BOOK REVIEWS

Philosophical Troubles: Collected Papers, Volume 1. SAUL KRIPKE. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xiv + 394 p. Cloth $39.95, paper $24.95.

Philosophical Troubles is the first volume of Saul Kripke's collected papers. It was originally to be called *Bandersnatches in Dubuque, and Other Philosophical Troubles*, after the observation, of which more later, that "whatever bandersnatches may be, certainly there are none in Dubuque." The contents are nontechnical, with the partial exception of "Outline of a Theory of Truth" (1975).[1] There are four canonical papers that most of us will have read; three lesser-known recent publications, on Russell, Frege, and presupposition; and six papers, almost half the volume, that appear only here.

Kripke was philosophizing, as we know, as a teenager, but the glory years began with "Identity and Necessity" and *Naming and Necessity*, both based on lectures given in 1970. A number of papers pick up themes from these two works. But although THE NECESSITIES (as I call them) are full of metaphysical fireworks, it is the semantical themes that Kripke mainly returns to—starting with the worry that, if a name means its referent, there are not enough meanings to go around.

The one-referent, two-meanings case is discussed in "A Puzzle about Belief" (1979), through the example of Londres-loving Pierre with his reservations about London. Insofar as the names are not interchangeable, this is a problem for everyone, Kripke thinks; it arises from principles that are not especially to do with names. The no-referent, one-meaning case is discussed in "Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities." Empty names, at least of the fictional variety, are, it initially seems, not a problem for anyone.

> [People think that] it is very hard to find a theory that can possibly account for the possibility of [fictional names]….On the contrary, one has virtually *got* to have empty names because given any theory…of how the conditions of reference are fulfilled…one can surely *pretend* that these conditions are fulfilled when in fact they are not. Thus the existence of pretended names (in fiction) cannot possibly adjudicate among different theories of names. (60)

[1] A second volume, *Logical Troubles*, is expected, with papers on intuitionism, adopting a logic, and substitutional quantification, and quasi-historical work on Turing, Church, and the Hilbert program. Kripke's 1973 Locke Lectures, *Reference and Existence*, appeared this year (New York: Oxford, 2013).

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Their semantic contribution *is* a problem, however. How can a "Holmes"-statement be true, if the name is empty? One should first check that the fatal true/empty combination really obtains. *Holmes wore slippers* has an empty name in it, but is only pretend-true. *Holmes is the best-known fictional detective* is authentically true, but the name is not, in Kripke's view, empty; it stands for a certain sort of abstract artifact, created by Arthur Conan Doyle. Neither tactic works with *Holmes does not exist*. Negative singular existentials are true, it seems, *because* the name is empty.

> What gives us any right to talk that way? I wish I knew exactly what to say. But the following is a stab at it. We can sometimes appear to reject a proposition, meaning that there is no true proposition of that form, without committing ourselves to mean that what we say expresses any proposition at all. (71)

Call that the *No True Proposition* (NTP) account of singular nonexistence claims: *Holmes does not exist* conveys, without expressing, that there is no truth of a certain type.

Why does Kripke say he is only taking a stab it, and why is he not happier with the stab he takes? The reasons are not clearly stated, but we can guess.

(Dependence)	A sentence's truth-value ought to derive from what it says. *Holmes exists* does not say anything, and yet it seems clearly false.[2]
(Difference)	Sentences making distinct claims should differ in what they say. *Holmes exists* does not say anything different from *Pegasus exists*.
(Aboutness)	There is no truth of *what* type? The type attributing existence to a thing called "Holmes," presumably. But then we are talking about language, not the world.[3]
(Overgeneration)	*Holmes drinks* does not express a proposition, either. Nor does *Holmes fails to exist*. Why do we not say that he does not drink, and does not fail to exist?

There are hints in Kripke of an alternative to the (NTP) account; more on this at the end.

[2] "[A] certain sentence about [Holmes] seems to have a truth-value, but this does not mean that sentences containing ['Holmes'] express ordinary propositions. And this I regard as a very substantial problem" (69). Note that *Holmes exists* acts like a falsehood also in contexts where nothing is being rejected (conditionals, disjunctions).

[3] "I reject [metalinguistic accounts] on a bunch of grounds." The "metalinguistic translation [does not] give an analysis that would apply to counterfactual situations also" (70).

I was struck by the amount of epistemology in the volume. "On Two Paradoxes of Knowledge" begins with the Surprise Exam paradox. Quine thinks the students do not *know* a surprise exam will be given, since they expect to doubt that it will as the week progresses. Kripke replies that surprise exams are an everyday occurrence. Is the class concerned that their teacher might be the first who is unable to pull it off? (What a lame excuse it would be, to insist that they did not *know* there was going to be a surprise exam, but only that the teacher had said so.) Well, perhaps the students do not know that they know. This exaggerates the difficulty of reflective knowledge, Kripke thinks.

