

Satan, Baalzebub, and Peter Geach

The aim of the following notes is to examine the views of Peter Geach on proper names, with special attention to the potential applicability of two of his notions to questions of continuing interest, to wit, the notions (A) of *nominal essence* from a 1957 book, and (B) of *quasi-names* from a 1969 paper.¹ The two parts of this study, dealing with these two notions, are largely independent and separately readable.

A. Speaking of the Devil

Beginning with nominal essence, §1 will summarize Geach's 1957 discussion,² then briefly recall the views on naming developed over the course of the next decade or so. §2 will recall Saul Kripke's criticism of Geach on nominal essence, offering a partial defense. §3 will introduce the larger problem of the epistemology of modality. §4 will suggest how the notion of *sortal*, to which Geach's discussion draws our attention, may be useful in connection with this problem.

1. Nominal Essence

Geach begins with a prompt dismissal of Russell's view that a name is a "truncated description." However, he equally rejects the view, which he identifies as Locke's — it was also Mill's — that a name has no meaning at all. He claims that a "general term" supplying "identity criteria" — what is generally called a "sortal" — must be part of the meaning of a name. His argument is terse to the point of being cryptic:

"The same" is a fragmentary expression, and has no significance unless we say or mean "the same X" where "X" represents a general term... In general, if an individual is presented to me by a proper name, I cannot learn the use of the proper name without being able to apply some *criterion* of identity; and since the identity of a thing always consists in its being the same X, e.g. the same *man*, and there is no such thing as being just "the same," my application of the proper name is justified only if (e.g.) its meaning

includes its being applicable to a *man* and I keep on applying it to one and the same *man*.⁴

I would reconstruct the argument as follows. *The phrase “the same” is meaningless unless supplemented by a sortal or general term supplying identity criteria, either expressly stated or tacitly understood. Thus it cannot be true, or even meaningful, to say, “What I am now referring to as Jones is the same as what I was previously referring to as Jones,” unless “the same” is supplemented by the sortal “human being.” This, not being explicitly said, must at least be implicitly meant. But there is no other word in the sentence of whose meaning “human being” could be a part except the proper name “Jones.”* To the argument thus reconstructed it might well be objected that if things come in sorts, then “*a* is the same as *b*” can be understood to mean “*a* and *b* are of the same sort, and the *same* thing of that sort, whatever sort that may be,” which seems to make perfectly good sense even if a specification of what sort is in question forms no part of the meaning of *a* or of *b*.

But setting aside for the moment the question of *status* of Geach’s conclusion, its *content* is of considerable interest. For not only would it make the sortal classification “Jones is a human being” analytic, but it would also make attribution to Jones of whatever follows from the identity conditions for human beings, which are supposed to be part of the meaning of the sortal, analytic. Assuming for the sake of example these identity conditions presuppose having a living, flesh-and-blood body and a conscious, rational mind, and consist otherwise of certain continuity constraints on the changes in body and mind over time, then “Jones has a living, flesh-and-blood body,” and “Jones has a conscious, rational mind,” to begin with, would be analytic. For Geach the analytic consequences of the sortal meaning of a name constitute the “nominal essence” of its bearer.³

Geach’s anti-Millianism and his anti-Russellianism are combined in the conclusion that the meaning of a proper name consists of *no less and no more* than a sortal classification of its bearer. The result is a problem about what determines the denotation

of a name. For on Geach's view, the *meaning* of the name suffices only to determine what *sort* of thing the name denotes, but not *which* thing of that sort. To say "Jones did this...Jones did that...Jones did the other," according to Geach *means* no more than to say, "Some man did this...the same man did that...the same man did the other." Something else beyond the meaning must determine *which* man.

In this connection Geach refers us back to his a discussion earlier in his book of demonstratives, where he likewise holds that "This is doing so-and-so...this is doing such-and-such," *means* no more than "Something is doing so-and-so...the same thing is doing such-and-such." Geach holds that what, on the occasion of a given use of the demonstrative "this," makes the speaker's reference be to some one specific item, is present sensory awareness of the thing in question, and what Aquinas called *conversio ad phantasmata*, roughly speaking, turning attention to the relevant sensations.

In the case of names, if Jones — or rather, if the relevant one from among all the various men named "Jones" — happens to be present, then "some man" can become "this man," so to speak, and the denotation of the name can be determined as the denotation of a demonstrative is determined. But since one can refer to Jones as "Jones" even in his absence, and even after his death, the solution offered for demonstratives will not work as a general solution for names. Geach hints that what matters is a connection between one's later and one's earlier thoughts using the same name; but he frankly disclaims having any complete theory to offer.

So the question of how a name attaches to its bearer is left open. Two solutions emerged in the period between the 1957 and 1969. One was offered the very next year, 1958, by Searle.⁵ According to his view, what is associated with a name — whether as "giving its meaning" or merely as "fixing its reference" does not matter so much — is not a single description but rather a *cluster* of descriptions. The correctness of most of these, and agreement among speakers about them, is what makes the name denote its bearer, and enables speakers to communicate using the name, though any *one* member of the

cluster might turn out to be in error. The cluster version of descriptivism, in one variant or another, became the prevailing view for a decade or so.

In 1968, however, we find an allusion to a different kind of view, due to Kripke, in a paper of David Kaplan.⁶ After a longish discussion of his own views on how the history of a picture determines what (if anything) the picture is a picture *of*, Kaplan inserts an acknowledgment that his view of pictures has been influenced by views of Kripke on how the history of a *name* determines what (if anything) the *name* is a name of. We today, of course, know to what view of Kripke's Kaplan must have been alluding, but it was not until 1970 that Kripke delivered his famous Princeton lectures on naming and necessity, making his view available to a wider public and not just small Harvard seminars or selected individuals such as Kaplan, and not until 1972 that the transcript of the lectures was published.⁷

Naming and Necessity, on the one hand, offers an historical "chain of communication" picture of how names become and remain attached to their bearers, involving (i) an initial baptist picking out an object by ostension and/or description and giving that individual a name, followed by (ii) transmission to later speakers who hear earlier speakers use the name and form the intention to use it to name whatever earlier speakers were using it to name. On the other hand, the lectures contain objections to descriptivism in general and the cluster theory in particular, noting among other things that a speaker may use a name to denote an individual even while in ignorance of any uniquely identifying description of that individual, or in possession only of one that is in error, as shown by various memorable examples. Among these one is directed specially at Geach; and to this we must turn.

Kripke offers a much more elaborate reconstruction of Geach's 1957 argument than I have, and one that goes well beyond the text, though for all I know it may be based on oral discussions with Geach, and be closer to an expression of Geach's full view than Geach's own tersely stated published version quoted earlier. Kripke interprets Geach as assuming that the early users of a name must be personally acquainted with the item

name, and interprets this assumption as an insistence (i) that the *first* bestower of the name must introduce it by *ostension*. Kripke then represents Geach as adopting a view of Wittgenstein's and maintaining (ii) that *pure* ostension ("That," accompanied by pointing) cannot suffice to pick out the item to be named, but ostension must be supplemented by a sortal classification ("That *man*," accompanied by pointing) in order to do so.

Kripke himself does not take a stand on (ii), but he definitely rejects (i). He allows context-independent descriptions ("The brightest star in the constellation Taurus") as equally eligible with descriptions involving ostension ("That bright star over there," accompanied by pointing) as a means of picking out an item for naming. One result of the difference between Kripke and Geach over (i) is that Kripke can and does, while Geach cannot and does not, accept that " π " is a name for a real number. For one certainly can describe the number in question, and just as certainly cannot point a finger at it.

But this is the least of the differences between the Kripke and Geach. Kripke's main criticism is directed not against (i) or (ii), but rather against Geach's view that a sortal classification used in picking out an object for initial naming must *remain* somehow attached to or associated with the name as it passes from speaker to speaker. However Geach arrived at the view that it does, Kripke rejects this main conclusion of Geach's 1957 chapter, and offers objections both from ignorance and from error.

2. Diabolical Imposture

Kripke's argument from ignorance runs as follows:

A mathematician's wife overhears her husband muttering the name 'Nancy'. She wonders whether Nancy, the thing to which her husband referred, is a woman or a Lie group. Why isn't her use of 'Nancy' a case of naming?

To make the rhetorical question into an argument, it may be observed that the wife may complain, “My husband is obsessed with Nancy,” while ignorant of whether the object of her husband’s preoccupation is a human being or an abstract entity. Since she can successfully communicate something by assertively uttering this sentence, it might be claimed, she must know what the words in it mean, including the word “Nancy.” Since of that word she knows nothing more than that it is a proper name, that must be all there is to its meaning, contrary to Geach’s view that this is only *part* of its meaning, the other part being that it is a proper name *for a human being*.

A supporter of Geach could reply to the argument above that one often succeeds in communicating something using a word even though one has only partial knowledge of its meaning. For instance, the mathematician, even if colorblind, may succeed in communicating something to a decorator by saying, “My wife wants teal for the new curtains,” while knowing no more than that “teal” is the word for some color, without having any idea *which* color.

