Metalinguistic "Troubles" with Kripkean Proper Names

Proper names interpreted as rigid designators do not allow us to formulate metalinguistic statements of the form 'NN might not have been named "NN"'. All we can do is to show what we are trying to say. But we cannot properly formulate such a metalinguistic statement about a rigid name. The rigidity of the name establishes a relationship with its bearer that is much stronger than the contingent relationship that is supposed to exist in the natural languages between the name and its bearer. The sentence is intuitively true as expressed in natural languages, but once we translate it, if possible, into Kripkean formal semantics it is false because once the individual is rigidly named, she cannot have been named otherwise; or even worse, as I suspect, the whole sentence is untranslatable, because in Kripean formal semantics there is no possible world in which she would not have had the name she rigidly has. This problem in Kripkean semantics could well be termed, as Wittgenstein would say, an ineffability.

Keywords: *rigid names, metalinguistic statements, rigid quoted names.*

Introduction

Proper names seem to present a straightforward example of how language relates to the world. However, philosophers and linguists disagree about many issues surrounding them. An important one is this: What is the role of proper names in a formal theory of language? That question has received at least two answers[1]. Proper names are either formalized as constants or as a special kind of predicate.[2]

Kripkean modal semantics is a paradigm of the constant view because proper names are taken to be rigid designators that relate straightforwardly to those individuals they designate in the actual world and in any possible world in which the individual exists.[3] A rigid designator is an excellent device to refer always to one and the same particular allowing us to state contingent and

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[1]Anders J. Schoubye [2016] opens up a third possibility, proper names are type-ambiguous. However, his proposal aims to develop a formal theory for natural language in which metaphysical modality is not at all the relevant topic in his discussion as it is Kripke's semantic theory.

[2]For instance, Burge [1973: 430] notes that names as predicates have a mild self-referential element in their application conditions that is absent in most common predicates. For instance, an object could not be a Jones unless someone used 'Jones' as a name, but an animal could be a dog, even if the word 'dog' were never used as a symbol.

[3]According to Salmon [1981: 32-41] a name is obstinately rigid if it refers to the same individual in all possible worlds including those worlds where the individual does not exist, and a name is persistently rigid if it refers to the same individual in all worlds where the individual exists but fails to refer in worlds where the individual does not exist. However, nothing in my discussion hangs on the choice between these notions and I am neutral on this issue here.

1   necessary truths of the referred object. We can say for example of Saul Kripke
2   that he is necessarily identical to himself or that it is contingently true of him
3   that he wrote Naming and Necessity, and so forth.

4   Many papers have been dedicated to support or oppose Kripke's views on
5   proper names but there is one important issue that has not been appreciated: the
6   ineffability of his semantics, since there is at least one central kind of statement
7   that cannot be formulated within his theory, namely, a type of statement about
8   a rigid designator and its bearer. This article claims that if proper names are
9   rigid designators, then they are not suitable for formulating metalinguistic
10   statements of the form 'NN might not have been "NN"' in the formal
11   system itself. All we can do is to show something that cannot be said.
12   Stipulating that proper names are rigid designators preserves both the unicity of
13   reference in Kripkean modal semantics and guarantees that any true de re
14   identity statement is necessary.

Kripke's theory of proper names

18   We can briefly characterize Kripke's theory of proper names as follows: a
19   proper name is a singular term and its semantic contribution to propositional
20   content is its referent; the relation between the name and its bearer is direct,
21   that is to say, it is not mediated by any other propositional content; the
22   reference of a name is modally stable, the name refers to the same individual in
23   any possible world where the individual exists; and finally, names are
24   individuated by their bearers. The salient features for my argument are three:
25   the rigidity or the modal stability of the name and its quotation,[4] and the claim
26   that names differ among themselves whenever their bearers differ.[5] This
27   characterization helps us state a rigidity rule in Kripke's semantics:

29   (RR) Any counterfactual circumstance in which the individual is located, must
30   be stated in terms of possible worlds and with the use of rigid designators.