> Suppose I know something—for example, I know that Nixon is the president of the United States….Certainly *you* (in the audience) know that I know that Nixon is the president….Surely, I am not normally in a worse position than *you* to judge this matter. (34)

The problem is to do with knowledge *retention* in the face of counter-evidence. The class cannot be relied on to *continue* to know that a surprise exam is approaching, as the opportunities dwindle away.

One might still wonder how the students could know today what they expect not to know in the future, if events take a certain vividly possible course. Kripke draws a parallel with Malcolm, Hintikka, and (let me add) Austin, on the "predictive" character of knowledge. To know it is an ink-bottle, must I know that it will not lead me to reconsider that judgment, by disintegrating, say, or reciting poetry? Apparently so, if knowledge is closed under entailment, for p entails the misleadingness of whatever evidence might be encountered against p. Knowing as I do that counter-evidence is misleading, I should, it seems, resolve today not to be swayed by such evidence, tying myself to the mast as it were. This is Kripke's dogmatism paradox. He says he will not attempt to solve it, having discovered it. Three appendices are included, one on Harman's influential dissolution of the paradox.[4]

The longest paper by far is "Nozick on Knowledge." Your true belief that p constitutes knowledge, according to Nozick, if it is sensitive to the facts: you would not have believed that p, had it not been the case.[5] Guided by his admonition in THE NECESSITIES

[4] Gilbert Harman, *Thought* (Princeton: University Press, 1973).

[5] Nozick adds, obscurely: you would (still) have believed it, had it (still) been the case. See Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1981), p. 172ff.

not to confuse metaphysics with epistemology, Kripke asks how to apply this condition if *p* would, for metaphysical reasons, fail in a conspicuous way. I do not know, in fake-barn country, that the structure in this field is a barn. And yet my belief is "sensitive" to the barn's presence, if a convincing mock-up is, unbeknownst to me, ruled out by soil conditions.

Nozick defenders will want to substitute a nonrigid description for "this field." It could have been that *the structure on the field before me* was papier mâché, since I could have stopped at a different field. But this "actually points to one of the greatest objections to his theory" (169). Hypotheses that are epistemically equivalent for me, like *this* field having a barn on it, and there being a barn on the field before me, can differ counterfactually, and hence in whether I know them. This is the counterpart for empirical knowledge of Kripke's examples of a priori equivalents only one of which holds necessarily, for instance, *This lectern is made of wood* versus *The lectern before me is made of wood*.

Nozick's theory makes for violations of epistemic closure. I know I have a hand, since I would not have believed I did, had the hand gone missing. Were I a handless brain in a vat, however, I would not have noticed. The anti-skeptical belief does not constitute knowledge, even though its content follows from the known fact of having a hand. This sort of closure violation Nozick welcomes. Knowledge of Moorean truths should not require us to know that skeptical possibilities do not obtain. Nozick is committed, however, Kripke thinks, to *egregious* violations of closure that no one could welcome. I might be sensitive to whether there is a red barn before me—the nearest alternative is a green one—while insensitive to whether there is a barn—the nearest alternative is a convincing red fake. Surely to know it is a red barn, I must know it is a barn.

Kripke relies here on the idea, implicit in closest-world accounts of counterfactuals, that $\neg(A \,\&\, B) \,\Box\!\!\rightarrow C$ reduces to $\neg A \,\Box\!\!\rightarrow C$, if it is easier for *A* to fail than *B*. To the naïve ear, however, *Without both parents' consent, Billy would not be allowed on the plane* says more than *Without Mom's consent, Billy would not be allowed on the plane*, even if Mom's approval is harder to get; Dad has got to consent, too. Read the same way, *Had it not been a red barn, I would have noticed* requires both that I would have noticed, had it not been red, and that I would have noticed, had it not been a barn. My red-barn belief does not constitute knowledge on this reading, since I would *not* have noticed, were it not a barn. The stronger reading may not be mandatory, but it is there, and available for

use in a Nozick-like theory that is vulnerable only to all of Kripke's *other* objections.[6]

The lectern, recall, has got to be made of wood. Do we understand what it means for a thing to be essentially wooden? Kripke does battle with Quine on this. *De re* necessity is intelligible, Quine maintains, only if it is reducible to *de dicto*. Quine attempts a reduction (maybe we should say, he pretends to attempt one) via the unrestricted modal exportation principle

(MEP) x is necessarily G iff, for some F satisfied only by x, the F is necessarily G.