Going over from the defensive to the offensive, a Geachian might observe first that what little the wife can say using “Nancy” generally has to be said rather awkwardly. Kripke writes “the thing to which her husband referred,” but in a state of ignorance an awkward disjunctive construction seems required: “the thing *or person* to which *or to whom* her husband referred.” In English, for any noun, whether a proper noun or not, one cannot know whether the pronoun “who” or “where” or “which” is called for without knowledge of at least a broad sortal classification of the item the noun denotes as person or place or thing. This strongly suggests that such a classification should be part of the lexical entry for any noun, and part of its meaning. This potential reply to Kripke’s ignorance example may provide a better reason to accept Geach’s suggestion about names having a sortal meaning than the argument of Geach himself quoted earlier.⁹

But Kripke offers also an argument from error:

Couldn't Dobbin turn out to belong to a species other than horses (though superficially he looked like a horse), Hesperus to be a planet, rather than a star, or Lot's guests, even if he names them, to be angels rather than men?

From Geach's point of view, we need not take Dobbin and Hesperus very seriously. There are broader and narrower classificatory terms that may be called sortals, but Geach is only interested in sortals as supplying identity criteria. The identity criteria may be the same across a broad sortal classification comprehending many narrower subclassifications. In particular, the identity criteria for horses, donkeys, zebras, mules, and other animals are presumably entirely the same. Likewise for stars, planets, comets, asteroids, and other heavenly bodies. Likewise perhaps for *Homo sapiens* and *Homo habilis* and *Pithecanthropus erectus*, and even for earthlings and Martians and Venusians. Geach takes "human being" to be part of the meaning of proper names, and may doubt that there are any rational animals other than human beings. But if there are, their identity criteria are presumably similar, and little would be lost in Geach's examples if "human being" were broadened to "rational animal."

By contrast, from Geach's point of view the possibility of mistaking angel for man does need to be taken seriously, since Geach agrees with Aquinas that a disincarnate soul is not a full human being, and holds that the identity criteria for human beings are different from those for immaterial spirits. The Lot's visitors example may strike some modern readers as far-fetched, and *Genesis* in any case provides few details, but there is at least one fairly well-known case from earlier times where there was serious doubt whether two named individuals were human beings or angels, though it was a question not of good but of evil angels.

For Procopius, in the *Secret History*, writes thus of Justinian and Theodora:¹⁰

...to me ... these two persons never seemed to be human beings, but rather a kind of avenging demons, and, as the poets say, "a twin bane of mortals," seeing that they purposed together how they might be able most easily and most quickly to destroy all

racers of men and their works, and, assuming human form and becoming man-demons, they harassed in this fashion the whole world.

As regards the emperor, in particular, Procopius writes at the conclusion of his work:

So when Justinian either, if he is a man, departs this life, or, as being the Lord of evil spirits, lays his life aside, all who have the fortune to have survived to that time will know the truth.

Moreover, Procopius claims he is not alone in holding his view of the imperial couple.

It may be desirable to have a more modern example, even if only a hypothetical one, so let us consider another political leader, one who already figures in several of Kripke's examples: the individual who sat behind the desk in the Oval Office of the White House at the time of Kripke's lectures. Let us suppose that, introducing a new name or nickname, one aide whispers to another, gesturing towards that individual, "I call the man over there 'Tricky Dick.'" Now suppose further that, in the Oval Office of those days, he who "high on a throne of royal state ... exalted sat, by merit rais'd to that bad eminence" was no ordinary lying politician, but the very Father of Lies.¹¹ In that case, the description "*man* over there" would not be true of him. But Kripke's view is that a description may be used to pick out an individual for naming even if it is a misdescription.

In this connection Kripke cites from the earlier literature examples where someone succeeds in picking out an individual using a description that is in fact not true of the individual in question. The *locus classicus* for such examples is a 1966 paper of Donnellan, but there is also such an example in a 1963 paper of Prior.¹² Using "the man who lives next door" one may succeed in picking out a certain man (*homo*) even if it is not a man (*vir*) but a woman, and even if she only works next door and does not live there. And if one can mistake *mulier* for *vir*, why not *diabolus* for *homo*?

Kripke's view would be that in the case as I have described it, "Tricky Dick" would become, like "Old Nick," simply another name or nickname for *Satan*. It then would not be analytic or even true that Tricky Dick is a man, or that Tricky Dick has a living body, composed of flesh and blood, rather than a mere simulacrum, composed perhaps of compressed air (as Geach somewhere reminds us that Aquinas suggests). A presidential aide who exclaims, "Tricky Dick is quite a man to work for," erroneously supposing the demon he serves to be a human being, is still able, according to Kripke, to refer to and communicate something about that demon.

Or consider an inverse example. Radio and TV talk-show hosts in the U. S. tend to "demonize" Bill and especially Hillary Clinton. Let us suppose, for the sake of example, that one of them, call him Rush L., "demonizes" the Clintons in the same literal sense in which Procopius "demonized" Justinian and especially Theodora. Suppose that Rush L. is sitting in the U. S. Senate balcony, and sees Senator Clinton rise to make a speech. Gesturing towards her he whispers to a crony seated beside him, "I call that she-devil '@%*#!\$.'"¹³ But suppose Rush L. is wrong and the female senator from New York is not a demoness but just a woman. On Kripke's view, the talk-show host has nonetheless succeeded in bestowing an unprintable nickname on a human being.

What can a supporter of Geach say about such cases? Perhaps the talk-show host and the presidential aide had tacitly in mind some broader sortal that would take in mortal men and women and immortal demons and demonesses alike. Kripke himself says, "Perhaps Geach should stick to more cautious sortals," while Procopius, or rather his translator Dewing, used "persons" as a neutral term between men and devils.¹⁴ Such a broadening of the scope of the sortal will, of course, bring with it a narrowing of the scope of nominal essence that might be unwelcome to Geach. And almost nothing would be left if we had to broaden the scope still further, to take in robots, which figure in other examples of Kripke's.

The bolder alternative, for a supporter of Geach, would be to deny that "Tricky Dick" or "Nixon" succeeds in naming unless a rational animal sits behind the desk.

Perhaps the best arguments proceed by way of analogy. Suppose first that what sits behind the desk is at different times different members of a team of C.I.A. agents who have usurped the powers of the U.S. presidency. Geach himself, in his 1969 paper, alludes to a literary example of this type from Chesterton, and what he says about it, applied to the Nixon case, would amount to this, that “Nixon” would not name a team rather than a person, but rather would name nothing at all.

Would the case really be different if the “team” had only one member? There seems to be a difference between the case of, say, a bigamist who maintains two domestic establishments under two different names, or an author who publishes under multiple *noms de plume*, and that of an impostor who forges a false identity. Some may recall the case of one James Hogue, a 30-year-old convicted thief later convicted also of fraud after presenting himself as an 18-year-old self-taught boy-wonder Alexi Indris-Santana, and under that assumed persona gaining undergraduate admission, with scholarship, to Princeton. It seems to me at least equally natural to say that no such person as Indris-Santana ever existed as to say that Indris-Santana and Hogue are the same person. If this is so for a human impostor, how much more so if it is the Prince of Darkness who, for a time, assumes the role of emperor or president. We need not conclude that “Nixon” is, like “Lucifer,” another name for Satan, any more than we conclude that “Hamlet” is, like “Henriette Rosine Bernard,” another name for Sarah Bernhardt.

As for robots, suppose now that what sits behind the desk is not a man or team of men, but some contraption operated by remote-control by a little man behind a screen in the corner. Think of *The Wizard of Oz*, but with Henry Kissinger as the wizard. The objection to concluding that Nixon is Kissinger is really stronger than in ordinary cases of imposture, already dismissed. But to say instead that a ventriloquist’s dummy or marionette, speaking not in its own voice but in one projected by Kissinger, is Nixon does not seem right, either. And if Nixon is neither Kissinger nor his puppet, then there is no Nixon at all. At the very least, even those usually sparing in their use of “so-called” and of scare quotes will be likely to reach for them when speaking of the supposed Nixon

in such a case. And is the case of a self-contained, artificially-intelligent robot, programmed in advance by Kissinger rather than operated by him in real time, really any different?

With this rhetorical question I conclude my partial defense of Geach's doctrine of nominal essence. The claim that it is analytic that human beings have living bodies, composed of flesh and blood — that they are made of meat and not plastic — would perhaps also be challenged by Kripke, and of this claim I will not even mount a partial defense. The reason I do not feel impelled to do so will emerge shortly.

3. The Epistemology of Modality

The historical tendency from Kant to Carnap was for the necessary, in the “metaphysical” sense of what couldn't have been otherwise, to dwindle to the *a priori*, and the *a priori* to the analytic, and for the analytic to dwindle from the product of two independent factors, logic and definition, to a product of a single factor, linguistic convention. Mill's slogan that all necessity is verbal necessity already anticipates this development.

Multiple concerns motivated the multiple authors involved in the reduction of metaphysical necessity to linguistic convention, but high on the list of concerns was a desire to *demystify* modality, and disassociate metaphysics from the occult. On a naive view, there are facts about how things are, and superfacts about how things not only are but could not have failed to be. But then there seems to be an epistemological problem, a mystery as to how we are supposed to be able tell the superfacts from mere facts. We would seem to need some occult faculty to do so. In this connection Kripke quotes a well-known saying of Kant from the preface to the B edition of the First Critique: “Experience teaches us that a thing is so-and-so, but not that it cannot be otherwise.”

