

WHAT CAN WE DO IN PHILOSOPHY USING FREGE’S AND KRIPKE’S LOGICS?

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Abstract. In this article I issue a challenge to philosophers engaged in constructing logical languages. Formal languages that have had a great influence on various areas of philosophy have ineffable statements that arise from metaphysical assumptions, thus limiting what we can do with them. I deal with two cases. The case of Frege known as “The paradox of the concept horse”, and that of Kripke that is not as famous as the Fregean problem, which I call “The necessary bearing of the name.” I briefly develop each case and show that together they give us sufficient evidence of the limits of what we can do with logic when the formal systems employ unexamined metaphysical assumptions.

Keywords: ineffable • nonsense • rigid designator • quotation • Frege • Kripke

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1. Introduction

My purpose here is to encourage philosophers toward metaphysical inquiry rather than simply assuming metaphysical claims that underlie Frege’s truth-conditional semantics and Kripke’s modal semantics. To achieve my purpose, I employ this strategy: First, I demonstrate that there are ineffable statements for Frege, e.g., ‘The concept *horse* is a concept’ and for Kripke, e.g., ‘NN might not have been named “NN”.’ Second, I use these examples to support my conjecture that research in metaphysics might be able to help us avoid such ineffable statements.

Frege’s well-known paradox ‘The concept *horse* is a concept’ cannot be expressed within the resources of the theory because its logical form delivers a meaning that is nonsense in the theory itself. I have argued before (Valdivia 1985a) that the source of this problem is his metaphysical assumption that no object is a property where objects and properties are all there is, but they exclude each other, and the same goes for terms referring to each one. Here I update my conclusion by discussing True-man’s high-order logic treatment of the puzzling statement where the paradox of the concept *horse* remains as an instance of nonsense. Kripke’s puzzle or “The necessary bearing of the name” states that any sentence of the form ‘NN might not have been named “NN”.’ is ineffable because although it is a *prima facie* true contingent



statement, its logical form cannot be expressed by rigid designators. Hence, as I have argued previously (Valdivia 2022) any such formulations are beyond the theoretical apparatus. Here I hold that the source of the problem lies in Kripke's linking the rigidity of proper names to the necessity of identity.

At the end of this paper, I will present my view that these ineffable statements might be insurmountable by stressing two issues: first, that the sources of these problems are their substantial metaphysical underpinnings which require careful and difficult exploration, and second, that we should not abandon this inquiry due to the difficulty in formalizing core metaphysical claims.

2. Frege's case

The paradox arises by positing a relation between saturated/unsaturated bits of language and saturated/unsaturated bits of world (Valdivia 2016). Frege expresses it in terms of the reference relationship that is established, on one hand, between unsaturated terms (concept-words) and unsaturated bits of world (concepts) to which they refer; and on the other, between saturated terms (proper names) that refer to saturated bits of world (objects). These assumptions are the "Fregean Categorical Distinctions" (FCD) which stipulates the categorical constituents in a language and in the corresponding ontology, and that the categories exclude each other, and this is why terms from different categories cannot refer together to the same bit of the world. For ease of presentation, after depicting Frege's case in his own terminology I use the following: for 'concept-word' or 'function-name' I use 'predicative-term' thus avoiding the cognitive connotations attached to 'concept-word' (Frege 1979 [1892-5] p. 18); I use 'property' for a predicate term's referent; and for Frege's 'proper name' I use 'singular term' whose referent is an object.

According to the Fregean theoretical framework 'The concept *horse*' is a proper name referring to an object and 'is a concept' is a concept-word or function-name (i.e., a first level predicate admitting only proper names as its argument) referring to a concept (Frege 1970 [1904] p.115). The puzzling sentence is:

- (1) The concept *horse* is a concept.

