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ON THEORIES OF PROPER NAMES
—GRAMMATICAI AND SEMANTICAL—

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0 introductory   Proper names have been a subject of wide and abiding interest in grammatical and semantical literature, and this is undoubtedly not altogether without reason. Borderline cases never fail to be charming; a proper name seems to be on the borderline between a full–fledged noun and a mere label. Theories of proper names furthermore acquire a deeper significance when they are expected to throw light upon the senantic nature of linguistic signs in general. In the limited space allotted to me my humble endeavour will be to bring out some grammatically and semantically important aspects of proper names in the light of recent theories.

1 gramatical descrption   'Every human language has proper names,' postulates Charles Hockett in his search for language universals (Hockett 17). This is at least an assumption of a high probability. Proper names are thus a universal to be found in prcatically every language. It can, however, by no means be denied that each language has its own proper names grammatically distinguished from other languages; they can be said to be a semiotic type of signs with a grammatical type of their own. It is in this sense that a grammatical description of proper names should first of all be given as regards present–day English, our object language.

Let us take Sφrensen's definition of proper names as an example of an up–to–date grammatical description: ' a proper name is a four–dimensional primary A–nominal junctional which is not compatible with an a–relative clause but which is compatible with a b–relative clause and which is in all construction compatible with a verb which contains a perfect tense flexive, and which contains neither a number flexive nor a determinative flexive' (Sφrensen 156).

An unwary reader would be staggered by this formidably long–winded maze of technicalities. Anyway, with a due regard for the anthor's closely–knit description, we shall try to see how this definition is helpful to bring out grammatical characteristics of Mod E proper names; (we cannot afford here to give a critical consideration to his procedure of setting up the grammatical meta-signs which are to be used as the definiens of proper names).

The former part of his defining metasigns, 'four-dimensional primary A-nominal junctionals', is perhaps intended to distinguish proper names, together with 'appellatives' (which include Jespersen's countables and uncountables), from other word-classes. Nominal junctionals roughly correspond to traditional 'noun phrases' or, in terms of structural linguistics, endocentric constructions whose heads are nouns. The distinction between an A-nominal and a B-nominal junction seems to depend upon the order of modifying signs, all the modifiers preceeding the head in the former case. The concept of 'dimension' may be ragarded as a refinement of Jespersen's theory of ranks; it refers to the order of constituent signs within a nominal junction, where any pair of signs which can be removable to each other is considered to belong to the same dimension; proper names as well as ordinary appellatives are found to be four-dimensional. Finally that proper nemas are primary means simply that they can stand as the heads of nominal junctions.

Now that proper names have thus been seperated from other word-classes, the criteria are to be sought by which they are distinguished from appellatives which are also four-dimensional primary A-nominal; here it is to be noted that Sφrensen denies the traditional notion that any appellative is grammatically related to any other appellative more closely than to a proper name; (for instance the relationship of the definite uncountables (e.g. 'the milk') to proper names is closer than their relationship to the generic countables (e.g. 'the dog' in 'The dog is an animal.')); so, to be strictly precise, we should enumerate the grammatical relationships between proper names and six various kinds of appellatives. For our present purpose, however, it will be enough to consider the distinguishing characteristics between proper names and appellatives in general: appellatives contain determinative flexives, while proper names do not. Determinative flexives here roughly correspond to Fries's 'determiners', the markers of class 1 words (i.e. nouns), but Sφrensen develops his theory on the assumption that 'the'(or 'my')in 'the hat' (or 'my child') is to be regarded not as a secondary but as a constituent part of the primary ('hat' or 'child'), and that 'girls' or 'milk' is supposed to contain a determinative the designator of which is zero, a generic determinative. That proper names do not contain determinatives presupposes his contention that 'the' in 'the Thames' is not a determinative; it is, from the synchronic point of view, a mere syllable constituting a part of the name. According to Jespersen-Haislund's theory of the stages of familiarity (MEG VII, cc. XII-XVI), proper names need no determinative because they have reached the stage of complete familiarity; but this is perhaps anticipating semantic analysis.

