What's in a name? The sense of reference, the rigidity of designators and the history of causes when determining the names of the two main islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand

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Abstract

The New Zealand Geographic Board recently revealed that the two main islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand have never been officially named. The revelation made both national and international news and led to a large number of publicly aired comments on the matter, suggesting that something so fundamental and seemingly innocuous as naming is in fact likely to generate a good deal of controversy, no more so than in a bicultural/bilingual context. This paper will examine the phenomenon of naming from a number of angles. After discussing a layperson's idea of what is meant by the meaning of names, we shall attempt to apply a number of theoretical models from the field of Language Philosophy to the case of the main islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand: the **Descriptivist** approach of Frege and Russell, Kripke's **Rigid Designators**, and **Causal Grounding** theory. We shall conclude that, in the case of applying the first two of these, there is a question mark over whether any of the current names for the two islands, both Māori and Pākehā, are in fact names at all; in terms of applying the theory of Causal Grounding, we are drawn to the conclusion that in history lies the key to the future.

Introduction

Over several days in late April 2009, the British and New Zealand media (among others) reported that Aotearoa/New Zealand's two main land masses have no official names. That is according to the New Zealand Geographic Board (Davison, 2009):

> For several years, the board had (*sic*) been investigating Maori[1] names for the islands and exploring a process for formally recognizing alternative Maori names for each island. Board chairman Don Grant said "[…] We therefore want to formalize alternative Maori names and, at the same time, make the naming of the North and South Islands official."

What can be described as the geographical north island and the geographical south island are commonly known among Pākehā as The North Island and The South Island respectively. However, early maps and charts – including those of Captain Cook, who "recorded only Maori names for the islands when he mapped what would later be called New Zealand in 1770" (Chapman, 2009) – show the names by which the islands are commonly known among Māori; Te Ika a Maui ("the fish of Maui") for the North Island, Te Wai Pounamu ("the place of greenstone") for the South Island.

In this paper, we shall first see how the New Zealand Geographic Board's revelation has led to an "etymological row" (Manhire, 2009), and particularly how mistrust and misunderstanding can quickly lead to a collective jump to wrong conclusions. Second, we shall examine some of the ideas relating to the meaning of names, from the perspectives of both layperson and expert to see if there is an answer to the question, "What's in a name?"

Parker, M. (2010). What's in a name? The sense of reference, the rigidity of designators and the history of causes when determining the names of the two main islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand. *He Puna Kōrero: Journal of Māori and Pacific Development.* 11(1), 27–42. https://doi.org/10.15663/K10.14193

Public reaction to the New Zealand Geographic Board's revelation

The initial reaction to the New Zealand Geographic Board's revelation was one of general public outrage at such disruption of the assumed status quo. Most of the following quotes show a misunderstanding, not only of the New Zealand Geographic Board's intentions and motives, although clearly stated, but also of the meaning of the word, "alternative". The general sentiments expressed by respondents to the initial press reports might be positioned somewhere along a cline that runs from the plain silly and trivial at one end, to the contemptuous and imperialistic at the other. In all cases, however, the issue of the two islands' official names seems beyond discussion.[2]

It should be pointed out that the list of comments that follows is not the result of a subjective choice made by me but is representative of the published thoughts of the majority of correspondents;[3] the colonial ancestors of Angry from Manchester, perhaps. Yet we should not automatically assume that these opinions and attitudes are representative of the majority of the inhabitants of Aotearoa/New Zealand. After all, it is a certain type of person who writes to newspapers, calls radio phone-ins or sends text-messages or emails to media institutions to comment on an issue of the day, usually one whose opinions and attitudes have their foundations in a restricted view of reality, and whose opinions and attitudes are expressed as a reflex, without first establishing facts:

- "Call it (*sic*) what you like, but what's the point? 95% of New Zealanders will continue to call it (*sic*) North Island and South Island."
- "It seems the board has nothing better to do. Come on, leave the current names along (*sic*). North and south islands sound fine. If the board really doesn't have enough to do, how about restructure (*sic*) itself and save tax payers some money."
- "Stop wasting millions and millions of dollars on stupid, unimportant things, and spend the money where it's really needed. Helping dig NZ out of the recession might be a better idea of where the money can go."
- "Leave the names as North Island and South Island. These twats should concentrate on getting Australia to change its name to West Island."
- "How about South East Australia and Really South East Australia?"
- "North Island & South Island is (*sic*) fine. They are what they are, and everyone can pronounce them fine. It's all well and good for the Maori people to say that "Pakeha" (*sic*) people are being selfish etc by wanting names that aren't Maori – but in the bigger picture it is the Maori that are being selfish. NZ gets so many tourists, a lot of them can't speak English, let alone Maori. Whakatane and Whangarei are hard enough for even Australians to pronounce. Te Ika a Maui? You might get 1 in 25 tourists that can pronounce it."
- "We are meant to be a visitor-friendly destination, yet we persist in trying to make life more complicated for our visitors to NZ."
- "Where else could you go in the world and (*sic*) the locals have actually two different names for everywhere? It is political correctness of the worst kind – unthinking, unfeeling and completely immune from any heritage and history that is not Maori."
- Other suggestions include: Top and Bottom; Transit and Visit; Hot and Cold; Minor and Major; East and West; Fush and Chups and Kiri and Te Kanawa; Not Australia and Still Not Australia.

