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### Chapter 3

## THE ORIGINS OF MATERIAL INDIVIDUALS: FROM INANITY TO SEQUENTIALISTIC PROPENSITY

Perhaps more than any other philosopher, Saul Kripke fostered the impression, still so widely prevalent today, that mainstream philosophy is replete with quite novel characteristically philosophical thoughts that are not only concretely substantial propositions, but that, often enough, disclose previously obscure aspects of concrete reality. In this matter, Kripke's great influence stems mostly from a single work, his *Naming and Necessity*, a short book based on transcriptions of three lectures, the bulk of the book having been previously published, in a less accessible venue than the whole of the self-standing slim volume.<sup>1</sup>

As the first word of Kripke's title indicates - the word "Naming," of course - much of the book is focused on semantic matters, in particular, on what's involved in our using names for things - first with proper nouns, and multi-word phrases used as names for individuals and the like, as with "Babe Ruth", but then also certain common nouns, as well, as with "cat" and "dog", and as with "gold" and "water". This big discussion comprises, as a matter of course, both what may be typically involved in the introduction of these names and also what's involving in the spread these introduced names, from the names to others, and the sustaining of the names, first, in the use of the namers, and second, in the use of the others, as well. Correlative with that, there's a strong focus on the semantic status of these ordinary names, both proper and common.

In this large portion of the work, its author's focal topics differed only a very little, if they differed at all, from the topic focused on by many analytic philosophers whose work preceded his, as with Bertrand Russell, for a very salient example. Kripke's *views* on these semantic topics often differed very markedly from his analytic predecessors, as with Russell, for example, though view of proper names is, in its essentials, very similar somewhat still earlier thinkers, as with Russell's godfather, John Stuart Mill, for an equally salient example.

But, of course, insofar as there are any concretely substantial thoughts offered in this big discussion of semantical matters, whether by Mill, or by Russell, or, more recently, by Kripke, they're all quite parochial propositions, as with how certain people, speakers of certain earthly natural languages, use certain expressions of the languages they use. None are anywhere near so grandly general as to be any *characteristically philosophical* propositions, in my use of that happy expression. So, in most of Kripke's terribly influential book, there's no attempt to offer any concretely substantial characteristically philosophical claims. And, in keeping with that, in the bulk of the book there's no attempt to offer any claims with much metaphysical import, let alone concretely substantial claims that are metaphysically quite significant.

If *Naming and Necessity* concerned only such semantic issues as the bulk of the book addresses, then that work never would have done much to foster the impression that, even as it's been practiced rather recently, mainstream analytic philosophy is a far more grandly substantial field discipline than was analytic philosophy early in the twentieth century, and, of course, than was the analytic philosophy of the middle of the century. But, of course, the metaphysically trivial topic of naming - well, it's certainly not any truly fundamental philosophical matter - isn't the only topic on which Kripke meant his work to focus. Far from it, he meant it to concern, in

very large measure, various questions concerning the real (mind-independent, and language-independent) nature of concrete reality – and not only some quite parochial and rather superficial aspects of this reality, but, at least equally, some quite general and pretty profound aspects, as well

Just so, and as the last word of Kripke's title indicates - the word "Necessity," of course - the book is also meant to focus on matters that transcend, very greatly, anything just merely semantical. As well, the work is meant to place on offer some several robustly metaphysical claims, each sufficiently comprehensive to be rightly reckoned a characteristically philosophical proposition. Taking things extremely charitably now, each robustly metaphysical claim may be taken as offering us a concretely substantial truth that's *anything but* rather parochial and quite superficial. For our present discussion, it's in this apparently much more robustly substantial part of the book where the relevant claims are offered. Accordingly, it is with this part of the book that, in many of this chapter's pages, I'll be concerned.

### **1. On the Origin of One Tood, a Particular Wooden Table**

In *Naming and Necessity*, Kripke offers us quite a few examples of propositions that, though he thinks we can know them to be true, or to be false, *only empirically*, or only *a posteriori* - whatever any of that may be, exactly – well, they're all perfectly *necessary* propositions. Each of the empirical propositions that's true is *necessarily true* – whatever *that* may be, exactly – and each of them that's false is *necessarily false* – whatever, exactly, *that* may be.

At all events, some of Kripke's most salient cases, perfectly central to his metaphysical remarks, concern the origins of certain concrete individuals. For those who hold with our widely

shared Scientiphical Metaphysic, or even with just most of our Scientiphicalism, as Kripke himself apparently did when presenting these central examples, the cases will concern the origins of certain quite *complex physical* concrete individuals. Quite famously, and in particular, he presented and discussed the case of a certain wooden table, which we'll also be discussing. Following Kripke here, we'll suppose that each of our originating concreta is, first, a *purely physical* concretum and, beyond that, it's a quite *complex physical* individual – a particular that, at the least, is far *more complex* than, say, even any particular mere molecule, let alone any particular quark, or electron – each of which last-mentioned items – the quark, and the electron - just might be, as we may instructively suppose, a relevantly and physically simple concretum.

For those of us who, when we're to think about purely physical individuals, want to spend much effort pondering only such questions as concern, most fully and directly, just ontologically fundamental physical entities, as with electrons, perhaps, or as with vast physical fields, perhaps, there's not much impetus to think long and hard about the likes of an ordinary table. We won't be moved to focus much on any such presumably ontologically superficial thing - on any *superficia*, as I call them. For, especially when we go along with Scientiphical discussions, we won't think that focusing on such purely physical complexes is apt to help us learn much about concrete reality, well beyond what's both quite provincial and rather superficial.

For an obvious example of this, we won't be much moved to spend much of our energy mulling over questions concerning (the "real" mind-independent and language-independent nature of) such *perfectly obvious superficia* as is any mere *disturbance among* what's itself merely a *swarm of bees*. Nor will we wish to focus, in any effortful way, on a mere *scratch in*

what's merely the *surface of* a table. Especially given our shared Scientiphicalism, all that's almost perfectly obvious, I think.

Only slightly less obvious than that, given our shared Scientiphicalism, is this further thought: We also shouldn't spend much time, or much energy, mulling over questions concerning (the "real" mind-independent and language-independent nature of) such *slightly less obvious superficia* as is any mere *swarm of* bees, or as is any mere *surface of* a table.

And, only slightly less obvious than *that*, given our shared Scientiphicalism, is this yet further idea: We *also* shouldn't spend much time, or much energy, mulling over matters concerning (the "real" mind-independent, and language-independent nature of) such *yet still slightly less obvious superficia* as is any mere *bee*, for instance, or as is any mere *table*, for another very readily available example.

Quite as things are with any mere bee - well, Scientiphically placing aside the "possibility of souls for bees" - any mere table is, we do well to suppose, very much like a mere *swarm of* elementary particles, or else it's very much like a mere (spatially scattered?) *disturbance of* some physical field, or fields. Or, in some relevantly similar sort of way, a table is nothing more than an "ontological parasite," ever so parasitic on the particles, or on the fields, or on some other far more basic concreta.

Though these last thoughts aren't utterly obvious truths, even so they're not any very controversial thoughts. And, much more important than that, they're each an unobjectionable truth or, at the least, quite close enough to a perfectly unobjectionable truth.

What's the main point of the just previous half dozen paragraphs? In brief compass, it's this: Even in advance of any detailed Scientiphically Respectable discussion of mere physical

complexes – even such an living physical complexes as thriving plants and flying bees, much less such “nonorganic” physical complexes as mere tables and mere blocks of wood - we may expect that, almost certainly, the discussion won’t offer us any characteristically philosophical concretely substantial thought, not even any that’s incorrect, much less any correct idea. By contrast, what we may well expect are ever so many concretely inane ideas, including quite a few, of course, that are analytically concretely inane.<sup>2</sup>

Near the beginning of the section, I said that, central to supporting his metaphysical remarks, some of Kripke’s most salient cases concern the origins of certain concrete individuals. For those who hold with most of our widely shared Scientiphicalism, as Kripke apparently did when presenting those salient cases, the examples will concern the origins of certain *complex physical* concrete individuals. Following Kripke here, in each case the originating individual is, first, a *purely physical* concretum and, beyond that, it’s a *complex physical* individual, wholly constituted of material concreta each simpler than it is. And, as we may Scientiphically suppose, along with Kripke, each of the originating complexes is ultimately composed of basic physical concreta, as with, perhaps, up-quarks, down-quarks, electrons, and maybe photons.

Central to Kripke’s thoughts about the material origins of material complexes, there’s his case of a table, supposedly first made from a certain block of wood. In a few moments, we’ll explore this case, aptly bearing in mind that the table is always a Scientiphically respectable complex physical individual, as is also the aforesaid block of wood.

Before confronting that case of the wooden table, I’ll say something about why, in these pages, that’s the only example of Kripke’s, concerning matters of material origins, that we’ll very seriously consider. Why? Well, in his book, Kripke presents two cases that, as he

supposes, are both clearly of the general sort just characterized: the case of the wooden table and, just about as salient and famous an example, the case of Queen Elizabeth II. Accordingly, I should say why I won't bother, in these pages, to seriously consider the case of Elizabeth II. In a note appended to this very sentence, I make sure to do that right now.<sup>3</sup>

Helpfully passing over Kripke's contentiously presented case of Elizabeth II, I move to focus attention on Kripke's other most salient case concerning the origins of complex physical individuals, the case of a wooden table first made from a certain block of wood. As indicated, this uncontroversial salient example features only a quite ordinary piece of furniture, safely enough taken to be completely insensate. We'll focus, then, on a certain insensate wooden table, one that Kripke indicated, presumable when he was lecturing. More specifically, he indicated this table when uttering these following words or, at any rate, words subsequently transcribed, quite precisely, just as follows:

In the case of this table, we may not know what block of wood the table came from. Now could *this table* have been made from a completely *different* block of wood, or even of water cleverly hardened into ice — water taken from the Thames River? We could conceivably discover that, contrary to what we now think, this table is indeed made of ice from the river. But let us suppose that it is not. Then, though we can imagine making a table out of another block of wood or even from ice, identical in appearance with this one, and though we could have put it in this very position in the room, it seems to me that this is *not* to imagine *this* table as made of wood or ice, but rather it is to imagine another table, *resembling* this one in all external details, made of another block of wood, or even of ice.<sup>4</sup>

If only for a few moments, let's suppose that Kripke is completely correct here, in his claims about the wooden table right there before him, the piece of furniture he indicated.<sup>5</sup> Let's explicitly suppose, further, that the indicated table was *always* made only of the wood that first formed it, all of this nice wood just previously right there in Kripke's imagined block of wood.

So, as to how things actually are with the table itself, especially as regards its composition, the situation is always quite simple and terribly boring.

Presumably far less boring, what more is involved, of any concrete substance, in any of Kripke's central claims here, say, the claim that the table *could not have been* first made of ice? In other words, *beyond* anything about how the table *actually was* constituted, both when Kripke was indicating it and, as well, at the indicated table's earlier times, and later times, *what more* is really claimed, of any concrete substance, about the table, or about anything that constituted it?