When considering (1) in his "Concept and Object" (1970 [1892a]) Frege makes two remarks on which I will comment below. First, he acknowledges that (1) is false because "... we are confronted to say that the concept *horse* is not a concept, whereas e.g., the city of Berlin is a city, and the volcano Vesuvius is a volcano." (1970 [1892a], p.46). Second, he says that (1) is senseless: "I don't want to say it is false to assert about an object what is asserted here about a concept; I want to say it is impossible, senseless, to do so". (Frege 1970 [1892a], p. 50]

The reason why the concept *horse* paradox feels paradoxical is not just because 'the concept *horse*' really looks like it should refer to a concept (property). That is explained away easily enough: we wanted a term that referred to a concept (property), so we built a term to do it; but we then discovered that singular terms cannot refer to concepts (properties), and thus that 'the concept *horse*' cannot do what we built it to do. One might think it's just a matter of coming up with a proper term for the job.¹ However, there may not be a term that is suitable for the job of referring to concepts (properties), because singular terms and predicative terms exclude each other and there are no other referential terms. It is difficult to get a suitable expression for the job that satisfies (FCD) and agrees with what we truly and meaningfully say about properties in natural languages and in Frege's theory; in both languages we say of any concept that it is a concept. Frege himself was aware of this awkwardness, but was dismissive of the problem:

By a kind of necessity of language, my expressions, taken literally, sometimes miss my thought; I mention an object, when what I intend is a concept. I fully realize that in such cases I was relying upon a reader who would be ready to meet me halfway—who does not begrudge a pinch of salt. (Frege 1970 [1892a], 54)

It is completely unobjectionable to ask your reader to grant you a pinch of salt to be charitable or to keep things brief and readable. Many philosophers have thought that they have no choice but to speak a bit loosely or metaphorically. However, to do so remains reasonable only if you can also speak strictly and clearly state what your views amount to.

Granting that we understand what the problematic sentence (1) says and straightforwardly translates as (1*) '*Fa*', Frege thought at one point (1*) to be false, and later, to be nonsense. How is it that Frege's formal language turns it to be false? A logical language turning ordinary true sentences into false ones has a deep problem.

Let me state the puzzling case as follows. In the first place, for (1*) to be false it must be admitted that (1*) is well formed. A formula is well formed if and only if it satisfies both language-ontology restrictions stated by (FCD). Now, 'the concept *horse*' satisfies the requirement to be a saturated expression, therefore, to be a proper name as in (1*) notwithstanding that it doesn't refer to *what in natural language and Fregean language we intended it to refer to* because we meant a property, not an object. But even worse, in formal Fregean language we also need to refer to concepts, for instance, to say of a concept that it is identical to itself. This might be a reason to suspend judgment about its truth value, before saying that (1*) is false.

We might also think of a desperate option to deny that (1*) is false by rejecting that (1*) satisfies (FCD) and a fortiori that (1*) is ill-formed. We should try to say that 'the concept *horse*' contrary to Frege's characterizations is not a proper name

and reaffirm the thesis that predicates are the appropriate way to refer to properties. However, an argument is needed to exclude expressions of the form ‘the *F*’ from the category of proper names. In other words, even if a predicative form were found to refer to concepts, that would not be enough to exclude expressions like ‘the *F*’ from the category of proper names and the problem will remain if we hold (FCD). If the problem persists, (1*) it would be an ineffable statement.

In this article, instead of considering the idea that through a “logical translation” what was taken to be true in natural language turns out to be false in Fregean language, we can consider, as Frege did, that the logical form obtained does not make sense because it says of a property that it is an object; or we could say that it is ineffable and beyond what the theory can formalize because of the logically exclusive disjunction incorporated in (FCD). Note that when we consider such a logical form to be nonsense, we accept that we could construct it, but when we consider it to be ineffable, we refrain from doing so. The latter is a much more radical position, for which I have only the conjecture that whenever there is an exclusive disjunction in the foundations of logical construction only one of the disjuncts can be referred and predicated at a time. One way of understanding what Frege meant by “nonsense” seems simple, i.e., according to (FCD) it makes no sense in his theory to say of a concept that it is an object even though (FCD) delivers ‘Fa’. In the second option, one way to make it ineffable is that the thought expressed in natural language and intended to be expressed in formal language, is always beyond any formal language based on the exclusion character built in (FCD). I argued in other articles (Valdivia 1985, 2015, 2016) that (FCD) cancels out any possibility of referring to concepts within Frege’s original system and it could hardly be thought that (FCD) is maintained as a theoretical stipulation for the system to work, as I hold it is the case with Fregean stipulation (Valdivia 1985b) that sentences refer to truth values (Frege 1970 [1892b] p.78).

