as giving its sense according to Fregean theory. Linsky admits, on page 95, that, "in the case of some names of famous historical figures . . . something like Russell's theory seems true." There he says that the sense of a name like 'Thales' may be determined by one simple description, say 'the Greek philosopher who held that all is water'. In such cases, the only difference between the name and the description, on Linsky's view, is that the name *rigidly* denotes whoever happens to satisfy the description. Suppose now that, owing to some error or fraud, the man referred to by those from whom our use of the name 'Thales' derives (writers such as Aristotle and Herodotus) never genuinely believed that all is water. Suppose further that, by a very strange coincidence, there was indeed a Greek hermit-philosopher who did in fact hold this bizarre view, though he was unknown to them and bears no social-historical connection to us. To which of these two philosophers would our name 'Thales' refer? This is a clear semantical question with a clear answer. The name would refer to Thales, the first of the two. Our use of the name would bear no significant connection to the second character whatsoever. It is only by way of a comical accident that he enters into the story at all. This example is not to be confused with the corresponding modal argument ("Thales might not have been the Greek philosopher who held that all is water"). The issue is not whom the name actually denotes *with respect* to the imagined circumstances described above. To this question Linsky's theory gives the correct response: the name *rigidly* denotes Thales, and therefore does not denote the hermit with respect to these circumstances. The issue, however, is whom the name *would* denote if the circumstances described above *were to obtain*. The key phrase in the definition of a descriptonal singular term is '*whoever or whatever* uniquely has the properties'. On Linsky's theory, as on any descriptonal theory, precisely whom the name denotes depends entirely on whoever happens to have certain properties uniquely. The theory predicts that, if these circumstances were to obtain, the name would *rigidly* denote the hermit instead of Thales, and Linsky explicitly acknowledges (109) that he is pre-

<sup>10</sup> "Proper Names and Identifying Descriptions," in Davidson and Harman, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-379, at pp. 373-375.

pared to accept such consequences as this. But here the theory is simply mistaken. The existence of the hermit philosopher would be quite irrelevant to the denotation associated with our use of the name 'Thales'.<sup>11</sup>

Putnam's Twin Earth argument is a special version of the semantical argument.<sup>12</sup> Instead of talking about the properties associated with a term, Putnam talks outright about sense<sub>1</sub>, the psychological concept; but the thrust of the argument is the same. Putnam's Twin Earth argument is particularly well suited to expose the error in Linsky's theory. Linsky writes:

. . . If we turn to people like my children, about whom I know an indefinitely large number of facts, Russell's theory seems a typical product of the philosopher's occupational disease, oversimplification. There is just not any one description which I can supply as expressing the sense of my wife's name because though I can produce an indefinitely large number of definite descriptions which denote her, no one of these stands out as having the privileged role of expressing the sense of her name (95).

Consider then Linsky on earth and his Twin Earth counterpart both reading the name of someone near and dear, say, their respective wives. It is virtually true *by hypothesis* that Linsky and his counterpart attach precisely the same sense<sub>1</sub>, the same purely conceptual content, to the name of his own wife. Whatever qualitative properties are darting in and out of one mind are darting in and out of the other as well. Indeed, as Kaplan has pointed out, at the precise moment that the two subjects read the name, their very *brains* could be interchanged though neither would be the wiser. It is of no use to appeal to Wittgensteinian shiftiness here. Whatever shifts and indeterminacy are occurring in Linsky's mind are also occurring in his counterpart's, and vice versa. The senses<sub>1</sub> are the same, but the denotations are different. The Twin Earth

<sup>11</sup> Linsky says that his sense for the name 'Thales' is determined by the description 'the Eleatic philosopher who believed that all is water', a description which, he says, "exhausts my information" (95). Charles Parsons has pointed out to me that this description does not even denote Thales, since Thales was not from Elea, but from Miletus. Here then is an actual case in point. If we assume that Linsky's theory of names is correct, it will follow that, in using the name 'Thales', Linsky has probably been referring to no one, and if it should turn out that there *was* an Eleatic philosopher unknown to us who endorsed Thales' doctrine that all is water, Linsky's reference all along has been to this unknown Eleatic instead of Thales. Can we really regard these consequences as acceptable?

<sup>12</sup> "Meaning and Reference," this JOURNAL, LXX, 19 (Nov. 8, 1973): 699-711.

argument demonstrates that the sense<sub>1</sub> that a speaker attaches to a proper name, the purely conceptual content or qualitative properties, can always underdetermine the denotation. The sense<sub>2</sub> of a proper name, by definition, is always something that uniquely determines the denotation. Hence there is nothing that can be identified as the sense<sub>1</sub> and the sense<sub>2</sub> of a proper name simultaneously, though this is precisely what is required by any full-blown Fregean notion of *sense*, including Linsky's.