In writers from Kant to Carnap we find the source of knowable necessity being traced to *us*, to the forms of our sensibility and the categories of our understanding, or to the conventions of our language. Knowledge of necessity thereby is made a form of *self-*

knowledge, and thereby is made less mysterious. On the view that identifies all necessity with verbal necessity, in particular, we know that things could not under any circumstances have been otherwise in certain respects by knowing that we ourselves would not *count* any circumstances as circumstances in which things were otherwise in those respects.

The notion of analyticity needed for purposes of demystification need not be one according to which the distinction between analytic and synthetic is precise, or according to which whatever is analytic is *ipso facto* certain. For we only wish to explain the source of the somewhat imprecise and uncertain intuitions about necessity that we have, not precise and certain intuitions about necessity that we do not have. Hence many kinds of worries about analyticity would be bad reasons not to accept the reduction of necessity to analyticity.

Better reasons are supplied by Kripke's examples of *a posteriori* (hence synthetic) necessity, which come in a variety of kinds: *unprovable mathematical truths*, *natural kind classifications broad and narrow*, *statements about composition*, *statements about origins*, and (a rather special case) *identities*. In particular, Geach's doctrine of nominal essence suggests that the statements of classification and composition, "Nixon is human" and "Nixon is made of meat" are verbal necessities, and such claims may be challenged by Kripke. Whatever the status of these particular examples, Kripke would surely be right to challenge other narrow and specific statements of biological classification ("Dobbin belongs to the species *Equus caballus*") and chemical composition ("Meat is ultimately composed mostly of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen"), which perhaps even Geach would not regard as statements of nominal essence, though according to an intuition of Kripke's that is shared by many, they are "metaphysically" necessary.

All this is why I did not exert myself very strenuously to defend Geach in certain particular cases even where I think he may, in fact, be right. However these specific cases turn out, there can be no *general* reduction of the "metaphysical" necessity of statements of classification and composition to nominal essence and verbal necessity. (I am not

suggesting that Geach in 1957 was in any way aiming at such a reduction.) And yet I think the notion of sortal to which Geach turns our attention may have a role in explaining the source of the “metaphysical” necessity of such statements nonetheless, in some less direct way than simply reducing it to verbal necessity. To explain that role, however, will require some background. So setting aside the classification and composition cases, let us look just at mathematics for the moment.

Even before Gödel, the logicist thesis that all mathematical truths are analytic was coming to seem increasingly implausible, and since Gödel it has come to seem plausible that there are certain mathematical truths that are not provable or discoverable *a priori*. Yet intuitively all mathematical truths seem necessarily true. An obvious difficulty arises if we try to provide a specific example of an unprovable mathematical truth, for how can we establish its truth except by proof? All we can really do is cite *what for all we know at present may be* examples, such as Goldbach’s Conjecture, and pretend for the sake of argument that they are examples.

Now Kripke, in the very passage in his addenda where he takes issue with Kant,¹⁵ makes the following suggestive observation about just this type of example:

[T]he peculiar character of mathematical propositions (like Goldbach’s conjecture) is that one knows (*a priori*) that they cannot be contingently true; a mathematical statement, if true, is necessary.

All cases of the necessary *a posteriori* advocated in the text have the special character attributed to mathematical statements: Philosophical analysis tells us that they cannot be contingently true, so any empirical knowledge of their truth is automatically empirical knowledge that they are necessary. This characterization ... *may* give a clue to a general characterization of the *a posteriori* knowledge of necessary truths.

So Kripke holds that though Goldbach’s conjecture (supposing for the sake of example it is a genuine case of an unprovable mathematical truth) is not *a priori* true or *a priori*

false, it is *a priori* non-contingent (necessary if true and impossible if false). And he hints that something similar may be at work in other classes of examples.¹⁶

Now there may be at least a minor mystery how we can know *a priori* even that Goldbach's conjecture is not contingent. Can verbal necessity account at least for this much *a priori* knowledge? A clue is provided by recent debates over mathematical skepticism. Mathematical skeptics represent non-skeptics as "Platonists" who believe in a world of transcendent objects existing outside all space. The Platonists must believe, according to the skeptics, that they have some kind of occult faculty by which they "see" this world beyond.

Now the actual view of the alleged "Platonists" (of whom I am one) is that it is absurd to speak of objects "outside space," since "outside" is a spatial term. To say that mathematical objects lack specific location in space may not be equally absurd, and is indeed correct, but all such "material mode" formulations are potentially misleading. The most revealing formulation is in the "formal mode," and it consists simply of noting one negative linguistic fact, that spatial predicates do not have significant application to purely mathematical subjects.¹⁷

Similarly with time: Inflection for tense has no significant application to purely mathematical sentences. If we spoke a language that had no tense inflections, but indicated time reference in some other way, as our actual language indicates spatial reference, the negative grammatical point might be easier to make.¹⁸ In English we can strain to indicate timelessness by saying "Two plus two is, always was, and always will be four," but that creates a potentially misleading appearance of saying something positive (especially if one uses grand words like "eternal" and "immutable"), whereas the real point is a negative one, that certain temporal modifications used with other sentences have no use with mathematical sentences, and having no use, have no meaning. Skeptics who argue, "Suppose all mathematical objects cease to exist; then since mathematical objects are causally inert, no change in mathematical practice will result; so how do you

know that mathematical objects *do* exist?” are asking us to make a nonsensical supposition.¹⁹

What goes for tense goes for mood. Skeptics who argue, “Suppose mathematical objects hadn’t existed...” are also asking us to make a nonsensical supposition. Self-knowledge in the form of our knowledge — generally unconscious but not at all occult — of grammar is the ultimate source of our knowledge of the non-contingency of mathematical examples. Their non-contingency is *a priori* because it is analytic, and analytic because it is merely a positive-sounding way of putting a negative grammatical fact. Such, briefly and dogmatically, is the position to which the historically absurd label “Platonist” has come to be applied, and how it attempts to dispel one minor mystery. There remains, of course, the question *why* we exempt certain sentences from modal qualification, and the prior question why we make modal qualifications at all; but though such questions may be difficult, they are not mysterious in the sense of inviting the positing of occult faculties.

4. Sortals

Turning now to other, non-mathematical cases of purported *a posteriori* necessity, and returning at last to Geach and sortals, we have seen that the claim that statements of classification are analytic, while defensible for broad sortals, would be hard to defend for narrow ones. Yet there is now more to be said, taking a lesson from the mathematical case as we look more closely at sortals. In an early and less than successful attempt to collate Geach and Kripke,²⁰ I wrote of sortals as follows:

sortals ... including ‘human being or person’ ... as well as more general terms, ‘living creature’, ‘material body’, &c., are distinguished logically by the feature that it is part of the sense, meaning, intension, connotation, ‘semantic reading’, of a sortal ‘ σ ’ that whatever is a σ has always been and will always be a σ throughout its existence.

Nonsortals ... do not share this feature of *analytic permanence*.

The sense of a sortal 'σ' consists, apart from this feature, of (i) certain *static* conditions which anything must satisfy at every moment of its existence in order to be a σ, and (ii) certain *dynamic* conditions to which the evolving history of any σ must conform. In the case of the sortal 'human', [some] have stressed static conditions, rationality and animateness, while [others] stress dynamic conditions (persistence of memory, &c.) ...

It is evident that if an entity is of a sort σ, if the sortal 'σ' is true of it, then it cannot change in ways violating the static and dynamic conditions of σ-hood, without thereby ceasing to exist. But everything there is, is of some sort or other! Any new theory, positing the existence of entities not of recognized sorts (not persons, not other leaving creatures, not dead material bodies, &c.) is not fully expounded until it is explained what sorts of things these new entities are supposed to be, until the static and dynamic 'identity criteria' or 'principles of individuation' of the new entities have been set out. Again, as P. T. Geach and others have insisted, the reference or denotation of a newly introduced proper name is not fixed until it is indicated what sort of individual the name names. (Parsing 'child' as 'immature human being', the baptismal formula 'I hereby name this child...' contains the sortal 'human'.)

Taking the three paragraphs in reverse order, the relevant features of sortals claimed to be part of our thinking are as follows: (i) that everything is of some sort or other, (ii) that being of a given sort entails various conditions (the "static" and "dynamic" conditions being simply the synchronic and diachronic aspects of what are generally called "identity criteria"), and (iii) things don't change sorts.

Today I would add two glosses to the third point. First, "permanence" has a potentially misleading positive sound, whereas what is really at work is a negative grammatical principle, which in a slightly different kind of language would take the perfectly transparent form of the rule that "Nixon be a human being" has no room for a temporal complement. Second, what has been said about tense and time applies also to mood and modality, just as in the mathematical case, so that classifications are not just "analytically permanent" but also "analytically necessary."

At the time of my early paper I did not know whether to agree with Geach or with Kripke about the status of examples like “Nixon is a human being” or “Dobbin is a horse,” and said nothing about them. Today I would say that so far as demystifying modality is concerned, all Geach claims and more also *might as well* be right, even if it is wrong. Negative grammatical facts, put in a perhaps misleadingly positive way, tell us at least that it is analytic that *if* Nixon is human, *then* he is permanently and necessarily so, and *if* Dobbin is a horse, *then* he is permanently and necessarily one. Then given that Nixon *is* actually human, and Dobbin *is* actually a horse, it follows that the former is *necessarily* human, and the latter *necessarily* a horse, whether or not human or equine nature is part of the meaning of either name.