32   Let us address the ineffability problem by discussing the following central
33   text in his celebrated Naming and Necessity:

35   In these lectures I will argue, intuitively, that proper names are rigid
36   designators, for although the man (Nixon) might not have been the
37   President, it is not the case that he might not have been Nixon (though he
38   might not have been *called* 'Nixon'). Those who have argued that to make
39   sense of the notion of rigid designator, we must antecedently make sense of
40   'criteria of transworld identity' have precisely reversed the cart and the
41   horse; it is because we can refer (rigidly) to Nixon, and stipulate that we

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[4] Mario Gómez Torrente (2013: 353-90) holds that any quoted name is rigid, unstructured and context insensitive. I section 3 I discuss and endorse his theory.

[5] Kripke [1980: 8, footnote 9] says: 'distinctness of bearers will be a sufficient condition for distinctness of the names.' Therefore, Kripke distinguishes one name from another not because they are tokens of the *same type of name*, but because they have different bearers.

1   are speaking of what might have happened to him (under certain
2   circumstances), that 'transworld identifications' are unproblematic in such
3   cases. [1980: 49]
4
5   Let me make two preliminary remarks before turning to my argument for
6 the claim that Kripke's semantics does not allow us to formulate metalinguistic
7 statements of the form 'NN might not have been called "NN"'. First, the point
8 of Kripke's sentence is to distinguish Nixon's name as a rigid designator from
9 non-rigid terms expressing properties (e.g., becoming President) or what he
10 might have been called, e.g. "Tricky Dick". Names are rigid. What someone is
11 *called* is not, and this brings me to my second remark.
12   My second remark is about the naming/calling distinction [Katz: 2001,
13 142]. It is reasonable to think that Kripke can say, truthfully, that Nixon might
14 not have been called Nixon, because calling someone X does make X a name,
15 X could be a nickname or a pejorative expression neither of which are rigid
16 designators. We can say 'Nixon might not have been called "Tricky Dick"'.
17 What Kripke cannot say is that Nixon might not have been named 'Nixon',
18 which I assume is the intended reading: Nixon might have had another name.
19 Perhaps the reason that he cannot say the sentence 'NN might not have been
20 called "NN"' has not been fully appreciated before is that people have failed to
21 see the difference between calling and naming. Now let us turn to Kripke's
22 theory of names to start my argument.
23   Rigidity is a relation between the name and its bearer in every possible
24 world including ours, whenever the referent exists.[6] Thus, this account of rigid
25 designation captures Kripke's [2011: 2] metaphysical assumption that $((x)$
26 $\Box(x=x))$. For example, if 'Tully' and 'Cicero' are both rigid designators for the
27 same person, any statement of the forms 'a=a' or 'a=b', in which those names
28 are replaced by the constants, if true, is a necessary *de re* identity statement. It
29 is crucial to note that two theses are affirmed here, one about language and the
30 other about the metaphysical modality. About language, Kripke clearly
31 acknowledges that: 'This terminology certainly does not agree with the most
32 common usage.' [1980: 8] and as I will argue, this terminology strengthens the
33 relation between a name and its bearer, contrary to our common use of proper
34 names.
35
36
37 **The Metalinguistic Trouble**
38
39   How well does this stipulation for proper names fits metalinguistic modal
40 claims? Consider the following example used by Kripke in the above
41 quotation:
42   (1) Nixon might not have been *called* 'Nixon'.
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[6]Later in this section I will examine a proposed way to deal with the problem of ineffability
that is much more complex and show that it, too, does not work.