As I assume, it's not just that the complexes figuring in the example - a block of wood, a block of ice, a wooden table, and maybe more - well, they all should be understood in terms of our shared Scientiphical thinking. While that was presumed or presupposed by Kripke, it wasn't any part of our shared Scientiphicalism that, in passages like that just cited, this mainstream philosopher was actually claiming. Quite certainly, he didn't intend to articulate, or to state in any way at all, some of our Scientiphical thinking.

But, then, well beyond what's implicit in our Scientiphicalism, is there, really, any concretely *substantial* point that was offered with the "modally loaded words" Kripke used, or with his use of the words "*could this table have been* made from a completely different block of wood"?

As I suspect, there really isn't any concretely substantial point offered. Rather, my suspicion is that all that's offered is an idea that's analytically concretely inane. Towards making clearer the basis of my suspicion, I'll do several things.

First off, I'll present an argument that's quite negative in all its force, and even in all that it suggests only indirectly. As I believe, this negative argument will show, quite compellingly, that offerings like Kripke's haven't the even least little bit of a chance of differentiating certain ways

for concrete reality to be from other ways. Though I take it that this argument is all but devastating, it won't do anything in a much more happily positive direction. In this way, the upcoming argument will be quite unlike our discussion of Putnam's failures, which discussion positively suggested to us, at least, the philosophically interesting idea of individualistically directed propensity.

Second, there will be this: Not content with being just a terribly negative discussant of someone's main philosophical efforts, I'll go on to provide a fairly lengthy discussion of Kripke's table, all of it relatively relaxed and, I hope, quite relaxing, as well. This happier treatment features discussion that, though it's also quite critical of Kripke's unfortunate thoughts, does positively suggest to us, at least, some philosophically interesting concretely substantial thoughts. And, these will be ideas that, at least in any well-articulated form, we haven't previously encountered.

As you can well imagine, this pretty happily positive discussion will occupy quite a lot of this present chapter. But, before getting to that, it will be useful for me to provide some terribly negative argumentation against Kripke's claims. So, that's what I'll next do.

## **2. Thoughts about Tables are just as Inane as Correlative Thoughts about *Shmables***

Speaking with the vulgar - well, I'm terribly vulgar, most of the time - I'll now say something that's quite clear enough, and quite true enough, for our present purposes, all terribly limited and pretty superficial, too. Here it is: Right before me here, in my dining area, there's a round wooden table. Beyond being made of wood, though it certainly is that, this table is, more specifically, made of *oak*, a certain kind of wood. As far as I can tell, not only is this table made

of oak, and so made of wood, but it always was made of oak - from the time when first it was constructed, or crafted, right up through this present day and this current moment. (Heck, I *better* be able to tell *pretty darned far* here, the piece was sold to us, years ago, as a genuine J & G Stickley, made by master craftsmen near the start of the twentieth century. Even then, we paid a pretty penny for this presumed and putative period piece.) At any rate, I'm going to suppose that much now, much as Kripke did for the table in "his" lecture room. And, for a nice reader-friendly exposition, I'm going to give this oak table of mine a pretty memorable proper name, *Toak* - as it's a table always made of *oak*. In some of what follows, I'll discuss this oak table.

Now, following Kripke's lead, let's assume - something almost certainly false, I think - that if a table is first made of wood, then, as a matter of the strictest necessity, that table must have been first made of wood, and it couldn't possibly first have been made of stuff that wasn't wood. Or, more cautiously - though still almost certainly false), I think - it couldn't have been first made of stuff *none of which* was wood. So, as we'll suppose, *Toak* couldn't possibly have been made of stuff that was all some *nonwooden metal*. So, we've made a supposition with implication like this one: If there was a truly terribly shortage of good wood a century ago and, so, the Stickleys and other table-makers couldn't get any decent wood, then, if the craftsmen made just so many metal tables, without any wood, then *Toak* never would have existed. We will grant that, in such merely a hypothetical situation, and in such a completely counter-factual circumstance, this much will be true, or it would be true: Even while I might well be confronting a metal table in my dining area right now (suppose) - and even a table made by the Stickleys to look and feel quite like a genuine oak table (also suppose) - still and all, this Stickley metal table just wouldn't be *Toak*. Rather, it would be only some quite distinct table, not *Toak* at all.

Supposing all that to be perfectly true, what concretely substantial thought might we then infer, or otherwise uncover? As far as I can see, there really aren't any at all. And, as I'm pretty confident, I can see plenty far enough, in this very little neck of the woods.

How can I manage to see that far; how can I be so very penetrating? Well, actually, there are several rather different ways for me to do that. But, right now, I'll present just one of these ways, perhaps the very simplest of them. While this will involve us in a newly concocted contrivance, the device employed is so wonderfully apt to the matter at hand, I imagine, that the "mystery" of my penetration, into the current question, will soon become shockingly obvious. That said, let's prepare to contrive.

All right; this will be our preparation: Continuing with all our generous suppositions, and putting the point in currently fashionable terms, we may say that our actual usage of the word "table" proceeds much like this: With this word of ours, the English word "table," we have (established conventions to the effect the word is) semantically most closely associated with just a certain particular concept, namely, *the concept of a table*. To use a catchy phrase, our conventions for "table" have ensured that, with this word, we "latch onto" the concept of a table. Now, for any entity to which this very concept properly applies – the concept of a *table* - it is guaranteed that the entity satisfying that concept – here, an arbitrarily chose concrete table – will have certain characteristic *persistence conditions*. So, for instance, when the elementary particles composing a certain wood table are all used to make a long skinny copper wire - or a big-pot's-worth of clam chowder - and none of them are replaced with any other matter at all, then, as must eventually happen, that very table *won't* still exist (leaving it open, in this discussion, whether or not, at some still much later time, the table might again exist.)

Of course, that's old hat – and even long before Kripke, it was already old hat.

But, along with that, and not quite as old hat, there's this: For any entity to which this very concept properly applies – the concept of a table - it is guaranteed that the entity – the table – will have certain characteristic *origination conditions*. So, for instance, when it's supposed that all the particles first composing a certain table were never constituents of any table, then it should be supposed, as well, that the table in question will never have existed, whatever other tables may, or may not, have existed.

That said, we've completed our preparation. Now, it's on to concoction, or contrivance.

Correlative with the word “table”, I'll now introduce a new word, “shmable.” Through my now establishing the appropriate conventions for its doing so, with this new word we'll latch onto a concept that, in many respects, is the same as the concept of a table – but which, in certain respects, is quite different from that ordinary concept. As I'll concoct things, there'll be two salient respects in which the newly introduced concept of a shmable differs from the familiar concept of a table. (To make my critique of Kripke's offering a compelling criticism, I'll need only one the two differences to which I've just alluded, the one that I'll specify first. But, to have the critique be most vivid, and most memorable, I'll want the second difference, as well.)

First, there's this difference between the two concepts: As concerns its characteristic *origination conditions*, the concept of a *shmable* is enormously more *lax* than (what we've supposed for) the concept of a table. How so? Well, here's how: For any entity to which the concept of a shmable applies, it makes no difference, as concerns whether the shmable in question now actually exists, what matter first served to constitute the shmable, providing only that there is, or there was, a continuous enough transition from that originating matter to how

things are, compositionally and materially, with the shmable right now, or at the time that a token of “shamble” is used with reference to the material complex in question. (There’s nothing mysterious or esoteric in this continuous enough transition business: Often enough, it will happen when a big raft built of many small boards undergoes a very gradual changeover of its constituent boards, a changeover that’s so thorough that none of the boards matter serving to constituting the raft, at the start of the changeover, still serves to constitute it, by the changeover’s end. And then, of course, none of the matter constituting the raft, at the start of the changeover, still serves to constitute it, by the changeover’s end.)

That said, we may then think this: In any situation where someone confronts a table, as with me confronting my oaken Toak, he’s also confronting a shmable. So, in the present instance, right when I’m confronting the table Toak, I’m also confronting a shmable, an enduring physical complex we may conveniently label *Shmoak*. Each the two, both the table and the shmable, will be a complex individual that’s wholly coincident, spatially and materially, with the other currently notable complex individual. Just so, right now, and even through all of their actual histories, Toak is wholly coincident with Shmoak. (Now, I’m not someone who recommends going in for such coincident entities; but, for each of several sufficient reasons, none of the problems that may attend such a conception will make any difference for our present discussion. For just one thing, all that we’re now discussing are some physically derivative and ontologically superficial items; this *isn’t* anything even remotely like any inquiry into what really is, and what should be widely regarded as, *basic metaphysics*.)

Now, while it may be true (as we’ve been granting) that the *table* before us, one *Toak*, would never have existed had it not first been made of (at least) some of the matter that, in actual fact,

first served toward constituting it, that's *not* true of the *shmable* that, quite equally, we're also now confronting; in other words, that's *not* true of *Shmoak*. Suppose that all the matter first constituting Toak never served to constitute even anything remotely like a table – or, for that matter, any other sort of furniture. Then, even though Toak wouldn't have ever existed, it may still be true that *Shmoak would still have existed* – both at what would then have been various past times and also at what would then be the present moment.

Before proceeding further, with our contrivance concerning shmables, let's pause to confront some obvious questions. And, even if it's only ever so tentatively, let's provide short answers to the obvious questions. So, consider the proposition that *Shmoak would have existed*, no matter *what* should have been its (actually) *originating matter*, whether it was the matter that actually first served to compose *Shmoak* or whether, very alternatively, it was entirely different matter. Now, our first obvious question occurs: Is this thought a concretely substantial proposition? No way; rather, it's a concretely inane idea, even for its being an analytically inane idea.

That done, let's now consider a correlative thought about Toak, the table. This may be the proposition that *Toak would have existed* only if *at least some of* the matter that *actually* first served to compose it *would have*, in an imagined counterfactual circumstance, still have served to compose it. Or, just about the same, there's this correlative idea: Toak wouldn't have existed, should it not first have begun with (at least some of) its actually originating matter. So, correlatively, our second obvious question occurs: Is *this* thought any concretely substantial proposition? My second short answer: No way; rather, it, too, is only a concretely inane idea, even for its being, most likely, an analytically inane idea.

As regards questions of concrete substance, and analytic inanity, the thought about the table Toak is perfectly on a par with the thought about the Shmable Shmoak. Even as the latter thought is a concretely inane idea, so also is the former (Kripkean) thought a conception that's concretely inane.

With just that little bit of reasoning, our demonstration is done. In all the Kripkean business about the necessity of material origin, there's naught but inanity - unless it be, on the margins, some perfectly provincial and exquisitely superficial idea. But, as I try to be a most reader-friendly author, my providing that demonstration is far from my doing, for you, everything I take to be worthwhile here. To do all that, I should provide a helpful perspective on the demonstration just provided.

Toward that helpful end, I'll observe a second difference between the newly introduced concept of a shmable and, on the other hand, the familiar concept of a table.

For memorable vividness, I'll press on with my contrivance. Just so, I'll establish a certain sort of *symmetry* between the concept of a table and, on the other side, the newly introduced concept of a shmable.