If these represent the majority voice, there is a minority voice. As one often finds with

minority voices, the marriage of logic and language is a happier one. One such example is the Editorial comment in the *Herald on Sunday* (nzherald.com, 26th April 2009) which goes some of the way to restoring a level of equilibrium on the matter of the naming of Aotearoa's islands:

> The public response to the proposal that alternative Maori names for what we habitually call the North and South Islands might be made official suggests that quite a lot of people are not familiar with the meaning of the word "alternative". […] many people reacted as though common parlance was to be swept aside by politically correct fiat. […] It is hard to avoid the suspicion that the reaction is driven by a belief that Maori are trying to put one over on everybody else. […] The proposed name changes do no abridge anyone's right to be who they are. They simply give expression to our dual heritages. We would do better to celebrate that than resist it."

Of course, as with many such issues that appear quite suddenly in the newspapers and news broadcasts one day, they fade away just as quickly. It will be back, but for now let's leave the last word to a correspondent to the BBC[4], who argues that "Surely we have better things to worry about as a nation, like winning the 2011 rugby world cup".

For those whose interests and concerns extend beyond the sports field to the fields of Philosophy and Linguistics, it is time to scrum down with the boys from the Philosophy of Language Department, see whether or not we can score a try for egalitarianism and, if the wind prevails and the weight of the kick and swing of the ball are correctly calculated, perhaps make a conversion.

What's in a name?

Semantics – meaning expressed by language as opposed to meaning expressed by language users – has never been able to deal adequately with naming, the linguistic identification of an entity by the use of a proper noun. **Reference** – the linguistic identification of an entity by the use of a common noun *or* proper noun – is less troublesome, although still highly complex and riddled with inconsistencies. **Deixis** – in relation to the current argument the linguistic identification of an entity by the use of a pronoun and some other non-linguistic, physical, means (for example, pointing a finger or merely occupying a space) is the least troublesome means of identifying an entity. For example, let's say, for the sake of argument, I rob a bank at gunpoint.

> "Give me the money," I say. "Put it in this bag."

Here, *me* is an **indexical** – it can refer only to the speaker; *the money* is a referring expression (it's a bank I'm robbing; there's a consensus that this is the case, so I don't need to point and say "that money" – the actual money is the **referent**, or the thing being referred to); *this bag* is indexical – without an actual bag, there can be no "this bag".[5] Anyway, as we know, crime never pays and I am arrested (there were four witnesses: the teller whom I accosted; a passer-by hurrying on his way to an appointment and not realizing what was going on until seeing the TV news bulletin later the same day; a butcher whose shop is next door to the bank; and a customer who walked in on the robbery and who turned out to be a former student of mine on a course in Semantics). They all identify me. "It's a fair cop," say I. The question is, "How were they able to identify me?" What linguistic and/or non-linguistic devices

were they able to call upon in order to get their meaning across? Here are some suggestions:

1. "Don't look now, but it's the guy who's leaning on a lamppost at the corner of the street."
2. "A short guy with a big nose, glasses and a goatee beard did it."
3. "Martin Parker did it."
4. "Him!"

Three of these are simple to interpret: expression 1 uses a bound relative clause as a referring expression such that I am identified; expression 2 is merely descriptive of certain physical features and is the weakest of the three – it narrows the field down to all short guys with big noses who sport goatee beards and wear glasses but the field is still a big one – this will identify me but only in a context where nobody else fits the description; expression 4 is unequivocal – language is unnecessary: the finger of blame is enough.

Expression 3, however, is not at all so simple. It ought to identify me absolutely but is in fact the least informative of all. If you search for "Martin Parker" on Google you will find there are quite a lot of me; close to 58,000 in fact if placed between inverted commas.

"What? The seventeenth century English balladeer?"

Obviously, the police investigating the bank job would need more than a mere name. Can she give them more?

"Dr Martin Parker."

The mouse clicks. It seems the combination of my given name and my family name augured well for those registered on programmes leading to the award of MD, DD, PhD etc.: there are more than 22,000, almost 40% of all Martin Parkers that make the Google list.