1   Kripke when using (1) presupposes that Nixon bears 'Nixon' as his proper
2   name and also asserts that it is contingent of Nixon to bear that proper name,
3   because he might not have been called 'Nixon'. There is no kind of necessity
4   involved in the name-bearer relation, because even if to be the bearer of a
5   proper name were a property, it would be a contingent one. All there is to the
6   name-bearer relation is a mild self-referential element in the application
7   conditions of proper names because an object could not be a 'Jones' unless
8   someone uses 'Jones' as a name. As Tyler Burge [1973: 430] said, the
9   sentences: 'Jones is necessarily a Jones' and 'this entity called "Jones" is
10 necessarily an entity called "Jones"' come out false in any occasion of use.
11 Notice that Burge doesn't distinguish between 'called' and 'named'. By parity
12 of reasons, we could say that 'this entity named "Nixon" is necessarily an
13 entity named "Nixon"' is false, while 'Nixon might not have been named
14 "Nixon"' is true.
15   Let us read (1) using Kripke's rigid designators. I will show that (1) cannot
16 be literally said in Kripkean semantics as Wittgenstein suggests (1983:
17 §6.522), we can only show but not say the statement that we aim to state. I will
18 use the subscript 'R' to emphasize that the name is a rigid designator, or as
19 Salmon [2012: 430] puts it, 'Nixon' is a "specific name" that cannot name
20 anything else other than its bearer[7]. Properly stated (1) should say:
21
22   (1*) $Nixon_R$ might not have been named '$Nixon_R$'
23
24   In the intended reading of (1*) the first occurrence of '$Nixon_R$' is used to
25 rigidly refer to Nixon, it is a specific name, and the second occurrence merely
26 quotes that specific name. Kripke's point is that '$Nixon_R$' rigidly designates the
27 person that in our natural language was baptized as 'Nixon'. The rigid
28 designator '$Nixon_R$' helps us to state counterfactual scenarios where Nixon
29 himself, might not have been the President of the United States, or might have
30 been lefthanded, or a bachelor, or whatever else might have happened to him.
31 We can state any of those scenarios by applying (RR). We use the rigid
32 designator '$Nixon_R$', which is a specific name that cannot name anything else
33 other than its bearer, and thus, we need no criteria of transworld identification
34 of the bearer.
35   Regarding the quoted name in (1*) Soames [2002: 251] says that an
36 intuitive test of the claim that the term 'Nixon' is a rigid designator is that: 'A
37 singular term t (of English) is a rigid designator of an object iff the individual
38 that is (was) t could not have existed without being t (and no other than that
39 individual could have been t) expresses a truth.'[8] Therefore the object that is

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[7]Salmon says: 'A distinction must be drawn between a *generic* expression, which is an
expression-form in abstraction from any particular use, and what I call a *specific* expression,
which is use-loaded and good to go. The terminology is meant to suggest the distinction
between *genus* and *species.*' [2012: 430]
[8]Soames in footnote 11 says that bold italics indicate corner quotes.

1 'Nixon' is such that it could not have existed and failed to be 'Nixon' (and no
2 other object could have been 'Nixon') is intuitively true.[9]
3   The crucial question to consider now is this one: is there a counterfactual
4 scenario or possible world, where that specific man might not have been named
5 'Nixon'? Can we properly state (1*) without violating (RR)? Let's elaborate
6 this a bit more. There are at least two tangentially related issues, that might
7 mistakenly seem to be relevant here: on the one hand, the same concatenation
8 of letters could make up a name for someone other than our Nixon; on the
9 other hand, our Nixon may have another name besides the name 'Nixon', let's
10 say 'Kripxon'. In the first case, Kripke would say that the names are
11 homonymous but different in that they name different people.[10] For example,
12 given that 'Nixon' is a family name, let us assume that there are at least two
13 family members bearing it, thus we have two different specific names,
14 'Nixon$_1$', 'Nixon$_2$', and the problem I am discussing depends only in
15 considering any of these particular specific names because regardless of your
16 choice the problem arises. In answering whether Nixon might have had a name
17 other than 'Nixon', if someone else happens to have a name made up with the
18 very same characters, that name will be a different name just because its bearer
19 is a different person. Homonymous names are not at issue when we ask about
20 whether Nixon might have had another name than the name he has, we are
21 concerned about the specific man who was the USA President and whose
22 specific name happens to be 'Nixon' and we are wondering about him if there
23 is a possible world where he himself is not named 'Nixon.
24   The second case, the case of coreference, happens when there is more than
25 one name for a person, for instance, as in the 'Tully/Cicero' example, each
26 name is a specific name for the same person. However, co-reference is not at
27 issue, because the question is not whether one individual has more than one
28 name, rather it is if she has some name, it might not have been that very name.
29 In other words, if the famous orator has 'Cicero' and 'Tully' as his names, the
30 point is whether he might not have had either of these two specific names. We
31 can always pose the question for every name a person has. That is, we could
32 also ask if that person might not have been named 'NN' and so forth, no matter
33 how many names the person has.
34   To correctly state the answer to the question of whether Nixon might have
35 not been named 'Nixon', according to (RR), we must use rigid designators to
36 move around Kripkean possible words in order to attempt to find at least one
37 world where that specific person is otherwise named. But how can we map that
38 specific person into possible worlds? It is obvious that in order to say of Nixon