Now, even as the concept of a table is pretty *strict* (or, at least, a little bit strict) as concerns the *origination* conditions for the entities that satisfy the conception - well, this is what we're granting for the concept, anyway - still, there's what's on the other side of the temporal coin left to consider. Still to be considered, there are the persistence conditions for tables. Well, on this score, our familiar concept, the concept of a table, is a terribly *lax* idea. Here's the same point, in slightly different terms: As concerns what matter may *now* constitute a given table, which piece of furniture must have originated (we're supposing) with just some certain matter, the

concept of a table is a very *lax* conception – pretty much any old matter may *now* serve to constitute the table – providing that there was a suitably gradual changeover between the matter that first constituted the object and that which now serves to compose the table.

Even as I confront my oaken Toak right now, and while employing my ordinary tabular concept, a thought to this following effect seems certainly sanctioned by that familiar notion of ours: At least in those circumstances where Toak is originally composed of all the matter, and of only the matter, that actually first composed that table, and providing only that there is, or there was, a continuous enough transition from that originating matter to how it is right now, compositionally and materially, with that very table right now, *Toak would still exist, right now, even if all the matter now constituting it should be entirely distinct from the matter that actually now composes Toak.* (As I said before, when correlatively talking about shmables, there needn't be anything mysterious about, or anything esoteric in, this continuous enough transition business; it's very much like what ordinarily happens with many ordinary perceptible material objects.)

Anyhow, the important point is that there's the wanted parallel, or symmetry: What's sauce for the goose, or the shmable, is sauce for the gander, or the table. So, while the concept of a table is (we suppose) pretty *tough* as concerns *originating material* constitution, that concept is (quite certainly) quite *lax* as concerns "*current*" *material* constitution (well, maybe it's something like "current with the token-claim in question, though nothing about the nuances matters much here.)

Now, as we'll all recall, the (contrived) concept of a *shmable* is perfectly *lax* as concerns *originating material* constitution – perhaps, and as we're supposing, by contrast with the concept of a table. So, for a nice symmetry to hold for these two concepts, we'll want our

shmable concept to be pretty *tough* right where our table concept is quite lax. And, of course, that's where our concept's concerns are with a material complex's *currently constituting matter*. So, quite opposite to how little our concept of a table requires for a complex's current material constitution, with our concept of a shmable the requirement will be this *pretty tough* condition: For a given shmable to exist, right now, that shmable must be composed of (at least some of) the matter that actually does, right now, serve to compose the shmable. So, if *none of the matter actually composing my oaken Shmoak were to constitute this shmable of mine*, then Shmoak wouldn't exist now. This will be so *even in all* such circumstances where, as with the actual situation, the Stickleys made use of *just the very matter that they actually employed, in originally constructing a certain ancestor of whatever (other) shmable(s) should currently exist*.

Now that we're so very vividly aware of what's what with shmables, and also what's what with tables, can any of us really believe that there's anything concretely substantial going on with *any* of these presently belabored ideas, apart from some very parochial and superficial matters, each concerning the habits or practices of various human beings? Not me; I can't. To the contrary, and as seems quite clear to me, each of these belabored thoughts is a concrete inanity. And, most likely, that's because each is analytically inane.

So, now we have more than just a fine demonstration of the analytical inanity of the Kripkean thought that a *table must have had (some of) its actually originating matter*, should the *table* be correctly said to exist in a situation that, for its part, won't ever occur, exist or obtain. Quite beyond that, we have a nice perspective on what's been doing the needed work in our fine demonstration.

### 3. Origination Conditions, Persistence Conditions, and Boxing a Logical Compass

In just awhile, I'll return to attempt further usefully instructive criticism's of Kripke's noted ideas and, maybe more important than that, to attempt further articulation of the Scientiphical Metaphysic that, quite as so very many of us still do, Kripke tacitly accepted when offering those ideas. (To whatever extent he accepted this Scientiphicalism as applied to experiencing beings – and there the record is quite mixed – it's clear that, as regards such presumably mindless entities as tables, and blocks of wood, and blocks of ice, he quite fully accepted our very widespread and dominant metaphysic, and he expected almost all of his audience, mostly mainstream philosophers, to fully accept it, in these presumably insensate matters.<sup>6</sup>)

Before that, however, I'd like to do a fair amount more toward giving us a still more helpful perspective on the negative demonstration I recently offered, against Kripke.

Accordingly, here and now, I'll introduce a couple of new terms, each as unfamiliar as “shmable” and, now coining a quasi-technical epithet, each as *inconvenient* as “shmable”. These new terms will differ semantically from both “table” and “shmable” – just a little bit, I imagine – and they'll do this in ways in which “table” and “shmable” semantically differ from each other. With this paragraph's previous sentences, what is it, exactly, that I'm very vaguely suggesting?

Now, as we've observed, in a *certain* way, the word “table” is pretty *strict*, or pretty *demanding*, as regards its semantic application. More specifically, it has some pretty strict *origination conditions*. At the same time, but in a *different* way, this same word, “table”, is pretty *lenient* semantically. More specifically, it has some petty lenient *persistence* conditions.

As you'll also recall, the inconvenient new term “shmable,” while it's semantically very like the familiar “table” in every so many ways, is different from our familiar term in these two

complementary respects: First, where “table” is (more) strict – as concerns matters of origination conditions - “shmable”, is (more) lenient. And, second, where “table” is (more) lenient – as concerns matters of persistence conditions - “shmable” is (more) strict.

Now, it takes only a little attention to detail, and hardly any imagination, to realize that, in addition to these two concepts – the convenient concept of a table, and the inconvenient concept of a shmable – there’ll be two further concepts, both of them inconvenient ideas, that complement the first two conceptions in a logically most salient way. Together, all four concepts will fill out a complete schedule of the logical options presently in play, concerning origination conditions, on the one hand, and persistence conditions, on the other. I’ll amplify.

One of the two, which we may introduce with the new word *strable*, will be a concept with *strict conditions of both* our currently considered kinds: Very like the concept of a table, and the concept of a shmable, in ever so many ways, the concept of a strable will have both *strict origination* conditions – well, origination conditions exactly as strict as those for the concept of a table – *and also strict persistence* conditions – well, persistence conditions exactly as strict as those for the concept of a shmable. As this will be a concept that’s suitably strict along both of the conceptual dimensions under consideration, it’s a vividly memorable name we’ve chosen for it, in coining the term “strable.”

The other of these two further concepts is, of course, an idea with *lenient conditions of both* our currently considered kinds: Very like the concept of a table, and the concept of a shmable, in ever so many ways, the concept of a *lable*, just now highlighted, will have both *lax origination* conditions – well, origination conditions exactly as lenient as those for the concept of a table – *and also lax persistence* conditions – well, persistence conditions exactly as lenient as those for

the concept of a shmable. As this will be a concept that's suitably *lax*, or *lenient*, along both conceptual dimensions under consideration, with the new l-word "lable", we'll have a most vividly memorable term most closely associated with this newly highlighted idea.

(Though "lable" is pronounced the same way as is the familiar word "label" – a word for an item that's involved in labeling – the spelling is notably different, of course. At all events, nobody should be confused by any of this. Indeed, even for the ambiguous old word "table" itself, just mere context serves to avoid confusion: Everyone knows that, in our discussion so far, we've been using this term for a certain sort of piece of furniture, and not for an array of items to be systematically considered - often arrayed "rectangularly," with the each item in both a (horizontal) row and also in a (vertical) column. By contrast with that, in just a moment I'll be using "table" in *both* these main senses of the word. Even so, context will make clear which sense is in play with each use of mine, and with each inscribed token of "table.")

For quite a few readers, it may be helpfully handy to have all four terms properly placed, each relative to all the others, via a very simple and visually vivid table. Arbitrarily, I'll have the *columns* for this table representing the noted *persistence* conditions of the concepts – with one column for the ideas with strict p-conditions and with the other for the ideas with lax p-conditions. And, with each of them horizontally oriented, of course, I'll have the *rows* representing the noted *origination* conditions – with one row for the ideas with strict o-conditions and with the other for the ideas with lax o-conditions. Finally, I'll have each of the four cells filled with the name for a certain sort of enduring (presumably) material entities – each a sort for things which satisfy just a certain one of our four currently considered conceptions. (The only *familiar* sort will be, of course, the sort *tables*.) In doing all that, I'll *box the logical*

*compass*, as it's said, with respect to this little conceptual neighborhood. Anyhow, as that's quite enough of clarifying preamble, without any further ado I'll place the little table right here:

	<b>Strict Persistence Condition</b>	<b>Lax Persistence Condition</b>
<b>Strict Origination Condition</b>	strables	tables
<b>Lax Origination Condition</b>	shmables	lables

As should be clear to almost everyone, tables are no more realistic, and they're no more fundamental – whether physically, or whether metaphysically, or whether in any other “worldly way” – than are strables, or shmables or lables.

If you think – heaven forefend – that a certain wooden table has a particular individual essence, whatever that should mean, and that this essence is somehow tightly related to that very table's origination conditions and/or its persistence conditions, then you should also think, as our table vividly suggests, that right where that table is, and composed of the very same matter, there's a material strable, as well, with its own particular individual essence. Not only is the individual essence of this strable numerically different from that of that table, you should be thinking, but, in addition, it's also (and even) qualitatively different from that of the table with which it's spatially and materially wholly coincident: Even as the *table's* essence is tightly tied to *that* object's *lax persistence* conditions, so the *strable's* individual essence is tightly tied to *this* object's *strict persistence* conditions. And, as you should also then think, even in addition to that, there are at least two other material objects each spatially and materially coincident with both the table and the strable - each of the two having its own numerically different, and even

qualitatively different, individual essence: There's also a shamble, right there then, and, what's more, there's also a lable, as well.

#### **4. A Central Tenet of Scientiphicalism: Basic Individuals Have No “Memory-Like” Propensity**

As I've been arguing, as concerns the origins of complex material things, Kripke offers us only analytically inane propositions, not any concretely substantial ideas. All that argumentation was, of course, only just so much negative material, and perhaps nearly the same may be said of the perspective I've offered, toward our more clearly understanding the status of my possibly quite devastating critical comments.

By contrast, toward improving the prospects for more concretely substantial philosophy, this chapter has so far offered nothing, or next to nothing. As we may reasonably hope at this point in our work, we may use sentences like those Kripke employed in a way that's instructively different from how he employed them, using such sentences to offer no analytical inanities, but, instead, only some characteristically philosophical concretely substantial ideas. While some many of the concretely substantial ideas may have much in common with certain happily novel thoughts positively present in the just previous chapter, some others may have less in common with them. At any rate, and beginning with the very next sentence, I'll begin a discussion that, eventually, should lead us to some relevantly welcome concretely substantial propositions.

By this point in the book, you certainly needn't be reminded of the Core of our Scientiphical Metaphysic. Nor need I remind you that, this book aims to articulate not only our Core Scientiphicalism, but, as well, a fair amount of our widely shared Extended Scientiphicalism.