"He's a university professor," she says.

Click.[6] That narrows it down to around twelve-thousand or so.

"He teaches Linguistics," the former student says (she failed the course – she's out for revenge).

Click again. Only three-thousand-four-hundred-and-twenty-seven hits for Dr Martin Parkers teaching Linguistics. The police need more.

"He teaches Semantics," she offers with a grin (the police don't know what Semantics is and they are therefore unable to point out the precarious nature of the relationship between teaching and learning – if they did they would have been able to tell the witness that while *buy* and *sell* are converses, *teach* and *learn* are, sadly for her, not). That narrows it down to nine-hundred-and-forty-six.

"He teaches Semantics at the University of Bahrain," she says with an expression on her face that asks *Am I being helpful* (it was, after all, neither accident nor travesty of justice that lay behind her failing the course).

I am, finally, undone. Now, had my name been Theobold Cholmondley-Smythe, or that of either of his chums, Algernon Middleditch-Farquarson and Archibald Pilkington-Frobisher, the police investigation would have reached a far speedier conclusion and I would be exchanging my fifty-four acres, twenty-three bedrooms, sixteen bathrooms and countless gin-and-tonics on the terrace for much smaller accommodation. An indication, perhaps, of why upper-class twits rarely commit serious crimes while so many John Smiths do.

So, in order to identify me, and me alone, using my name would require the addition of one or more of the three descriptive expressions listed, or at least something equally damning, something that separates the name Dr Martin Parker, meaning the same "me" who uttered the fateful words *Give me the money*, from all the other Dr Martin Parkers who either practice medicine or divinity, or teach at universities around the world in this or that discipline: in other words, a **description** of some kind.

We shall return to the idea of names as descriptions shortly, since it is central to reaching the point towards which we are headed. First, however, we should also consider the significance, or lack thereof, of the derivation of names in a layperson's understanding.

A layperson's idea of names and their meaning

In Western cultures, name-giving is largely a matter of taste (whether positively or negatively oriented) and does not depend on the kind of meanings listed in dictionaries. For example, my own given name, "Martin", is supposed to carry such meanings as "from or of Mars", "warrior from Mars" or the less attractive "Martian warrior". Look out world – if all the Martins listed on Google were really from Mars, not even the imagination of H.G. Wells could predict the full horror of what we have in store for you earthlings.

Similarly, the etymology of family names bears no relationship to the present-day holders of those names. For example, "Parker" is, like Smith, Butcher, Baker, Cooper, Farmer, Thatcher, Archer, Fletcher and so on, derived from the trade one's ancestors would have practised centuries ago, in the case of my family name meaning one who looked after the park (i.e. the grounds of the feudal manor house).

Thus, if the meaning of "Martin Parker" (i.e. Martin the parker (= keeper of the park)) were of any present-day significance, I would, rather than be writing this paper, be a member of an alien sleeper unit biding my time before the impending conflagration, waiting for my Martian masters to give the command to attack. Meanwhile, I would, as my cover, be tending to the lawns and flowerbeds of somebody with some such preposterous name as Theobold Cholmondley-Smythe.

Names, then, are historically derived from descriptions. In some cultures, for instance in those of some indigenous peoples in the former colonies of European powers, such naming practices might still be carried on. In Western, and Westernized, cultures, while any such meanings can be found in the multitude of books and on the large

number of websites whose primary purpose is, in the case of place names, merely to satisfy the curiosity of one who might be interested to know, or, in the case of first names, to help parents choose a name for their newborn, they are generally overlooked, even ignored. What is important in choosing a name is that it might, in both aesthetic and phonetic senses, be euphonious, but any comical collocations should be avoided. Thus, my school friend with the family name Startin might not have had such an easy time of it had his parents, rather than calling him Geoffrey, called him Martin!

Place names are, of course, either unique: my home town of Uttoxeter in the English Midlands is one such. Otherwise they are severely limited in number: Stafford, the county town of Staffordshire, the county in which Uttoxeter is situated, also occurs in two other locations, both in the United States (one in Kansas, the other in Virginia). The derivation of both is also descriptive: the former was originally recorded in the Domesday Book as *Watochsede* (said to mean "Wat's homestead on the heath") which has since the 11th century undergone as many as 76 spelling changes before arriving at its present-day name; the latter is derived from "ford by a landing place" (OE *st{ð* + ford). These derivations are inconsequential to the "meanings" of the place names today, which are, if anything at all, likely to be only associative.

Interest in the relationship between etymology and human settlement, however, is usually restricted either to historical linguists or the curious and rarely troubles those who fit into neither category. Rarely do such issues hit the national and international media. This is what makes the current problem an interesting one. In the remainder of this paper, we shall consider the alternative names, both Māori and Pākehā, of the two main islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand in terms of a semantico-philosophical argument.