Next, 'number flexives' (singular and plural) are used as the meta-sign distinguishing proper names from countables; countables appear to be the only four-dimensional primary A-nominal junctionals which contain number flexives, while proper nams, together with uncountables, contain no number flexives. This is perhaps tantamount to saying that they exhibit no number contrast, 'Johns' and 'a John' being regarded not as proper names but as appellatives (though such an interpretation as 'conversion of proper names into common nouns' may be deemed to belong to a diachronic description); again, since so-called 'plural place-names' (e.g. 'the Andes') have no singular entities of which they are plural, they should be considered to contain no number flexive, which fact admits them as legitimate proper names.

On the basis of their behaviour towards relative clauses and verbs in the perfect tense, proper names are further contrasted with uncountables and with generic uses of appellatives, which leads to his remaining part of the definiens of proper names.

Lastly his theory reveals the fact that there are no appellatives to which personal pronouns are grammatically more closely related than to proper names; they are different from proper names in that they are zero–dimensional (ignoring such anomalous constructions as 'embrace me, my sweett embraceable you') and that they contain a number flexive.

To sum up in a more familiar jargon our grammatical description of proper names in present–day English: with ordinary nouns they share the capability of standing as the heads of noun– phrases which function in sentences as their subjects, predicatives or objects of verbs or prepositions; again, as regards the two–term (common and genitive) case system, proper names behave like ordinary nonus. The distinguishing characteristics of proper names are their lack of number contrast and their incapability of collocation with determiners; apparent exceptions to this (such as 'the Johnses') are to be regarded as homonymous ordinary nouns (or, diachronically described, as converted names). The affinity betwenn proper names and pronouns may point to the thesis that proper names are a class intermediate between nouns and pronouns, which our semantic analysis will corroborate later.

2 logical proper names　　Pure logic, if it is completely cut off from the real world and is exclusively concerned with formal characteristics of discourse, will 'have no occasion for proper names; its propositions contain only variables'(Russell HK 88). 'But the logician may wonder, in his unprofessional moments, what constants could his for be substituted variables.' The logician is thus tempted into the garden of semantics.

In a most primitive type of a sentence (i.e. what Russell calls 'an atomic sentence') there must be available two kinds of signs: names for the individuals, and designations for the properties (i. e. Jespersen's 'predicatives') and relations predicated of the individuals. Regarding a predicative as a 'monadic' (one–place) relation, we may symbolize a sentence by $Rn(x_1, x_2, \cdots x_n)$, where Rn is an n–ardic relation and $x_1, x_2, \cdots x_n$ are *names*(cf. Russell IMT 95). Thus in terms of logical syntax, a proper name may be defined as a word not denoting a predicative or relation which can occur in a position containing no variable. Or, as Russell puts it (HK 89), proper names will be constants which are values of variables of of lowest type if any kind of hierarchy is admitted among variables.

Stebbing distinguishes three kinds of signs used to refer to individuals (Stebbing 25–32):
(1) a demonstrative sign (or a 'logical' proper name), the sole function of which is to indicate the individual for which it stands.
(2) an 'ordinary' proper name, which is used descriptively, but is primarily intended to stand for the individual called by the name.
(3) a descriptive phrase (or a 'description') the significance of which is independent of the individual to which it may apply, and which can therefore be understood even if it applies to nothing. Here she is seen to regard ordinary proper names as a bridge between pure demonstrative 'logical' proper names and descriptions. Before entering upon the semantic analysis of ordinary proper names, it will not be out of place to make a brief examination of

demonstrative and descriptive signs in general.

Morris, in his system of a behavioristic semiotic, introduces three sorts of demonstrative signs (which are called 'identifiors'): indicators, descriptors, and namors (Morris 75-76). Now 'namors are identifiors which are language symbols, and hence substitute signs synonymous with other identifiors' (76); (Morris calls a sign a 'symbol' when it acts as a substitute for some other sign with which it is synonymous). In locating a person by pointing, a sound may be uttered which becomes synonymous in signification with the particular act of pointing; here the sound (a 'namor') is synonymous with the pointing gesture, a non-language sign called 'indicator'. Such may be a behavioristic interpretation of the identifying function. Note that Morris regards 'descriptors' (which describe locations such as 'at the corner of 23rd street and Broadway') as language signals; it is due to his unsatisfactory distinction between symbols and signals with which we cannot bring ourselves to agree.