The point at issue now is whether ineffability can be ruled out within a higher-order logic that commits along with (FCD) to clearly stating that a property is a property and does not need a pinch of salt. However, if in a higher-order logic it is not possible to say of a concept that it is a concept or the theory holds that such a claim is a nonsensical statement, then my conjecture still stands: Ineffability occurs whenever there is an exclusive disjunction as in (FCD) which makes it impossible for both singular terms and predicative terms to refer to the same bit of the world.

2.1. Trueman on ‘The concept *horse* is a concept’

Granting that what (1) truly expresses in natural language cannot be stated in Fregean language, Trueman claims that although no singular term refers to properties, second level predicates do. He dubs his neo-Fregean approach *Fregean realism* be-

cause it sticks to (FCD) and holds that properties exist on their own as *second order existents*.

He claims that in extensional contexts,² *disquotation* is central for referring. When asking what 'Aristotle' refers to, we answer by using the quoted name. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that a quoted instance of a predicate can serve the purpose of referring to its referent. When asking what 'is a horse' refers to we reply by using the quoted predicate.

He proceeds as follows, first, to express predicate-reference he uses something of the form $R(x, Y)$, where 'x' marks a gap for a quoted predicate and 'Y' marks a gap *only* for a use of the quoted predicate. For instance, "'... is wise' predicate-refers to being wise" cashes the idea that we say of a property that a predicate refers to it, and it has the schematical form of: 'x' predicate-refers to Y.

Second, because singular and predicative terms share the common disquotational feature of obtaining a true statement when one puts a quotation name of an appropriate type of expression in the first place and that expression in the second one, he turns the claim that a predicate refers into the claim that a predicate has satisfaction conditions.³

The claim that predicates have satisfaction conditions to account for their semantic role whenever they satisfy their common *disquotational* feature is rendered by:

$$(S) \quad \forall y(y \text{ satisfies } x \leftrightarrow Yy).$$

And this is how we specify what 'is a *horse*' refers to:

$$\forall y(y \text{ satisfies ' } x \text{ is a horse' } \leftrightarrow y \text{ is a horse}).$$

(S) has no gap for singular terms. For a Fregean realist predicates *and only predicates* can refer to properties. Trueman insists that what Fregean realists hold when they say that a predicate refers to a property is that the predicate has satisfaction conditions.⁴

Assuming that (S) expresses predicate-reference, a third and final step is to use second-level predicates ' $P(X)$ ' to characterize the referents of predicates:

$$(P) \quad \exists y \forall x(Xx \leftrightarrow Yx).$$

Therefore, Trueman claims that instead of saying that 'The property *horse* is a property', (p.78) they should say:

$$\exists y \forall x(x \text{ is a } \textit{horse} \leftrightarrow Yx).$$

However, there is a direct way to object to (P): According to (FCD) identity is only established between objects. Whenever two functions produce the same extensions, their value ranges are materially equivalent (Frege 1979 [1982-5] p.119), and this

is why identity holds between their value ranges, but value-ranges are objects. The identity relation is expressed by a first-level predicate that has two gaps to be filled with singular terms that refer to objects, but they can never be filled with a first-level predicate that refers to a property like ‘... is a horse’. Contrary to this restriction, Trueman seems to think that Frege’s suggestion (1970 [1891], p. 16n*) is useful to try to bring identity towards quantification in higher-order logic. Frege warns that what ordinary mathematical terminology understands by ‘function’ in his theory corresponds to the extensions of functions. Assuming that is correct, then Trueman (2021, p. 77) might be thinking that the identity established in first-order logic would be maintained by analogy in second-order logic that quantifies over properties:

If (S) expresses predicate-reference, then to say that two predicates co-refer —i.e., refer to one and the same thing— is to say that they have materially equivalent satisfaction conditions. It follows that:

‘ $\forall x(Xx \leftrightarrow Yx)$ ’ must express identity between properties.

