

A NOTE ON KRIPKE'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN RIGID
 DESIGNATORS AND NON-RIGID DESIGNATORS

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Kripke's distinction between rigid and non-rigid designators is well-known. Something "is a *rigid designator* if in any possible world it designates the same object, a *non-rigid* or *accidental designator* if that is not the case" ([3], pp. 269-270). Proper names are examples of rigid designators. As examples of non-rigid designators Kripke cites the cases of definite descriptions like 'the man who corrupted Hadleyburg' ([2], p. 145), 'the U.S. President in 1970' ([3], p. 270), and 'the man who won the election in 1968' ([3], p. 265). An obvious objection that might be raised against proper names being rigid designators according to the above definition is that 'Nixon' does not designate the same thing in any possible world, for it designates different things at least in the actual world. But suppose only one man is designated by 'Nixon' in the actual world, still it is not true that the expression designates the same object in any possible world, for the simple reason that different men are called 'Nixon' in different possible worlds.

But what about a particular designative use of the name 'Nixon'? (*cf.*, Strawson [4]). We designate our Nixon, the President of the U.S. in 1970 (in the actual world), with our use of the name 'Nixon', the person who is different in different possible worlds, but is the same person in all possible worlds where he exists. Thus with our use of the name 'Nixon' the same person in different possible worlds is designated. This is what may be called *transworld designation*. It simply follows from the thesis of transworld identity. It should, however, be noted that although the transworld designatum is the same, the objects of *in-world designation* are not necessarily the same. What I mean, thereby, is that with different uses of the name 'Nixon' in different possible worlds different things might be designated, as is the case with different uses of the name in the same possible world. There is, of course, a transworld designation corresponding to each case of in-world designation.

If proper names are rigid designators, because with a use of a proper name the same object is designated in all possible worlds where it does