The semantical arguments also show something about the nature of sense<sub>2</sub>. The sense<sub>2</sub> of a name, the way its reference is determined, is not a purely *conceptual* matter. External factors enter into it, factors such as the extralinguistic setting in which the speaker is found, and the history of the use of the name leading up to the speaker's acquisition. In a word, sense<sub>2</sub> is a *contextual* phenomenon. Linsky is correct to point out (110) that contextual factors such as these have little or nothing to do with the graspable conceptual content associated with the name. If a full-blown Fregean *sense* is what is wanted, such a thing as sense<sub>2</sub> simply will not do.

Of the three kinds of "sense," sense<sub>3</sub> is, and remains, the most mysterious. It is characteristic of the propounders of the new theory of reference to steer clear of sense<sub>3</sub> altogether, aiming their arguments toward the nondescriptionality of proper names and the consequent failure of any straightforward sense<sub>1</sub>-sense<sub>2</sub> identification for names. It was an initial interest in sense<sub>3</sub> that provided the impetus for Frege's theory of *sense*, with its three-way identification. It is time now to examine the enigmatic third kind of "sense" for names in the light shed by the discovery of their nondescriptionality. This much about sense<sub>3</sub> may be said. Frege's identity puzzle, which is concerned primarily with sense<sub>3</sub>, seems to demonstrate that the sense<sub>3</sub> of a name, its cognitive information value, cannot be strictly identified with the reference; for there seem to be pairs of names with identical reference but differing cognitive contents. It is also a mistake to identify sense<sub>1</sub> and sense<sub>3</sub>, to suppose that the conceptual content or qualitative properties associated with a name include the information value of the name. Indeed, it is a mistake to identify the information value of a name with the information that a competent speaker associates with the name. The epistemological and semantical arguments for T4 demonstrate that the information associated with a name may often be substantially incorrect information about the denoted individual. The conceptual content of a name may not only fit several objects



at once, and thereby underdetermine the denotation; it may also fail to fit the right object altogether, and thereby perhaps determine the wrong object. The sense<sub>3</sub> of a name, on the other hand, contains no misinformation. When one asserts, believes, knows, etc. that Aristotle wrote the *Metaphysics*, there is nothing incorrect in what is being asserted, believed, known. The sentence 'Aristotle wrote the *Metaphysics*' is both true and informative, and the knowledge thereby expressed is a posteriori. The name 'Aristotle' seems to make some contribution to this correct and a posteriori information, and indeed a different contribution from what might be made by a distinct name for the very same man. One's concept of Aristotle, or even the set of beliefs about Aristotle that one might cite in identifying Aristotle, may be replete with misinformation, enough so in fact as to befit Plato far better than Aristotle. Even so, the assertion (belief, knowledge, etc.) is not a false assertion about Plato; it is a true assertion about Aristotle. The contribution made by the name 'Aristotle' to the information content is not the same thing as one's concept of Aristotle. When a proper name is involved, paradoxically, what one says or believes can often have very little to do with what one "has in mind," one's conception of the situation being asserted or believed. It is time to abandon the overly mentalistic view of propositional attitudes forced by the theories of Frege and Russell. The sense<sub>3</sub> of a name—its cognitive content, that which forms part of any belief or assertion involving the name—simply cannot be identified with the purely conceptual content attached to the name, nor with the properties one would cite to identify the referent of the name.

Indeed, sense<sub>3</sub> may be more closely connected to sense<sub>2</sub> than to sense<sub>1</sub>. Linsky is too quick to dismiss contextual factors such as those mentioned above as playing any significant role in what we say and believe. He says of the social-historical connection between a speaker's acquisition of a name and the individual for which the name stands that

It cannot be taken to be . . . part of an account of what we understand when we understand [sentences containing proper names], or what we claim to know when we know them to be true. If I claim to know that Socrates drank the hemlock in 399 B.C., it is surely utterly unrealistic to maintain that I am claiming to know anything whatever about the chain of acquisition which brings the name 'Socrates' down to me across the centuries, for I have no such knowledge and claim none. Nevertheless, I claim to know that Socrates did drink the hemlock in 399 B.C. (109/10).