We began by acknowledging that ‘*Fa*’ is a puzzling way to state that ‘The concept *horse* is a concept.’ Because proper names are not designed to refer to properties, Trueman takes predicates to refer to them. First, he turns predicate-reference into predicate-satisfaction conditions based on their shared disquotational feature that produces a true statement when one puts a quotation name of an appropriate type of expression in the first place and that expression in the second one. Second, he argues that satisfaction conditions are the referents for first-level predicates as expressed by ‘(S) $\forall y(y \text{ satisfies } x \leftrightarrow Yy)$ ’. Since we need to express satisfaction conditions for higher-order logic in accordance with (S), he characterizes the referents of predicates by ‘(P) $\exists y\forall x(Xx \leftrightarrow Yx)$ ’ and ends up with $\exists y\forall x(x \text{ is a } \textit{horse} \leftrightarrow Yx)$ instead of ‘*Fa*’. Let me finish this section with some comments on the way Trueman applies his Fregean realism to ‘The concept *horse* is a concept’.

Trueman’s Fregean realism, I must stress, is not the “traditional Fregean realism” in that he doesn’t think of properties as being *any kind of object*, and if predicates refer to their satisfaction conditions, second-order quantifiers *only* quantify over the satisfaction conditions of predicates (Trueman 2021, p.84). However, according to his *ontological neutralism* (Trueman 2021, p.83) “second-order quantifiers cannot generate an ontological commitment to a kind of entity that is not already generated by the use of predicates. [...]” And they cannot produce anything else because he argued that in ‘ $\exists y\forall x(Xx \leftrightarrow Yx)$ ’ the use of a predicate ‘*Y*’ is nothing but the *disquoted* predicate referring to its satisfaction conditions that formerly occurred in our first-order logic statement.

He thinks that ‘ $\exists y\forall x(Xx \leftrightarrow Yx)$ ’ is a good way to translate the puzzling sentence ‘The concept *horse* is a concept’ within a higher-order logic but he also says that a strict reading delivers *nonsense*. Nevertheless, Trueman holds that Wittgenstein’s

distinction between “saying and showing” may help us out. However, for the purposes in this article, it is enough to say that in higher-order logic we are still facing the problem of stating *nonsense*. There is little progress, if any, towards a straightforward way of stating that ‘The concept horse is a concept’.

For a Fregean realist, second-order quantification is wholly *analogous* to first-order quantification: first-order quantifiers quantify over a domain, and that domain is a collection of objects each of which could be referred to by a singular term; and in an *exact analogy*, second-order quantifiers quantify over a domain, and that domain is a collection of properties each of which could be referred to by a predicate. However, it is one thing to say which are the domains over which quantifiers quantify, but it is quite another thesis to claim that identity holds on both different domains in an *analogous way*.

The first analogy between referring and satisfying might hold in first-order logic by claiming that because singular-terms and predicative-terms share a disquotational feature they play an *analogous* semantic role⁵ in contributing to the composition of a proposition, but quite another thesis is to hold that identity in first-order logic plays an *analogous* role in a higher-order logic.

The point to stress here is that the semantic role that ‘ \leftrightarrow ’ plays is to truth-functionally combine truth values, which are the value ranges of functions. We don’t have a shared semantic characteristic for ‘ \leftrightarrow ’ to play both in first logic and higher logic. There is no semantic feature for ‘ \leftrightarrow ’ in first-order logic that can be shared in higher-order logic. What seems to be required is a common semantic role to be played by ‘ \leftrightarrow ’ when quantifying over objects in first order logic and over properties in higher-order logic. But there cannot be any, because a higher-order identity relation between properties goes against (FCD) “... the relation of equality for which I understand complete coincidence, identity, can only be thought of as holding for objects, not concepts.” (Frege 1970 [1891-5], p.120)

These are the reasons for ‘The concept *horse* is a concept’ to be *nonsense* as True-man himself acknowledges: such a statement cannot admit of a literal reading even under his way of understanding Fregean realism; therefore, although we should grant him a pinch of salt, this looks more like a barrel of salt.

