12

Names, Knowledge and Identity

Armed now with the idea that 'name' in *TLP* covers only proper names, we can return to consider what Wittgenstein has to say about their semantics, considering also how this issue relates to his treatment of identity.

12.1   THE *TLP* THEORY OF NAMES

In chapter 3 we argued that 3.203 should be read as saying that the object to which a proper name refers constitutes its semantic content (Bedeutung), it being the referent itself which figures in the truth-conditions (Sinn) of sentences in which the name occurs (4.1211). But then we argued in chapter 4 that 3.3411 should be seen as committing Wittgenstein to the idea that names have sense as well as reference: each significant name constituting a symbol, having associated with it in the idiolects of particular speakers some mode of thinking about, or way of determining, the object to which the name refers. Yet differences in symbol (either within or across idiolects) which do not emerge at the level of reference are said to be inessential, making no difference to the semantic content of sentences in which they occur.

It is easy to see the point of this combination of views. Wittgenstein is accepting Frege's theories of idiolectic understanding and of how reference gets fixed, but is rejecting his theory of the role of proper names in communication. He is accepting that speakers must associate a sense – a mode of thinking of the referent – with every proper name which they understand, it being in virtue of express-ing such a sense that the name comes to have the reference which it does within their idiolects. But he is denying that mutual knowl-edge of modes of thinking is required for communication through the use of a name. On the contrary, speakers may be said to understand one another so long as they know that they each use the name to refer to the very same thing, irrespective of any differences in the sense they associate with it (provided, of course, that they have mutual knowledge of whatever is required for understanding the predicative element in the sentence). And all sentences which differ only in that one co-referring name has been substituted for another may be said to have the same truth-condition (Sinn), and to say the very same thing.

The claim that the semantic content of a name is exhausted by its referent ought more accurately to be expressed by saying that names for different things belonging to the same sortal category differ from one another in semantic content only in so far they differ in reference. For there will of course be much more involved in the understanding of a name, which will be common to all competent speakers irrespective of idiolect, than the bare knowledge of its referent. In particular, speakers will need to know how that name may fit together with other words to form a sentence, and the kinds of things which can significantly be said of its referent – they must know, in a phrase, the 'logical grammar' of the name. To this extent, at least, names may be said to have public senses. But all names belonging to the same sortal category will have the same public sense, the distinctive contribution of any given individual name to the semantic content of sentences in which it occurs being exhausted by its referent.

It is important to note that Wittgenstein's view is not that a speaker's knowledge of the logical grammar of a name is to be 'read off' from their direct acquaintance with the nature of the referent, as some have claimed.[1] On the contrary, he is emphatic that the significance, or otherwise, of various different combinations of words is a feature of the symbols involved, which in this context means their public senses; maintaining that we cannot attempt to justify those combinations by appealing to features of their reference (3.317). His view is thus that understanding a name involves knowing its logical grammar (its public sense), as well as possessing some means or other of determining its reference; but different speakers may employ different means of determining the reference of a name and yet continue to communicate.[2]

If we took the above account to apply to the proper names of ordinary discourse, then we might allow the modes of thinking associated with the names in an idiolect to take the form of a

definite description, or to consist in a non-descriptive recognitional capacity, or even to take the form of a memory-based demonstrative (e.g. 'By "Mary" I mean that woman I met then'). Our thesis would be that in order to understand another's statement involving a name you would have to possess some such mode of thinking of the referent. But this need not be the same mode of thinking as that employed by the speaker, nor need you know what sense the other employs. Indeed the account might also be extended to cover all singular referring expressions including indexicals (with due deference to the differences in their logical grammar). The role of any such expression in communication would simply be to present its referent as a topic of discussion (mutual knowledge of reference sufficing for understanding) not to convey any particular way of thinking of it.[3]

In chapter 13 we shall defend just such a view of the semantics of ordinary proper names. For the present we shall continue our discussion of Wittgenstein's views, considering first some objections to our interpretation, which arise out of his remarks on the notion of knowledge of reference.