Indeed, in the previous chapter, we did some of that when noting that, on the View taken by Scientiphicalists, all of an individual's other-directed propensities should be generalistically directed powers. In this chapter, I'll try to do some more, complementing what came before.

(While the present discussion proceeds in terms of a particulate vision of how things are with physical reality most fundamentally, matters will run parallel in a discussion that proceeds in terms of a vision where what's physically basic is a physical field, or maybe some mutually interpenetrating or overlapping physical fields.)

For some happy specificity, let's suppose that all electrons are among the basic physical individuals, in the actual world, during its present Eon. And, let's suppose, as well, that, at least as regards their quite general intrinsic features - notably, their perfectly generalistic powers - each electron is precisely similar to all the other electrons. Within the framework of these suppositions, let's now consider a certain arbitrarily selected electron, which we'll call *Elliot*. Now, according to our widely shared Scientiphical View, real propensities, Elliot *ever* has - like its gravitational power to attract massive entities, and like its electrical power to repel entities that are negatively (electrically) charged - they will be intrinsic powers that the basic individual *always* possesses, for as long as it ever should exist at all. If Elliot is really propensitized in a certain way at *any* time when it exists, then it will be really propensitized in just that way at *every time* when it exists. In a word, however it is that our pondered electron is really propensitized, that will remain *constant* - from any earlier time, when it exists, to any later time that it exists.

(In holding this to be so, it should be observed, our Scientiphicalism makes no discrimination between a basic physical thing's real propensities and *any other of their basic* properties, as it's intrinsic spatial properties, and as with its purely qualitative properties. So, suppose that Elliot

now is spherical. Then, according to our Scientiphicalism, *that's constant*: Elliot always was spherical, whenever it existed, and it always will be spherical, for as long as it should exist. Though all that's so, here our focus will be on how utterly constant things are with Elliot *propensitively*. Even while even our Extended Scientiphicalism isn't discriminating here, holding that all a basic particles fundamental intrinsic properties will be perfectly constant properties, our own interest, in this chapter, will be focus just on the constancy our Scientiphicalism dictates for Elliot's propensities.)

As our Extended Scientiphicalism holds that Elliot's intrinsic propensities will never vary, it says as a matter of course, that our how our arbitrarily selected electron's propensitied will never be affected, at all, by any event, process, or situation, in which the particle's ever involved, and which the electron survive. So, more specifically, Elliot's propensitive profile is *utterly unaffected* by how it is the electron *related to any other* concreta, whether the others be electrons or whether nonelectrons, as with quarks, or whether both at once.

With that being so, Elliot's propensities will be unaffected its serving to help constitute complex physical concreta - if any such there be, and if it should ever serve so. For example, if Elliot should become engaged in such electrical bonding as will have it help serve to constitute a certain water molecule, one Walter, for example, that will mean nothing for how it is that Elliot's propensitied, a matter that's as constant as it is intrinsic, even as it will also mean nothing, for our electron's propensitive profile, should Elliot, after serving to help compose Walter, then cease to help serve to compose that water molecule and, in the bargain, come to be so isolated from all other particles that, at this later time, our electron won't serve to constitute any complex physical concretum at all.

Using a colorful phrase to make this point a notably memorable thought, we might Scientiphically say that, as with any other basic physical things, Eliot “has no memory.” A little less colorfully, we might Scientiphically say that Eliot “has no memory-like propensities”.

As almost goes without saying, for Scientiphicalism, a basic physical concretum won’t have any memory-like properties of and fundamental. (Less notable, for our present discussion, it won’t have any memory-like purely qualitative properties and it won’t have any memory-like purely spatial properties. At any rate, and whatever phrases we choose to use to express it, the basic point remains this most pertinent proposition: According to our shared Scientiphicalism, how it is intrinsically with any physically (and metaphysically) basic individual always remains the same. It always remains the same spatially, as with the entity’s shape and its size. And, it always remains the same qualitatively, as with, perhaps, its Spatially Extensible Color. And, most important for us to note now, it always remains the same propensitively.<sup>7)</sup>

In our Scientiphical thinking, we make these assumptions of intrinsic constancy for (what we take to be) all the basic physical individuals. And, partly for that reason, we make *aptly dovetailing* assumptions about physical complexes, which physically derivative entities we Scientiphically suppose to be wholly composed of basic physical individuals. About these physical complexes, one quite central Scientiphical supposition is this aptly dovetailing proposition: All the real powers of any complex physical individual may be aptly regarded as deriving from just two things, one of which is constant, and the other of which is variable. What’s constant is, as I’ve been observing, the intrinsic powers of the basic physical entities that serve wholly, and exhaustively, to compose the physical complex in question. What’s variable, by contrast, is how it is that basic physical individuals may be physically related. In line with

that, there's this key point about the powers of the variously constituted physical complexes: On our Extended Scientiphicalism, any of the changes in the powers of a physical *complex* – and our Scientiphicalism allows that there may often be just such changes – will (physically) *derive only from* changes in what's just been said to be variable – that is, they will derive from only *changes in the physical relations* among the complex's basic physical constituents. In marked contrast, they'll never derive from changes in the powers of a complex's basic constituents, of course, even as there *never are any* such changes as those.<sup>8</sup>

Now, according to these Scientiphical suppositions, it's (relevantly) easy enough for there to be many complex physical entities each of which is a precise duplicate of all the others. In particular, it's easy enough for there to be many physical complexes each precisely similar *propensitively* – that is, precisely similar just as far as their pure powers are concerned. This will be just as easy – a veritable piece of cake - as it is for there to be many physical complexes that are each *shaped* precisely the same as all the others. Whether it be precise duplication with respect to shape or whether it be precise replication with regards to power, all that's needed, Scientiphically, will be this: First, each of the candidates should contain precisely the same number of each sort of basic physical constituent: each should have the same number of up-quarks as does the other; each should have the same number of electrons, and so on. And, second, each of the physical complexes in question – the “candidate duplicates”, so to say – should have its basic physical constituents physically related to each other in just the same way as happens with all the other candidates. If those two conditions are met, there will be precise intrinsic physical duplication (or “multiplication) and with that, our Scientiphicalism says, there'll be precise intrinsic complete duplication.

This central Scientiphical tenet is a concretely substantial thought (even if that may not be perfectly obvious). That said, I'll attempt to clarify, more exactly, the real import of this tenet of our widely shared Extended Scientiphicalism.

Consider an electron that once served as a basic constituent of a wooden table. Even though its history includes its having served in just that constitutive way, our considered electron *won't be at all affected*, as concerns how, at late times, it's *propensitied* with respect to any basic concreta (especially, those other than itself.) Likewise, an up-quark that once served toward constituting an ice cube will be, in regards to all its constituting propensities, or powers, well, it will be precisely like an up-quark that never served toward composing any such icy individual. As far as what it may contribute, at later times, toward constituting other physical complexes, our former-ice-cube-constituent up-quark will be quite the same as any other up-quark. In particular, it will be the same, in this regard, as any of the very many up-quarks that were never involved in the constitution of any ice-cube or, indeed, in constituting any ice at all. For example, in serving to constitute an automobile, say, or a piece of fried fish, for another example, each these two up-quarks – both the one that served to compose an ice-cube and the one that never served to compose any ice at all – well, each will be propensitied to provide “just the same sort of service” toward constituting the auto, or toward composing the piece of fish, as will the other. Neither up-quark will do the least bit more than the other, or do the least bit less, of course, in happily filling any constitutional role that may be “asked of it,” whether it be “asked” by a truly constructive mindful agent or, perhaps much more commonly, whether it be “asked” just by “mother nature.”

Put in what I hope is quite memorable language, I'll offer this quite central tenet of our Extended Scientiphical Metaphysic: Each basic physical individual, each electron, for example, will always be perfectly interchangeable with any other basic individual of its same basic physical kind, in this case, with any other electron. And, though no electron will be interchangeable with an up-quark, of course, and vice versa, none of that has any relevance, to the Scientiphical proposition just memorably offered. Rather, what's relevant to that proposition Even as each electron is interchangeable with any other electron, each up-quark is interchangeable with any other up-quark, and so on.

Using some homey illustrative examples, let me amplify: If a certain largely wooden piano has one of its electrons interchanged with an electron from a certain entirely brass trumpet, devoid of any wood at all, well, then, the powers of the piano won't be altered one bit - and, of course, neither will be those of the trumpet. In particular, and even as the piano will *still* be made *just* so largely of *wood*, the piano will still have precisely the same propensity toward the production of sounds - when played upon, and so on - as it did before the interchange - as *also* will be true of the still *entirely non-wooden* trumpet. The piano won't be disposed to sound a wee bit more trumpet-like than before; nor will the trumpet be disposed to produce sounds that are a wee bit more piano-like. And, this will be so even if, perhaps in sequence, many trillions of the piano's electrons should be interchanged with just as many trillions of electrons that, before the interchange, helped serve to compose the brass trumpet. (Each interchange will involve something like this: There'll the movement of one electron away from a certain place in the piano, and into a certain other place in the trumpet, even while there'll be the opposite movement

of one of the trumpet's electrons, which particle will have just vacated that certain other place, in the trumpet, and will have then moved into the vacated spot in the piano.)

As I'm quite confident, all this section's main points were quite fully accepted by Kripke, perhaps even more fully than I myself now accept them. And they were also accepted, of course, by almost all his most relevantly competent audience, and readers, almost all of whom were at least pretty sophisticated mainstream philosophers. *Given the acceptance of (this articulation of) our shared Scientiphical Metaphysic*, what concretely substantial claim could Kripke have possibly been making, really, when he said, about the wooden table he was indicating, that *this very table could not have been made of ice?*

In pursuing that matter, it may be helpful, I think, to modify our question, just to keep it clear, for ourselves, that Kripke *wasn't meaning to deny* (even any part of) our *Scientiphical Metaphysic*, even while he was tacitly assuming (and been presupposing, pretty much all of) *Scientiphicalism* to hold true. No; his intent wasn't to offer us anything as substantially radical as a denial of our *Scientiphicalism* – I daresay that no such thought as that ever so much as crossed his mind.

Well, then, what substantial thought, if any at all, might it have been that Kripke wished us to consider? Right now all too briefly, perhaps, let's explore that question. For some of that activity, a very apt question may now be posed with just these following words: *Beyond* anything about how the table *actually was* constituted, both when Kripke was indicating it and at the table's earlier times, *what more* was really claimed, of concrete substance, when Kripke said that the indicated complex *couldn't have* originally been made of ice? As our considerations are

starting to suggest, he might have been offering only some analytically inane idea and, quite certainly, not any concretely substantial proposition.

As well as we now can appropriately do it, let's attempt to pursue this next fledgling suggestion: Because Kripke himself was often up-to-his-ears in (something like) ordinary-language philosophy, a lot of the discussion, in the next several sections, will be little more than some pieces of some such (at least apparently) pretty superficial sort of philosophy. In a way, that is, I think, very unfortunate. But, since responsible commentary is one thing I'm aiming to provide here, that really can't be helped.