In this way what Kripke says by way of demystifying mathematical examples of *a posteriori* necessity applies also to examples of natural kind classification. Turning to examples of composition, for instance, the facts that human beings and horses are made not of plastic but of meat, and that meat in turn is made of the elements enumerated earlier, all we need to be analytic is that human beings and horses are natural kinds, and that things of the same natural kind are made of the same stuff — with no room for inflections of tense or mood. It will then follow that if even one human being or even one horse is made of meat, then permanently and necessarily all human beings or all horses, as the case may be, are so made as well, and similarly for what meat is made of. Again verbal necessity, the meaning and grammar of sortal terms, indirectly yields, when taken together with ordinary fact, metaphysical necessity. Statements of origins, too, may perhaps be susceptible to similar treatment, since it is a short step from taxonomy to pedigree, though I will not discuss that matter here.

What I have been ever more sketchily sketching is a strategy for trying to work out explicitly what may be implicit in Kripke’s “clue to a general characterization of the *a posteriori* knowledge of necessary truths,” drawing on the sortal idea to which Geach has turned our attention. Obviously an enormous amount — nearly everything, in fact — needs to be worked out much further before any real plausibility can be claimed for

the kind of picture (of *a posteriori* necessity as a product of the grammar and meaning of sortals plus ordinary facts) I have adumbrated.

My present purpose has been no more than to call attention to Geach's comparatively neglected notion of "nominal essence," rather brusquely treated by Kripke himself, and suggest how it might be applied in modified form to a problem arising from the work of Kripke. There are other potentially useful notions in Geach that need some working out, too, to one of which I turn next.

B. In the Name of Baalzebub

Turning to quasi-names, the notion was introduced in a 1969 paper of Geach.²¹ The paper is fairly well known. Unfortunately, it is as well known as it is largely because it has been taken up by revisionist historians who have seriously misrepresented it, and in a way that distracts attention from the notion of quasi-name, and impedes understanding of the notion if it happens to be noticed despite the distraction. So the negative task of correcting misrepresentations must be undertaken before the positive task of suggesting how Geach's notion could potentially be useful. §5 below is concerned with common background for the two tasks, §6 with the negative task, and the remaining half of the paper with the positive task, §7 being devoted to recalling Geach's notion, and §8 to suggesting how it might be applied to a puzzle of Kripke's and related issues.

5. Anti-Russellianism in General

Russell distinguished so-called logically proper names, which he considered the only genuine names, from names in the ordinary sense, grammatical proper nouns. According to Russell, I can assign a logically proper name only to an object of whose existence I am certain, which according to Russell means only an object with which I am immediately acquainted, which according to Russell at his most extreme means only one of my own sense data. Ordinary persons and places and things, with which we are at most mediately acquainted through sense-data, and whose existence is uncertain, can only bear

names in the ordinary sense, and according to Russell these are not really names at all, but truncated descriptions.

We have seen that Geach rejects this view in the book that was the subject of the first part of this study. Indeed, he early accuses Russell of committing a crude modal fallacy, that of arguing from “it is certain that if ‘ ___ ’ is a genuine name, then ___ exists” to “if ‘ ___ ’ is a genuine name, then it is certain that ___ exists.” Geach (like all the other writers I have been and will be citing) takes names in the ordinary sense to be genuine names, and the only kind of names of interest. And he denies that they are truncations or abbreviations or synonyms of descriptions. But if it is denied that a name has the same meaning as some uniquely identifying singular definite description, then a problem arises about what determines the denotation of a name. And we have seen that in his 1957 book Geach had no solution to offer, but that between his book and his 1969 paper, two proposed solutions had been developed: the cluster theory and the chain of communication picture.

Searle advanced arguments from error against a simple, Russellian, single-description view, and advanced versions of a cluster-of-descriptions view in its place — while Strawson added arguments from ignorance motivating yet further modifications of descriptivism on which historical considerations play a partial role. Donnellan and Kripke urged that the error and ignorance arguments, taken further — and in Kripke’s case, supplemented by a modal argument — should motivate, not the addition of epicycles to descriptivism, but its abandonment. They argued for recognition that what a name denotes is determined, not by any associated descriptions, but entirely and not partially by the history of the name — and in Kripke’s case a picture, though not a full-blown theory, was given of how it does so, with an initial baptism and a chain of speaker-to-speaker transmission.

As we turn now to Geach’s 1969 paper, it is natural to wonder whether Geach has adopted some solution to the problem he had left open in the 1957 book. Did he come to accept something like the cluster version of descriptivism, in Searle’s or Strawson’s or

some other variant? Or did he anticipate Donnellan's and Kripke's historicist critique of descriptivism, and perhaps even anticipate Kripke's chain-of-communication alternative to descriptivism (to the extent that one may speak of "anticipating" a picture that was already alluded to in print by Kaplan a year earlier)? Or did he adopt some yet other view?

As it happens, this question is not easily answered, since the 1969 paper is not directly about names, but rather about something else that Geach calls *quasi-names*. Geach illustrates the notion with the example of "Arthur" as used in tales of the Round Table and so forth. If Jones says, "The hill fort was built by Arthur," and Robinson, a skeptic about the tales says, "Jones thinks the hill fort was built by Arthur," then Jones is using "Arthur" as a name, though an empty one if Robinson is right, while Robinson is using "Arthur" as a quasi-name. Geach does say some things about names, but is content to give a less than full statement of his conclusions, with almost no indication of his arguments for them.

For what Geach has to say about names is only by way of comparing and contrasting them with quasi-names. For instance, he insists late in the paper on the claim that names and quasi-names alike do have *some* kind of meaning:

Names and quasi-names are of course grammatically proper nouns. I suppose I need to say something about the contemporary idea that proper nouns do not really possess a meaning, are not words in a language, etc. For I have argued that the sentence 'Smith believes that the hill-fort was built by Arthur' must be being used equivocally by two speakers when one means 'Arthur' as a name and the other as a quasi-name. If 'Arthur' is not a word with a meaning anyhow, because it is a proper noun, then of course it can't be used equivocally, or univocally for that matter. In my view this objection is terribly silly; to those of my readers who would agree, I apologize for raising the matter.

But while he goes on to respond to some terribly silly arguments for the claim that names are not "words in a language," he does not reiterate his earlier claim about the meaning of

a name including a general term supplying a criterion of identity. Yet we must not conclude that he has revised his earlier view, since the claim that there is *some* meaning is all that is relevant to what he is saying in the quoted passage about quasi-names, which are his direct topic, and he has no occasion to restate or reargue his earlier position or contrariwise to retract and revise it.

But revisionist historians have quite confidently declared that the credit generally accorded to Kripke for the chain-of-communication picture should be transferred to Geach on the strength of this paper.²² If that were so, then the importance of anything else in the paper would presumably be slight in comparison, and so the revisionist claim tends to draw attention away from the notion of quasi-name. That is the first reason why it is necessary to confront the revisionist claim; a second reason will emerge later.

6. Geach's Anti-Russellianism in Particular

Let us begin, then, to sift through Geach's fragmentary remarks about names. One thing Geach does early in the 1969 paper is to reiterate the opposition to Russellianism that was so conspicuous in the 1957 chapter. Geach in the fifth paragraph of his paper rejects Russell's demand for the kind of extraordinary, immediate acquaintance we each have with our own sense-data as a prerequisite for naming.²³ The ordinary kind of acquaintance he has with various Polish cities and citizens suffices. Further, even that kind of "immediate" or first-hand acquaintance is only sufficient, not necessary. "Mediate" second-, third-, and *n*th-hand acquaintance would be enough. Thus Geach's sixth paragraph begins as follows:

I do indeed think that for the use of a word as a proper name there must in the first instance be someone acquainted with the object named. But language is an institution, a tradition; and the use of a given name for a given object, like other features of language, can be handed on from one generation to another; the acquaintance required for the use of a proper name may be mediate, not immediate. Plato knew Socrates, and Aristotle knew

Plato, and Theophrastus knew Aristotle, and so on in apostolic succession down to our own times; that is why we can legitimately use ‘Socrates’ as a name the way we do.

Geach elaborates the analogy as he goes on in the remainder of the paragraph to reiterate his earlier objection to Russell’s view that for a word to be genuine name we must have *unquestionable knowledge* its bearer exists:

It is not our knowledge of this chain that validates our use, but the existence of such a chain; just as according to Catholic doctrine a man is a true bishop if there is in fact a chain of consecrations going back to the Apostles, and not if we know that there is. When a serious doubt arises (as happens for a well-known use of the word “Arthur”) whether the chain does reach right up to the object named, our right to use the name is questionable, just on that account. But a right may obtain even when it is open to question.

Commentators have generally not remarked the anti-Russellian subtext of the paragraph, or connected it with the anti-Russellian themes of the 1957 chapter. Rather, they have been exclusively interested in citing Geach’s “apostolic succession” passage as a supposed enunciation of the historical chain picture prior to Kripke’s.