12.2   NAMES AND KNOWLEDGE

In the early sections of *TLP* where Wittgenstein talks of our knowledge of simple objects – the objects which form the referents of the simple names – he employs the verb 'kennen' rather than 'wissen' (2.0123–2.01231). Since this word can mean 'to be acquainted with' as well as 'to know', it might be suggested that he is here putting forward the thesis that knowledge of the reference of a simple name is a matter of direct acquaintance, rather than knowledge in virtue of a Fregean mode of thinking as my interpretation implies.[4]

The suggestion is weak however. It is sufficient to explain the use of the verb 'kennen' that Wittgenstein is here talking of knowledge of the internal (non-contingent) attributes of objects. He is emphasizing that in order to know an object (referent of a name) one must fully grasp its logical status and characteristics. So he is talking of knowledge of *what* an object *is*, rather than of knowledge *that* such and such is contingently true of it (compare 5.552). Now the showing/saying doctrine implies that this is not the sort of

knowledge which could be expressed in a significant proposition. So the choice of terminology may merely serve to stress the fact, since the object of 'kennen' can be non-propositional too. He could maintain perfectly consistently that one may refer to an object by virtue of possessing a recognitional capacity for it, or via a memory-based demonstrative. He could even hold that reference may be effected through some contingent description or other, or through some uniquely identifying essential characteristic.[5] All of these would be versions of the Fregean theory of how reference gets fixed.

In addition, the specific features of Wittgenstein's metaphysics would make a direct-acquaintance doctrine extremely hard to believe, for reasons similar to those we raised against the Fregean theory of thinking in chapter 9. For the simple objects of *TLP* exist necessarily, being constituents of all possible worlds (2.02–2.0272).[6] And whatever the merits of the Russellian doctrine of acquaintance in connection with names for fleeting mental states of the thinking subject (sense-data), it is wholly implausible if the names are to designate necessarily existing (and hence mind-independent) things. Since such entities obviously cannot themselves enter into the thinker's consciousness, we should have to suppose the acquaintance-relation (like Frege's grasping-relation) to obtain directly between a changing mind and a necessarily existing thing, this relation somehow being sufficient to explain the thinker's knowledge of what that thing is (which will emerge, for example, in what sentences they acknowledge to be significant). Besides remaining completely mysterious, this relation, too, would have to be removed from the thinker's conscious access.[7]

There is one further passage in *TLP* dealing with knowledge of objects which appears to cast doubt upon our quasi-Fregean interpretation. This is 4.243, which implies that one cannot understand two names without knowing whether their reference is the same or different. For such a thesis would surely be untenable if to understand a name were to associate with it some mode of determining its referent, such that there might be a number of different modes of thinking which determine the very same referent. For then one might understand two names, which express two different senses, without knowing that they have the same bearer; and it would be informative to learn that this is the case.[8]

In fact it is not merely our interpretation of the *TLP* doctrine of names for which 4.243 raises a problem. For the passage goes on to

apply the transparency thesis, not just to the proper names of a fully analysed language, but even to words in ordinary speech. It claims that if I understand a word of English and a word of German which in fact mean the same, then it is impossible for me not to know that they do. This is of course implausible. It is a matter of common experience that one can believe two words to mean the same although there are in fact sentence-constructions in which their use would be different, or possible circumstances in which the one would be appropriate but the other not. Therefore one might obviously doubt that two words, which one understands, mean the same when in fact they do. So in charity to Wittgenstein we should seek some other interpretation of 4.243.

One suggestion is that Wittgenstein does not use 'know' ('wissen') in quite its standard sense. This would receive some support from 5.5562, where he says that if we know on logical grounds that there must be elementary propositions, then everyone who understands propositions in their unanalysed form must know it. This is simply absurd if 'know' is used in such a way as to imply 'belief'. For whatever else may be the case, speakers of ordinary language neither believe nor disbelieve in the existence of a class of logically independent elementary propositions consisting of names of simple, necessarily existing objects. So Charity requires us, if we can, to interpret the *TLP* use of 'know' in such a way that knowledge does not have to involve belief.

Evidence for just such an interpretation may be found at 5.136–5.1362, where Wittgenstein implies that because we cannot *infer* future events from those of the present, we cannot have knowledge of the future either. (See also 6.36311.) This suggests that to know something, on Wittgenstein's view, might be to possess a logically necessary warrant for it – to be in a position to deduce, on the basis of other things which one knows (justifiably and truly believes), that it must be the case. This would of course explain why he thinks that ordinary speakers know of the existence of elementary propositions: for they are capable (if Wittgenstein is right) of deducing it. They have merely not yet constructed the necessary arguments. It would also explain his views on translation, assuming he held that translation-manuals can be constructed *a priori* by anyone who is bilingual. (And note that he does gloss his remark at 4.243, about knowing that an English and a German word mean the same, by saying that he must be *capable* of translating the one into the other.)

