Being Called Names: Attributive Calling Accounts of Proper Names

Historically, debates about the nature of proper names have been about whether we should treat them as devices of reference or as disguised definite descriptions. More recently, however, the debate centers around treating them as devices of reference or as predicates. There are different views about the nature of name-predicates. At least one version of predicativism relies on analyzing name-predicates as involving the concept of being called by a name – calling accounts. Some have offered meta-linguistic calling accounts of the nature of such predicates, but such accounts are subject to criticism on the grounds of failing to be informative. An alternative calling account, the attributive account, most fully developed by Fara, does not fall prey to this objection, on the face of it. However, it is not clear that it is informative in any substantive sense. It also rests on a mistaken conception of the nature of meta-linguistic actions that itself suggests another way to understand proper names.

1. Introduction

There are several predicative accounts of names that analyze their meanings in terms of being called by a name. Many of these calling accounts analyze those predicates as meta-linguistic predicates (Kneale 1962; Katz 2001). However, there is now an alternative attributive calling account due to Fara (2011a, 2011b, 2015).¹ Attributive calling accounts are claimed to escape the problems afflicting standard meta-linguistic analyses, because the calling relation itself is not understood as meta-linguistic. Instead, it is understood as attributive. Distinguishing between meta-linguistic and attributive notions of calling is supposed to disperse with the common objection to calling accounts, specifically, Kripke’s objection that these kinds of accounts cannot be informative. However, while such accounts may be informative in some superficial sense, they do not in fact substantively increase our

¹ Fara herself credits the original attributive view to Burge, but it is only in Fara’s work that it receives a full development, and therefore, we will focus on her version of the attributive account.
understanding of acts of naming. Two separate objections to the most well-developed of an attributive account show that it cannot be the correct account of acts of naming. A different account is proposed, one based on understanding acts of naming as performative meta-linguistic acts.

2. Names as Predicates

The motives for treating names as predicates are varied, but one classical reason comes from Quine’s “On What There Is” (1953): names should be treated as predicates because doing so allows us to avoid the traditional problems associated with analyzing the meaning of empty names. Those traditional problems arose in the context of taking names to be expressions that have only referents – that this exhausts their meaning. Clearly empty names challenge this view, since it predicts that these names would be meaningless. If we treat them as predicates, however, then their meaning need not be exhausted by having a referent. Instead, they can be fully meaningful expressions, since they would be expressing properties, and therefore, would not require the existence of a referent to give them meaning. However, at least in this article, Quine never develops this suggestion in any detail, and we are left wondering what the meaning of name, if it is to be treated as that of a predicate, might be.

One possible Moorean answer is that the meaning of each name is equivalent to that of a simple, un-analyzable predicate, one for each named individual in a domain of discourse. But this answer faces the same problems that any primitivist theory of any other concept faces. As an explanation, it is rather unsatisfying.

\[2\] Of course, we do have empty predicates in the language as well, but we’ll ignore that for the purposes at hand.
Most predicativists, however, would deny that names are predicates in this sense, in the sense of having only one individual as their extension, and would also reject a primitivist theory. These theorists have a different motivation for treating names as predicates than Quine did. For these theorists, the linguistic evidence is that names do in fact function like predicates (Burge, 1973; Elbourne, 2005; Elgardo, 2002; Fara, 2015; Geurts, 1997; Gray 2013; Izumi, 2013; Larson and Segal, 1995; Matushansky, 2008; Pietroski, 2010; Sawyer, 2010; Sloat 1969). For instance, consider the sentence ‘Some Franks are real chatterboxes, while some other Franks are true bookworms’. Sentences like this show that names can take on determiners, and that predicativists take as evidence that they are predicates, that they play more than a mere simple referential role in the language – at least grammatically.³

Even on the previous view, however, there is still the issue of giving an analysis of the meaning of such name-predicates. One common answer, a calling approach, is provided by a meta-linguistic analysis, according to which the meaning of a name like 'Tyler' is analyzed in terms of what it is to be called ‘Tyler’. So the meaning of the name ‘Tyler’ is given by the meaning expressed by a sentence something like this: x is called ‘Tyler’. This answer, however, faces Kripke's objection that it is uninformative (1980: 68-70); an analysis of the meaning of any expression ought to be informative in the sense that it ought not to be tautologous; it must not already encode an understanding of the meaning of the expression being analyzed.