Theories of naming

For the purpose of the current argument, we shall consider three approaches to the problem: (i) **Descriptivism**; (ii); **Rigid Designators**; (iii) **Causal Grounding**. Since my concern is to test the application of ideas to the problem of naming the two islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand, details of the various approaches will be necessarily brief.[7]

Descriptivism (Frege and Russell)

In terms of naming, both Frege and Russell were concerned to demonstrate the relation between the utterance of a name and to what or whom it referred or what or who was denoted by it (e.g. Carney and Fitch, 1979; Jungman, 2009; Russell, 1905). The Frege-Russell approach, then, centres on the problem of **identity**: names are **abbreviated descriptions**. For example, let's return to the scene of the bank robbery detailed above, and the subsequent attempts by the police to establish the identity of the perpetrator.

In all cases the referent is Dr Martin Parker (i.e. "me", the speaker of the phrase "Give me the money"). We have various devices, all of which are intended to give a third-person identity to the indexical "me". Although they probably wouldn't know it, what the police need to establish, in a Fregean view of things, is the **sense** of "me", in Russell's terminology the **disguised description** of "me" (for the differences between Frege's and Russell's terms, see Carney and Fitch, 1979; Jungman, 2009). That is, they need a proper name but in only one instance do they get it. But how useful is the

name by itself? According to Carney and Fitch (1979, p. 384):

> "For Frege the way to determine whether 'a' differs in sense from 'b' is to ask whether a statement of the form [a = b] can be informative. It seems that the primitive way to determine whether such a statement is informative is to ask whether someone can believe that a is a and not believe that a is b."

If we call "Dr Martin Parker" *a* and all other identifications *b*, it should thus be possible, using the formula, *a = b*, to 'prove' who committed the crime. That is, we need to be able to determine that in all possible worlds: (i) *a = b* (and only *a = b)*; (ii) that the reference does not cloud the sense; or (iii) that the "description" (*b*) makes transparent the "disguised description" (*a*). This would necessarily mean that *a = b* is fully compatible with *a = a*. A revised formula might read, *(a = b) = (a = a)*:

1. *Dr Martin Parker = the guy leaning on a lamppost at the corner of the street*
2. *Dr Martin Parker = a short guy with a big nose, glasses and a goatee beard*
3. *Dr Martin Parker = him*
4. *Dr Martin Parker = a university professor*
5. *Dr Martin Parker = someone who teaches Linguistics*
6. *Dr Martin Parker = someone who teaches Semantics*
7. *Dr Martin Parker = someone who teaches Semantics at the University of Bahrain*

Clearly, only 1 and 3 fit the bill (depending on contextual factors). 7 might get close but, at the time of writing, it is no longer true since I have been usurped in that role by a colleague who, were he to grow a goatee beard and wear glasses, would also be identified by 2. He might still be identified as the robber because the police could assume that the beard and glasses were a disguise! All are, nevertheless, informative to a degree, although the informativeness might be more readily assigned to pragmatic, rather than semantic meaning. On the other hand, in any possible world, *a = a* would not be informative:

8. *Dr Martin Parker = Dr Martin Parker*

In relation to the naming of the islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand, however, it should be immediately obvious that applying the two formulae given will lead us round in circles if not to dead ends. First, let's see where a monolingual analysis takes us; English first, where *a* is a proper name, *b* a description:

9. *The North Island = the north island*
10. *The South Island = the south island*

These represent little difficulty in terms of measuring to what level they are informative when applying a Fregean analysis – provided they are represented in writing (i.e. The North Island (a name) = the north island (a description)); phonologically they are, of course, **tautologies**. Russell's idea of a disguised description, however, begins to look less likely – the disguise is entirely transparent and therefore we are left only with tautologies: they tell us nothing.

A problem arises if we apply the same kind of monolingual analysis to the Māori

names:

11. *Te Ika a Maui = Te Ika a Maui*
12. *Te Wai Pounamu = Te Wai Pounamu*

These are clearly tautologies. The only way to approach the Māori names, therefore, is to adopt a bilingual approach:

13. *Te Ika a Maui = the fish of Maui*
14. *Te Wai Pounamu = the place of greenstone*
15. *Te Ika a Maui = The North Island*
16. *Te Wai Pounamu = The South Island*

This will render 13 and 14 translations; and what are translations if not bilingual tautologies? Nevertheless they do have informative value, albeit in a strictly limited context. Furthermore, in relation to the same examples *(a =b) = (a = a)* would hold only for those who are familiar with both English and Māori. While the same formula would work for 11 and 12, they are meaningless to non-Māori speakers. On the other hand, 15 and 16 are informative without being bilingual. This makes them approximately equivalent to 9 and 10, except they remain so in speech as well as in writing but are otherwise simply giving two names for a single entity (this is well documented in the literature in relation to the planet Venus being both the Morning Star and the Evening Star). Again in Fregean terms, this would mean the two islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand each representing a single referent but having (at least) two senses.