It might be objected that 5.1362 only really implies that a logical warrant for a truth is a necessary condition for knowledge of it, not that such a warrant is sufficient – it being left open that belief may also be required for knowledge. But in fact the final bracketed sentence of 5.1362 clinches our interpretation. This says that 'A knows that P' is senseless (sinnlos) if 'P' is a tautology. For recall from chapter 6 that 'senseless' is the term used to characterize the status of tautologies and contradictions, suggesting that 'A knows that P' will be tautological whenever 'P' itself is. And indeed this is explicitly stated at *PTLP* 5.04441. In which case, since it is obviously possible for 'P' to be a tautology without my believing it (as 6.1262 recognizes), knowledge must here be understood as not implying belief.[9]

The fact that Wittgenstein's use of 'know' is non-standard is of some help in defending our interpretation of the *TLP* doctrine of names against the transparency thesis expressed at 4.243, but it is still not sufficient. For there is no guarantee that someone who employs two names with different senses which in fact refer to the very same thing will always be able to establish that this is so *a priori*. Quite the contrary. So we cannot explain Wittgenstein's saying that anyone who understands two such names must know that they have the same referent simply by pointing out that by 'know' he means 'is in a position to deduce'. We need in addition to suppose that he has in mind a specific programme of analysis. We need to suppose that he believed that the names in a fully analysed language would have to be introduced by means of some general rule, rather in the way that the names of the numbers are introduced. For then anyone who understands two such systems of names, and who understands names from the different systems which in fact refer to the same things without believing that they do, will nevertheless be in a position to work out *a priori* that they do – just as someone who understands both 'XCIII' and '93' without realizing that they designate the same number must still be capable of working it out.

Is there then any reason to suppose Wittgenstein to have believed that the names of a fully analysed language would be introduced by a general rule? Notice first, that it somehow has to be guaranteed that there is a name for every single object if his substitutional account of quantification is to be adequate, according to which '∃xFx' is defined as the negation of the joint-negation of

all sentences which result from completing the predicate 'Fx' with a proper name (5.501, 5.52). This surely requires that those names be produced in accordance with some systematic rule. Furthermore, he certainly thought it possible for such a language to contain infinitely many names: see 4.2211 and 5.535. Indeed there is reason to think he believed that it actually would do so. For at 4.463 he speaks positively of logical space being infinite, and logical space is defined by the set of elementary propositions (3.42). So either there must be infinitely many names, or there are infinitely many modes of combining names (infinitely many different forms of elementary propositions). Yet it is hard to see how there could be infinitely many names in a language, for a non-Platonist like Wittgenstein, unless they were introduced by a general rule. A language surely could not contain infinitely many names by accident, so to speak.

Moreover, the model for elementary propositions which I shall explain in *MT* chapter 14 will have precisely this feature: infinitely many names introduced by a general rule. So it may be that Wittgenstein already had something like this model in mind when he wrote 4.243. At any rate, this will prove to be a likely enough possibility to save our interpretation of the *TLP* doctrine of names, especially given the intrinsic implausibility of the alternative: that he believed in direct acquaintance with a class of necessarily existing simple objects.

12.3   ORDINARY NAMES

Thus far we have been expounding Wittgenstein's view of simple names (the names which will mark the end-point of analysis – 3.202). Our question now is what view he took of our ordinary proper names. Did he, like Russell, espouse some version of description-theory, thus giving what I shall argue is a false account of their semantics? Or did he believe that there is some way of extending his doctrine of simple names to cover all proper names?

The evidence for a description-theory is apparently quite strong. For 3.24 tells us that any proposition which mentions a complex object must contain a description of it. Not only that, but the description must apparently enumerate all of its parts, since Wittgenstein says that a proposition about a complex entails propositions about its constituents. (Compare *NB* 62: 'To say that one

thing is part of another is always a tautology'.) So he appears not only to have held a description-theory of ordinary proper names, but also to have had quite specific views about the form which such a description would take: it would designate the individual parts of the complex object and describe their relations to one another.[10]

This would of course be absurd as an account of the modes of thought (senses) employed by individual speakers. When I think about Mary I certainly do not think of each of the individual parts of her body, let alone each cell and atom. Indeed Wittgenstein was aware of as much, since at *NB* 64 he remarks that he might refer to a particular watch without having the least knowledge of a wheel which is one of its components. So the thesis of 3.24 would certainly be unacceptable as an account of the senses which ordinary proper names possess. But then since he thinks that differences amongst modes of determining the same reference belong to the realm of the inessential in language, he would hardly have devoted an important paragraph to them anyway. Rather, we should treat 3.24 as an account of the semantic content of an ordinary name.