The meta-linguistic approach does not satisfy Kripke's criterion for being informative, since it mentions the name itself in its application condition.⁴ To illustrate its inadequacy,

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³ Among predicativists, there are disagreements about how to understand the standard uses of names, when they occur without determiners, but this debate does not concern us here.
⁴ We might think that an account that is tautologous might still determine a name's
Kripke applies this approach to the particular expression 'quark' (1980: 69). On Kripke's interpretation, the meta-linguistic analysis of the meaning of 'quark' is just this: the expression 'quark' picks out those things we call 'quark'. But while a speaker understanding the expression 'called' in the object language might recognize this as a truth, they would still not understand or be able to use the expression 'quark' unless they were already familiar with this expression. Kripke therefore concludes that a meta-linguistic account cannot give us any way of understanding the meaning of a name that is not tautologous. And, therefore, gives us no means for determining that name's reference.

A third approach, another calling theory of names, is the attributive account. According to this account, a name's meaning likewise depends – as in the meta-linguistic account – on a calling relation, but on one that is not itself meta-linguistic. In fact, this other calling relation is understood on the model of property attribution (Fara, 2015). For instance, someone can be called stupid, in the sense of having the property of failing to be intelligent. That is, we can call people names – say derogatory things about them – by attributing to them the property expressed by a particular expression. This, of course, is what is meant by children crying out: Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me. To be called Fred, on an attributive account of naming, is to be attributed the property of being Fred. Because the meaning of a name on attributive account is not analyzed meta-linguistically, it can avoid Kripke's circularity objection. Furthermore, If the account is intuitively plausible, it also offers a strong motivation for thinking of names as predicates.
Our examination of the attributive account of names, then, will involve investigating whether it is fully informative in the Kripkean sense. Second, we will examine whether an attributive notion of calling is the appropriate notion for understanding names or acts of naming.

3. Two Notions of Calling

As we’ve seen, on the attributive view, it is a mistake to understand the expression ‘being called x’ in one and only one sense, the meta-linguistic sense, since calling can also be understood in an attributive fashion. Several examples of this attributive understanding are offered in Fara’s defense (2011b) of the attributive view, which we will now turn to examining.

One example that illustrates how we might call some individual something in an attributive sense relies on adjectives. For instance, we might say that

(1) Maude was called ‘stupid’.

is true, but still maintain that it is false that

(2) Maude was called stupid.

This is because it might be the case that Maude has the expression ‘stupid’ applied to her as an ironic nickname as in

(3) Hey, stupid, help me with my calculus homework.

Or, she might also literally have the property of stupidity attributed to her as someone might do by saying

(4) That stupid Maude caused me to fail my calculus class.

That is, Maude might be called stupid but fail to be addressed using the word ‘stupid’.
We can further illustrate the different notions of calling involved in these examples by noting that a person might not mind being addressed as stupid, but would mind having the property of stupidity attributed to her. As Fara writes, this person might make her opinions known by uttering the sentence:

(5) You can call me ‘stupid’, just don’t call me stupid.

The calling relation in the first part of this utterance is the familiar meta-linguistic notion, holding between a person and a linguistic symbol, while the calling relation in the second part is a different, attributive relation, holding between a person and a property.\(^5\)

Now that we have established that there are, in fact, different notions of calling we can invoke, it is incumbent upon us to examine whether the other attributive notion of calling carries over to the case of proper names. Again, turning to some examples from Fara, while it might be true that

(6) Quine was called Willard,

as in Quine has the property of being a Willard, perhaps in virtue of its being written on his birth certificate or some such thing, nevertheless the following sentence might be false:

(7) Quine was called ‘Willard’.

The first use is supposed to indicate that we know that Quine’s name is in fact Willard, but what we do not know is whether Quine was ever addressed using the name ‘Willard’. Perhaps he was always called by the name ‘Will’ by his parents. If the only notion of calling was the meta-linguistic notion, that is, if (6) were ill-formed, as Kripke seems to suppose, or if (6) and (7) were merely different formulations of the same point, then the observed discrepancy in the truth of those sentences should not be possible, but in fact, the examples

\(^5\) Bach (2002) also points out this distinction, but does not develop the view in the detail that Fara does.
we just looked at show that it is. To be called Willard is not simply a matter of being addressed as ‘Willard’, since despite the fact that Quine’s name was ‘Willard’, it could still fail to be an expression others use to address him.