### **5. Proceeding Scientiphically, Could a Wood Table First Be Made from a just Hunk of Ice?**

In our previous sections, I strongly suggested that no concretely substantial issue was addressed with Kripke's use of sentences like "This table could not have originally been made of ice". Now, I'll go from suggesting to asserting, and I'll support the assertion that, with his use of such words, he offered us nothing more than an analytic inanity.

Toward this end, let's conduct some divinely focused thought-experiments, each tailored to feature, most relevantly, central tenets of our shared Scientiphicalism.

First, let's suppose that, so time ago, an Almighty God wanted to construct the wooden table that, in his later lecture, Kripke indicated. Now, in our little experiment, God won't always take the course of least action. Rather, He'll place certain constraints on how he'll allow himself to operate. (Without any net, tennis wouldn't be much fun.) Just so, our God will always confine Himself to using already available basic physical individuals, notably quarks and electrons, in

his construction of the wanted wooden table, with these supposedly basic concreta always being just as, with some aid from physics, our Extended Scientiphicalism takes them to be.

More specifically, let's suppose that, at the time He wished to begin some super-fast table-construction, the world was in a Hyper Ice Age: Every electron anywhere, and every quark, too, was then serving to help constitute some ice. (Perhaps some were serving to compose certain hunks of ice, even while others were serving to constitute other icy hunks, many of the hunks quite distant from many of the others.) Now, we'll further suppose that He had it in mind to compose a table that, when it's first made of wholly of wood (and, when it first contains no ice) will be composed, most fundamentally, of just such-and-such particular quarks and just so-and-so specific electrons (even while it's then *not* composed of any *other* basic physical concreta).

In pursuing His self-given goal, would our self-challenging God here be facing any terrible difficulty? Of course, he wouldn't. Rather, even if He imposed upon Himself the aforesaid constraints, He'd be facing no difficulty at all.

Indeed, working within the signaled Scientiphical constraints, there are many different ways in which He could have succeeded. Quite briefly, I'll characterize just a few:

First, and just for one thing, if He wanted, He could proceed by initially turning a biggish hunk of ice into a similarly biggish hunk of wood, and only then, after this "substantial transformation," he could use that produced wood to make just the table He wanted, whether by carving the hunk of wood, or whether by operating on (much of) the produced wood, in another way, different from carving. (Here's one way that, in the first-mentioned step, our God could turn a hunk of ice into a pretty similarly sized hunk of wood: Quickly but gradually, He might rearrange one smallish area of the icy hunk's particles, so that they'd come to compose some

wood, instead of any ice, and then He might rearrange another such area, and so on - until the whole darned hunk of stuff didn't even contain a smidgeon of ice, and it was all just a biggish hunk of wood. But, maybe even with just that, I digress too much. Anyhow, let's move on.)

Second, and for another thing, if He wanted to make a wooden table from some available ice in a rather more radical way, so to say, He could proceed in a quite different manner: Radically, he'd begin by decomposing an icy hunk into many rather widely scattered quarks and electrons. After this radical decomposition, he'd bring together, into a very nicely wooden and tabular structure, the mutually quite isolated particles that He freed up for just such a constructive end.

Third, and for yet another thing, if He wanted to make a wooden table - any wooden table - in a still very different way, He could proceed quite *oppositely from*, so to say, how He did His work in the *first* of the (three) ways I'm indicating. Just so, He could proceed by first turning a hunk of ice into a table-shaped icy hunk, in effect at least, into an icy table. After effecting this merely "shapewise transformation," He could use the icy table he produced to make just the wooden table He originally wanted to be in Kripke's presence, at lecture-time, presumably always wanting to proceed in just this perversely refuting and roundabout way.

In some detail, how should he realize this third option? Well, even very readily, he might do that by rearranging the basic particulate constituents of the icy table He'd just recently produced, so that they came to form some wood, while always retaining their same overall shape, so happily tabular. Very readily, he could do this so that this wood - formed from the quarks and electrons of an *icy* table - would then be the wood of a (similarly shaped) *wooden* table. From a table first made of ice, He could produce in the lecture room, well before Kripke entered that hall, the wooden table our lecturer would observe and then indicate. (For this case to have

“widespread intuitive appeal,” He might do this both serially and also gradually, first changing, from ice to wood, a certain small section of the originally-icy table, so to say, then doing that with another similarly small section, perhaps adjacent to the first, and so on --- until, eventually, He’d have changed the entire table from ice to wood.)

Even well within the confines allowed by our Scientiphical Metaphysic, each of these three ways is a perfectly allowable possibility, a perfectly possible way for our “somewhat self-challenging” God to produce an envisioned table - or to fabricate a table he intended to produce - from basic particles He selected for just that purpose.

Is Kripke ever denying any of this? No; he’s never doing anything even remotely like that. So, I’ll now having provided it with quite fair support, I’ll again make my critical assertion as to what, in fact, Kripke said and did: Insofar as he made claims about the wooden table he indicated, he made no concretely substantial claims about any mind-independent concrete reality.

From the present work’s perspective, this section’s main points have, by now, all been made. In addition to them, perhaps this next point may also be of some interest, even if this upcoming point should be, in my specified sense of the terms, a thought that’s analytically *inane*.

Return to consider the first of the three ways (we just specified) for our self-challenging God to proceed: In this scenario, our God first turned a hunk of ice into a hunk of wood and, only after that, did he make any table. So, he made a wooden table that, made from a hunk of wood, was a wholly wooden table, even from the very first moment it existed. But, even though this table was thus originally made of wood, it could have been, even at the first moment of its existence: Indeed, it would have been just that had our God chosen to proceed in our third way, rather than choosing to proceed in our first way, in the way that, in fact, he did choose. And,

being God, He certainly *could have chosen to proceed in either* of these ways, even while having already chosen to be constrained in our noted Scientiphical manner.

As all the foregoing considerations at least start to show, when Kripke said that his indicated wooden table couldn't have first been made of ice, not only was he offering us an analytically *insubstantial* thought, but, as well, the thought he offered was incorrect, or untrue. Far from offering a concretely substantial truth, he provided, instead, only an incorrect analytical inanity.

Against what I've just argued, a follower of Kripke might counter along some such line as the following: Although an Almighty God could have made the merely imaginary wooden tables that Unger's just been indicating, by starting just from some ice and no wood, that's not very harmful, in any way, to what Kripke proposed. For Kripke was focusing on (a certain real and not only imaginary) wooden table that, in fact, was originally made of, and made from, wood and no ice. And, even an Almighty God couldn't have produced that *very* table, Kripke's indicated wooden table, by starting only with a bunch of ice, and not any wood at all. Well, there may seem a certain surface plausibility to this line of reply. But, how well does it hold up, after even just a modicum of scrutiny?

Now, I'm not certain what Kripke's acolyte has in mind here, but, very likely, it may be something that, in all essentials, runs a lot like this: Kripke's table was first formed from a certain block of wood and, very plausibly, that very block of wood came from, and it must have come from, a certain tree, which tree itself was (mostly made of) wood. So, very plausibly, Kripke's table itself, just like its ancestral tree, must have first been made of wood.

Now, that is not a silly thing to say, in the present context, no matter how riddled it may be, as I suspect, with all manner of analytically inane presuppositions. But, still, it's a pretty weak

reply, as can be seen through each of several routes of exploration. Right now, I'll bother to articulate, only very briefly and somewhat sketchily, just two of these routes.

In the first place, or along the first route, there is this to consider: When Kripke was commenting on his chosen table, he was most interested in making a quite general point, and not just a point the whole of whose compass was limited to just the matter of just that one poor old belabored piece of furniture. For example, something like this may well have been the sort of quite general point he was after, though, as it concerns only table, and not desks or chairs, is still far less general than anything of any great philosophical interest or importance: It's necessarily the case that, if something is a table and it's wholly wooden from the first moment of its existence (or of its being a table), then anything that's wholly *ice* from the first moment of *its* existence (or of *its* being a table), and that's not at all wooden, from the first moment of *its* existence (or of *its* being a table), well, that will (and must) be some other thing, presumably even some *other table*; it won't be the very same table (as was referred to, or as was picked out by, the aptly referential terms occurring in this sentence's antecedent, that is, occurring in its if-clause). But, as my own God-infested examples show, any such general thought as that is quite incorrect, and untrue, however riddled it may be with nothing more than just so much inanity. Well, that's just in the first place.

Now, in the second place, and along a second route, let's consider a kindred example, that goes back, historically, a good ways further than Kripke's tabular example. Kripke's table was first made from a certain block of wood. Presumably, that block of wood came from a certain tree; of course, it would have been a largely (even mostly) wooden tree – or, more colloquially, the wood of the block was, before the block was carved, (at least some of) the wood of the tree.

Well, what our God can do with blocks, he can also do with trees, even within the bounds of His self-imposed Scientiphical constraints. Had he chosen to do so, a choice well within His power, He would have taken the tree and turned it all into ice, after which He would extract a block of ice from the tree, after which He would have made, from the ice block, an ice table, and after which He would have gradually turned that ice table into an entirely wooden table. Or, alternatively, Had he chosen to do so, a choice also well within His power, our God would have taken, from the selfsame wooden tree, a block of wood, after which He would gradually turn that block of wood into a block of ice, after which he would into an ice table, and then turned that, gradually, into a table made entirely of wood, with no ice (left) at all. Or, He could have done various other things still, getting ice to prevail in the process, at some woodless stage or other, even while He would finish with a table made entirely of wood, containing no ice at all.

As those two explorations help serve to show, and as might also be seen through still further exploratory avenues, when Kripke said that his indicated wooden table couldn't have first been made of ice, not only was he offering us an analytically concretely *insubstantial* thought, but, as well, what he was offering us was, apparently, an analytically *incorrect* inanity. In this large regard, he's quite like the philosophers who say, with Putnam and Davidson, that, unless someone's had a certain sort of rich past history, the person can't think, or, at the very least, she can't think about anything in her environment.

For our central concern, the question of whether the most salient offerings of analytic philosophy feature quite a few concretely substantial thoughts or whether, against that, they're almost all just so many analytically inane propositions, this section's material amounts to an argument that's not only quite partial and incomplete, but, as well, an *ad hominum* argument.

Even so, it may be well worth our serious consideration. Why? Well, as is even pretty obvious, the reason for that is just this: Philosophers whose most salient offerings are worthless in one utterly central regard - that concerning correctness and incorrectness, or concerning truth and falsity - well, they may be, very possibly, philosophers whose most salient offerings are utterly disappointing in other central regards, as well - perhaps most notably, that concerning concrete substance and analytical inanity.

## **6. Tood and Tice, a Table First Made of Wood and a Table First Made of Ice**

For folks with no heavy investment in recent mainstream philosophy, most of this chapter's main negative points have been, I think, pretty well motivated. But, first, most isn't quite all, of course. And, second, at the time of this writing, much of my intended audience, largely comprising just so many academic philosophers, does have a heavy investment in that fashionable philosophy. So, for two reasons, at least, there remains, even in the confines of this single chapter, a fair amount of work still to be done.

