

A Return to the Reductive Argument:  
Saul Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*



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# Big Picture



- o Many properties of self can change with no affect
- o Possibility of component of us that is indispensable to self
- o If that component exists, we would have a necessary condition for defining ourselves
- o In this sense, returns to a theory of reducibility
- o Main point is to discover properties of ourselves that cannot be changed

# Thought Experiment #1: The Queen of England

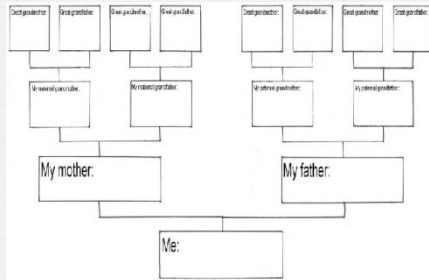
- o “Could the Queen – could this woman herself – have been born of different parents from the parents from whom she actually came? Could she, let’s say, have been the daughter instead of Mr. and Mrs. Truman?” (Kripke, 222)
- o Parents = contributors of the biological egg and sperm
- o No scenario in which daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Truman could be the Queen of England (Elizabeth the Second)
- o Conclusion: “anything coming from a different origin would not be this object” (Kripke, 223)



# Thought Experiment #2: The Table



- o Table made of a certain block of wood
- o Could table be made of different block of wood or even ice and be this table?
- o Table looks identical in appearance and located in the same place and position in the room but made of different block of wood or ice
- o The table is not “this table” but rather another table that resembles “this table”



# Conclusion

- o Search for what is essential to the self
- o Two thought experiments
- o Ancestry and origin are necessary
- o Other properties can be changed
- o Differs from Reid
- o In line with three other theories of the self: body, soul, and consciousness

# Discussion Questions

- Do you agree that some properties are essential while others are dispensable?
- If so, do you think that ancestry and origin are indispensable to the self, as Kripke seems to claim?
- Do you think there are other properties that could be essential?

# References

- o Professor Marcus's Notes. "Irreducibility and Essentialism". March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- o Kripke, Saul. *Naming and Necessity*. D. Reidel, 1972. Print.