Kripke's Objections to the Cluster Theory

Theses of the Cluster Theory

1. To every name or designator 'X', there corresponds a cluster of properties … φ such that A believes 'φ X'.

2. One of the properties, or some conjointly, are believed by A to pick out some individual uniquely.

3. If most, or a weighted most, of the φ's are satisfied by one unique object *y*, then *y* is the referent of 'X'.

4. If the vote yields no unique object, 'X' does not refer.

5. The statement, 'If X exists, then X has most of the φ's' is known *a priori* by the speaker.

6. The statement, 'If X exists, then X has most of the φ's' expresses a necessary truth.

Kripke's Objections

Kripke's arguments against the Cluster Theory can be divided (cf. Soames, *Beyond Rigidity*) into three basic groups. Suppose that *n* is a name and *the D* is a description (or cluster thereof) that is supposed to give the semantic content of *n*.

Semantic: Aim at showing that the referent of *n* is not linguistically determined by *the D*. (vs. 2, 3, 4)

Epistemic: Aim at showing that what is known or believed by a speaker who says '*n* is *F*' is different from what is known or believed by a speaker who says '*the D* is *F*'. (vs. 5)

Modal: Aim at showing that sentences like '*n* is *F*' behave differently from sentences like '*the D* is *F*' when placed in modal contexts. (vs. 6)