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[9]Scott Soames calls this expedient the "linguistic test" for rigidity of noun phrases. Gómez-Torrente [2013: 371] says that it is thought that all other standard tests would deliver the same verdict.

[10]Kripke says: "For language as we have it, we could speak of names as having a unique referent if we adopted a terminology, analogous to the practice of calling homonyms distinct 'words', according to which uses of phonetically the same sounds to name distinct objects count as distinct names. [1980: 7-8]

that he could have been named otherwise, he has to be named 'Nixon' in the first place.

Therefore, I ask again, can we adequately satisfy (RR) and say that there is a possible world where: (1*) 'Nixon$_R$ might not have been named "Nixon$_R$"' is true of Nixon? Strictly speaking (1*) shows what Kripke cannot say if we comply with (RR). Once we use a rigid designator to specifically refer to a person in whatever possible world that person exists, we can neither deprive that person of her rigid designator, nor we can say anything counterfactually about her without the use of her rigid designator. True, if we did not know that in Kripke's semantics proper names are rigid, it would not seem to be necessary of the self-same Nixon to bear the proper name 'Nixon'. It would seem to be a contingent fact about him, but how could we state such a contingent fact about him without using his rigid designator? According to (RR) we cannot. Sentence (1*) seems to be the straight way to do it, but (RR) imposes the use of rigid designators while the predicate 'might not have been named "Nixon$_R$"' seems to indicate its elimination. To make my point clearer, we could read the predicate as saying '… might not have been rigidly named "Nixon"'. But once again, he has to be rigidly named in the first place in order to say anything counterfactual of him. Again, according to (RR) naming has to be a rigid naming.

Maybe another interpretation for (1*), contrary to the rigidity test for quoted names considered above, is that the used occurrence of the name is rigid while the mentioning of the rigid name is not a rigid designator, because it does not rigidly refer to the bearer of the name, it only mentions the name, and if so, there is no tension between (RR) and the indication of '…not have been named "Nixon"'. However, obvious questions arise: what is the relation between the two occurrences of the name in sentence (1*)? Do quoted names refer at all? And do they, thereby, contribute to the truth value of a statement in which they occur? In general, how are we to account for the role of quoted names in a Kripkean modal semantics?

It is well known that Davidson [1984: 79-92] observed that quotations, unlike typical names, must be interpreted in a way that exploits the salient pre-referential relation between a quotation and the expression between its quotation marks. In "How Quotations Refer?" [2013] Gómez-Torrente discusses recent theories of quotation and provides a well-argued proposal that accommodates Kripke's semantics by making the quoted expression an unstructured, rigid, context insensitive term. He holds that quotations can be understood as being much closer to typical names [2013: 368]; and yet get their referents fixed wholesale with the help of a general rule that he calls "The Interiority Principle" which exploits a pre-referential relation between terms and their intended referents. On Gómez-Torrente's view, quotations get their referents fixed via an implicit general convention:

(Interiority) A quotation refers to the expression within its quotation marks.