The argument here is clearly a *non sequitur*. Contextual factors may indeed enter in a crucial way into a proper account of propositional attitudes involving proper names, of what Linsky knows when he knows that Socrates drank the hemlock in 399 B.C. The fact that Linsky may know nothing about these contextual factors themselves is quite beside the point. Contextual factors surely do enter into a proper account of propositional attitudes involving certain kinds of nondescriptive terms, namely indexicals. They enter into a proper account of what Linsky knows when he knows that *he* drank *this then*. Associated concepts and beliefs, since they may involve considerable error and bear little resemblance to denoted objects, more or less fall by the wayside. Frege's identity puzzle seems to show that reference is not all there is to sense<sub>3</sub>. Perhaps something like Frege's identity puzzle can also be used to show that sense<sub>2</sub> is not all there is to sense<sub>3</sub>. Something like Frege's identity puzzle already shows that sense<sub>1</sub> fares no better as a candidate for sense<sub>3</sub>: I, like Putnam, find no difference whatsoever between my concept of an elm tree and my concept of a beech tree. The concepts evoked in me by the terms 'elm' and 'beech' are precisely the same; I associate the very same conceptual properties with each. Nevertheless, it would be news to me to be told that elms and beeches are the very same things.

If the sense<sub>3</sub> of a proper name, its cognitive content, is neither the reference, nor the conceptual content, nor the associated information, nor the contextual manner in which the reference is determined, what sort of thing is it? One suggestion might be that it is, at least in part, the name itself. The supposition that the contribution made by a name to the information content of containing sentences is, in whole or part, the name itself, even taken as a special supposition about names and not extended to other kinds of expressions, involves certain serious difficulties.<sup>13</sup> I mention it only as a suggestion; it is one possibility among many.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> These difficulties stem from the fact that, generally, the very same bit of information can apparently be conveyed in different languages by way of translatable sentences involving appropriate variations of a name, e.g., 'Tully' translated as 'Tullius'. [See Alonzo Church, *Introduction to Mathematical Logic I* (Princeton, N.J.: University Press, 1956), p. 62n.] The difficulties are explored by Kripke in "A Puzzle about Belief," in A. Margalit, ed., *Meaning and Use* (Boston: Reidel, 1979).

<sup>14</sup> In discussions of these matters there is often the suggestion that the sense<sub>3</sub> of a name, as defined above, should be identified with the reference of the name despite Frege's identity puzzle. With regard to this proposal the criticisms raised by Linsky and other writers, such as those mentioned in footnote 4, have a great deal of force. What I wish to emphasize here is that the new theory

Further investigation into the nature of the sense<sub>3</sub> of a name is well beyond the scope of this review. For now, sense<sub>3</sub> remains a fleeting figure in the fog.

We are left with the following conclusions: The sense<sub>1</sub> of a name, its purely conceptual content, cannot be identified with either the sense<sub>2</sub> or the sense<sub>3</sub> of the name. The sense<sub>2</sub> of a name is not something purely conceptual, but something contextual. It remains somewhat obscure precisely what sort of thing is the sense<sub>3</sub> of a name, its cognitive information value, but it is clear that it is not the qualitative properties or even the information associated with the name. Contra Linsky and other Fregeans, there is nothing in any of these three kinds of "sense" for a proper name which would qualify as a full-blown Fregean *sense*, a conceptual representation which conveys certain information, thereby determining the reference, and which forms part of any information (belief, knowledge, etc.) whose expression involves the name.

Linsky's book contains few typographical errors. Sentences (16) and (17) on p. 61 should be prefixed with the possibility operator '◇'. In line 7 on p. 119, the word 'simply' should read 'nonsimply'. In line 26 on p. 131, the word 'reflective' should read 'reflexive'. Sentence (γ) on p. 164 should read ' $c = 'S'$ '.

Finally, the argument presented on pp. 33–35, attempting to rescue Meinong's theory that  $\lceil \phi(\iota x \phi x) \rceil$  is true for any  $\phi$ , from Russell's charge of inconsistency is easily refuted by letting  $\phi$  be ' $p \ \& \ \sim p \ \& \ F(x)$ ', or by taking as two separate instances of  $\phi$ : ' $p \ \& \ F(x)$ ' and ' $\sim p \ \& \ G(x)$ '.

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of reference defended by Kripke in "Naming and Necessity" and by others elsewhere, need not be taken as making any positive pronouncements regarding the sense<sub>3</sub> of a name and is compatible with many different proposals. The theory is that proper names are nondescriptorial (hence rigid, etc.), that proper names do not refer by way of associated properties. This precludes any straightforward sense<sub>1</sub>-sense<sub>2</sub> identification for proper names, and, *a fortiori*, any identification of the sense<sub>3</sub> of a name with a full-blown Fregean *sense*. But it is perfectly compatible with an identification of sense<sub>3</sub> with reference, or with the name itself, or with the ordered couple consisting of both, etc. Positive proposals regarding the nature of the sense<sub>3</sub> of a name are to be considered on their own merits.