In what's next upcoming, I'll try, in the first instance, to convince more of my intended readership that this chapter's main negative claims are, at least by and large, usefully correct ideas. In this effort, I'll be preparing the way for some further points, each as tentatively suggestive as it's positively imaginative. Indeed, these more positive points are, to my concretely substantial way of thinking, the most central offerings of the present chapter.

Toward the goal of convincing more of my "heavily invested" readers, I'll now make this very readily understood suggestion, in no wise any very far-fetched, exotic, or esoteric proposal: In addition to the table that Kripke's had us consider, let's also consider another table. Maybe

this other table will be only hypothetical, but, at all events, it will be, at least in terribly central respects, very like some actual tables.

Still thinking in terms of our received Scientiphical Worldview, let's now imagine a table that originally *was* made entirely of ice, perhaps the proud production of a human ice sculptor. To continue our discussion of Kripke's offerings, we may suppose that this frozen table should seem, as regards all its surface appearances, terribly similar to some tables that are made of wood, though this supposition isn't really needed. (How this should be so I don't know. Could it be done by mixing some suitable dye in with the water, before the darkly colored water was frozen into a big block of ice, ready for the ice sculptor to shape tabularly? Very possibly, I imagine. But, as the latest supposition is only quite optional, that certainly doesn't matter.) Thought it's just optional, as I said, and not really needed, you might enjoy considering this scenario: For a table that's originally just 99.9% pure ice - much as (impure) water that's taken right out of a river is just 99.9% pure (or rather less so) - a realistic enough specification is quite easy, as I'm sure you know as well as I do: The ice sculptor may apply to his table, all over its surface, a very thin coat of opaque dye. With a certain very good sort of dye, perhaps he could make it appear like a table made of "natural wood." But, using just a simple opaque black dye, he could *easily* make it appear the same as a *wooden table that's painted black*. And, with another sort of dye, of course, he could easily make it appear the same as a wood table that's painted *red*, for another example. Of course, very many actual wooden tables are painted tables.

So far, so good: With all of the ice-sculptures that people have been making lately, I think it likely that there actually have been many tables made of ice and, given all that production,

perhaps there's been one, at least, that may have looked very like some painted tables that are made of wood. With that said, we've done our stage-setting.

Now, let's consider a certain easily understood "Ship-of-Theseus-Style Scenario" for our happily contemplated *ice-table*. (Unlike our examples involving a self-challenging God, who confined himself to working only in Scientiphically Respectable ways, this upcoming Scientiphically Respectable case won't be any very far-fetched, exotic, or esoteric scenario.) Here is the case I have in mind: Kept nicely in a freezer room, our ice-table - we'll name it *Tice* - is frequently used as a table. Perhaps, while supporting some wooden carving boards, it's mainly used, by some butchers, to cut meat upon, those meat-cleaving men warmly enough clothed, for the freezer room. After a certain period of such use, we're supposing, some of Tice's ice is replaced by a spatially congruent piece of wood, the replacing wood quickly fusing, quite well, with the ice of Tice that *hasn't* (yet) been replaced. If need be, we'll use a smidgeon of fusing material, an apt glue, perhaps, that's neither ice nor wood, for such an interim step.

After another similarly useful period, that sort of thing happens again. Eventually, and only after some several months go by, all of Tice's ice has been replaced. At this point, as it's only natural to suppose, Tice will be composed entirely of wood (or as nearly so as most actual wooden tables are). At all events, our currently-wooden Tice will comprise no ice at all.

Shortly after Tice is composed entirely of wood, it's removed from the freezer room, and it's placed in a typically warm lecture hall. After some several hours, there's the expected rise in Tice's temperature, so that, like most other wooden tables, it's "at room temperature". When that happens, we may naturally enough suppose, Tice becomes a precise physical duplicate of Kripke's indicated wooden table, which somewhat distant (and precisely similar) piece of

furniture we've been calling *Tood*. Thinking in our shared Scientiphical terms, as we've just been doing, we may imagine all this both very easily and also quite clearly.

Why is it that we may imagine all that so clearly? Well, among other things, and as I've taken pains to stress, there's this that's serving to shape our imaginative thinking: Central to our Extended Scientiphicalism, there's the thought that, even though they've served toward constituting an icy object, Tice's original up-quarks are always propensitively (and otherwise) just like any other (of our Eon's) up-quarks, including any that *ever serve to constitute the always wooden Tood*, and including any that *never serve to constitute any icy complex*. And, of course, we're supposing similarly for Tice's other original basic physical constituents, such as its original electrons.

Largely owing to our making these Scientiphical suppositions, and to our habitually thinking in terms of them, it's easy for us to suppose - quite clearly, I'm suggesting - that Tice and Tood are precise physical duplicates of each other.

As Tice and Tood are precise physical duplicates, each has precisely the same propensities, or powers, as does the other: How it is that Tice is propensitied, once it's out of the freezer room, and it's made of warmish wood, will be precisely the same as how it is that Tood's propensitied. Just so, each will have precisely the same physically derivative powers as the other has - and those will be absolutely all the real powers possessed by each of these two wooden tables. Precisely as Tood should be expected to interact with any other object - as with its happily supporting a certain bowl, perhaps - just so will Tice interact with that very same other object, or with any object precisely similar to that one. That's a consequence of our shared Scientiphical view of such ordinary physical complexes, a position implicitly accepted by

Kripke, I imagine, and rightly presumed, by him, to be accepted by his intended audience, as well. And, just as the currently wooden Tood will burn - it won't melt, of course - when it's in the presence of a hot flaming torch, so will the currently wooden Tice burn, too. Concisely, we may put the present matter in these terms: While Tice and Tood certainly have had very different histories, still, *at the present time, there's no concretely substantial difference between* the two complex concreta. Perhaps most notably, for our current discussion, Tood and Tice are, at the present time, *precisely similarly propensitied* complex physical particulars.

For the moment, and just for the sake of some potentially instructive reasoning, let's generously agree with the Kripkean thought that Tood *could not have* been originally made of ice. On the other hand, of course, Tice *actually was* originally made of ice. And, so, at least in the way philosophers usually use the words, *Tice* certainly *could have* been originally made of ice. But, now, *beyond* their having had such *different past histories*, as specified by us for them, what concretely substantial difference is there, at the presumed present time, between these two currently all-wooden tables, Tood and Tice? Scientiphically speaking, at least, there's none.

Suppose now that, contrary to Kripke's claims, somebody else - it could be me, for example - makes these quite opposite claims, if only for the sake of promoting a potentially instructive philosophical argument: Even as Tice could have been originally made of ice, so also, even if perhaps not so obviously, the *originally wooden Tood could have been* originally made of ice. While I'll be disagreeing with Kripke, is this dispute concretely substantial? I don't think so.

Rather than our making any truly conflicting claims, about some mind-independent concrete-worldly matters, our disagreement will be, at least in effect, little more than just this: On the one side, I'll be claiming that, in line with proper English semantics, it sometimes may be correct to

say that a table first made of wood (from a certain particular block of wood) could first have been made of ice, instead. And, on the other side, he'll be claiming, in effect, that I've gotten the semantics wrong here - perhaps owing to one or another conflation, or confusion. Is there really a lot more that's at stake in this little quarrel? Again, I don't think so.

## **7. How Modal Terms May be Used to Make Substantial Statements: The Case of Determinism**

So far, I've been urging that, with his use of locutions involving ordinary modal phrases, like "could have" and "could not have," Kripke hasn't offered us any characteristically philosophical concretely substantial thoughts. But, as hardly needs much argument, that's not the only way in which, quite in keeping with their ordinarily accepted meaning, we may properly use our common modal words. Here's a salient example of that.

Traditionally, many philosophers have advocated a strict thesis of *determinism*. And, what I think amounts to much the same, many have endorsed a strict thesis of *fatalism*. According to this traditional deterministic view, the actual world's situation is always this: *Whatever* actually does obtain - whatever entities exist (at whatever times), whatever events occur (at certain times), and so on - those things always *had to* obtain - the entities always *had to* exist (at those times), the events always *had to* occur (at those certain times), and so on: Every blade of grass that does exist, it simply had to exist - just when it does, and just as it does, and so on. With regard to the shape of any given one of those blades, that blade always had to be shaped in just precisely the way that, at any given time, it actually was shaped. Nothing that ever is could have

been different, in any way at all, from just the precisely specific way that, at any given time, it actually is.

This thesis of determinism is, I think, a substantial statement about concrete reality (though, as I believe, it's probably a substantial claim that's not true.) If this fatalism *is* true, then concrete reality will be a *certain* way. And, if it *isn't* true, which is also consistently conceivable, then reality *won't be that way* – rather, it will be some *other* way. As this determinism is a concretely substantial idea, it's a thought that conflicts with various other concretely substantial propositions: For just one example, it conflicts with the thought that, with at least some occurring events, their occurrence is, or it was, a perfectly random matter. And, for another example, it conflicts with the thought that the occurrence of some event – as with the decay of some radioactive substance - is a purely probabilistic matter, as with it's being the manifestation of a probabilistic propensity, of that substance, to decay.

And, though this point has been a notoriously much-argued issue, our concretely substantial strict determinism also conflicts with this still other concretely substantial thought, ever so different from the conflicting thoughts featured in the just previous paragraph: At least from time to time, each of very many people really does choose, each then choosing just one actually available alternative for her own thoughtful activity from among several mutually exclusive alternatives, for her thoughtful activity, all of which are also then actually available to her. At least as far as this third thought has it, the situation will be this: On such an absolutely fatalistic view as our noted determinism, there'll *never be*, for anything or anyone, any *real alternatives* at all and, so, there'll never be any that are ever actually available to anyone and, so, there'll never be anyone who really chooses from among actually available alternatives for her activity.

It matters little, for our present discussion, whether any actual philosophers ever upheld such an absolutely fatalistic deterministic proposition. Maybe, Leibniz did. And, perhaps more likely – I don't know - it may have been upheld by certain ancient philosophers, as with perhaps, the Megarian thinkers. But, as I just said, for our present discussion, that's no big deal.

To express a deterministic view with reference to any particular state of affairs, it is certainly quite natural for us to use, and, as I think, it's perfectly proper for us to use, locutions involving "could not have." So, for those expressing a deterministic view, it may be proper to say that, if something is a certain way, then it *could not have* been any other way.

In particular, it may be *substantially* claimed - whether or not it's truly so claimed - that, as a certain table was actually first made of wood, so that table *could not have* first been made of anything other than wood. But then, and quite the same, of course, it *also* may be substantially claimed - with just as much deterministic propriety - that, as a certain table was first made with a *rectangularly shaped brown* top, that table *could not have* first been made with *any other sort* of top, say, an *rectangularly shaped black* top.