Interiority assigns a referent to a quotation as:

1 …a function of the identity of one of its morphological components, the
2 quoted expression, hence exploiting the salient pre-referential relation
3 between a quotation and its intended referent … Interiority assigns a
4 reference to each quotation type, independently of any sensitivity to
5 contextual factors. [213: 340]

7 According to Gómez-Torrente's theory it is only on the basis of linguistic
8 knowledge that a competent user could associate any quotation with one or
9 more particular reference-fixing descriptions for that quotation, but the
10 quotation is not equivalent to the (unquoted) corresponding reference-fixing
11 descriptions.
12 Therefore, the pre-referential relation between the used and the quoted
13 name in (1*) is preserved under Gómez-Torrente's theory. Thus, according to
14 the theory, the used name refers to Nixon while the quoted expression 'Nixon$_R$'
15 refers to the rigid name of Nixon.
16 Is there a criterion to establish whether these two occurrences are of the
17 one and the same name? Interiority helps us in answering: A quotation refers to
18 the expression within its quotation marks. Therefore, a proper name is
19 individuated by its bearer while a quoted name is individuated by Interiority.
20 Isn't it a good support for Interiority that in (1*) we are not saying something
21 like 'Nixon$_R$ might not have been named "Kripxon$_R$"'? If the answer is "yes",
22 then why isn't it obvious that when saying '… might not have been named
23 "Nixon$_R$"'? we have to be referring to Nixon's name and no one else's name.[11]
24 Although I have given enough reasons to argue that (1*) cannot be
25 formulated in Kripkean semantics, I will now consider two final possible ways
26 out of the problem of ineffability that I have discussed. Kripke could try to say
27 what he appears to want to truly saying: there is a possible world where
28 Nixon is not named 'Nixon'. If that were the case, (1*) would be true. But we
29 have already seen that if we use Nixon's rigid designator, namely the name he
30 has, to place him in a possible world and predicate of him that he does not bear
31 his name, we will be back to the problems discussed above. For those reasons,
32 perhaps a first desperate alternative would be to recognize that although in this
33 world the person is named 'Nixon', in another possible world he is not named
34 that way. If that were to happen, then it would be true of Nixon that he might
35 not have been named 'Nixon'. So let us move from natural language to formal
36 language and use a name that is different from the name the subject bears in
37 this world in order to say that in a possible world he is not named as he is in the
38 actual world, and therefore it is true of Nixon that he might not have been
39 named 'Nixon'. But do we satisfy the assumption that he, Nixon, is not named

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[11] This issue is related to the objection that for non-structured quotations there would be no rule of interpreting them, that the relation between a quotation and the thing x that it quotes cannot be the relationship between a semantically unstructured expression and what it refers to, because any semantically unstructured expression could have been used to refer to x, but no quotation other than the one quoting x could have been used to quote x; that is it in the absence of structure we could get 'Nixon$_R$ may not have been named "Kripke$_R$"'. Gómez-Torrente provides Interiority as an interpreting rule to prevent it from happening. Therefore, he secures the relation between the name and its quotation while maintaining them both to be rigid.

1 'Nixon' by stipulating in our formal language that he is named differently? I do
2 not think we do, because by formulating a statement that uses a different name
3 than the one Nixon has in our world, in the formal language we say nothing
4 more than something like 'NN$_R$ might not have been named "NN$_R$"' and we
5 have returned to the starting point.