3. Kripke’s case

I claim that if proper names are rigid designators, then they are not suitable for formulating metalinguistic statements of the form ‘NN might not have been named “NN”.’ in the formal system itself. Stipulating that proper names are rigid designators preserves both the unicity of reference in Kripkean modal semantics and guarantees that any true de re identity statement is necessary (Kripke 2011, p. 17).

Kripke's theory of proper names holds the following: A proper name is a singular term and its semantic contribution to propositional content is its referent; the relation between the name and its bearer is direct, that is to say, it is not mediated by any other propositional content; the reference of a name is modally stable, the name refers to the same individual in any possible world where the individual exists; and finally, names are individuated by their bearers. There are three salient features of the theory utilized by my argument: (1) the rigidity or the modal stability of the name, (2) the rigidity of the quoted name, and (3) the claim that names differ among themselves whenever their bearers differ. This characterization helps us state a rigidity rule in Kripke's semantics:

(RR) Any counterfactual circumstance in which the individual is located, must be stated in terms of possible worlds and with the use of rigid designators.

Let's discuss Kripke's suggestion that 'Nixon might not have been called "Nixon".' is a contingent truth as explained below:

In these lectures I will argue, intuitively, that proper names are rigid designators, for although the man (Nixon) might not have been the President, it is not the case that he might not have been Nixon (though he might not have been called 'Nixon'). Those who have argued that to make sense of the notion of rigid designator, we must antecedently make sense of 'criteria of transworld identity' have precisely reversed the cart and the horse; it is because we can refer (rigidly) to Nixon, and stipulate that we are speaking of what might have happened to him (under certain circumstances), that "transworld identifications" are unproblematic in such cases. (Kripke 1980, p. 49)

The point of Kripke's '[...] might not have been called "Nixon".' is to distinguish Nixon's name as a rigid designator from non-rigid terms expressing properties e.g., becoming President. Rigidity is a relation between the name and its bearer in every possible world including ours, whenever the referent exists. This is precisely the modal stability of the name.

However, names are rigid, but what someone is *called* is not,⁶ because calling someone X doesn't make X a name, X could be a nickname or a pejorative expression neither of which are rigid designators. Naming and calling are two different relations (Katz 2001, p.142). What Kripke cannot say is that Nixon might not have been *named* 'Nixon', which I assume is the intended reading of Nixon might have had another name. Hence, Kripke's original statement properly stated is 'Nixon might not have been *named* "Nixon".'

It is important to note that when we accept that Nixon might not have been *named* 'Nixon', there are at least two tangentially related issues that might mistakenly seem to be relevant here: on the one hand, the same concatenation of letters could make

up a name for someone other than our Nixon; on the other hand, our Nixon may have another name besides the name 'Nixon', let's say 'Kripxon.' In the first case, Kripke would say that the names are homonymous but different in that they name different people.⁷ The second case, the case of coreference, happens when there is more than one name for a person, for instance, as in the 'Tully/Cicero' example, each name is a specific name for the same person. However, co-reference is not at issue, because the question is not whether one individual has more than one name, rather it is if she has some name, it might not have been *that very name*.

My argument that in Kripkean semantics we cannot formulate the statement 'Nixon might not have been *named* "Nixon".' depends on two premises: first, the rigidity of the name itself and its quotation and, second, the application of the rule (RR).

3.1. Kripke's metalinguistic ineffable statement

Let's start with the proper formulation of the statement. I will use the subscript "R" to emphasize that the name is a rigid designator, or as Salmon (2012, p. 430) puts it, 'Nixon' is a "specific name" that cannot name anything else other than its bearer.

(2*) Nixon_R might not have been named 'Nixon_R'.