The demonstrative function of proper names seems to be shared by what Quine calls 'demonstrative singular terms' (Quine 100); they are formed from general terms by prefixing demonstrative particles ('this' or 'that'): 'this river' or 'that woman'. By these terms we can refer singly to objects whose names we do not know, or to objects that simply have no proper names. These terms, or sometimes simple 'this' with a pointing gesture (i.e. with indicator signs), obviously function as demonstrative signs. One notable trait about them is 'their transiency of reference' in contrast to tenacious singular terms like 'mama' or 'Nile' ; their denotation is relative to the speaker. Such is also the characteristics of those words which Russell calls 'ego-centric particulars' (HK 100, IMT 108): 'this', 'I', 'you', 'here', 'then', 'now', etc; we should know how to switch the reference of a term according to systematic cues of context or environment. 'Demonstrative singular terms', comments Quine (101), 'have the convenience of flexibility and the drawback of instability; and it is just when this drawback begins to count that we introduce a proper name to carry the reference for good; "This river is the Nile".

Russell's contention, which Gardiner qua a linguist criticises severely (Gardiner 58ff), that the names we commonly use, like 'Socrates', are really abbreviations for 'descriptions', is no doubt based on his epistemological consideration; (the description we are here referring to is more precisely what Russell calls 'definite' as distinguished from 'indefinite or ambiguous' description in the form of 'the so-and-so'). From the point of view of linguistic ontogeny, we come to know the meaning of a word either 'ostensively', i.e. through a direct acquaintance with the referent of the word, or 'verbally', by a definition in terms of ostensively defined words. And certainly many ordinary proper names are learned not ostensively but verbally; therefore they are to be regarded as abbreviated descriptions if ostensively given words alone are admitted as proper names.

Logical proper names as ostensively acquired words, unlike descriptions, should then 'denote' referents; this excludes 'Hamlet' or 'Socrates' (at least to us moderns) from the status of logical names and relegates them to the domain of descriptions. Qua linguistic semanticists, we need not perhaps go so far as to ascertain whether this theory of logical proper names may

finally lead to the position where any proper name is an abbreviation for, and hence synonymous with, a description made up of the qualities of the thing named (i. e. the referent), particulars being regarded as 'complex of universals' or Russell's epigrammatic 'bundles of qualities'.

Linguistically we are not concerned with the problem of the existence of the referent; as Gardiner points out (66), 'for Langnage it is a matter of complete indifference whether the thing named or described has or once had external existence'. From this linguistic point of view Quine is closer to us when he introduces the notion of 'purport' to distinguish between general and singular terms; ' "Pegasus" counts as a singular term though true of nothing, because it "purports" to refer to just one object' (96). Whether a sign has not the purport to refer to an object is, in the same way, an intralinguistic problem which has nothing to do with the extralinguistic world of existence.

3 semantic analysis   Gardiner's carefully framed definition (in a revised form, 1953) brings to light almost all the essential characteristics of proper names; there a proper name is recognized as a sign having identification as its specific purpose, and it depends upon its distinctive sound alone for that purpose, and that without regard to any meaning possessed or acquired by the sign.

Gardiner's conception of proper names as identification signs can evidently be traced back to J. S. Mill's idea of names as 'unmeaning marks'; they are labels stuck upon the referents in order to be distinguished from others. With Mill Gardiner agrees in considering that a connotative or conceptual meaning associated with a proper name does not constitute the meaning of the word in its proper sense. In a striking contrast to this view, Jespersen insists upon the 'connotedness of proper names'(PhG 66): 'proper names' "connote" the greatest number of attributes'; (cf. Magnusson 65, ⋯most of hypotheses (i. e. concerning the difference between proper names and common nouns) may be brought together in two main theories. According to one of these proper nouns are not expressions of qualities, according to the other they are, and in a still higher degree than common nouns.')

It may be that this antithesis between the conflicting theories has, as is taken a glimpse at above, its philosophical counterpart in the time-honoured problem of universals and particulars, or, in a modern phraseology, of descriptions and logical proper names.

Linguistically the opposing theories should rather be interpreted as representing the varied points of view from which theorists approach to the problem in question. Gardiner's definition lays much stress on what might be called the dictionary value of names, while Jespersen's emphasis is placed upon their contextual value in which they are actually spoken or written; in Saussurean terminology, the former is mainly concerned with the theoretical side of the meaning of names in Language (langue), and the latter with the actual meaning in Speech (parole).