As should seem quite compelling, there's a great difference between these deterministically oriented thoughts, claims, each of which is a concretely substantial idea, and, on the other hand, the analytical inanities that, using much the *same modal words*, but using them in a *very different way*, Kripke placed on offer, in connection with various "essentialistically oriented thoughts", saliently including those concerning the material origin of a certain indicated wooden table. If that's right - and it certainly seems to be so - then, even if Kripke offers us only some quite *empty* thoughts, with *his most noted uses* of "could not have," still and all, there are *other* uses of these same words – saliently including many deterministically oriented uses of the terms –

whereby what's offered are concretely substantial thoughts. And, as is the case with the deterministic thesis itself, or with the fatalistic thesis, some of these concretely substantial thoughts may be characteristically philosophical propositions.

With all that being the case, this next question immediately arises: Is the thesis of determinism, or the thesis of fatalism, along with ever so many specific consequences of those theses, the *only substantial* propositions we may quite naturally express with locutions like "must have," and "could not have," and other similarly modal expressions? No; not by a long shot. Right off the bat, we may notice that, with very many uses of these expressions, we make very many statements that, though they're of little or no metaphysical interest, are nonetheless quite substantial propositions. For example, I might say that, while I *could not have* been a professional baseball player, I *could have been* an experimental psychologist.

When interpreting these remarks of mine - quite true enough when understood quite sensibly - we *hold certain things fixed*, so to say, while allowing other things to vary. So, among the things we hold fixed is that pretty much all the other folks around would still be around - including very many thousands of men my age each of whom, when all of us were suitably young, had far more baseball talent than I ever did.

While some will be satisfied with that, more may need some help here, maybe especially regarding what's going on with our holding certain things fixed. Well, here's something that should help: Suppose someone truthfully showed us that, though it would have been an exceedingly unlikely occurrence, still, at a certain earlier time, an *asteroid could have* collided with the earth, and in *just such a way* as to eliminate almost all of those very many thousands of young men, even while not adversely affecting me at all. Well, in anything remotely like an

ordinary circumstance, we wouldn't take *that* as (a consideration) relevant to evaluating my statement. Rather, in anything much like a normal situation, we'd still take it as true that (for being far less athletically talented than very many other then-young men) I *could not have* been a professional baseball player. To be sure, there's nothing very deep involved in these rather ordinary matters - much less anything that's of any genuine metaphysical moment. Still, our recognizing these *very many* ordinary uses does make clear to us that, with our common modal locutions, we *often* succeed in making what are concretely *substantial* claims.

While all that may be well and good, for all ordinary concerns, what'd its relevance for any most exemplary philosophical thinking, not for the analytically inane ideas pervading recent mainstream philosophy, and for not the almost perfectly parochial substantial thoughts also abundant in the recent mainstream literature, but, rather, for the characteristically philosophical substantial thoughts fairly abundant in much traditional philosophy? My statement that I could not have been a professional baseball player, while a concretely substantial proposition – and while quite certainly true, to boot – isn't any claim of any great philosophical, or metaphysical, import, or interest. So, now there arises this next question: *Beyond expressing a thesis of strict determinism, or a comprehensive fatalism*, can our ordinary modal locutions be used, quite naturally and properly, to express some concretely *substantial* thoughts that are also thoughts of some considerable *characteristically philosophical* import? Or, is the situation much bleaker than that? Is it so bleak that, whenever we should try to use these locutions to express characteristically philosophical concretely substantial ideas, we'll succeed in offering nothing more substantial than, say, the concretely inane ideas that Kripke proffered, when he opined about the origins of (presumed) material complexes?

At least at first blush, it seems unlikely that our situation should be as bleak as that. And, when we remember our discussion in chapter 1, where we proffered propositions affirming there to exist beings with individualistic other-direct powers, even while noting the conflict between those thoughts and our Extended Scientiphicalism, we can be fairly confident that our isn't really such a very bleak situation. Still, there's still quite a lot at stake here: Just for thing, we'd still be in a pretty pickle should it be true that, beyond matters of determinism and fatalism, it's only the sort of topics treated earlier, all of them concerning what might be called mental matters, should allow for nicely substantial philosophical thoughts to be offered with perfectly proper uses of the most central modal expressions of English and, presumably, or other earthly natural languages.

Accordingly, and for other reasons as well, in some of this chapter's subsequent sections, I'll attend to some substantial thoughts about concrete reality, very few of them concerning mental matters, if any at all, and each naturally expressed with an apt use of "could not have" (even while each will be, of course, much more interesting, philosophically and metaphysically, than the thought that I could not have been a professional baseball player).

## **8. Distinctive Material Objects and these Objects' Distinctive Matter**

At great length, and in a variety of other places, I've argued that our Scientiphical Metaphysic may be inadequate to central issues concerning conscious experiencers like ourselves. But concerning the likes of ordinary inanimate objects - like tables and chairs, like stones and rocks - supposing that there really are such "ontologically parasitical" entities as them - I think that Scientiphicalism may well be free of any truly serious difficulties. Or, much the same, it does

well by the tables and rocks of our own Eon - presumably for the last several billion years or so and, also presumably, for some billions of years yet to come. Maybe it doesn't do *extremely* well, in that regard – but, anyhow, it does at least fairly well. Or so it seems to me.

With little more than some hand-waving, what have I just been gesturing at?

Well, during this present Eon, at least, there's nothing all that special about any particular table, or about any particular rock. The matter composing a particular table is, in all fundamental respects, quite like the matter composing any other table, and also quite the like matter composing any particular rock. For one way of putting the point, if the matter composing a given table is (or it comprises) just so very many quarks and electrons - and nothing else comparably fundamental - then so it is, too, with the matter composing any other table and, for that matter, with the matter composing any particular rock, just as well. That's one of the thoughts that ground our idea that, at least in principle, for any given table, there may be precise physical duplicates of the object, quite as things are with rocks as well, of course, and with all sorts of other ordinary physically composite material objects.

Just so, concerning any of our Eon's ordinary complex material entities, there's nothing *truly distinctive* about the complex individual and, relatedly, there's nothing *truly distinctive* about the *matter constituting* the composite material particular: There's no table with a shape, for example, that can't be duplicated, at least in principle, no matter what merely technical difficulties may, in actual fact, stand in the way of that. And, similarly, there's no rock with any propensity, or power, that can't be duplicated - so that, existing simultaneously with that rock, and spatially quite separate from the rocky entity, there'll then be another rock, with precisely the same, or with precisely similar, real propensities.

The sentences I've just presented were used to make substantial claims, even if perhaps only some quite obviously acceptable claims, about how things are. This may not be how things are absolutely universally, but, at any rate (and as we are wont to presume) that's how it is with very many (presumed) things in the present Eon, at least, in this concrete world of ours, this perfectly actual world. That being so, we should be able to express, with complementary sentences, some very different substantial claims about how things are, which statements will conflict with the boringly acceptable substantial thoughts I've just placed on offer. And, indeed, there are many such complementary sentences.

Using some of these complimentary sentences to that wanted effect, I'll now express some thoughts that, in a quite radical and fundamental way, conflict with anything even remotely like our Scientiphical suppositions: Perhaps the product of a big bang very different from the one that initiated our current Eon, just (about) some fourteen billion years ago, there might have been, very much earlier than that, a much big bang. And, this much earlier big bang might have produced two fundamentally very different sorts of matter, both of them visible to, and tangible to, the people that inhabited a certain planet, on whose surfaces there was matter of both of the very different sorts. Now, *almost* all of that produced matter may have been of a quite familiar sort – it may have been just like the ordinary matter of our own time, or of this present Eon. But, then, a little bit of the produced matter may have been of a very peculiarly different sort. So, among all the hunks of matter that were then around, anywhere, there was just one whose very *special* matter – fundamentally very different from any of our ordinary matter - had the power to cure, or to heal, any afflicted any man, or even any suffering beast, that *came in contact with that matter*, even if only very briefly. To use a memorable term for this wonderfully special stuff, I'll

say that all of it was then composing, at a certain very early time, a single hunk of *healthite* – and not any enormously large hunk of healthite, at that. As we’re supposing, I’ll repeat, the situation was this one: Throughout all those early times, of that great old Eon, all the healthite in the world was just the healthite first composing this one hunk of the very wonderfully special material. Now, in line with that supposition, we’ll be supposing, in the bargain, statements like this proposition: If the original healthite hunk should be evenly cut in two, then all the healthite in the world would still be just the same quite limited quantity of stuff, with half of it now serving to compose one newly separate hunk of healthite and with the other half now serving to compose another such hunk, spatially quite separate from the first.

(All this being so, we should agree that, as well, the original hunk itself had this curative power, even if that’s only because the matter composing the hunk was so wonderfully propensitized. Of course, for the hunk’s curative power to be manifested effectively, the diseased people, and the afflicted beasts, must each be reciprocally propensitized; they must each be propensitized to be healed by, or to be cured by, the wonderfully healthful hunk of healthite, upon contact with the wonderful material - even if *that’s* only because *they’re each propensitized* to be healed *by* the healthite. But, of course, that’s something that we’ve been implicitly accepting - and now I’ve offered it, for your tentative acceptance, even quite explicitly)

To be healed by (contact with) the healthite, ill people came to the hunk, from near and far, so as to make curative contact with the wonderful stuff. Of course, this presented something of a hardship for many of the ill pilgrims, as they had to come to the single hunk’s location, on one of the planet’s continents, from places on other continents. Most pilgrims needed to cross a vast ocean, as part of the required journey. To reduce these hardships, and to make the precious

healthite more widely available, it was decided that an able carver should cut the healthite hunk in such a way as to produce ten separate wands of healthite - each wand to be located at a place pretty distant from all the others, and *no very* great distance from *any* ill individual. As each continent would have at least one wand of healthite, nobody would have to cross an ocean, to make contact. For simplicity's sake, we suppose that each of the wands was precisely like each of the nine others. As far as its curative power was concerned, each was like the original hunk. But, if more than ten wands were made from that hunk, then none of the newly composed (smaller) items would have enough healthite to be curatively all that effective.

Even quite arbitrarily selected from among the supposed ten, let's consider, right now, a certain one of these ten congruent wands, a wonderful wand that, alliteratively, we'll call *Warren*. As is true of all the other wands, too, Warren was originally composed of, and Warren still is composed of, pure healthite, and only of pure healthite. Even as all the world's healthite is just that which came from the original hunk, so it must be that the healthite composing Warren (both at the first moment of its existence and at the presumed present time) is all healthite from that single original healthite hunk. So it is, too, with the other nine congruent wonder wands.

Suppose that, not knowing much about all this, a benevolent ignoramus wanted to make more wands, each as wonderfully curative as Warren, but from much more ordinary, vastly more plentiful matter – since he didn't have any healthite available. (The only wonder wand that our benevolent guy knows of, at least at the start, is Warren.) Any, in an effort at setting him straight, we might tell this guy how wonderfully different healthite is from any other matter, and how very rare healthite is, and how all the healthite, then in the whole world, serves to compose one or another of the ten world's ten wonder wands – one of which is Warren.