Well, Geach and Kripke do have in common the view that language is passed on from generation to generation. But that is pure platitude, and if the historical chain view consisted of nothing more, one could hardly speak seriously of “credit” for it, and if one did, “credit” surely could not go to anyone writing as late as the twentieth century. Kripke’s own discussion in *Naming and Necessity* indicates that there were writers giving *some* role to historical matters before him, such as Strawson (and one writer who arrived generally independently of him at the view that history is all that matters, namely Donnellan). Moreover, Kaplan, in the very passage where he calls attention to Kripke’s as yet unpublished chain-of-communication picture, notes an overlapping set of figures who have brought in historical considerations, writing as follows:

I have recently found at least vague recognition of the use of genetic factors to account for the connection between name and named in such diverse sources as Henry Leonard: ‘Probably for most of us there is little more than a vaguely felt willingness to mean ... what the first assigners of the name intended by it.’²⁴ and P. F. Strawson: ‘[T]he identifying description ... may include a reference to another’s reference to that particular ... So one reference may borrow the credentials ... from another; and that from another.’²⁵ Though in neither case are genetic and descriptive features clearly distinguished.

What the apostolic succession passage leaves open is mainly the question what keeps the name continuing to refer to the same bearer as it passes from generation to generation. The passages quoted so far from Geach do nothing to answer this question, and by themselves raise more doubts than they settle. And as we move beyond bare platitude, *some* differences, at least, between Geach and Kripke become apparent.

For one thing, Kripke is interested in the *first* bestowal of a name on its bearer and in the *first* acquisition of a name by a new speaker from an old. That Geach has no special interest in these matters is plain from his choice of example: Socrates-Plato-Aristotle-Theophrastus. For while some ancient sources report that the name “Plato” was bestowed on the broad-browed philosopher, previously called “Aristocles,” by his teacher Socrates, no sources suggest that the name “Socrates” was bestowed on the snub-nosed philosopher only in old age, by his young student Plato, rather than in infancy, by his parents Sophroniscus the mason and Phænarete the midwife. Nor is it likely that Aristotle first learned the name of Socrates from Plato, since it is generally accepted that Aristotle went to Athens in order to meet Plato, implying that he had heard of Plato before he met him, and it is unlikely he could have heard of Plato without hearing of his famous teacher Socrates.²⁶ There is unquestionably a difference between Kripke and Geach here, but the question is *why*?

What Geach is interested in is not so much the mere passing on of the name as such, but rather the passing on in some sense of “acquaintance,” which according to Geach is needed to “validate” our use of names, to give us the “right” to use them, to enable us to use them “legitimately.” According to Kripke, by contrast, anything that can be described can be named, with no personal acquaintance required on the part of the initial baptist. Recall their differences over naming abstract objects such as Lie groups or the number π . Again we have an unquestionable difference, and again we have a question *why*. But though the “apostolic succession” passage raises new questions, it does nothing to answer the old question left open by Geach in 1957, the question dividing historical chain theorists from cluster theorists.

That question was not whether names are passed on from generation to generation — for who ever doubted *that?* — but what *keeps the denotation the same* as the name is passed on. Searle offers one theory, Kripke a different picture, Geach in the “apostolic succession” passage no clear view at all. Does the consecration involved in apostolic succession require merely an appropriate intention on the part of the episcopal candidate, as on Kripke’s historical chain picture, or does it, as on Searle’s cluster view, require the new bishop to subscribe to some cluster of articles of faith, some Apostles’ Creed? Geach does not tell us — not in this passage, anyhow. I suppose one might try to guess what his position must be by carefully reading what the theologians of the Church of Rome have to say about the doctrine of *ex opere operato* as it applies to episcopal consecrations, and trying to work out an analogy. But since Geach gives no sign he intends his “apostolic succession” simile to be taken to quite such a Homeric length, a better plan might be to read his paper beyond its sixth paragraph.

Now if Geach is to have anticipated Kripke’s historical chain picture, he will have to have anticipated its presupposition, the Donnellan-Kripke historicist critique of descriptivism. So let us read on beyond the sixth paragraph looking for evidence of anti-descriptivism. When we do so, we soon find, at beginning of Geach’s ninth paragraph, the following two sentences:

I introduced the proper name “Pauline” by way of the definite description “the one and only girl Geach dreamt of on N-Night”; this might give rise to the idea that the name is an abbreviation for the description. This would be wrong.

Have we found a rejection of descriptivism on the part of Geach? We have not. All these two sentences contain is a reiteration of the rejection of the Russellian *single* description theory that Geach had already rejected in 1957, and that by 1969 was more or less universally rejected, usually in favor of the cluster theory. To decide whether Geach was an historical chain theorist, a cluster theorist, some other kind of theorist, or was still as undecided as he was in 1957, we will have to read further.

But not much further, for here are Geach’s very next sentences, the remainder of the ninth paragraph:

A proper name can never be logically tied to just one definite description; so long as we agree in a good many of the judgments we make using a certain proper name, we can use that name for communication. And there is no one judgment, mentioning a peculiarity of Pauline, such that agreement on *it* is indispensable; in particular, not the one that would be expressed by “Pauline is the one and only girl of whom Geach dreamed on N-Night.” If I told you a lot of things about Pauline under that name, and then suddenly remembered that my dream of her had occurred not on N-Night but the night before, I’d have to withdraw this definite description of Pauline, but I need not stop using the name.

Let us compare this with the expression of the cluster theory in the *locus classicus* for that doctrine, the 1958 paper of Searle cited earlier:²⁷

(1) Suppose, for example, that we teach the name “Aristotle” by explaining that it refers to a Greek philosopher born in Stagira, (2) and suppose that our student continues to use the name correctly, that he gathers more information about Aristotle, and so on. (3) Let us suppose it is discovered later that Aristotle was not born at Stagira at all, but in Thebes.

(4) We will not now say that the meaning of the name has changed, or that Aristotle did not really exist at all.

Though it is unlikely that the parallelism between Geach's "Pauline" example and Searle's "Aristotle" example will have escaped the reader, let me make it plain by repeating the key clauses in Geach's example, adding numbers for ease of comparison with Searle:

(1) I introduced the proper name "Pauline" by way of the definite description "the one and only girl Geach dreamt of on N-Night" ... (2) If I told you a lot of things about Pauline under that name, (3) and then suddenly remembered that my dream of her had occurred not on N-Night but the night before, (4) I'd have to withdraw this definite description of Pauline, but I need not stop using the name.

As for Searle, so for Geach, the first description given in connection with a proper name (1) can be corrected (3) without prejudice to the standing of the word as a genuine name (4) — *provided that* (2) one first "gathers more information" or has been told "a lot of things." Geach's doctrine is the same as Searle's: Russell notwithstanding, a name can never be tied to *just one* definite description, and any *one* description associated with the name may be retracted — *provided that* we agree on "a good many." An historical chain theorist would not grant the need for the proviso, but would join Kripke in claiming that, just as students can successfully refer to Newton by that name even though they have heard nothing about him except the silly fable about the apple, so students can successfully refer to Aristotle by that name even though they have heard nothing about him except the silly fable about Phyllis.

In short, Geach is not an historical chain theorist like Kripke, but a cluster theorist like Searle. It is this fact that explains one difference between Geach and Kripke whose significance was obscure when I first noted it above. It is because he is a cluster theorist that the *first* introduction of a name of its *first* acquisition by a new speaker from an old is

of no special importance to Geach. The *first* description associated with a name may be wrong, after all, as in Searle's and Geach's "Aristotle" and "Pauline" examples, and it is only after one has accumulated a big enough cluster of other descriptions that one's referential tie to the name's bearer is secured, and one's place in the apostolic succession validated as rightful and legitimate. The ceremony of consecration takes some time to perform, and its *first* step is no more important than its later steps.

The methodological moral from all this is, I'm afraid, as trite and trivial a truism as the platitude that language is passed down from generation to generation. It consists of just this maxim, that if you are sincerely interested in understanding what an author is advocating in a given paper, then it is best to read the whole paper (and it wouldn't hurt to have read some of the author's other papers as well).²⁸

What is peculiar to Geach's variant of the cluster version of descriptivism, differentiating it from Searle's or Strawson's, is his explicit insistence on an attenuated "acquaintance" requirement. But the question *why* he insists on this point remains obscure even if one reads all the paper all the way to the end. Geach simply does not discuss the matter. He does not do so for the reason I have already mentioned, that naming is not his main interest, but a side topic he mentions *only by way of contrast* with his main topic, *quasi-names*. Let us now take a look, undistracted by revisionist historiography, at that notion.

7. Geach's Quasi-Names in Theory

Geach illustrates his notion with the case of "Arthur" as used in tales about Camelot and so forth. As used by a believer, "Arthur" is a name, though an empty one if those tales have no basis in historical fact. As used by a non-believer in describing the beliefs of a believer, however, as when Robinson says, "Jones is so credulous as to believe in Arthur and the Round Table," the word is a quasi-name. Another good example is provided by the case of the journalist who conflated Georg Henrik von Wright with Crispin Wright. If the reporter writes, "Crispin von Wright was a student of

Wittgenstein who wrote a big book on Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics," the name-like phrase is an empty name, denoting nothing real, but only a chimæra. When *we* say, in a tone of irony, "That reporter must believe that Crispin von Wright has had an incredibly long career," the same name-like phrase would be counted by Geach as a quasi-name.