In the previous examples, the being-addressed-as relation is the relation that properly delineates the meta-linguistic notion of calling, something anyone can do with whatever expression they choose at anytime they like. To call in this sense is to assign someone or something to a linguistic item arbitrarily as its semantic value, and perhaps as a one-time act. However, naming is decidedly not like this, as our previous examples illustrate. Quine, for instance, got his name in virtue of someone or other having a certain special authoritative relation to him, such as his parents might have to him. Parents are in the position of being able to make it true that Quine is called Willard, but not necessarily that Quine is called by the name ‘Willard’. In other words, Quine’s parents cannot guarantee that Quine will be addressed using the name ‘Willard’ in the object language, but they do make it true that Quine is, in fact, Willard.

There is a difference then between having a name, and being addressed using that name. One of these is the standard meta-linguistic notion, the other is one of property attribution – the attributive use. In other words, naming is not a matter of meta-linguistic actions, but rather a matter of property attribution – calling in the attributive sense is to relate someone or something to a property, not a linguistic item.

4. The Informativeness of the Attributive Account

Suppose that there is an attributive notion of calling. And suppose being called by a certain name should be understood on this model. If correct, then Kripke’s objections are no longer sound precisely because he does not recognize any notion of calling that is not itself meta-
linguistic. But as we saw, we can distinguish different notions of calling in natural language, with the attributive notion, that finds its home most naturally with respect to the use of adjectives like 'stupid'. Once we see that there is an attributive use of proper names, we can give an informative account of the meaning of a name using this relation, rather than the first, meta-linguistic relation. In fact, Fara, an attributive theorist, offers us a way, in fact the only explicitly developed way, of illustrating how such accounts are informative by introducing the following schema

'N' is true of an object just in case that object is called N

as a general application condition for proper names, on which the notion of calling on the right-hand side of the schema should be understood in the attributive sense.

To illustrate, this schema entails, for instance, that the name 'Tyler' is true of an object just in case that object is called Tyler. Specific to the naming case, the schema licenses a type of disquotation principle such that, if an object is named ‘N’, then that object is, in fact, N. For instance, if an object is called ‘Tyler’, then that object is in fact Tyler.

We can see that the schema is informative by showing that the substitution of other predicates, like the previously discussed 'stupid', result in the schema being false, thereby proving that the schema is informative. According to Fara, “if the being-called condition for the applicability of names as predicates were trivially true, then analogous schemata for other predicates would be trivially true.” But, of course, this is false. Consider again the

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There are several issues here that need to be clarified about the relation between informativeness and falsifiability before we can properly assess the attributive schema. First, the attributivist cannot be committed to it as a necessary and sufficient condition for informativeness, since the necessity of identity claims prove that falsifiability is not necessary for a claim to be informative. Furthermore, it is far from clear that falsifiability is the correct criterion for evaluating the informativeness of accounts of the meanings of expressions. For instance, we could know that a claim is falsifiable without fully
case of the predicate 'stupid'. In that case the schema yields the result that 'stupid' is true of an object – so that the object is stupid – just in case it is called stupid. And, of course, this is not only falsifiable, but false. Some stupid individuals are not called stupid, and some individuals are called stupid even though they are not.

Of course, whether an object is called $N$ is itself dependent on our linguistic practices: the fact that someone possesses the property of being called Tyler, for example, holds only because that individual was, at some point, dubbed using the name 'Tyler'. Still, even if being called Tyler, for example, is true of an individual in virtue of our naming practices, this does not make the condition meta-linguistic. To stress the point once again, this is because being Tyler does not involve being related to a linguistic symbol, but a certain property – that of being Tyler. That is, if your name is ‘Tyler’, then you could not fail to be Tyler.

Attributive accounts of the meaning of a name-predicate, then, have the resources to respond to Kripke, since on this view, relying on the attributive notion of calling in order to give the meaning of a name-predicate is not tautologous in the way it is in when we understand that relation purely meta-linguistically. We can see this if we subscribe to Fara’s schema as a condition for name applications, since as we just saw, it is indeed falsifiable, and therefore, informative.

understanding the content of the claim itself, as shown by Kripke's example of a speaker who understands the concept of calling can understand that the claim that quarks are called ‘quarks’ without thereby coming to know the meaning of the expression 'quark'. So not only does the condition fail to be necessary, it may not even be a sufficient condition for understanding the meaning of an expression. Relatedly, it is unclear whether we should understand informative and substantive as interchangeable. Instead, we might think of a substantive truth as a metaphysical matter, while informativeness is an epistemic matter. However, it is not my aim to engage this matter directly here.
5. More Notions of Calling

There are notions of calling that are neither meta-linguistic, nor attributive. Consider for instance the fact that my dog’s name is ‘Jackson’, but I address him using the expression ‘J’. Still, even though I might address him as ‘J’ and while I may have attributed the property of being Jackson to him in naming him using the expression ‘Jackson’, I might also perform callings besides the previous two kinds, as I do when I call out ‘Jackson’ to induce him to come inside.