Applying Frege's approach suggests the Māori names have no meaning (although, as we shall see, they clearly do and can be shown to have meaning if we apply another approach). However, we could also argue that the English-language names are not names at all but descriptions (not even disguised ones). From this point of view, we may just as well describe them in any terms we wish, capitalize the initial letters and – lo and behold – we have solved the naming problem! Examples 17-20 provide an idiosyncratic illustration:

17. *The North Island = the one with more people and more volcanoes on it*
18. *The One With More People and More Volcanoes On It = the north island*
19. *The South Island = the one with fewer people and more glaciers on it*
20. *The One With Fewer People and More Glaciers On It = the south island*

Searle (1958) introduced the seemingly obvious notion that (as the above discussion has already implied) names can be associated with any number of descriptions (see, for example, Lycan, 2008). As Jungmann (2009, p. 127) points out:

> For Searle, speakers manage to successfully communicate by using a proper name in virtue of knowing a "sufficient" but "unspecifiable" number of definite descriptions which are true of the object denoted by the name.

Such a "**cluster**" of descriptions makes identifying the referent a simpler process. Formulaically, this might be represented as $a = b \times X$, (and thus $(a = b \times X) = (a = a)$), where X is the number of descriptions in the cluster. Thus, while the descriptions

of the bank robber in 1-7 above might not be sufficient on their own, as a cluster of descriptions they ought to lead only to me. However, the idea of a cluster of descriptions excludes their coterminous occurrence – speakers select from the cluster, choosing the description that is most pertinent, or, in terms that will be familiar to anyone who has studied introductory Semantics, a sufficient and necessary number of pertinent items from the cluster that might lead to correct identification of the referent. Nevertheless, we have to allow for the fact that a speaker does this without necessarily knowing there is a cluster at all. For instance, my student witness knows I teach Linguistics but she does not know a whole catalogue of other descriptions that might "identify" me. Here are some of them:

21. Konrad's father
22. Lidia's husband
23. the mandolin player in *Celtic Rumours*
24. Frank Parker's son
25. Dr Winnie Crombie's former research assistant
26. the driver of a silver Dodge Charger

Again, some of these are more exclusive than others but there is no certainty that – individually – any of them refer to me and me only. I am the only person, however, who would know that all of them point to me; nobody knows you better than you know yourself. Yet even I may not know that this is the case. Imagine I am driving and, unwittingly and unknown to me, cause an accident but escape involvement. A message goes out that the police are looking for the driver of a silver Dodge Charger. I would believe that description 26 is making reference to anyone who drives a silver Dodge Charger *but not me*. Of course, it is clusters of descriptions, rather than single descriptions, which help the police solve crimes.

Kaplan (1989) provides an anti-Fregean perspective to the discussion with the Millian notion of **Direct Reference**. The main postulate of Kaplan, and other disciples of John Stuart Mill, is that "the semantic content of a name or other directly referring expression is nothing more than the referent […]. So there is no descriptive information semantically conveyed by a directly referring expression" (*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2006). In other words, names simply stand for their bearers" (Jungmann, 2009, p. 137). This is so even if the bearer doesn't exist (Santa Claus, for example).

The attraction of this notion for our discussion is that it obviates description and thus resolves the complexity of clusters, while also resolving any issues of tautology and the need to be bilingual. It also seems to suggest that an entity is whatever one calls it. Hence if I call the north island The North Island and Hine calls it Te Ika a Maui, then each of our meanings is wrapped up in the terms we have used. However, this is no more informative than saying something is named whatever it is named and that is its meaning. This seems most unhelpful and inconclusive. As Jungmann says, "the Millian view that names are directly referential is fraught with insurmountable difficulties" (2009, p. 131). It also conflicts with what we understand what it is that we are doing when we *use* a name. We shall return to this notion of usage later.

Rigid designators (Kripke)

The notion of rigid designation is most closely associated with Saul Kripke (1981).

Kripke identifies expressions as being either **rigid** or **non-rigid** (or accidental) **designators**. Names, along with generic terms for concepts, he argues, are rigid designators; definite descriptions are not. Thus, "Martin Parker", "dog", "building" etc. are rigid designators, "the Semantics teacher at the University of Bahrain", "the dog" (unless generic) and "a building" (again unless generic) are non-rigid designators.[8] In this view, the alternative names for Aotearoa/New Zealand's islands – both English and Māori – are rigid designators since they are names. Yet we already know that they are, at the same time, descriptions (albeit behaving as proper names). From a Frege-Russell perspective, this means that a rigid designator is synonymous with a non-rigid designator. Is this possible? The purpose of this section of the paper is to put that notion to the test.