What makes the difference? Here the "apostolic succession" passage is relevant. The point of the passage is not to supply what was missing from Geach's 1957 chapter, an account of what determines the denotation of a name, such as Searle and Kripke in their very different ways sought to provide. Nor is the point *just* to engage in some Russell-bashing, though Geach seems to find the opportunity to do so not unwelcome. The point is, rather, to identify the feature that crucially distinguishes names, even empty names, from quasi-names. Genuine names stand in "apostolic succession" to their bearers. Empty names purport to do so, but do not. Quasi-names are different in that they *do not even purport* to do so. If, from Geach's perspective as an adherent of the Church of Rome, a name is like a Catholic bishop and an empty name like an Anglican bishop, then a quasi-name is like a mock-bishop at a Feast of Fools.

Overt irony, outright mockery by *B* of *A*'s false beliefs, is a feature of some of Geach's examples. Indeed, while Geach holds that the same word may be used *equivocally*, as a purported name by speaker *A* and as a quasi-name by speaker *B*, Geach also allows that the expression *B* uses as a quasi-name need not be identical with the expression *A* uses as a purported name, but may be a mocking nickname. For one rather learned example he alludes to a the view of certain Biblical critics that "Baalzebub" or "Lord of the Flies" as used in the Hebrew Bible is just such a nickname for a pagan god called by his worshipers "Baalzebul" or "Lord of the Mansion."

It is noteworthy that Geach seems here to adopt the Old Testament rather than what appears to be the New Testament view of pagan gods. They are non-entities, or according to Jeremiah (14:22 and 10:5) "vanities of the Gentiles" which "cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good," rather than demons as powerful as they are malicious. If

demons *are* involved, it may be along the lines of early Christian belief as described by Gibbon:²⁹

It was confessed, or at least it was imagined, that they had distributed among themselves the most important characters of polytheism, one dæmon assuming the name and attributes of Jupiter, another of Æsculapius, a third of Venus, and a fourth perhaps of Apollo; and that, by the advantage of their long experience and ærial nature, they were enabled to execute, with sufficient skill and dignity, the parts which they had undertaken. They lurked in the temples, instituted festivals and sacrifices, invented fables, pronounced oracles, and were frequently allowed to perform miracles.

Some diabolic impostor may lurk in the temple or mansion of which the mythical Baalzebul is supposed to be the lord, assuming the dramatic *persona* or “character” or “part” of the pagan god; but for all that, “Baalzebul” need not be construed as *naming* a demon, any more than “Hamlet” is construed as *naming* an actor who appears in that role.³⁰

Whether for this reason or some other, Geach clearly does consider “Baalzebul” as used by his worshippers to be an empty name. Indeed, in *all* Geach’s examples of cases where *B* is said to use a quasi-name in describing what *A* believes, *A* is supposed by Geach, or at least supposed by Geach to be supposed by *B*, to have used an *empty* name. Now while the emptiness of the name implies the untruth of what is believed, the converse does not hold, and it does seem that there could be so many and such peculiar untrue beliefs even where the name is *not* empty as to invite mockery or irony. Could there not be cases of quasi-naming merely on account of beliefs being untrue to a radical degree or in some special way, even though the name involved is *not* empty? Geach does not consider the question, and his conception of quasi-naming would have difficulty allowing for the possibility of such cases.

To understand why, it is crucial to recognize Geach for the cluster theorist that he is, and not take him for an historical chain theorist, which he is not. (This is a second

reason why the revisionist historical claim had to be confronted.) The view of cluster theorists is that a name will *automatically* be empty if not enough of the descriptions associated with it are true, or if too many of the descriptions associated with it are false. It is because he is a cluster theorist that Geach does not and cannot conceive of the possibility of massive ignorance or error without resulting emptiness or “vanity.” For an historical chain theorist, by contrast, a name may perfectly well succeed in referring even in cases of massive ignorance and error. This suggests the possibility of ironic quasi-naming without emptiness.

To be sure, Kripke is prepared to say that the student who has heard nothing but the tale of the apple has a false belief *about Newton*, and in so saying he is himself using “Newton” as a genuine name in characterizing the student’s belief. Yet there are other cases, where error is not just radical in degree but also special in kind, where Kripke seems not so sure who, if anyone, the mistaken beliefs are about.

8. Geach’s Quasi-Names in Application

A plausible candidate case of quasi-naming without emptiness of the original name is provided by Kripke’s example of Peter and the Pole.³¹ Peter has seen and heard the Polish pianist-premier Paderewski several times playing at a concert hall, and seen and heard him several times speaking at a party rally, without realizing that it is the same person he has seen and heard on both types of occasion. He imagines that there are *two* Paderewskis, the one Paderewski being an apolitical musician, and the other Paderewski an unmusical politician. He is not very curious about why he has never seen them together, since he supposes a maestro and a statesman would move in very different circles. If he thinks about their relationship at all, he may suppose the two Paderewskis to be perhaps cousins, like the two Poincarés, which might explain such physical similarities as he has noticed. Perhaps, misremembering or having misheard a remark that was really about the Poincarés, he even imagines that he has been told by someone in a position to know that the two Paderewskis are cousins.

Now Kripke asks, “Does Peter believe Paderewski has musical talent?” or “Does Peter believe Paderewski has political acumen?” Most of us aren’t sure what is the right answer, and perhaps aren’t even sure that there *is* a right answer. Even those who, being in the grip of some theory, *are* sure they know the right answer generally hold that *just* to give this answer, just to say “yes” or “no” to Kripke’s question, is bound to be misleading. Yet it is not, Kripke emphasizes, that we don’t know how to describe the situation in a non-misleading way, for he does so in his paper, and I have just done so in the preceding paragraph. The puzzle is just that most of us don’t know what to say to the specific questions Kripke asks.

I recall this all-too-familiar example because I want to point out that it looks as if we may have here a case of quasi-naming, even though, on Kripke’s anti-descriptivist historical chain view, “Paderewski” as used by Peter is *not* an empty name, but rather refers to the musician-politician every time Peter uses it, for all that Peter is so sunk in error as to believe it refers sometimes to one, sometimes to the other, of two cousins. But let me proceed cautiously here, first recalling some key Kripkean doctrines.

According to Kripke, coreferential names are intersubstitutable in some contexts but not others. In particular, they are intersubstitutable in the context “It is necessary that...” in the so-called metaphysical sense, amounting to “It could not have failed to be the case that...,” but not in such epistemic or epistemological contexts as “Peter knows that...” or “It is knowable *a priori* that...” or the like. Specifically, if *a* and *b* are two names for the same item, then “It is necessary that $a = b$ ” will be as true as “It is necessary that $a = a$,” while “It is *a priori* that $a = b$ ” may be false even though “It is *a priori* that $a = a$ ” is true. Kripke’s argument for the necessity of “ $a = b$ ” depends not on some general principle of the intersubstitutability of coreferential names in all contexts, but on an intuition supposed to be specific to modal contexts.

The argument begins by comparing (1a) what we use a name to denote when we are speaking of the actual situation, (1b) what we use a name to denote when we are speaking of a contemplated counterfactual situation, and (1c) what speakers in the

contemplated counterfactual situation would use the name to denote. Kripke holds that (1a) and (1b) coincide. This is the famous “rigidity” of proper names (shared with some but not most descriptions). By contrast, he insists that (1b) and (1c) must be distinguished. This is why “having the same denotation in all possible worlds” is a potentially misleading way of characterizing rigidity. It is from the rigidity intuition, properly characterized, that the necessity of “ $a = b$ ” follows.

Now similarly let us compare (2a) what we use a name to denote when expressing our own beliefs, (2b) what we use the name to denote when describing someone else’s mistaken beliefs, and (2c) what that someone else him- or herself uses the name to denote when expressing those mistaken beliefs. Since “ $a = b$ ” is *not* supposed to be *a priori*, according to Kripke, one might well suspect that the analogue of rigidity should *not* hold, and that (2a) may sometimes be different from (2b); moreover, one might expect that (2b) will sometimes be different from (2c). *Just as one must distinguish the question of what people speaking in a counterfactual situation would denote by a given name from the question of what we speaking of a counterfactual situation denote by that name, so also one must distinguish the question of what Peter denotes by “Paderewski” when stating his own mistaken beliefs, and what we denote by “Paderewski” when describing Peter’s mistaken beliefs.*

If this is accepted, it will seem plausible to suggest that when *we* speak, at a certain ironic distance from Peter, of “the one Paderewski” or “the other Paderewski,” we are *not* twice over denoting the two-sided Paderewski, who exists in reality and more specifically in Poland, but rather are denoting now one, now the other, of two one-sided demi-Paderewskis, who exist only in Peter’s imagination. If so, then *our* uses of “Paderewski” when we describe Peter’s beliefs in a natural way, are cases of quasi-naming, referring to nothing real *and not purporting to do so, either*. It simply isn’t natural for us to use “Paderewski” as a genuine *name*, within the irony-inducing context “Peter believes that...,” and when Kripke’s questions try to force us to do so, we experience a distinct awkwardness, and want to ask him back, “Which Paderewski?” even though we, unlike

Peter, do not believe there really is more than one pertinent Pole. Such, at any rate, is how the situation might be diagnosed using the kind of extended version of Geach's notion I have been contemplating.