We argued above that the *TLP* view is that the semantic content of a name is simply the object for which it stands, knowledge of which object is being talked about sufficing for understanding. Let us suppose that he wished such an account to apply to the proper names of ordinary language. Then there need be no conflict here if he also held a thesis of essentiality of composition. For in that case knowledge of the parts and their arrangement would be knowledge of something which is, necessarily, the object talked about. And conversely, knowledge of the reference of the name would be knowledge of something which is, necessarily, made up of those parts. Indeed a proposition containing a proper name would be logically equivalent to a proposition containing a description of the parts of the bearer of the name, and so both would, on the *TLP* account of the semantic content, say the very same thing.

The thesis of essentiality of composition can easily seem plausible in its own right. For consider a particular physical artefact, say an individual table. Could this very table have been made out of different parts? Could it have existed if its parts had never existed? Surely not. For what, in that case, would have made it true that it was this very table which existed rather than another? Of course it would hardly be plausible to maintain that every single part of an object is essential to it, for the table could surely have existed had a

different piece of wood been used for one of its legs. And we also need to make some provision for the replacement of parts over time. What is perhaps essential to the individual table is that it should have been made up of most of the parts from which it was originally constructed, arranged in something like the way in which they were.[11]

The *TLP* doctrine of ordinary proper names might then be seen as follows. Speakers will employ some means of determining the reference of any name which they understand. These modes of thinking may vary from person to person, and their discovery and description would be the business of psychology. From the point of view of successful communication all that matters is the reference: so long as speakers know themselves to be speaking of the very same things they will understand one another. But in virtue of the thesis of essentiality of composition for complex objects, each such name will be logically equivalent to a description of the composition of its referent. Consequently sentences containing such a description will be logically equivalent to the corresponding sentences which contain the ordinary proper names. So they will say the very same things, and the former may be regarded as an analysis of the latter.

Such an account cannot be generally acceptable however. For essentiality of composition is not indefinitely transitive, nor does it apply to all categories of object. Thus although it may be essential to this table that it should have been made out of the pieces of wood of which it was, it could surely have consisted of quite different atoms and molecules. For suppose that the trees which had supplied the planks had been fed on nutrients consistng of qualitatively similar but numerically distinct molecules throughout their lives. Then the table would still have consisted of the very same pieces of wood (and indeed the planks would still have derived from the very same trees – in the case of living things it is their point of origin, not their composition, which is essential to their identity),[12] and would thus still have been the very same, despite consisting of different microscopic parts. So a sentence involving a name for that table would not, after all, be logically equivalent to a sentence enumerating its simple parts.

It might be doubted whether essentiality of composition is really necessary to Wittgenstein's case. For suppose that ordinary proper names are rigid designators, as Kripke and others have argued, referring to the same individuals with respect to all possible worlds.

And suppose that their analyses in *TLP* employed descriptions of parts having the form 'The thing which is in fact made up of the following parts . . .', the role of the 'in fact' being to index the description to its reference in the actual world. Then such a description will, if accurate, have the same reference as the corresponding name with respect to all possible worlds, the two then being logically equivalent.

This suggestion is an advance on the previous one, successfully reconciling a form of description-theory of names with the thesis that the semantic content of an ordinary name is exhausted by its bearer. Yet if we suppose Wittgenstein to have adopted either it or the previous suggestion, then he must be mistaken in his view that the relationship between the *analysans* containing the ordinary name and the *analysandum* enumerating the parts of its referent would be a logical (tautologous) one, and hence one which for him must be dependent upon the symbols alone (6.113, 6.126). For it is not in virtue of being the symbol which it is (having the sense which it does) that a proper name will be equivalent to a world-indexed description accurately describing the component parts of its referent. Rather, this will be true in virtue of the nature of its reference. Nor could such a truth be known *a priori*, through reflection on sense alone. So what Wittgenstein needs is to find a place for a distinctively metaphysical rather than narrowly conceptual species of necessity.[13] Now I shall argue in *MT* chapter 3 that there is nothing in his approach to metaphysics in general which stands in the way of his recognizing the category of metaphysical necessity. But it would of course mean that his programme of analysis, as well as his attempt to reduce all necessity to tautology, would have to be abandoned.

There is therefore no wholly satisfactory way of interpreting Wittgenstein's version of description-theory for ordinary names. Construed as a theory of sense it is manifestly absurd. And although construed as a theory of semantic content it may be in one respect acceptable, it nevertheless requires the backing of a distinction between metaphysical and conceptual necessity, which would put it entirely at odds with the programme of analysis within which the theory itself is placed. As to the question what might have motivated him to embrace a form of description-theory of any sort, the answer will have to wait on my investigation in *MT* of the *TLP* programme of analysis and the argument to Simples.