Cohen (2008), presents three definitions of rigid designator:

A. α is rigid iff α designates the same object in every possible world.
B. α is rigid iff α designates the same object in every possible world in which that object exists.
C. α is rigid iff α designates the same object in every possible world in which α designates anything at all.

Following Cohen's argument, we can, as our first test, consider a description (since we know descriptions are non-rigid). The description of me, "the driver of a silver Dodge Charger", is not rigid in any of the three senses. At the time of writing it designates me and a lot of others in the actual world and potentially a great deal many more in some other possible world.

Next, consider a number, or an arithmetical equation: "2" is rigid in all senses; "2 + 2" always equals "4" and is therefore rigid in all senses.

Now let us consider a name. "Martin Parker" (the name and not any individual among the multitude of those who bear it) is rigid in all senses: sense A, because "it depends on whether a designator can designate an object with respect to a world in which that object does not exist" (Cohen, 2008); sense B because "it designates the same thing – [Martin Parker] – in every world in which Martin Parker exists" (Cohen, 2008); it is, of course, also rigid in sense C. However, as Cohen (2008) points out, the third sense of rigidity "is not Kripke's notion of rigidity".

The question here is one of whether both alternatives of the proper names for the islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand are rigid designators according to conditions A and B above. Now, the fatal flaw in this progression ought to be obvious: since all proper names are rigid designators, and we already know that both Māori and Pākehā alternatives are indeed *used* as names and therefore must be considered bona fide names, they must also both be rigid designators in all senses. We might want to argue that the Māori names are not quite as transparently descriptive as the Pākehā ones. Clearly, we are going to find ourselves running in circles (this is philosophy, after all) if we insist that The North Island and The South Island are descriptions pretending to be proper names while Te Ika a Maui and Te Wai Pounamu are proper names that look a little bit like descriptions (with mythological roots). It is hard to avoid the conclusion that in both cases, we have definite descriptions masquerading as names.

The sticking point, for this discussion, is the "all possible worlds" caveat in Kripke's definitions. In a bilingual/bicultural context, the rigidity of designators is thrown into chaos, or at least split in half, since all designated phenomena have two designators, whether rigid or not.[9] This, in turn, means that there are two sets of possible worlds. This being so, the inevitable conclusion is that in the world of Māori culture and language, Te Ika a Maui and Te Wai Pounamu are names, and therefore rigid designators; in Pākehā culture and language, The North Island and The South Island are names, and therefore rigid designators.

We might also usefully consider Kripke's related notion of **necessity** in trying to reach a solution. Briefly and simply, to say "Venus is Venus" is to state a truth which is **necessary**, or ***a priori***. However, the two observable "identities" of the planet Venus – i.e. the Morning Star and the Evening Star – were not always known to be descriptive of the same phenomenon; their dual identity, therefore, expressed by saying "The Morning Star is the Evening Star, is the result of **contingent**, or ***a posteriori***, truth. The question for our argument is whether the names for the islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand vis-à-vis their "descriptions" is necessary/*a priori* or contingent/*a posteriori*. Consider again examples 9-12 (repeated here for convenience as 27-30):

27. *The North Island = the north island*
28. *The South Island = the south island*
29. *Te Ika a Maui = Te Ika a Maui*
30. *Te Wai Pounamu = Te Wai Pounamu*

There is no sensible way of denying that 29-30 are both representative of necessary/*a priori* truth. There is, however, a case to be made for arguing that the truth of 27-28 is contingent. Now consider examples 13-16 above, repeated here a 31-34:

31. *Te Ika a Maui = the fish of Maui*
32. *Te Wai Pounamu = the place of greenstone*
33. *Te Ika a Maui = The North Island*
34. *Te Wai Pounamu = The South Island*

In relation to 31-32, I have already claimed that translations are bilingual tautologies, and therefore necessary by definition, and will stand by this claim as long as it is understood that the necessity applies only to bilingual speakers. Non-bilingual speakers will simply need to be made aware of the necessary/*a priori* nature of the two examples. This second point is reinforced if the two expressions in both 31 and 32 are reversed: *the fish of Maui = Te Ika a Maui* and *the place of greenstone = Te Wai Pounamu* would make sense only to a bilingual speaker without the aid of a barrage of contextual clues.

Examples 33-34, however, can be only contingent/*a posteriori*; this is because, before colonization there were no North Island or South Island, only various phonological representations of what are called today *Te Ika a Maui* and *Te Wai Pounamu*. Therefore the relationship between the names that exists today has not always existed. Interestingly, as we shall see in the following section, the key to solving this riddle can be found in history.