My statement (2*) makes use of Kripke's rigid designator as well as of a quotation of the rigid designator itself. I argued (Valdivia, 2022, pp.96-97) that the quoted name refers to the expression within its quotation marks and according to Gomez-Torrente's Interiority Principle, a quoted expression is an unstructured, rigid, context insensitive term.⁸

In the intended reading of (2*) the first occurrence of 'Nixon_R' is used to rigidly refer to Nixon. I also argued that the second occurrence that quotes that specific name refers to the name within its quotation marks. Kripke's point is that 'Nixon_R' rigidly designates the person that in our natural language was baptized as 'Nixon.' The rigid designator 'Nixon_R' helps us to state counterfactual scenarios where Nixon himself, might not have been the President of the United States, or might have been lefthanded, or whatever else might have happened to him. We should state any of those scenarios by applying (RR). We use the rigid designator 'Nixon_R' which is a specific name that cannot name anything else other than its bearer, and thus, we need no criteria of transworld identification of the bearer.

The crucial question to consider now is this one: is there a counterfactual scenario or possible world, where that specific man might not have been named 'Nixon'? Can we properly state (2*) without violating (RR)?

To correctly state the answer to the question of whether Nixon might have not been named 'Nixon', according to (RR), we must use rigid designators to move around

Kripkean possible worlds to attempt to find at least one world where that specific person is otherwise named. But how can we map that specific person into possible worlds? It is obvious that to say of Nixon that he might have been named otherwise, he must be named ‘Nixon’ in the first place. And here we go towards ineffability.

To satisfy (RR) and say that there is a possible world where Nixon might have had a name other than ‘Nixon’, we must say that: (2*) ‘Nixon_R might not have been named “Nixon_R”.’ is true of Nixon. However, strictly speaking (2*) shows what Kripke cannot say if we comply with (RR). Once we use a rigid designator to specifically refer to a person in whatever possible world that person exists, we can neither deprive that person of her rigid designator, nor we can say anything counterfactually *about her name* without the use of her rigid designator. True, if we did not know that in Kripke’s semantics proper names are rigid, it would not seem to be necessary of the self-same Nixon to bear the proper name ‘Nixon.’ It would seem to be a contingent fact about him, but how could we state such a contingent fact about him without using his rigid designator? According to (RR) we cannot. Sentence (1*) seems to be the straight way to do it, but (RR) imposes the use of rigid designators while the predicate ‘might not have been named “Nixon_R”.’ seems to indicate its elimination. To make my point clearer, we could read the predicate as saying “... might not have been rigidly named ‘Nixon’.” But once again, he must be rigidly named in the first place to say anything counterfactual of him. Again, according to (RR) naming must be a rigid naming.

It is crucial to notice that ‘Nixon might not have been named “Nixon”.’ presupposes that Nixon bears ‘Nixon’ as his proper name and asserts that it is contingent of Nixon to bear that proper name, because he might not have been named ‘Nixon.’ Therefore, there is no kind of necessity involved in the name-bearer relation, because even if to be the bearer of a proper name were a property, it would be a contingent one. All there is to the name-bearer relation is a mild self-referential element in the application conditions of proper names. As Burge (1973, p. 430) said, “... the sentences: ‘Jones is necessarily a Jones’ and ‘this entity called “Jones” is necessarily an entity called “Jones”.’” come out false in any occasion of use.⁹ By parity of reasons, we could say that ‘this entity named “Nixon” is necessarily an entity named “Nixon”.’ is false, while ‘Nixon might not have been named “Nixon”.’ is true.

However, in Kripke’s theory we cannot say that if ‘Nixon might not have been named “Nixon”.’ is true, then ‘this entity named “Nixon” is not necessarily an entity named “Nixon”.’ has to be true, because (RR) states that Nixon has to necessarily bear his name ‘Nixon’ in every possible world, ours included, where Nixon exists.