12.4   IDENTITY

We may now see how the above ideas fit together in the *TLP* treatment of identity. If true identity-statements involving two simple names are both necessary and knowable *a priori*, and if all ordinary proper names are analysable into a description of the simple component parts of their referents, then the identity-sign will only ever figure significantly in sentences where it occurs within the scope of a quantifier. What Wittgenstein notices, and explains at 5.53–5.534, is that it is then possible to do without such a sign altogether. Its use can rather be absorbed into the quantifier notation, by means of the convention that different variables within the scope of a quantifier are always to be replaced by names for different things. Thus 'b = The F', where 'b' is an ordinary proper name, will in fact have the form '$\exists x(Gx \ \& \ \forall y(Gy \rightarrow y = The \ F))$', where 'Gx' is a description of the simple component parts of b. And this in turn, employing the above convention, may be expressed as '$\exists x(Gx \ \& \ (\exists xGx \rightarrow The \ F \ is \ G) \ \& \ -\exists x\exists y(Gx \ \& \ Gy))$'. So as Wittgenstein remarks at 5.533, the identity-sign would not be an essential ingredient in a conceptual notation (Begriffsschrift), thus giving sense to the claim that identity is not a relation (5.5301).[14]

How much of this could survive our excision of the *TLP* claim that ordinary proper names may be analysed into a description of component parts? Clearly it would no longer be possible to say that the identity-sign will only ever occur significantly within the scope of a quantifier, and so the argument for the inessential nature of such a sign would collapse. But a slightly weaker thesis might remain, as we shall see in a moment.

Supposing that the semantic content of an ordinary name may be identified with its bearer (as we shall argue in the next chapter that it should) then how ought we to respond to Frege's original argument for his full-blown theory, premised upon the informativeness of identity-statements? Clearly we must deny that the cognitive content (the sense) of such statements will in general be intersubjective. Rather, since different speakers may associate different senses with the names involved, the information to be gleaned from the truth of an identity-statement will vary from person to person. Yet since we are agreeing with Frege that names at least have idiolectic senses, we can hold on to his insight that it is only possible to explain the differing cognitive content of 'a = a' and

'a = b' if we accept that names express modes of thinking in addition to possessing a referent.

We should, nevertheless, be committed to the claim that there is no difference in semantic content (Sinn) between 'a = a' and 'a = b'. And this can easily seem counter-intuitive. For if I assert that Jekyll is Hyde, have I not said something different from when I assert that Jekyll is Jekyll? Indeed if you misheard me, and took me to be saying that Jekyll is Jekyll, would you not have misunderstood me? Since we are committed to answering these questions in the negative, we need somehow to explain away the temptation to think the opposite. Here the familiar distinction between semantics and pragmatics can come to our aid – the distinction being between what speakers literally and soberly say, and what they would be understood to be trying to communicate in saying what they do. On the semantic level there is no difference, I claim, between 'Jekyll is Hyde' and 'Jekyll is Jekyll'. But obviously what someone would be trying to communicate by asserting the former would differ from what, if anything, they would be trying to communicate in asserting the latter. An identity-statement is only ever made, in general, when the speaker presumes that their hearer will attach different senses to the names involved. And what, pragmatically, they will be trying to communicate is that both of those modes of thinking (whatever they are – the speaker need have no precise knowledge of them) in fact pick out one and the same individual.[15]

Returning now to the question of the role of the identity–sign on such a view, the point to notice is that it will only ever figure in sentences whose semantic content differs from that of 'a = a' (or '–(a = a)') when it occurs within the scope of a quantifier. This is not quite the same as saying, with Wittgenstein, that the identity-sign is dispensable. For in any language which allows there to be names with different modes of determining what may be the same referent, we shall have need of a sign to express such a fact. But its usefulness will be confined to the cognitive contents expressible within the idiolects of particular speakers. The identity-sign will make no distinctive contribution to the semantic (literally communicable) content of sentences.

lations, which can constitute a state of affairs. And the corresponding semantic claim would merely be that no proper name or predicative expression can constitute a sentence by itself.

12 Indeed it has been claimed that since all the links in the chain serve equally to hold it together, Wittgenstein is here expressing the view that Simples are neither individuals nor universals, but some unique category of entity containing elements of both. (Peter Long put this view to me in correspondence.) The trouble with this suggestion is that it is impossible to see what would motivate the resulting doctrine.

13 It had been briefly mentioned at 1.21.

14 This is why Wittgenstein's talk of states of affairs being configurations of objects must be metaphorical – see note 6 above.