The notion of calling in play here is that of performing a certain action – that of using Jackson’s name in order to induce a certain behavior in him. Note that, of course, we could felicitously report on that kind of calling using both of the following sentences:

(8) I called ‘Jackson’ to get him inside.\(^7\)

(9) I called Jackson to get inside.

In sentence (8), a speaker, namely myself, addresses my dog using the name ‘Jackson’. I report on what I did or said by mentioning an expression, and that mentioning of that expression is done in order to achieve a certain effect – that of getting my dog to come inside. In contrast, in sentence (9), we are simply reporting on an act with no commitment about how it is performed – about how Jackson is ordered or enticed to come inside.

Think of the use of calling in sentence (8) as the inducive use of calling. Note that to accomplish the purpose of inducive calling, we might do any number of things that may or may not involve the name ‘Jackson’. Of course, I may use the name in order to accomplish my inducive goals, but I may also simply use the word ‘come’ to do so, or perhaps simply the word ‘in’.

\(^7\) I enclose the name ‘Jackson’ in double quotes here to indicate that we are speaking of an actual tokening of the word by a speaker in the object language.
That there is a third notion of calling shows that an assimilation of naming to an act of property attribution may be mistaken, since there are not merely two notions of calling, but at least three, and perhaps more. Because there are more than two notions of calling, we might be led to question whether naming might not be captured by yet another, as of yet, undiscovered notion of calling. The argument we’ve seen for treating name-calling as acts of property attribution, which assimilates acts of using proper names to acts of using adjectives attributively, then, cannot be deductive in nature, rather it is instead properly understood as an argument by analogy. That is, the argument is not of this form:

(a) Either being called by a certain name is a meta-linguistic or attributive
(b) It is not meta-linguistic
(c) Therefore, it is attributive

Rather, it is of this form:

(a) Being attributed a certain property can be understood using a calling relation – an attributive notion of calling
(b) Names can be understood using a calling relation
(c) Therefore, the calling relation in both cases is likely to be the same

This point plays a pivotal role in one of the objections to the attributive account, which we will consider next.

6. Two Arguments Against Attributive Accounts

The first objection we will explore deals with whether the attributive account, as developed by Fara, is truly informative. The second objection addresses how to understand the nature of meta-linguistic acts, and its implications for attributive accounts such as the version due to Fara.

On the surface, the schema for proper names that has them functioning attributively is not explicitly meta-linguistic. For sake of argument, let us grant that the falsifiability
criterion is itself a sufficient marker of informativeness for theories of semantic competence. Even so, the argument we saw from Fara, in favor of attributive accounts, shows only that the account is falsifiable for adjectives like ‘stupid’. Of course, if the argument we previously saw was deductively sound, that is, if attributive theorists had a proof that names must be thought of as attributive, if they are to be predicates at all, then this worry would not arise. However, as noted before, the argument can only be taken as an argument by analogy. If so, we might worry that if the schema cannot be falsified for at least one case involving proper names that this illustrates a breakdown of the analogy between acts of naming and acts of property attribution. Given this worry, we need to investigate whether there could be any instances of the schema, as applied to names, on which it is false.

And, in fact, there is at least one kind of case in which this could occur, involving names that are translatable across languages. Imagine a French individual, baptized using the name ‘Jean’, and consider the relevant instance of the given schema in French:

(10) 'Jean' est vrai d'un objet ssi cet objet est appelé Jean.

Because the name 'Jean' is putatively a version of 'John' in English, this instance of the schema can be translated into English as

(11) 'Jean' is true of an object iff that object is called John.

And here we have an instance of the schema that is clearly false, since ‘Jean’ is true of the individual but he is not called John. That is, no one standing in the authoritative naming relation to Jean identified him as John.