(MEP) lands us in contradictions, however. Obama *qua* President is necessarily American-born, but there is no such requirement on Ann Dunham's oldest son. Kripke is not much bothered by this. He has no more use for (MEP) than Quine. But what he *mainly* rejects is the idea that a bridge principle is needed. *De re* necessity can stand on its own.

This whole dialectic is replayed in *Troubles* in a doxastic key. *De re* belief ought to be grounded in *de dicto*, one may think. A discerning bridge principle proves impossible to formulate, however, and we are driven to

(DEP) S believes x is G iff, for some F satisfied only by x, S believes the F is G.

Unrestricted doxastic exportation may not land us precisely in contradictions. But it obliterates the very distinction at issue. It was supposed to be only his Russian handlers who believed Burgess to be a spy. To go by (DEP), though, Hoover believed it too, by believing that the hardest-drinking spy was a spy, when that title was held by Burgess. It gets worse: Hoover thought that he himself was a Russian spy, indeed, that he was Ethel Rosenberg. For let p be some randomly chosen false belief of Hoover's, say, that America was on the brink of collapse. Hoover held that (the x)[x = Hoover if p, otherwise x = Ethel Rosenberg] was a Russian spy, hence, by (DEP), that Hoover is a Russian spy. Of course, he believes it because he is wrong about who the description denotes, but (DEP) does not care about that, and cannot even make sense of it absent a further reduction.

[6] There is a huge literature on this, much of it seeking to explain the strong reading away. See Fine on the "wayward character of counterfactuals" (Kit Fine, "A Difficulty for the Possible Worlds Analysis of Counterfactuals," *Synthese*, CLXXXIX, 1 (November 2012): 29–57, at p. 42).

Kripke rejects (DEP), and denies that an exportation principle is needed. Is that to say that *de re* belief can stand on its own? What would that even mean?

Well, what did it mean for *de re* necessity to stand on its own? That we should not worry too much about a certain sort of skeptic: the sort who finds the essential/accidental distinction not unintelligible, but whimsical or quixotic, the judgments too shaky and manipulable to be taken seriously. Kripke's reaction here is a bit like Putnam's to behaviorists, when he accuses them of feigned anesthesia. The skeptic is, in Kripke's view, promoting a kind of learned helplessness about a distinction that is not in practice all that baffling.[7] If someone thinks *de re* necessity "is a philosopher's notion with no intuitive content, he is wrong."[8]

De re belief is not a philosopher's notion, either. What is a *suspect*, but an *x* whom the authorities think might have done it? Burgess became one when Hoover advanced from thinking that Maclean might have been tipped off, to thinking that he might have been tipped off by Burgess. We admittedly cannot say in so many words what that kind of advance involves, how suspect-hood depends on context, and so on. But so what? We cannot say what advancing from belief to knowledge involves, either.

> [The skeptic holds that because he] cannot think of the distinction it doesn't exist.…in my own case I think I am a bit slower and that philosophy is slow and that if a distinction is used there may be something to be ferreted out there, even though the philosophers have not thought about it.[9]

"A distinction is used" means, I take it, that we lean on the distinction in ways that would not make sense if it were built on sand. The police call press conferences to announce that they have a suspect. Federal grand juries are expected to send warning letters to whoever becomes a target of investigation.[10] Legal distinctions are tricky, but they are not whimsical. Again, a function is computable if its value on a given input can be mechanically determined.

[7] Quine offers to "evoke the appropriate sense of bewilderment" about *de re* modality. (Willard Van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge: MIT, 1960), p. 199.) Why would bewilderment be appropriate?

[8] Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1980), p. 42.

[9] Mark Steiner, "Kripke on Logicism, Wittgenstein, and *De Re* Beliefs about Numbers," in Alan Berger, ed., *Saul Kripke* (New York: Cambridge, 2011), pp. 160–76, at p. 161. Steiner is quoting the unpublished transcript of Kripke's second Whitehead Lecture, delivered at Harvard University in 1992.

[10] There is no absolute requirement, but it is considered good practice.

"Determining the value" cannot just be returning for each input x a term that denotes it, for that is always possible: "the number which is y iff $y = f(x)$." It is determining, of a certain number y, that *it* is the value of f on x.[11]

Returning finally to existence claims, what gives us the right to call *Holmes exists* false, when it does not express a proposition? A sentence's truth-value derives from what it says! This is a problem if "what S says" means the proposition that S. To explain S's falsity, though, it is enough that *something* it says is false. That something does not have to be the full proposition that S, and indeed there may be no such thing.