As far as the theoretical meaning in Language is concerned, proper names are thus seen to be lacking in it, and this will offer one of the important semantic characteristics which distinguish proper names from ordinary nouns. In terms of Marty-Funke's (and theorefore Nakajima's) distinction between autosemantic and synsemantic signs (autosememes and synsememes), ordinary nouns (or at least concrete nouns) can evoke some ideas ('Vorstellungen')

of their referents even when they are isolated out of the actual speech contexts, i.e. when they are in the sphere of Language; they are 'theoretical' autosemantic signs (or 'proper' autosememes); proper names, on the contrary, have no capability of concept evoking in the domain of Language.

The most essential function of these 'unmeaning marks' are then to be sought, as is pointed out by Gardiner's definition, in that of 'identification.' And it is evident that this function of identification (or, logically, denotation) is on the plane of Speech. In an actual performance of speech a concrete noun serves to classify various particulars, through the defining common concept (which constitutes the definiens of the noun), under the same class, while a proper name is used to distinguish one particular thing from similar things, so that it may be indicated or identified. This contrast may be characterized as the distinction between the 'synthetic' nature of concrete nouns and 'analytic' nature of proper names.

For the purpose of identification in Speech, a proper name depends upon its distinctive sound or, more generally, upon its sign-vehicle as Morris would call it. Our attention is presumably going to be concentrated upon the sign-vehicle each time we refer to the same referent so long as the vehicle enables us to indicate it. Thus, when we are concerned only with the mode of functioning of a proper name in one definite act of speech, it might be regarded as a 'signal' which is used solely to announce the existence of its referent though the existence may be in the past, at present, in the future, or purely imaginary; (the distinction between 'signals' and 'symbols' as the subclasses of signs is set forth in a mentalistic phraseology by Langer (c.3, though she says 'signs' instead of 'signals'): 'signals "announce" their objects to the interpreter, whereas symbols lead him to "conceive" their objects'). Pushed to its logical conclusion, a proper name might turn out to be a purely demonstrative sign, which is a 'uni-situational' sign employed to indicate one particular thing which occupy a definite place at at definite time. Linguistically, however, this is an impossibility; once a name is admitted as a 'word', that is, as a linguistic sign, it is, as a word, necessarily 'pluri-situational'; it is a universal, not a particular; it belongs to a 'sign-family'; it should be regarded as a 'type', not as a 'token'.

'In the expression "Nansen skates",' writes Urban (142), 'Nansen is a grammatical proper noun and may therefore be supposed to stand for a particular and not a universal. But it is really a universal. Nasen perceived must be Nansen eating or Nansen sleeping or Nanse skating.' The proper name 'Nansen' is a universal as a connecting link of his own manifold and varying states, relations, qualities, and activities. Urban finds in this individuality of Nansen's varying and manifold aspects the "intuitive" connotation of the proper name (ibid. 152). It is the emphasis upon this universal or pluri-situational nature of a proper name as a linguistic sign that leads us to discover its connotative or 'describing' function.

In the sentence 'He felt convinced thah Jonas was again the Jonas he had known a week ago, and not the Jonas of the intervening time' (Jespersen PhG 69) the name 'Jonas' is evidently apprehended as connotative of the individual who is incessantly changing. Again, because the bearer of the name is grasped as a unity possessing the conplex of qualities, it is possible to select one prominet quality out of them, and to characterize some other being as a possessor of the quailty; hence the appearance of 'a Judas' or 'a Caesar', the first step towards a

class-name.

Proper names, as we have seen, have grammatical characteristics peculiar to each object language which grammatical descriptions should reveal, and in the light of semantic analysis they are to be regarded as having no meaning of dictionary value theoretically in Language and their essential function must be sought in that of identificatication on the plane of Speech. Ordinary proper names, however, are far from purely demonstrative logical proper names. Because of their status of being linguistic signs, they get easily connoted, and, thus used descriptively, though at first connotation varies from one context to another, it may gain a fairly fixed meaning after sufficient occurrences in some definite context, and they may finally be admitted into Language as concept-evoking symbols.

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