15 Yet it still leaves us with entailment-relations between elementary propositions. Thus 'abc' will imply 'cba', and 'abc & cde' will entail 'bcd'. I owe this point to Tim Williamson.

16 See Stenius (1975).

17 See Wittgenstein (1973), p. 23.

18 Anscombe in her (1959), ch. 7, combines a narrow reading of 'name' with the thesis that the forms of elementary propositions are logical ones. She can do this because she thinks that amongst the names within an elementary proposition will be names of property and relation tokens. But such an interpretation faces overwhelming difficulties, most notably over the supposed necessary existence of Simples (see *MT* ch.8) and the possibility of falsehood (see ch. 15 of this work).

19 Griffin endorses such an interpretation. See his (1964), p. 13ff. and p. 89ff.

A plausible account of the genesis of the terminology would be as follows. In the 'Notes on Logic' Wittgenstein speaks of predicates and relational expressions as 'forms' because there is a sense in which they carry with them the form of a sentence, in a way that proper names do not. (This had been one of the strands in Frege's metaphor of the 'incompleteness' of predicates – see my 1983b.) He also thinks that properties and relations are all 'copulae' – i.e. that there are no logical forms of the sort Russell believed in (see *NB* 120–1). Then in *TLP*, when he moves to the view that elementary propositions consist only of proper names, the 'form' of a sentence has become the possibility of combining names in a given way, with different such modes of combination signifying different relations between objects.

20 C.f. *NB* 70: 'The watch is sitting on the table is nonsense!' (The German says 'sinnlos', usually translated as 'senseless'. But Wittgenstein obviously does not mean that 'The watch is sitting on the table' is either a tautology or a contradiction!) Frege had notoriously believed that in a properly constructed language predicates and relational expressions would be defined over all objects, so that truth-conditions would have to be fixed for 'Seven is heavier than five' – see his (1984), p. 148 and *BLA* 56. Wittgenstein on the other hand feels that

these examples show that the idea of a Begriffsschrift has not been carried far enough. He thinks that in a properly constructed, fully analysed, language its very syntactic structures would prevent us from formulating sentences such as these.

21 See Stenius (1960), p. 126.

22 For example, the inference: $\forall x(abx \rightarrow edx)$, abc $\vdash$ edc, treats the sentence 'abc' as having the form 'Fc'.

Notice that we can respond as we have done in this paragraph to an argument based upon 4.1211, which says that the proposition 'fb' shows that the object b occurs in its Sinn. It does not follow from this that there are any elementary propositions consisting only of a name and a predicate.

23 This argument is made much of by Hintikka and Hintikka. See their (1986), pp. 35–7.

24 Notice that this qualifying remark was added late to *TLP*, not occurring after the otherwise similar passage in *PTLP* (4.1022331).

25 Note that Wittgenstein's preparedness to talk here about internal relations between properties need not commit him to the existence of universals, but only to the existence of concepts (senses) and property-tokens. See ch. 15 for my account of the *TLP* semantic ontology as including only individuals and property- and relation-tokens.

26 Note that even if 'Bedeutung' in this passage means 'reference' it still does not commit Wittgenstein to the view that predicates have reference. Rather, it could be read as saying that to attempt to characterize the difference between proper names and predicates by saying that they have different kinds of referent (as Frege does) is to make the distinction between them too slight.

27 See Sainsbury (1979), pp. 305–7.

28 Again this passage is strongly emphasized by Hintikka and Hintikka (1986), pp. 32–3.

29 Virtually every commentator who adopts the wide reading mentions this passage.

30 See for example the evidence assembled by Hintikka and Hintikka in their (1986), ch. 2.

CHAPTER 12   NAMES, KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY

1 This is the view to which Baker and Hacker are committed, since they see *TLP* as endorsing what they call 'The Augustinian Picture of Language'. See their (1980), pp. 36–41 and 57–9, and my critique in my (1984a).

2 Note that this combination of views enables us to rebut the criticisms made by the later Wittgenstein at *PI* 40, which many have taken to be directed against the *TLP* view of names. To say that the distinctive semantic content of any given name is exhausted by its reference is not

at all to confuse its meaning with its bearer. On the contrary, understanding a name will also mean knowing its logical grammar. And where a name refers to a temporally existing thing, part of understanding it will mean knowing that the name can still be used to refer to that thing even after the latter has ceased to exist.