The mild self-referential element in the application conditions of the name is reinforced because the modal stability of the used and quoted name in (2*) strengthens the relation of the name to its bearer to such an extent that ‘Kripke_R is necessarily named “Kripke_R”.’ could be structured in accordance to (RR) in Kripkean semantics and contrary to our intuitions and Burge’s argument, ‘this entity named “Nixon” is

necessarily named "Nixon".' seems to be true in Kripkean modal semantics. However, if it is necessary for the bearer to bear his/her name and if my argument is correct, 'Nixon_R might not have been named "Nixon_R".' seems to be false, logically impossible, or ill-formed.

4. Ineffability and Nonsense

I take a statement to be ineffable when, although it is said significantly in natural languages, it would always be outside the scope of what can be said in a specific formal language. I take a statement to be nonsense when its logical form means something that does not correspond to the intended meaning. The key to distinguishing between a nonsensical statement and an ineffable statement lies in accepting or rejecting the logical form produced by the formal language under consideration. When we accept a logical form for a statement and its meaning is contrary to the intended meaning, we say that nonsense is expressed, so it is reasonable to seek for another way of formally representing it. On the other hand, the meaning of a sentence is ineffable when there is no way to arrive at a logical form to produce the intended meaning. In other words, we come to the conjecture that whenever nonsense is recurrent in a specific formal semantics there is ineffability in it that is most likely based on some theoretical thesis that imposes a difficulty in principle.

We say without any difficulty, for example, that 'the concept *horse* is a concept' and that 'Nixon might not have been named "Nixon".' However, I have argued that none of these statements can be formulated according to the semantics of the theories discussed. In my view, both are ineffable.

In Frege's case, the formalization of 'the concept of *horse* is a concept' results in nonsense in both first order and higher-order logic. In addition, the same goes for fundamental statements of the theory such as: 'no object is a function', 'all there is in ontology are objects and functions', etc. The resilience of nonsense is the best reason to conjecture that the theory suffers from ineffability and my bet is that this lies in the logical connectives of exclusive disjunction and exhaustive conjunction on which categorical distinctions are based. The intuition is very simple: Under exclusive disjunction only one of the disjuncts can be the case, for instance it can only be true that identity holds between objects, but not between properties. It is not surprising that exclusive disjunction delivers these results.

In Kripke's case, if we were to accept the use of rigid designators for the statement 'Nixon might not have been named "Nixon".' then the statement would be well-formed and would express a contingent truth about Nixon. But if it were to express a contingent truth, its denial should express a falsehood, that is, the statement 'Nixon must have been named "Nixon".' would be false. But according to the theory this

statement is true because ‘Nixon’ necessarily names Nixon in whatever world Nixon exists and we can truly say that ‘Nixon is necessarily named “Nixon”.’ Therefore, to think that it is true that Nixon might have been named differently ultimately leads us to deny that proper names are rigid designators.

But if we still want to maintain that ‘Nixon might not have been named “Nixon”.’ is well formed, perhaps one might think that it expresses the nonsense that the rigid name does not rigidly name. But this nonsensical statement is nothing but a contradiction of the thesis that proper names are rigid designators! Kripke deserves a pinch of salt. But the barrel of salt needed here is to accept contradictions! Once again, the supposed nonsense points towards ineffability because we cannot say using the resources of the theory that ‘Nixon might not have been named “Nixon”.’

For these reasons I conjecture that it is not nonsense but ineffability affecting the system and it lies in the fact that the only way Kripke found for the correct expression of true necessary identity statements is by means of rigid designators. Its semantics depend on the assumption that *de re* identity is necessary.

5. Conclusions

What can we do with ineffability? Wittgenstein famously instructs his reader to “throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it” (1922, 6.54). But in the cases that I have been considering it is difficult to understand (i) where the ladder took us, if anywhere, and (ii) what would result from throwing away the ladder. The formal ladder that built the logics proposed by Frege, Trueman and Kripke seems to have led us nowhere. Rung after rung the ladder revealed less and less. Why should we have to throw away all the scaffolding that led us nowhere? Best not to have climbed the ladder to begin with!