We could even imagine that, in parallel with a previous example, this individual, annoyed at the habits of Anglophones, says:
(13) You can call me ‘John’, just don't call me John.\(^8\)

In uttering this sentence, the speaker would then be agreeing to be addressed by the name 'John', while insisting that he is not John, or that the property of being John is not true of him. This case is analogous to that involving the adjective 'stupid', since both show that, while we might attribute a particular property to an object, this does make the property true of that object.

The cross-linguistic test for informativeness thus seems to vindicate the given attributive schema. But, we might wonder whether the success of the cross-linguistic test really does show that the naming case is, after all, akin to the predicate case, since no such cross-linguistic test was required for other expressions, expressions like 'stupid'. If we are to find the analogy between names and adjectives convincing, we should explore whether there could be an instance of the attributive schema on which it might be false for names not only cross-linguistically, but also intra-linguistically.\(^9\)

But, of course, since the property of being, let us say John, is had purely in virtue of language-relative naming practices, this would be impossible. Certain expressions, such as 'stupid', have applicability criteria that are not entirely dependent upon linguistic practices. Others, such as names, do not. As we saw, it is not sufficient for someone’s being stupid that they are called stupid – other factors are in play as well, having to do with what it is to be stupid. The property of being stupid has some language independent application criteria.

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\(^8\) Again, I flout my own terminology for use of quotes for the sake of consistency with Fara.

\(^9\) This may not seem obvious. For instance, one might propose that names form a special class of predicates for which this generally informative schema is guaranteed to hold. That would represent an interesting way to characterize names against the backdrop of a generally informative schema. However, whether the schema is indeed informative depends upon whether the analogy between adjectives and names is appropriate. And this has not been conclusively established.
In contrast, it is sufficient for someone's being John that they are dubbed using the name 'John' making John a property, if it is a property at all, an entirely language specific property.\textsuperscript{10}

The lesson to be drawn is that the attributive schema is not informative for names in the same way as it is for other predicates, precisely because the attributive calling relation for names, although not superficially metalinguistic, is still wholly supported by particular linguistic acts of naming. These acts of naming can, somehow, make certain language specific properties true of objects, and it is this fact that is in need of analysis. In fact, Kripke himself indicates as much: whatever this relation of calling is is really what determines the reference... (1980: 70)\textsuperscript{11}

A second objection concerns how to define meta-linguistic acts. According to the arguments we saw previously, meta-linguistic acts are willy-nilly in a certain way: we can address anyone with any expression we like, but this does not make it true of them that that expression is their name. Naturally, this leads the attributive theorist to the conclusion that there must be something different about acts of naming that distinguishes them from mere meta-linguistic acts of addressing an individual by using an expression of the speaker's choice. The meta-linguistic analysis is mistaken not only because it is uninformative, but also because meta-linguistic speech acts just cannot capture how acts of naming really work.

\textsuperscript{10} Another issue that might be raised about the attributive account is that it potentially inherits all of the problems of semantic instrumentalism about names, except now those problems are applied to properties, given that an attributive account is apparently committed to the idea that stipulative acts of naming are acts that bring into existence certain properties.

\textsuperscript{11} In fact, this very quote from Kripke reveals that he is indeed open to an analysis of the very notion of calling itself that may not be meta-linguistic.
The explanation of the difference between addressing an individual with a certain expression and naming an individual, which we saw earlier, is that acts of naming are special authoritative acts that can make certain properties true of an individual – that of having the property of being called by a certain name, and by our previous disquotation principle, that of having the property expressed by that name.

However, the fact is, properties can be described in several different ways. We might, as Fara points out, ascribe the property of being stupid to someone by saying that this person is dim-witted and ignorant. Why, then, if having a name is to have a certain property bestowed upon a person, could this not also be accomplished in any number of ways? On the property attribution model, it is unclear why not. But this is simply not how people get the names they do. Mentioning a certain expression is an essential part of the act of naming, and it is unclear on the attributive account why this should be the case.

Reconsider our previous Jean example. It is not obvious why we could not in principle, on Fara's account, name an individual 'John' by using the expression 'Jean'. After all, 'Jean' is in fact a translation of 'John', just as the expression 'dim-witted and ignorant' is a translation of the expression 'stupid'. The names 'Jean' and 'John' then should express the very same property. We should then be able to make it true of John that he has the property of being John by using the expression 'Jean' in naming him. Our Jean example, however, illustrates that this cannot be the case.