3 Indexicals receive no special mention in *TLP*. It seems to be assumed either that they are dispensable, or that they do not differ significantly from proper names. Neither thesis might seem very plausible in the light of the work which has been done on indexicals over the last decade. (See in particular Perry, 1977 and 1979, and Evans, 1982.) But recall that Wittgenstein's primary concern is with semantic content, whereas both the indispensability and many of the distinctive features of indexicals relate to their role in human cognition. Abstracting from the undoubted differences in logical grammar, Wittgenstein is in fact correct that names and indexicals do not differ in semantic content. For in both cases knowledge of reference suffices for understanding.

On this issue I disagree with Evans, who argues that in order to understand a statement involving an indexical you have to have, yourself, a suitable indexical thought about the referent (see his, 1982, ch. 9). This seems to me to be both intuitively implausible and unmotivated. Consider the following example. Imagine a security guard in a museum sitting outside a room in which a recently acquired piece of sculpture is the only work on show. She herself has not seen the sculpture, and cannot see it from where she sits, but she knows quite a lot about it: she knows what it depicts, who the artist was, and how much it cost the museum. Now suppose she overhears a visitor say as he enters the room, 'That sculpture ought never to have been purchased'. Does she not understand this remark? Surely she does: she knows which thing the visitor is talking about, and what he is saying about it. I can see no motive for denying understanding in a case such as this.

4 This is the way in which Anscombe takes it. See her (1959), p. 26.

5 Ishiguro goes wrong in claiming that the simple objects of *TLP* cannot be referred to by description. (See her, 1969, p. 44.) It is true that 3.221 tells us that objects can only be named, and that 3.261 says that names cannot be anatomized by means of definitions. But these remarks should be understood as relating to the semantic content of simple names, not to their idiolectic senses. Since objects are simple, there is no contentful description which can convey what they are. For not being made up out of parts, one cannot analyse the semantic content of their names by means of a description of the mode of their construction out of parts, as one can in the case of ordinary names (see the next section). And of course an analysis which tried to specify the object by means of an essential attribute of it would fail to have semantic content, whereas one which employed some contingent feature of it would for that very reason fail as an analysis, since

correctness of analysis requires logical equivalence. But it does not follow that people cannot think of simple objects by means of descriptions of one or other of these kinds.

What is true, is that not all simple names can have senses expressible as definite descriptions, because of Wittgenstein's view that there must be some genuinely singular (non-descriptive) propositions. On this see *MT* chs. 10 and 12. Rather, the senses of at least some simple names will have to consist in a recognitional capacity or memory-based demonstrative.

6 This interpretation will be substantiated in *MT* ch. 8.

7 In more detail: we can here set a dilemma parallel to the one we set Frege. Either the acquaintance-relation obtains in virtue of the thinker's conscious states, which derive their causal powers from the object of acquaintance – in which case our knowledge of the essential features of an object would have to be caused by non-necessary properties of it. Or the acquaintance-relation is a bare one – in which case the thinker will have no immediate knowledge of its obtaining, and like anyone else will have to infer that it does from their own behaviour.

8 It is clear that the names in question at 4.243 are genuine (logically proper) ones. For the remark occurs within a sequence of passages concerned with elementary propositions (4.21–4.25).

9 It is worth noting that *TLP* employs another epistemic term besides 'know' in a non-belief-involving sense. Thus at 4.464 and 5.525 the word 'certain' is used in an account of objective probability, to contrast with 'possible' and 'impossible'. On this usage all tautologies are certain, irrespective of whether or not anyone believes in their tautological status.

10 Griffin argues convincingly that analysis, on the *TLP* conception, involves defining terms for complexes (the latter being ordinary physical objects) into arrangements of component physical parts. See his (1964), pp. 42–50.

11 This is one possibility for what Wittgenstein has in mind at 3.24, when he says that propositions containing a sign for a complex will have a degree of indeterminacy. Perhaps he is thinking that their analysis will take the form 'The thing which contains most of the following parts arranged in something like the following manner. . .'. Other possibilities will be considered in *MT*.

12 In this I follow Kripke. See his (1980), pp. 112–15.

13 We owe it to Kripke that we are now able to see this distinction so clearly. See his (1980).

14 For a full exposition and discussion of Wittgenstein's views on identity, see White (1978).

Note that Wittgenstein's insistence that identity is *not* a relation between objects need not be taken to suggest that other relational expressions *do* serve to refer to relations. Rather, what is distinctive about the identity-sign is that not even a relation-token figures in the truth-conditions of sentences containing it. (What makes an identity-

statement true is an object, not a state of affairs.) See note 15 below, as well as chs. 15 and 16 where a non-referential semantics for predicative expressions is outlined.