6   A second more complex option would be to suppose that sentence (1*)
7 aims to say something like: (1**) 'There is a possible world at which no
8 inhabitant of that world uses the name '"Nixon" to name Nixon.'[12] Under this
9 interpretation we will assume that the name 'Nixon' in our language is an
10 obstinate designator, that is, that 'Nixon' designates Nixon in all possible
11 worlds whether or not Nixon exists in that world. Thus, on those possible
12 worlds where Nixon does not exist, by stipulation, its inhabitants would not use
13 the name 'Nixon' to denote Nixon. We use the name *in the actual* world to
14 refer to him in discourse about that other world. For instance, we can truly say
15 of Aristotle that 'Aristotle was born centuries before Nathan Salmon was
16 born'. This interpretation of sentence (1*) leaves two questions open: Would
17 statement (1**) be on par with 'Aristotle was born centuries before Nathan
18 Salmon was born? They are only on par in the sense that the names 'Aristotle'
19 and 'Nixon' are obstinate designators because in both cases their referents are
20 no longer in our actual world. We talk about Aristotle and Nixon from our
21 world to refer to them in discourse about the other possible world. However,
22 the great difference between both statements is important for our purposes. The
23 predicate 'being born centuries after' differs widely from the predicate 'not
24 using the name "Nixon"'. The difference is crucial, because as I said in
25 previous sections, the latter predicate denies the application of the name that
26 we need to use to build contrafactual scenarios, as established by rule (RR) and
27 the Interiority Principle for the quoted name. We encounter again the same
28 problem because although it is true that no inhabitant in that other possible
29 world uses the name 'Nixon', statement (1**) fails to capture the intuition that
30 we try to express, when using our natural language by saying that, Nixon might
31 not have been named 'Nixon', rather than the name 'Nixon' is not used by
32 anybody. The point is clear, we use the name and then we predicate whatever
33 might have happen to the named person. And that is precisely the issue at
34 stake.

35   Let me summarize these desperate solutions. On the one hand, when we
36 translate the sentence to our formal language, we used another name for Nixon
37 to capture the idea that Nixon might not have been named 'Nixon', but his led
38 us to the case 'Kripxon might not have been named "Kripxon"'. On the other
39 hand, we pursued the idea that nobody uses the name 'Nixon'. We found two
40 ways of accomplishing it. The first one is simply the case of coreference, in the
41 actual world Nixon is named 'Nixon' but in other possible world he is named
42 'Kripxon'. This did not give any solution to the ineffability problem, as I said
43 in my preliminary remarks, co-reference is not the issue. For example, in one
44 possible world they use 'Tully' and in other world 'Cicero' to refer to the same

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[12] I am indebted to X for this suggestion for dealing with the problem of ineffability.

1 person, but each specific name may be instantiated in the scheme: 'NN might
2 not have been named "NN"'. The second option that deals with the idea that
3 nobody uses the name as (1**) says, was to consider the name as an obstinate
4 designator, which by definition the inhabitants of the possible world do not use
5 the name where the individual does not exist. But the stipulation imposed on
6 the inhabitants of that other possible world, does not eliminate the possibility
7 of stating 'NN might not have been named "NN"'. These desperate attempts to
8 state what is ineffable, given Kripkean semantics, make more salient the
9 incoherence of formally maintaining that the rigid name is not or cannot be a
10 rigid name, that is, we do not stick to the rule (RR) that establishes the
11 semantics proposed by Kripke. We would be violating (RR) and rejecting the
12 fundamental basis for Kripkean modal semantics.

Concluding My Argument

17 Kripke is right in that the self-same Nixon, who might not have been the
18 President, could not but be Nixon. However, intuitively speaking, if 'Nixon' is
19 a specific name and we state any counterfactual claim about the relation
20 between the bearer of the name and his name, it is also true that in Kripke's
21 formal semantics Nixon could not but bear his name. The mild self-referential
22 element in the application conditions of the name is reinforced by the
23 definition of rigid designation. Therefore, contrary to our intuitions and to
24 Burges' argument, it would seem that in our formal semantics 'this entity
25 named "Nixon" is necessarily named "Nixon"' is true, and 'Nixon might not
26 have been named "Nixon"' is false. But if my argument is correct what cannot
27 be said in Kripkean metalanguage is 'Nixon might not have been named
28 "Nixon"'.
29 As I said in section 3, there were two preliminary remarks to be made in
30 order to frame my argument for the claim that Kripkean semantics does not
31 allow us to formulate metalinguistic statements of the form 'NN might not
32 have been named "NN"'. On the one hand, the point of Kripke's sentence is to
33 distinguish Nixon's rigid name as a rigid designator from non-rigid terms
34 expressing properties; on the other, there is the naming/calling issue. I have
35 concluded my comments about the former. And I now want to expand my
36 comments about the latter.
37 Notice that 'naming' imposes a restriction on the syntax of the sentence
38 (1*) by not allowing to occur within it, right after 'naming', any other
39 expression but a quoted proper name. Therefore, we need to explain more fully
40 the role of quoted names in Kripkean modal semantics. Gómez-Torrente's
41 theory provides a suitable account: quoted names are rigid designators and they
42 are also unstructured, context insensitive terms and, therefore, modally stable.
43 The modal stability of the used and quoted name in (1*) strengthens the
44 relation of the name to its bearer to such an extent that 'Kripke$_R$ is necessarily
45 named "Kripke$_R$"' seems to be true in Kripkean modal semantics. However, if
46 it is necessary for the bearer to bear his/her name and if my argument is