Causal Grounding (or the Causal-Historical Theory of Names or the Causal Theory of Reference)

The concern of Causal theory is to answer the question: "How is it that a proper name succeeds in referring to its bearer?" (Jungmann, 2009, p. 134). Consider this: one day, more years ago than I now care to admit to, I was born. "What shall we call him?" must have been a question on my parents' lips. They agree on the name "Martin". Thus, the name "Martin Parker", in so far as it attaches to the author of this paper (there we go with another description – for most readers, representing the only thing you know about me apart from some careless admissions contained herein), broke surface and entered the real world. This triggered a chain of subsequent mentions of my name – right up to the present and, I hope, beyond – all of which can be traced back to the baptismal, or grounding, moment. This allows us to use names without knowing very much about their bearers. For instance, if I say "Ludwig van Beethoven wrote the *Pathetique* sonata for piano", that may be all I know about him. The utterance of the name "Ludwig van Beethoven", however, forms a single link among innumerable links that go back historically to the original (i.e. causal) moment of naming (causal because someone – both or one of Beethoven's parents – caused the name to come into existence).

In relation to the naming of Aotearoa/New Zealand's islands, the picture suddenly starts to look a whole lot clearer. First of all, we can state with some confidence that, based on our general knowledge, the Māori names were grounded at a considerably earlier time than were the Pākehā ones. This is hardly a revelation. We also know that when Captain James Cook visited what is now known as Aotearoa/New Zealand in the eighteenth century, his maps recorded his orthographic versions of the current Māori names (Eahei No Mauwe *or* Aeheino Mouwe for Te Ika a Maui/The North Island and Tovypoenammu for Te Wai Pounamu/The South Island).[10]

And just how did the alternative names for Aotearoa/New Zealand's islands come into being? One can, of course, only speculate on the grounding of the Māori names when the islands were settled, and so too the Pākehā ones, but the latter perhaps with a deal more certainty. It might have gone something like this (with apologies to those who prefer their history to be dry and factual):

[*Back in London after his voyage, Cook is showing his maps to Lord North, the Prime Minister*.]

"So, James old boy, what did you discover?"

"Two land masses East of Van Diemen's Land. This one here [*he points to the map*] is called Eahei No Mauwe and this one [*his finger moves down the chart*] is Tovypoenammu."

"Tovy what? I say, bit of a mouthful."

[*Cook inwardly sighs and once again moves his finger over the chart*] "Eahei No Mauwe is the north island, Tovypoenammu the south island."

"Well, why didn't you say so in the first place, man? North Island – has a certain ring to it, eh? Yes, North Island, South Island. Right, let's go and colonize'em! Well done, James."

We have, then, in what is either the tangled links of a bilingual/bicultural causal chain or else two monolingual/monocultural causal chains entwined, what Jungmann (after Devitt, 1989) explains as being the result of the names that are used having different groundings (2009, 135), or of there being "a difference in the causally and historically constituted name using practices which had their beginnings in a single object" (2009, 135). The significance of this, theoretically, is that it mediates between the Fregean notion of sense and Millian direct reference, while at the same time accommodating the notion of rigid designators in that it at least gives us a clue about their origins (i.e. why rigid designators are thus rigidly designating in the first place). In other words, it makes a lot of sense (in a common, rather than Fregean meaning of "sense"). More significant, however, is that it focuses on the way in which we *use* names, something which, Jungmann argues, is of "paramount importance" (2009, 137).

Conclusion

The task which the New Zealand Geographic Board have set themselves, which you will recall is to formalize alternative Māori names and make the naming of the North and South Islands official, has four possible resolutions: (i) the aforementioned alternatives, Te Ika a Maui/The North Island and Te Wai Pounamu/The South Island will both be declared official (the Māori names subject to iwi consensus) and people can use either one or both alternatives, without their choice being stigmatized or "marked"; (ii) only one set of alternatives will be declared official (if this is the Māori names then again subject to iwi consensus) – the other will still be used but will remain unofficial, in which case people who use the form declared unofficial will probably feel stigmatized; (iii) the opposite of (i) but with the same result – i.e. declare neither alternative official and leave things as they are; (iv) invent new names (start over or, in technical terms, cause a new grounding event).

In relation to the three theoretical approaches outlined above, we should recognize that none of them is entirely satisfactory, although some are more useful than others.