15 This way of handling identity-statements is similar to that suggested by Salmon (1986) pp. 78–9, as well as having much in common with Morris (1984). But Morris thinks that what I call the pragmatic function of identity-statements should be used to elucidate their content. I am unconvinced by his arguments against what he calls the 'objectual analysis', which holds that the content of an identity-statement concerns the referents of the names involved. To endorse this is not necessarily to claim that identity is a genuine relation, nor that what makes an identity-statement true is a special sort of fact, namely an object being self-identical. For as will we shall see in ch. 16, I deny that *any* relational expressions serve to refer to relations. Rather they express rules for mapping the objects referred to onto truth-values. In the case of the identity-sign, the rule is that an atomic sentence containing it is true if and only if the objects referred to on either side of it are one and the same. What is distinctive about the identity-sign, as against genuine relational expressions, is that there is no relation-token involved in its truth-condition, but simply an object.

16 Note that even if we were wrong in arguing in the last chapter that 'name' in *TLP* means 'proper name', this interpretation would remain unaffected. It would merely follow that the doctrine should be extended more widely, to cover predicates and relational expressions as well.

CHAPTER 13   PROPER NAME SEMANTICS

1 Versions of this theory have been defended by Searle (1958) and by Dummett (1973), pp. 95–102. See also *PI* 79.

2 Russell certainly held a shifting-sense theory, though it is doubtful whether he requires mutual knowledge of sense for successful communication. See his (1917), p. 158.

3 I first developed an example of this kind in my (1983a).

4 See 'On Sense and Reference' (for example in Frege, 1984), where the bulk of the paper is taken up with this issue.

5 Of course Mary's belief is not *about* the mode of thinking α, but is expressed by means of it.
    This way of handling belief-sentences is very similar to that given by Salmon (1986), pp. 111ff., though arrived at independently. However, Salmon does not notice the distinction between the belief-acquisitive and explanatory perspectives on belief-description. And although it is clear from the context of his discussion that he is concerned with descriptions of belief from the explanatory standpoint, he makes no real attempt to show how a name can be used to convey something about the believer's mode of thinking, as manifestly it can. In fact his

proposal is adequate only to express the content of belief-ascriptions made from the belief-acquisitive perspective, where we have no interest in the believer's mode of thinking. It is clear, moreover, that Salmon would want to deny (what I have asserted) that it is the mode of thinking which a believer associates with a name which determines the reference which it has for them.

6 Hence the difficulties Kripke notices in his (1979). In my view the correct solution to his puzzle is that the principle of Disquotation (if A is prepared to assert 'P' then A believes that P) is only fully adequate for descriptions of belief from the belief-acquisitive standpoint. Where our interest is explanatory we may have to do more to characterize A's understanding of any names involved.

7 So when Kripke presses the question 'Does Pierre, or does he not, believe that London is pretty?' (Margalit, 1979, p. 259), the correct response is that both of these reports can serve as adequate characterizations of (non-contradictory) beliefs, when set against the background of the story Kripke has told us.

8 I focus here on the use of bearerless names in factual discourse, leaving to one side the problem of names in fiction. On this see Evans (1982), ch. 10.

9 For present purposes it matters little whether or not 'exists' is ever a predicate.

10 Compare *PI* 79: 'If we are told "N did not exist" we do ask: "What do you mean? Do you want to say . . . or . . . etc.?"'

11 In this much, at least, I agree with Donnellan (1974).

12 Perhaps Noonan (1979) holds such a combination of views, as does Searle (1983). However Searle seems prepared to allow that speakers' modes of determining the reference of a name can form part of the semantic (communicated) content of sentences containing that name (ibid. pp. 256 and 260). Moreover he is sloppy about what does and what does not belong to the cognitive content of thoughts employing names, making no real attempt to distinguish between what belongs to that content and what is implied by it (on which see the discussion in the final section of this chapter).

13 See Donnellan (1972) and (1974), Kripke (1980), and many others.

14 This is Evans' view. See his (1982), ch. 11.

15 At this point causal theorists might attempt to deploy the distinction between what a speaker literally says and what they mean, claiming that the external causal chain is part of a theory of literal saying. But this is not a plausible move for them to make. It would, for example, be plainly crazy to base a semantics for words like 'carburettor' on what it is about a speaker's use of that word which makes it true that they have said that there is a fault in the carburettor, when what they meant is that there is a fault in the exhaust system.

16 See Kripke (1980). In the preface Kripke tries to distance his views on names from the question of their behaviour in modal discourse, claiming that the issue of rigidity arises in connection with simple