Let us turn now to an older puzzle, going all the way back to Frege. "Lucifer" and "Phosphorus" are the Latin and Greek for Frege's "Morgenstern" or "Morning Star," while "Vesper" and "Hesperus" are the Latin and Greek for his "Abendstern," or "Evening Star." The Latin and Greek names were, by classical times, merely poetical, since the older civilizations of the east had long ago concluded that the morning star and the evening star are one and the same planet, whose prosaic names in Latin and Greek were "Venus" and "Aphrodite."³² In English we use the Latin prosaic name, but the Greek poetical names survive marginally as alternates. Probably the vocabularies of most English speakers include neither of these alternates, but there is doubtless somewhere an English speaker who has heard of both Hesperus and of Phosphorus, without having been told they are the same.

Let us imagine that Jones and Johnson are two such astronomical ignoramuses. We may suppose that as children, one day shortly before dawn, they pointed to a bright, beautiful object near the eastern horizon, and were told that it was called "Phosphorus." Then another day, shortly after dusk, they pointed to a bright, beautiful object near the western horizon, and were told that it was called "Hesperus." They have always wondered whether Phosphorus is brighter than Hesperus or the reverse, but cannot say from their own experience, since they did not see them together on the same night, and know too little to be able to identify them on their own (to distinguish them from Sirius, for example). While still children they once asked a neighbor, an amateur astronomer, which was brighter, but the neighbor just broke out laughing, and they have been too embarrassed to ask anyone else since.

Jones still remembers that they originally saw Phosphorus around dawn and in the east and originally saw Hesperus around dusk and in the west, and supposes the one to be visible only as morning star and the other only as an evening star. Johnson has forgotten

the details about the time of the night when, and the direction of the compass where, they first saw the heavenly bodies in question. Just as in speaking of scientific luminaries someone may be able to say no more than “Feynman and Gell-Mann are two very bright physicists” (or less correctly, “two very bright mathematicians”), so in speaking of celestial luminaries Johnson is able to say no more than “Hesperus and Phosphorus are two very bright planets” (or even more inaccurately, “two very bright stars”). On Kripke’s historical chain view, Jones’s and Johnson’s ignorance and error do not prevent “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” being for them genuine names, denoting Hesperus *alias* Phosphorus, a.k.a. Venus.

But what of *our* use of “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” when we say, “Hesperus and Phosphorus are one and the same planet, though poor Johnson imagines that Hesperus and Phosphorus are two different stars, while poor Jones supposes that Hesperus comes out only in the evening and Phosphorus only in the morning”? Comparison with “Paderewski is both a musician and a politician, though poor Peter imagines that there is one Paderewski who plays keyboard, and another Paderewski who makes speeches,” suggests that it may not be implausible to say that there is an equivocation, with the first use of each of the two key words “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” being a case of naming, while the second and third are cases of quasi-naming, referring not to the planet Venus but to a Hesperus and a Phosphorus that exist not in the sky, but only inside Jones’s and Johnson’s skulls.

The suggestion that there is a difference in the way we use the two names when expressing our own beliefs and when describing beliefs of others who are confused in the special way that Jones and Johnson are confused about astronomical matters is reinforced, at least in the case of Jones, by the fact that we can freely exchange the two names with each other and with “Venus” when speaking for ourselves, but would *not* want to switch them as they occur in “Jones believes Hesperus is an evening star while Phosphorus is a morning star.”

That fact that we could have used each word only once, and said “Hesperus and Phosphorus are one and the same planet, though poor Johnson imagines that they are two different stars, while Jones supposes that the former comes out only in the evening and the latter only in the mornings,” is not a serious objection to the suggestion. For the anaphora here is merely laziness, as Geach himself would say of cases like “The kakodæmon Beëlphagor is a figment of a diseased imagination, though Hob believes that he has cast a spell on the cow, and Nob believes that he has laid a curse on the sow.”

The issue may be relevant to the dispute between Kripke and so-called direct reference theorists such as Nathan Salmon and Scott Soames. Such theorists hold that substitution of one of two coreferential names for the other never alters what propositions are expressed. Thus on this view “Hesperus is identical with Phosphorus” and “Hesperus is identical with Hesperus” express the same proposition. Such theorists also hold that it is propositions that are the objects of belief and knowledge, and that are classifiable as *a priori* and *a posteriori*. On their view the proposition that Hesperus is Phosphorus is *a priori* since it is the same proposition as the proposition that Hesperus is identical with Hesperus. All that is *a posteriori* is the fact that “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” are coreferential, and the consequence that “Hesperus is identical with Phosphorus” and “Hesperus is identical with Hesperus” express the same proposition.

The problem for all sides is to explain why it sounds so misleading to for us to say “Jones believes Phosphorus is an evening star and Hesperus is a morning star,” and equally misleading for us to say “Johnson believes that Hesperus and Phosphorus are one and the same heavenly body,” even though Jones and Johnson do refer by both names to the same object, and even though in the case of Johnson, at least, *there may be no difference on the part of the individual whose beliefs are being described in the descriptive information associated with the one name and the descriptive information associated with the other name*. (Perhaps there is no such difference on our part, either. For many of us perhaps remember nothing more about “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” than that they are two obsolete or poetical names for Venus. Even Kripke, in his lectures,

exhibited or feigned some doubt as to whether he correctly remembered which was supposed to be the morning and which the evening star.)

The hypothesis that there is a Geachian equivocation (faintly, but only faintly, reminiscent of the Fregean distinction between direct and indirect sense), between the use of “Hesperus” as a name when we express our own beliefs, and the use of “Hesperus” as a quasi-name when we describe the beliefs of people like Jones and Johnson may provide a partial resolution. One view might be that the direct reference theorists are right to the extent that *if* we used “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” as *names* within the context “Jones believes...” or “Johnson believes...” *then* the right thing to say would be the counter-intuitive thing direct reference theorists are committed to saying, though the direct reference theorists are wrong inasmuch as we *don't* use the words as names in these contexts, but rather as quasi-names.

Needless to say, the resolution or explanation is only partial, since it remains to explain how and why certain contexts induce quasi-nominal as opposed to genuine nominal uses. Any full explanation or solution along the lines suggested would require a deeper examination and fuller development of the notion of quasi-naming, which raises several questions, beginning with the question of what if anything it is that one is naming when one uses a quasi-name. Purely for expository purposes I have so far written naively in giving examples, as if quasi-names did refer, and just differed from ordinary names in that the objects to which they refer are imaginary rather than real. But Geach emphatically rejects this view. He does not want to take talk of reference to “intentional objects” literally (nor do I so mean it), but rather holds that “Baal” literally does not refer to anything at all, and neither does “Arthur,” if tales about Camelot and the Round Table have no foundation in fact. Geach, however, holds it to be quite difficult to specify how talk of “intentional objects” *is* to be taken, if not literally, and in this he is surely right.³³

My aim has not been to settle the status of the Paderewski or the Hesperus/Phosphorus examples, but merely to recall Geach’s all-but-forgotten notion of quasi-name,³⁴ and suggest its possible applicability, once appropriately worked out, to

such well-known puzzles. More generally my aim has been to plead for more attention to and appreciation of Geach's views on proper names.³⁵

Notes

1. This paper derives from a talk “Verbal Necessity,” presented at a mini-conference at the Department of Philosophy, University of Calgary, in November, 2005. I have resisted the temptation to update the examples involving political figures of the period. I am grateful to the organizer of the conference, Richard Zach, and the head of the host department, Ali Kazmi, for their hospitality. Comments in the discussion following the talk from the local audience, especially Jack Macintosh, as well as by my fellow-speakers, Alasdair Urquhart and Kit Fine, have been very useful.
2. The relevant texts from Geach for this part are chapters 15 and 16, “Judgments about Sensible Particulars” and “Judgments Involving Identifications,” pp. 61-74, *Mental Acts: Their Content and Their Objects*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957. The term “nominal essence,” taken from Locke, first appears on p. 71.
3. Neither Aristotelian “real essence” nor Kit Fine’s distinction between essential and necessary properties will be an issue here, but it may be worth mentioning that from a Geachian perspective one could make a distinction between *nominally* essential and *nominally* necessary properties, by distinguishing between conditions that are, so to speak, axioms about things of a given sort, and conditions that are theorems following from those axioms.
4. *Mental Acts*, p. 69. Note that Geach, like virtually all English writers through the 1950s — a period when the word “gender” existed solely as a technical term of grammar — used “man” both in the more general sense of “human being” and in the more specific sense of “adult male human being.” That he means the more general notion he makes clear elsewhere in the paper by giving the Latin (*homo* rather than *vir*) in parentheses.
5. “Proper Names,” *Mind* 6 (1958), pp. 166-173, reprinted in *Oxford Readings in Philosophy* series, P. Strawson (ed.), *Philosophical Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1967, pp. 89-96. The passage I am about to quote comes from p. 91.
6. “Quantifying in,” *Synthese* 19 (1968), pp. 178-214, reprinted in D. Davidson and J. Hintikka (eds.), *Words and Objections: Essays on the Work of W. V. Quine* (Dordrecht: Reidel), 1969, pp. 112-144. For the reference to Kripke I am about to cite, see footnote 24, p. 133.