As I mentioned earlier, I do not find it attractive to walk the path between showing and saying because if something has been shown it is that the ladder does not lead to anywhere. Now, if my conjecture that ineffability in formal semantics arises from theses that impose in principle a difficulty, a possible way out would be to locate the thesis that is responsible for ineffability.

I think that in the Fregean case exclusive disjunction and exhaustive conjunction built in (FCD) are what in principle prevent the construction of central statements of the theory. But there must be a reason why these logical connectives are there. Is logic or metaphysics the impediment? Perhaps the problem is in the lack of the metaphysical investigations about what it is to be an object, what it is to be a property, and how they are related. In other words, if we were to produce a sound metaphysical argument that states that they are necessarily excluded and jointly exhaustive we would be bound to these logical constraints. But it is still possible that there is no

such argument, and we can find a better logical way to express what has been taken as a mere ontological assumption. Research in metaphysics could shed light on the formal system we would construct.

Similarly with regard to Kripke's semantics, if I am right in thinking that assuming that the identity every object holds with itself is necessary compels us to rigid designation in semantics, then if there were no conclusive argument in metaphysics establishing the necessity of identity, it seems that we would not be bound to the constraints proposed by Kripke. As far as I know, it is still debated whether all types of identity are necessary or contingent. But obviously everything said is merely programmatic and leads us to the methodological disjunction¹⁰ between doing semantics by gratuitously assuming ontological positions or doing metaphysics to determine which ontological positions should be formalized in our semantics.

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Notes

¹Many philosophers thought that a solution was to find another expression suited for the purpose. The literature is too vast to review here. As representative examples see Dummett (1981, 1955) in which he provides a well-known and very influential proposal. However, I will only discuss Trueman’s proposal because he considers the best literature on the issue and discusses in great deal the main arguments in favor and against his new proposal to solve the problem along essential Fregean lines. I find his new option worth being carefully considered.

²Trueman (2021, p.74–75) acknowledges that his extensional Fregeanism has problems in dealing with intensional and hyper-intensional contexts and makes some suggestions, but I need not to take them into account for my present argument.

³This is a long-standing position held by many philosophers: (see Dudman 1976, §II; Wiggins 1984, 316–7; Russinoff 1992, 75–7; Gaskin 1995, 164; Wright 1998, 77–81).

⁴Very similar proposals have been made by: Furth (1968, p. 45) and Dummett (1981, pp. 213–18) who made a slightly different recommendation: ‘ $\forall y(y \text{ is what } x \text{ stands for} \leftrightarrow Yy)$ ’, where the ‘is’ is the ‘is’ of predication, not identity.

⁵This analogy seems to stipulate that semantic roles of reference in extensional contexts is all there is for reference to play. If this is the case, leaving aside, as Trueman does, hyperintensional contexts, there remain some well-known problems, for instance, the notion of sense is too thick and although senses may differ their extensions could be the same.

⁶My remark makes use of Katz’s distinction between naming/calling (Katz 2001, p. 142). It is reasonable to think that Kripke can say, truthfully, that Nixon might not have been called Nixon, because calling someone X does not make X a name, X could be a nickname or a

pejorative expression neither of which are rigid designators. We can say “Nixon might not have been called ‘Tricky Dick’”. What Kripke cannot say is that Nixon might not have been named “Nixon”, which I assume is the intended reading of Nixon might have had another name.

⁷Kripke says: “For language as we have it, we could speak of names as having a unique referent if we adopted a terminology, analogous to the practice of calling homonyms distinct ‘words’, according to which uses of phonetically the same sounds to name distinct objects count as distinct names.” (Kripke 1980, pp. 7–8.)

⁸Interiority [...] assigns a referent to a quotation as a function of the identity of one of its morphological components, the quoted expression, hence exploiting the salient pre-referential relation between a quotation and its intended referent ... Interiority assigns a reference to each quotation type, independently of any sensitivity to contextual factors. (Gómez-Torrente 2013, p.340.)

⁹Notice that Burge doesn't distinguish between ‘called’ and ‘named’.

¹⁰See Cantero's article in this special issue.

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