ATTRIBUTIVE NAMES

STEVEN E. BOËR

1   The nature and function of proper names has long been a topic of interest to philosophers and logicians. Currently, there are three major theories of proper names in circulation, each purporting to be faithful to the facts of ordinary language—or, failing that, at least adequate to the theoretical purposes of the logician. In terms of their primary orientation, these theories could be categorized respectively as "syntactic", "semantic", and "pragmatic".

The syntactic theory, stemming from Russell [7] and defended in one form or another by most logicians, denies that proper names are genuine singular terms with a referential role. Instead, proper names are regarded as abbreviating certain definite descriptions, which themselves are not independent singular terms but only "incomplete symbols" which disappear upon analysis. Proper names might be said to "connote" on this view, but only because (qua abbreviated definite descriptions) they contribute to the quantificational and *predicative* structure of the sentences containing them.

By way of contrast, the semantic theory, deriving from Mill [6] and revived of late in Kripke [4], allows that proper names are indeed genuine singular terms which denote, but denies that they connote. In order to explain how a connotationless singular term might denote, Kripke has proposed accounting for the denotation of proper names (their "semantic reference", as he calls it) in terms of a causal chain leading from an initial act of baptizing some object with a name to a current employment of that name by a given speaker. On Kripke's view, proper names "rigidly designate" their semantic referents, i.e., designate them in all possible worlds in which they exist. (This is *not* to say that a proper name could not denote something other than what it in fact denotes: it is only to say that 'in *our* language, it stands for that thing, when *we* talk about counterfactual situations' ([4], p. 289).)

Between these two theories lies a third view, the pragmatic theory. This approach was originated by Searle in [8] and has subsequently been much elaborated by Meiland in [5]. Like the semantic theory, the pragmatic theory regards proper names as genuine singular terms. And like the