7. “Naming and Necessity: Lectures Given to the Princeton University Philosophy Colloquium, January, 1970,” in D. Davidson & G. Harman (eds.) *Semantics of Natural Language* (Dordrecht: Reidel), pp. 253-355, addenda pp. 763-769; reprinted with a new preface (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1980. A fuller history would take account of other figures from the period 1959-1971 who are cited and discussed by Kripke, notably Peter Strawson and Keith Donnellan; but here the focus must be on the criticism of Geach in footnote 58.

8. There is what may be considered an infelicity in the example, in that it combines two issues, (i) whether abstract entities can be given proper names at all, and (ii) whether supposing they can, an appropriate sortal classification would have to be part of the meaning of the name. It is aspect (ii) that is really Kripke’s concern. Aspect (i) could be eliminated by making the husband, say, a physicist and replacing the Lie group by, say, a black hole; but let us instead simply ignore it, as if the impossibility of naming abstract entities were not part of Geach’s view.

9. Note also that the wife cannot say, “My husband is obsessed with this Nancy, constantly muttering about her” or “...muttering about it,” but to be strictly correct must say “muttering about him or her or it.” A disjunction would not be necessary in French, since “groupe” happens to be feminine; but we can change the example from a Lie group to a Noetherian ring, since “anneau” is masculine. The situation is actually in general *worse* in languages more heavily inflected than English. In Modern Greek, definite articles, which show grammatical gender, are used even with proper names, in every grammatical case except the vocative. A wife who heard her husband muttering, “O, Nancy, Nancy, Nancy!” would not be able to use the name as the subject or object of a verb, but would have to resort to an apostrophe on the order of “O, Nancy, why is my husband so obsessed with you?” There is an obvious objection that this sort of argument proves too much, and would imply “essentialism about gender.” But a Geachian might be prepared to accept that gender *is* part of nominal essence, precisely as one of several respects in which nominal essences are merely *nominal*.

10. Procopius [of Cæsarea], vol. 6, *Anecdota* [*The Secret History*], English translation by H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library, (Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press), 1935, xii: 14, p. 149; the next quotation is from xxx: 34, p. 359.

11. As it is, of course, in *Paradise Lost*, opening of Book II.

12. Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions", *The Philosophical Review* 75 (1966), pp. 281-304; Prior, "Is the Concept of Referential Opacity Really Necessary?" *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 16 (1963), pp. 194-195.
13. I am using "@%*#!\$" as in a cartoon, to stand in for something unprintable. It may be pronounced "beep" or "blankety-blank."
14. If I understand the Greek, Procopius sidesteps the problem by saying "those two."
15. "Naming and Necessity," addenda, p. 765.
16. To obviate a potential misunderstanding, I should point out that Kripke does *not* say that every necessary or impossible *P* is analytically non-contingent, and this is not so even for simple logical compounds of Kripkean examples. Kripke's "clue" concerns *atomic* examples of *a posteriori* necessities only. If they are taken care of, the compounds may be left to fall out as they will, and for purposes of demystification the atomic examples are all that need be considered.
17. This point is well treated by William Tait, "Truth and Proof: The Platonism of Mathematics," in W. D. Hart (ed.), *Philosophy of Mathematics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1996, pp. 142-167.
18. In such a language we would, instead of "The cat is on the mat" or "The cat was on the mat" or "The cat will be on the mat," say rather, "The cat be on the mat now" or "The cat be on the mat earlier" or "The cat be on the mat later." But in such a language we would say simply "Two plus two be four," with no room for a further temporal complement "now" or "earlier" or "later." (A question of Kit Fine suggested the addition of this note.)
19. This point is well treated by Alan Baker "Does the Existence of Mathematical Objects Make a Difference?" *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 81 (2003), pp. 246-264.
20. "The Unreal Future," *Theoria* 44 (1978), pp. 157-179; specifically, §2.1 *Essence*, pp. 169-171, from which I will be quoting.

21. In “The Perils of Pauline,” *Review of Metaphysics*, 23, pp. 287-300, reprinted in Peter Geach, *Logic Matters* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1972, pp. 153-165. The title is borrowed from an old movie serial.

22. Revisionism was the creation of Ruth Barcan Marcus and Quentin Smith. It developed sometime in the early 1990s. As late as the mid-1980s, in the letter discussed in the editorial introduction to P. W. Humphreys & J. H. Fetzer (eds.), *The New Theory of Reference: Kripke, Marcus, and Its Origins*, Synthese Library 270 (Dordrecht: Kluwer), 1998, Marcus still attributed the historical chain picture to Kripke. In the volume of reprinted papers *Modalities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1993, however, she offers alternative attributions: first to Kripke and Donnellan and Geach in “Does the Principle of Substitutivity Rest on a Mistake?” pp. 101-109, and then to Donnellan and Geach only in “Possibilia and Possible Worlds,” pp. 189-213. Smith, in “Marcus, Kripke, and the Origin of the New Theory of Reference” (in Humphreys & Fetzer, pp. 3-12), an elaboration of the Marcus letter, simply ignores the historical chain picture; but in “Direct, Rigid Designation and A Posteriori Necessity,” (in Humphreys & Fetzer, pp. 137-178), he writes: “The historical chain theory of reference of names is neither ‘Kripke’s theory’ nor ‘Donnellan’s theory’, nor ‘the Donnellan-Kripke theory’. It is ‘the Geach theory’ of reference.” Marcus thereafter adopted Smith’s view in an on-line interview available at the time of this writing at

www.formalphilosophy.com/Formal_Philosophy_files/Interviews/Marcus.html

A number of others, whom it is perhaps not necessary to mention by name, follow the Marcus-Smith line half way, as far as adding the name of Geach to the credits, but not as far as removing the name of Kripke. There was no priority dispute between Kripke and Donnellan, and neither ever cited Geach in this connection.

23. The paragraphs I will be discussing run from pp. 154-156. The passages I will be quoting come from p. 155, with the last of them running on to the next page.

24. *An Introduction to the Principles of Right Reason* (New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston), 1957, section 30.2. [Kaplan’s reference.]

25. *Individuals* (London: Methuen), 1959, 182n. [Kaplan's reference.] Kripke quotes the same passage more fully.
26. Aristotle *may* have first acquired the name "Socrates" by reading some of the writings of Plato, but then again he may first have heard some fellow-Stagirite speak of the famous Athenian. There is, anyhow, no indication that Geach understands "acquaintance" so broadly as to take in acquaintance through writings alone. *That* would be more reminiscent of Luther and *sola scriptura* than of Catholicism and apostolic succession.
27. From p. 91, numbering added for the sake of comparison with Geach.
28. By contrast, if you are only looking to read some other writer's views into the paper, then strategically selective quotation — or "cherry picking," to use the common cliché — trusting that most readers won't look up the context, is the technique to use. Marcus and others cite the sixth paragraph of Geach's paper and nothing more; Smith also quotes the first two sentences of the ninth paragraph, somehow omitting to quote the remainder. For other instances of such cherry picking by Smith, see Scott Soames in "More Revisionism about Reference," in Humphreys & Fetzer, pp. 65-88.
29. In the notorious chapter XV of the *Decline and Fall*.
30. Gibbon goes on to write that "[T]he belief of the Christian was accompanied with horror. The most trifling mark of respect to the national worship he considered as a direct homage yielded to the dæmon..." but this is not incompatible with the view I have just suggested. For worship addressed to "Baalzebul" on the part of a Christian who, unlike the pagans, full well knew it was a demon who inhabited the temple would still rightly be construed as worship of a rebel angel.
31. "A Puzzle About Belief," in A. Margalit (ed.), In *Meaning and Use* (Dordrecht: Reidel), 1979, pp. 239-83.
32. Homer, however, was ignorant of the identity, whose discovery Greek writers variously attributed to Pythagoras or Parmenides — legendary figures to whom all sorts of things were attributed — or Ibycus of Rhegium.

33. Geach pursues the topic not only in “Pauline” but in other papers reprinted in the same section of *Logic Matters*.

34. Googling on the pair of key words “geach” and “quasi-name” or “quasi-names” or “quasi-naming” turned up *no* hits, except discussions that mention Geach in one place, and Strawson’s quite different notion of “quasi-name” — a descriptive phrase that has “grown capital letters,” as he puts it — in another.

35. Though needless to say it is Geach’s real contributions that deserve attention and appreciation, not contributions of others thrust upon him by historical revisionists. Geach’s one public comment about revisionist historiography, as cosignatory of the letter of Anscombe et al., *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 69 (1995), p. 121, came before his own name was conspicuously involved, but I have no reason to believe he later took any more positive view of revisionism today than he did originally. There are philosophers who might come to approve of commentators whose conduct and competence they had previously publicly questioned, if only they personally became beneficiaries of those commentators’ methods; but I am far from believing Peter Geach to have belonged to this class of philosopher. I trust it has been clear that in criticizing fabrications or fantasies *about* Geach I have not intended any criticism *of* Geach.