1 correct, 'Nixon$_R$ might not have been named "Nixon$_R$"' seems to be false,
2 logically impossible or ill-formed.

3   Another way to put what one would like to say is something like the
4 following: Nixon, who is the bearer of a specific name in any possible world in
5 which Nixon exists, may not have bear the specific name he bears. But it seems
6 that we would have to say of Nixon that the rigid name we need to use to place
7 him in some possible world is not really a rigid name after all.

8   In order to express that the referent of a rigid name may not have to bear
9 the specific rigid name he bears, we must quote precisely that name and no
10 other specific name in the predicate of the sentence. By quoting the specific
11 name and saying that it might not have been the specific name that it is, we
12 show an impossibility: we are using the name as a rigid designator in the
13 subject part of the sentence, establishing that it is necessary to use that name in
14 every possible world in which the bearer of the name exists but then, when it
15 appears quoted in the predicative part of the sentence, we predicate that it is not
16 necessary to use the name in every possible world. But that is to say nothing
17 other than the used name is not rigid.

18   To summarize my argument: 'Nixon$_R$ might not have been named
19 "Nixon$_R$"' I suspect, cannot even be formulated and therefore the question
20 about its truth-value cannot even arise. Further, even if it could arise, what
21 seems intuitively plausible, namely that Nixon might have been named
22 something other than 'Nixon', would be false. For, if it were true, it would
23 contradict the claim that the very name 'Nixon$_R$' must only refer to Nixon$_R$ in
24 order to state any contra factual claim about him and no one else.

25   Kripke is right to acknowledge that: 'This terminology certainly does not
26 agree with the most common usage.' The common usage of a name has only a
27 mild self-referential element in its application conditions, but proper names as
28 rigid designators strengthen it.

29   Rigid designation is an appropriate tool to capture Kripke's metaphysical
30 assumptions, but if proper names are rigid designators, we cannot make
31 metalinguistic claims about rigid designators as in (1*). Kripke thought that a
32 proper name, properly used, simply was a rigid designator that allows us to
33 speak of whatever might have happened to its bearer. However, there is one
34 thing that cannot happen to its bearer: once her name is rigid, she cannot but
35 bear her name.

36   At the end of the day, Kripkean rigid designators guarantee the logical role
37 of a proper name to univocally refer to one and the same object but do not
38 allow us to make this kind of metalinguistic claims about them. Proper names
39 are rigid designators, while quoted proper names rigidly designate their quoted
40 name. There are no metalinguistic claims of the form 'NN might not have been
41 named "NN".' Kripke's "troubles" are being unable to formulate such
42 metalinguistic statements about proper names as rigid designators.

43   My argument illustrates the fact that as philosophers, we face a tension
44 between creating artificial languages and theorizing about metaphysical
45 underpinnings of natural languages. The main issue is what adequacy
46 conditions should be imposed on philosophical semantics. These conditions

differ widely. In the case discussed, the main motivation for designing rigid designators is to capture the metaphysical claim underpinning the intuition that self-identity is a necessary relation. But in doing so Kripke is unable to correctly portray contingency between the bearer of the name and his/her name.

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