I. The Description Theory, a la Kripke

A. Kripke critiques the description theory, some version of which we have been getting at in most of our reading.

B. He boils it down to six theses and a general condition (53):

1. To every name or designating expression ‘X’, there corresponds a cluster of properties, namely the family of those properties \( \varphi \) such that \( A \) believes ‘\( \varphi X \)’

2. One of the properties, or some conjointly, are believed by \( A \) to pick out some individual uniquely

3. If most, or a weighted most, of the \( \varphi \)’s are satisfied by one unique object \( y \), then \( y \) is the referent of ‘\( X \)’

4. If the vote yields no unique object, ‘\( X \)’ does not refer

5. The statement, ‘If \( X \) exists, then \( X \) has most of the \( \varphi \)’s’ is known \textit{a priori} by the speaker

6. The statement, ‘If \( X \) exists, then \( X \) has most of the \( \varphi \)’s’ expresses a necessary truth (in the idiolect of the speaker)

7. (C): For any successful theory, the account must not be circular. The properties which are used in the vote must not themselves involve the notion of reference in such a way that it is ultimately impossible to eliminate them.

II. Considering the Theses

A. **Thesis 1**: A definition

B. **Thesis 2**:

1. Notice the emphasis on \textit{believed by} \( A \)

2. The properties (which could be expressed by descriptions) must be \textit{uniquely} satisfied

3. \textit{Counterexamples}: Cicero, Feynman, Einstein
P1. If Thesis 2, then we could only successfully use ‘Feynman’ to refer to Feynman if we had a property that picked him out uniquely

P2. People successfully refer to Feynman even if all they know about him is that he is a physicist (or perhaps nothing at all!)

C. Thesis 2 is false.

C. Thesis 3:

1. This isn’t tied to the beliefs of the speaker, or even the speaker at all

2. What counts as a weighted most?

3. Counterexamples: Gödel/Schmidt, Peano/Dedekind, Einstein again

P1. If Thesis 3 is true, then if I use the name ‘Gödel’ successfully to refer and I associate with it the property of being the person who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic, then I refer to the person who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic.

P2. In the Gödel/Schmidt case, I would successfully refer to Schmidt with the name ‘Gödel’.

P3. I can use the name ‘Gödel’ successfully to refer to Gödel even if I associate with it the property of being the person who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic and it was Schmidt who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic.

C. Thesis 3 is false.

D. Thesis 4:

1. The “vote” is what’s discussed under Thesis 3

2. Counterexamples: Cicero, Feynman, Jonah

P1. If Thesis 4 is true, then if most (or a weighted most) of the φ’s I associate with a name ‘X’ are not satisfied by a unique object, then ‘X’ does not refer.

P2. ‘X’ refers even if most (or a weighted most) of the φ’s I associate with it are not satisfied by a unique object, in two ways: (a) there is more than one object that satisfies them (e.g., ‘Feynman’), or (b) there is no one that satisfies them (e.g., ‘Jonah’).

C. Thesis 4 is false.
E. Thesis 5:

1. To say that the name is known *a priori* is to say that the speaker needs no experience with X to know that X has most of the \( \varphi \)'s

2. Kripke allows that names *could* work like this, and in fact some seem to (e.g., ‘Jack the Ripper’), but most names do not work this way; in most cases, we can reasonably wonder whether a person we name really has the property we associate with him/her, for (almost?) any property

3. *Counterexamples*: Gödel/Schmidt (compare reactions with the “Jack the Ripper” case)
   
   P1. If Thesis 5 is true, then I must know *a priori* that if Gödel exists, then he discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic.
   
   P2. I believe that Gödel discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic, and this belief probably counts as knowledge, but it is certainly *not a priori* – consider that I would need to rule out possible scenarios like the one involving Schmidt as fanciful and false.

C. Thesis 5 is false.

F. Thesis 6:

1. This is a metaphysical thesis, concerned with *necessity*

2. Necessity for Kripke is made out in terms of *possible worlds*

3. This thesis is associated with *rigid designation*

4. Kripke denies that one need have a weighted most of the properties associated with one’s name

5. *Counterexamples*: Aristotle, Hitler
   
   P1. If Thesis 6 is true, then it would be *impossible* (in my dialect) for the X to exist and not have most (or a weighted most) of the properties I attribute to him/her.
   
   P2. It is possible that Aristotle existed but did not have most or even any of the properties that he is thought to have. (Consider also the Jonah case, as well as the possibility that Nixon might have grown up to be a cabaret singer or an auto mechanic.)

C. Thesis 6 is false.
G. **Condition (C):**

1. Consider: “‘Socrates’ refers to the man I call Socrates”

2. Failure to avoid circularity keeps the theory from getting off the ground

III. **Kripke’s “Picture”**

A. Kripke doesn’t offer a theory; rather, he is interested in offering a better “picture” of reference

B. His picture is contained here: “An initial ‘baptism’ takes place. Here the object may be named by ostension, or the reference of the name may be fixed by a description. When the name is ‘passed from link to link’, the receiver of the name must … intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from who he heard it” (63)