Kripke entertains this possibility himself, in "Outline of a Theory of Truth," in his treatment of truth-functional combinations of the Liar with other sentences. If there is no proposition that L, the conjunction L & M presumably does not express a proposition either. Does this make it unevaluable? It does, on the Weak Kleene scheme. It classifies L & M as a truth-value gap, even when M is false. But Weak Kleene is widely rejected for just this reason, in favor of Strong Kleene, which finds the conjunction false.

That scheme

This suggests, thinking back to Kripke's *No True Proposition* account of negative existentials, a *Some False Proposition* principle. A sentence saying *inter alia* that R, even in the weak sense of implying R, is (as good as?) false, should R be false. This extends to an S that implies R with the help of true auxiliary premises T; for S alone implies, in that case, the false material conditional $T \supset R$.

(SFP) If S combines with truths to imply a falsehood, it counts as false itself.[12]

Is there anything in Kripke to suggest that *Holmes exists* combines with truths to imply a falsehood? Remember the bandersnatches:

> without being sure of whether Sherlock Holmes was a person…we can say 'none of the people in this room is Sherlock Holmes, for all are born too late, and so on'; or 'whatever bandersnatches may be, certainly there are none in Dubuque'. (71)

If *None of the people in this room is Holmes* counts as true, because each has features that rule it out, whether there is such a person as Holmes or not, then *Holmes is one of the people in this room* ought

[11] Although: to know the sum of a thousand and ninety-five is to know it is a thousand and ninety-five.

[12] Better, it implies an R that is false for reasons that could still obtain if S were evaluable.

to count as false, on account of these same disqualifying features. Kripke speaks of being born too late, but I doubt this is disqualifying by itself.[13] At some point, though, as the details accumulate—Doyle never once thought about you, there was no ghostwriter involved, and so on—we reach a point of no return. The story cannot be continued so that if things had turned out like *that*, you would have turned out to be Holmes.[14] It goes too far to say that you could not *under any circumstances, however surprising*, have turned out to be Holmes. But you could not have managed it while still being thus and so, and here we fill in enough details to reach the, or a, point of no return.

Of course, there is nothing special about this room. Every *x* in existence has features, different in each case, that prevent *it* from being Holmes, even bracketing the issue of whether Holmes is some other *y*. *Holmes exists* combines with the truth just stated to imply a falsehood, namely, that Holmes has features whereby he could not turn out to be Holmes. Isn't it clear, as Kripke says, without being sure of anything else about him, that Holmes is not a thing that is disqualified for the Holmes role? If so, then *Holmes exists* is something like false, by the lights anyway of (SFP).

I doubt that the papers collected here—there are some this review has not touched on, for instance, "Russell's Notion of Scope" (2005), "Frege's Theory of Sense and Reference: Some Exegetical Notes" (2008), and "The First Person"—have anything philosophical in common. But I seem to detect something on the metaphilosophical side. It shows up in remarks like "in my own case I think I am a bit slower and that philosophy is slow," "philosophical analyses of some concept like reference…are very apt to fail," "the mind-body problem strikes me as wide open and extremely confusing," and "the ghost of Tarski's hierarchy is still with us." There is a feeling for the immensity and tenacity of (certain) problems, and doubts about the prospects of solving them to everyone's satisfaction. One sees these attitudes, as well, in Kripke's continuing fascination with old,

[13] A devoted spiritualist, Doyle might have encountered your immortal soul at a séance. Or, the stories could have been written by Schmidt.

[14] Compare these remarks from a discussion session at the conference where "Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities" was presented: "[If you ask] 'Is the present king of France bald?' the informant may be puzzled and not say 'No'. But if instead you put it to him very categorically, say first specifying an armament program to make it relevant and then saying 'The present king of France will invade us', the guy is going to say 'No!', right? So what type of response you'll get from the informant will in fact depend on cases." Kripke et al., "First General Discussion Session (to Issue on Intentionality, Language, and Translation)," *Synthese*, XXVII, 3/4 (July–August 1974): 471–508, at p. 479.

supposedly discredited theories, and the ingenuity expended on getting them into their best possible form. (Russellian acquaintance is called in, for instance, to address Frege's problem about the lack of a backward road from reference to sense.) "Let me not pay inadequate tribute," he says, "to the power of the then prevailing complex of ideas, emanating from Frege and from Russell, that I then abandoned…"[15] No one could feel slighted after the papers mentioned. There is a saying that philosophical problems are not the kind of thing one should be trying to solve. I do not imagine that Kripke would agree with that. But he might think that, in some weaker sense, there is no end to our troubles.

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[15] Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, p. 5.