The implications of making names express properties show that an attributive view is flawed. For instance, if the attributivist is to maintain that we cannot name John 'John' by using the name 'Jean', then they would have to deny that the name 'Jean' is a translation of the name 'John', or that we cannot ascribe certain properties to individuals by using different
words that express the very same property. Neither of these moves would be easy to defend.

7. An Alternative Hypothesis: Performative Meta-linguistic Speech Acts

Clearly, an act of naming is a kind of speech act, or at least it is plausible to think of it on this model. What has not been established is that because acts of naming are a kind of speech act that, therefore, they ought to be understood as acts that make it true of individuals that they have certain properties.

What is missing in the attributive thesis is exactly the importance of the meta-linguistic role played by expressions in acts of naming. We might instead, relying on Austin’s work (1962), distinguish between different types of meta-linguistic actions – performative and constative. Dubbing an individual with the name ‘John’ by mentioning it would be a performative meta-linguistic act. In contrast, reporting that he is called by the name ‘John’ would be a constative meta-linguistic act, which might be false, explaining the data we saw without the need to reject the meta-linguistic account of naming after all. I will now offer something in the way of supporting some kind of meta-linguistic analysis of being named.\(^{12}\)

Consider the fact that in naming a child, one does mention, in fact must mention, a particular expression. After all, if an actual name that gets bestowed upon an individual is not mentioned, it is not clear why an individual might not be called a certain name in any number of ways, as we saw with other notions of calling. Recall, for example, in the inductive case, that I can call or summon Jackson by uttering the expression 'come'. We

\(^{12}\) This idea is developed more fully in my “Naming as a Performative Meta-linguistic Act.”
saw this in the case of attributive cases of calling as well. Surely this illustrates a flaw with attributive accounts.

It appears that the meta-linguistic features of acts of naming cannot be avoided, since otherwise, there is no explanation for why people get the actual names that they do. Up to this point, mentionings of expressions as direct speech reports in the object language have been enclosed in single quotes, as has the mentioning of an expression in the meta-language. But this usage might be flawed. There is a reason for this. It's possible that the informativeness objection to meta-linguistic accounts is misguided for reasons other than what the attributive theorist believes. We might think, for instance, that there is a difference between saying the meaning of ‘quarks’ is whatever are called ‘quarks’, and the meaning of ‘quarks’ is whatever are called “quarks.” The former does indeed seem tautologous, but perhaps the latter is not. The latter gives us some information about direct speech reports, and those could very well be used in constructing a theory of the meanings of the expressions so reported.

Actually, the use of double quotes here might reveal a problem with Kripke's objection, which I address elsewhere. Namely, that the objection trades on conflating the meta-language with the object language. If the use of double quotes here is appropriate, as it seems, then we might say that a meta-linguistic analysis is indeed informative because the use of the expression being analyzed on the left-hand side is understood in terms of the way language is actually used. Of course, we might also see the mistake as one of assuming that the meta-linguistic analysis is to be taken as mentioning the word itself in the abstract sense, rather than a phonetic form. This is yet another twist on a meta-linguistic
account, and it may well be informative, but it may also no longer be a meta-linguistic analysis given that it is appealing to phonetic, rather than purely syntactic forms.

In explaining an act of naming, then, we might describe it thus: ‘Tyler’ means whatever it is to be called ‘Tyler’. But, we might also describe it this way: ‘Tyler’ means whatever it is to be called “Tyler.” Where the second occurrence of “Tyler” is intended to represent a direct speech act that mentions the word ‘Tyler’ in the object language. In understanding acts of naming then, we need to understand them as performative speech acts that report on direct speech acts in the object language. Now in the case of nouns like ‘quark’, it will not be sufficient for understanding its meaning to be told that English speakers called quarks “quarks.” In contrast, it will be sufficient for understanding a name that Tyler is called “Tyler.”

8. Conclusion

The real issue, then, centers around the nature of the special authoritative calling relation underlying acts of naming, which are sufficient on the attributive view to make a name predicate apply to an object, as distinct from those predicates whose application conditions are not settled by linguistic practice alone. Presumably, the answer is to be found in an analysis of the phenomenon of naming itself, and just how our linguistic apparatus allows us to engage in successful acts of naming. On my reading of Kripke, it was this deeper kind of explanation he was seeking that the attributive account does not yet provide.¹³

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