First, in the descriptivist approach, we have the problem, from Frege's position, that in both languages the Reference *is* the Sense and vice-versa, from Russell's, also in both languages, two abbreviated descriptions (i.e. names) are identical to their associated non-abbreviated descriptions. The direct-reference approach is simply a non-starter, since to say "something is what something is (or isn't)" says nothing. My five-year-old son is fond of pointing this out to me when I try to fob him off with an answer to an impossible question. The answer "Because it just is" is no longer enough and I am told, in no uncertain terms, to stop giving such answers and be a little more informative (in so many words). One might say pretty much the same thing to the Millians.

Kripke's rigid designator theory offers little because it fails for the same reasons that the Frege-Russell approach fails – the incestuous and fatal relationship between name and description. We also saw that the distinction between necessity and contingency remains confused when applied to a bilingual context. The problem for Aotearoa/New Zealand, in the light of both aspects of Kripke's model, is that, in relation to the separate cultures, neither set of possible worlds is ready to give way to the other (even though, according to the real meaning of "alternative" no such thing is being asked of either); in more technical terms, it seems neither set of possible worlds is ready to accept either each other's rigid designators as such, or each others necessary/*a priori*

truths as such.

And so we must appeal to history. The causal grounding theory escapes the relationship that dogs the others, at least in terms of naming *per se* (any form of description attached to it being merely some knowledge about the name-bearer that has no significance at all for its grounding). Nevertheless, although it provides an academic base and vocabulary with which to talk about the issue, it says nothing that isn't already known – that Māori inhabited both Te Ika a Maui and Te Wai Pounamu several hundred years before Pākehā inhabited The North Island and The South Island. It hardly needs pointing out that Māori have also inhabited The North Island and The South Island for as long as Pākehā have as well as coterminously having inhabited both Te Ika a Maui and Te Wai Pounamu. Now, I am neither a philosopher nor a politician but, in spite of the implications, I do know that a first-come-first-served policy is one that would not have much sway with all inhabitants of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Ultimately, it is all beginning to look as if the quest for names – from both political and philosophical perspectives – is a futile one since, as long as the two possible worlds are resistant to each other's concerns, the reality of the situation accords entirely with the view expressed by another correspondent to the BBC (see endnote 4) in which there is a note of hopelessness and finality: "[…] no matter what [… the islands are] called, the already-ingrained attitudes between [… Māori and Pākehā] are not going to change.

While history is the key, then, it is also the problem. It is not simply an issue of accepting or not accepting names (in the theoretical understanding of what a name is), but rather one of accepting biculturalism and bilingualism as something to celebrate, not as a tool for driving a wedge between peoples. Differences are, after all, essential for a society in that they can only enrich that society. To this end, surely what matters is that bilingualism and biculturalism thrive, regardless of the name of the land on which they do so.

Endnotes

1 Words from te reo Māori are as in the original form of the citation; thus, in citations, macrons are used only if used in the original. Since macrons are an intrinsic part of the written representation of the phonology of te reo Māori, choosing not to include them in a national newspaper or elsewhere is significant in that it could be argued that it demonstrates an attitudinal position vis-à-vis both the language and its speakers.

2. I have avoided subjective judgements of the listed contributions in order that the reader might be free to place each on its respective position along the aforementioned cline according to his or her own interpretations. Unless otherwise stated, all contributions were published in the online editions of the *New Zealand Herald* dated 22nd April 2009, and *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* or *BBC News* dated 23rd April 2009.

3. Eriksen (2009) gives a figure of 71% of people polled by the *Herald* as being in favour of The North Island and The South Island. However, there is no indication of what percentage of the 29% either don't care or are in favour of Māori names. Besides, there is no suggestion from the New Zealand Geographic Board – but plenty from irresponsible reporting – that any of the names will be either consigned to history or imposed.

4. Confusion over NZ island's names (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8011846 accessed on 23rd April 2009)
5. The use of the pronoun *it* is an example of grammatical reference – this is a discoursal feature and is not the same kind of reference as semantic reference.
6. Here the figures become fictional – complicating the search to include Linguistics and Semantics merely increases the hits to close to a quarter of a million!
7. Interested readers are encouraged to refer to the large inventory of literature in the 'Philosophy of Language'. For an overview, Lycan 2008 (Chapters 1-4) is an excellent introduction; Van Langendonck (2007) presents a more detailed study.
8. See Devitt (2005) for a critique of Kripke's theory. See also Chakravarti (1975) for the difference between rigid and non-rigid designators. For a detailed account of Kripke's work, see Hughes (2004).
9. There are, of course, instances of interlingual borrowings but, in relation to Māori words entering New Zealand English, the number is small and is mostly restricted to some place names (e.g. Rotorua, Kaikoura - Mount Maunganui and Lake Taupo, for example, are blends of both) or some elements of the country's flora and fauna.
10. "Names Through the Ages" (http://media.nzherald.co.nz/webcontent/document /pdf/nzislands.pdf - also see Eriksen, 2009b).

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