All the healthite is used up in composing the wands; that's why no healthite is available. Taking healthite out of any of these wands would only worsen the situation, and certainly not mean any improvement. And, trying to make a wonderfully curative object out of anything not healthite is only an exercise in futility.

We might underscore this, especially this last point, by saying, perhaps among quite a few other things, that Warren *could not have been* made from anything but healthite. And, as all the (world's, and Eon's) healthite is just the healthite that came from (carving) the one original hunk, Warren *could not have been* made from anything but healthite from that one hunk. In fewer words, we might say that Warren could not have been made from anything but that hunk of healthite.

In just a couple of moments, I'll say something about what specially useful points we might be making, with the just previous paragraph's sentences, all used just as they were just above. As is my hope, that will help us, sooner or later, to make some metaphysical progress. But, before attempting anything as progressive as that, right now I'll make only some rather general comments, far more semantical, and superficial, than anything that deserves to be called metaphysical. My reason for this is quite straightforward and simple: I wish to forestall misunderstanding as to what my ambitions are in this discussion. They are, in several ways, rather modest ambitions, even though some might think otherwise - thinking, as they might, that I'm somehow trying to refute some strict deterministic thesis, or that I'm trying to do something else that's exceedingly grand, and extraordinarily difficult to accomplish. That said, and without further ado, here are the adumbrated general comments, hopefully about as clarifying as they're philosophically superficial.

As with almost all our other uses of “could not have” (and kindred expressions) in making the foregoing statements about Warren, the wonderful wand, I’ve assumed certain things to be fixed; as I’ve been tacitly assuming *those* things *could not have* been different. So, for example, I’ve assumed that the big bang giving rise to the original healthite hunk must have occurred, and that it couldn’t have occurred very differently from how (as I’ve specified) it actually did occur. In particular, it couldn’t have occurred in a way where there would have been no healthite produced by it, or in a way where there would’ve been many big healthite hunk emerging out of the big bang.

Of course, this was only to be expected, as I’m now *not* in the business of expressing anything much like a thesis of strict determinism, or comprehensive fatalism. (Before, when remarking that I could not have been a professional baseball player, I also assumed certain things to be fixed - even as I then wasn’t in the business of expressing a fatalistic thesis, either. I assumed, quite appropriately and correctly, that nothing would ever have eliminated all of the many thousands of people, each roughly my age, and each with far more talent for baseball than I myself ever possessed. Just as that’s appropriately held fixed when evaluating my claim about my “necessarily nonexistent professional baseball career,” so, in evaluating my remarks about Warren’s possible origins, it’s appropriately held fixed that, for one thing, Warren’s Eon was initiated by just a certain big bang (of just the precise sort I’ve specified) and that this initiating event occurred just as I specified it should do.)

Having read through the previous couple of paragraphs, you’ll be quite clear, I trust, that my philosophical ambitions, in this section, are really pretty modest goals. With that much very well

appreciated, and firmly born in mind, I'll try to make some rather more specifically tailored points, hopefully points that may help us, eventually, to make some philosophical progress.

Return to consider our benevolent ignoramus, a guy who wanted to make, not from rare healthite, but from just so much far more ordinary matter, some wands as curatively wonderful as Warren. Just so, I said we might usefully tell him this: Warren *could not have been* made from anything but healthite. And, as all the (world's, and Eon's) healthite is just the healthite that came from (carving) the one original hunk, Warren *could not have been* made from anything but that healthite hunk. Now, in making those remarks about Warren, to our benevolent ignoramus, I was indicating that there's something special about the matter that composes Warren, and about how this wonderful wand is related to just it's very special, and specially powerful, matter: During the vast Eon in question, it's not possible for there to be a wand propensitized as wonderfully as Warren is, unless the wand be composed of healthite, all of that being some healthite that was, originally, in the single quite limited hunk of healthite, the sole source of the special stuff, at least during all of the vast Eon that's so properly in focus. Just so, there's no point in trying to produce, from any much more ordinary matter, anything remotely like a precise duplicate of Warren.

Now, even in a most fundamental way, *that's very* different from how things are in our present Eon, in our actual world - and *not just* because we don't have any such wonderfully curative physical objects! In our actual and current circumstance, any simple physical individual, like an up-quark, perhaps, is precisely like each of terribly many other simples, each of them also up-quarks. So, in our actual circumstance, each of very many physical simples may be considered, quite rightly enough, a precise qualitative duplicate of each of very many others.

And, in particular, each physical simple is propensitively just like each of very many others - that is, precisely the same in its profile of real powers. So, for example, each (presumably physically simple) electron is propensitively just like each of the very many other electrons, and each (presumably physically simple) up-quark is propensitied just precisely like each of the very many other up-quarks.

What's more, in our own world and Eon, each physical complex, like a particular capsule of penicillin, is susceptible of precise duplication. All that's really needed for such precise similarity, including precise propensitive similarity, is for there to be, perhaps in a somewhat distant region, a constituting arrangement, just like our envisioned capsule's arrangement, with precisely as many quarks as are serving to constitute the first-mentioned capsule, and with just as many constituting electrons, and (or) with precisely as many other constituting physically simple individuals, whichever sort of simple entities they might be. (Indeed, as matters stand in our current Eon, that's a very clear instance of overkill: There are, in point of fact, very many arrangements of electrons and quarks, say, that are sufficient for there being a happily curative capsule of penicillin. Each of very many such capsules may be rather like all the others, in certain key respects, without any of the capsules being a precise physical duplicate of any of the others, or even coming impressively close to being that.)

Far from being anything like unique to our Eon, of course, there are extremely many of each sort of physically simple individual - there are extremely many down-quarks, for example - each available for the formation of a duplicate penicillin capsule, or a precisely similar capsule of penicillin. That's ever so unlike what we specified for our Eon with Warren the wonderful wand, during which enormously long era there's only the one quite limited hunk of healthite ever

available, as (the source of) matter suitable for constituting any such wonderfully propensitized particular. At any rate, according to our Scientiphical Metaphysic - which I assume to be quite correct in this matter - each happily imagined penicillin capsule, being a precise physical duplicate of each of the imagined others, will have precisely the same propensity profile as does each of the others. In particular, each will be just as effective - no more so and also no less - at fighting bacterial infections in the people, or in the (nonhuman) beasts, that may ingest any of the potent capsules.

(Indeed, pretty close to that ideal, there'll be something pretty close to such an exact equivalence, so far as propensity goes, with each of the penicillin capsules actually found in a typically full vile of ordinary penicillin capsules. Pretty nearly, each ordinary capsule will have the same infection-fighting power as does each of the others. Why? Well, any such medicinal power is, in our current eon, the physically derivative propensity of a physically derivative complex individual. And, even as each capsule is constituted of roughly the same number of quarks, and so on, as is each of the others, so also, each capsule's simple constituents are arranged, within the capsule, roughly the same as with each of the other capsules. So, with each of the capsules, there's much the same physical derivation as with each of the others and, accordingly, with each of the capsules, there's much the same profile of powers.)

Just as there's nothing very special about any one ordinary penicillin capsule, so there's nothing special required, in the real nature of things, for the formation of any one of the medically beneficial ordinary individuals. Especially if we *place aside* any constraints stemming from what happen to be the individuating concepts we "latch onto" with the phrase *penicillin capsule* – and then actually often employ, we may say – perfectly properly, I'll suggest - that *all*

of these capsules first *could have been* made from just about any available suitably-sizeable batch of matter, so to put the point. It would only be necessary to decompose the batch of matter, into its basic physical constituents - say, into its quarks and electrons – and then, by rearranging these items appropriately, produce the wanted capsules. Just so, and again *placing aside all such presumable sources of the noted inanity*, we might make much the same point by saying that *any of* the capsules could have been (originally) constituted of entirely numerically different quarks and electrons, say.

However any of that may be, for our present purposes the central point will still be this proposition: A *denial* of the presumptive possibility that I've just been suggesting, along anything much like the lines that Kripke has offered us, well, that *won't* be any truly *substantial* denial. Rather, what's then offered will be a quite empty (negative) idea, a (negative) point that's utterly inane.

By contrast with that, and again quite apart from points mainly concerned with any merely conceptual matters, it's something very substantial that's offered when it's said, about Warren, that it *could not have been* (originally) made from anything other than healthite and, what's yet more, from concretum other than the (Eon's) original hunk of healthite.

(To provide a tad of pizzazz, I specified a wonderfully beneficial power for our specified material objects - first for the sole hunk of healthite, and then for the ten wands, saliently including Warren. This was, of course, the power to heal, upon her contact with the wonderfully powerful object, any man or beast, ridding the ailing toucher of all of her illnesses. But, the same points can be made, quite equally well, in terms of far less exciting powers. Just so, we might specify that there be a single hunk of matter (or, a single hunky material object) that,

unlike all the other massive individuals of its Eon, was propensitized to attract other physical things with a (*quasi-* gravitational) force that's inversely proportional to the *cube* of the distance between the centers of the two objects – between itself, on the one hand, and, on the other, each of the much more ordinary object it's set to so attract, and each of which is so set to be attracted by it. (As in our actual world, presumably, each of the ordinary objects is set to attract each of the others with a (*proper* gravitational) force that's inversely proportional to the square of the distance.) For a memorable label, we may say that the special matter now in focus, composing our special hunky object, is just so much *cubeite*. (Also arising from that Eon's originating big bang, all of its other material things will be, of course, reciprocally propensitized - each propensitized to be attracted by the cubeite hunk in proportion to the cube of the distance between the special hunk's center and its own center.) Mirroring what we did with our healthite hunk just before, so as to have it provide us with ten healthite wands, we may specify that this cubeite hunk, too, could be carved, or split, to form several smaller cubeite individuals. But, as we may also specify, that's the only way that, in all of this vast Eon, there'll ever be any more cubeite individuals. Supposing that such a split produces two smaller cubeite entities, one *Carl* and one *Calvin*, we may then usefully make this quite substantial statement, in no wise, anything quite empty or inane: Carl could not have been formed from anything but cubeite and - as all the available cubeite was just that originating from the noted hunk of the stuff - it could not have been formed from anything other than cubeite from that original special hunk.)

Along lines I've been suggesting, I'll now explicitly propose this rather vague but pretty plausible hypothesis, or conjecture: Insofar as there may be any truth in a claim that, say, a certain ordinary table could not have been first made of entirely different matter – matter always

even spatially distant from, an utterly distinct from, the matter actually first constituting it - that will be due to, at least in large measure, the claim's involvement with some merely conceptual matters, and no real basic features of any (even just putative) concrete reality. To my mind, as I've said, *some such* hypothesis appears to be, quite plausibly, a *correct* proposition. And, what's more, I'll now add, it seems to make less mysterious what might otherwise appear to be a "specially deep and necessary feature" of such a humdrum complex - in fact, what's just a physically derivative composite - as one that is nothing more than just an ordinary table. That's no more a mysterious feature of tables than a certain correlative feature of *shambles* - newly noticed humdrum complexes, in most ways quite similar to table - is any "specially deep and necessary feature" of *such other* humdrum complexes. None of this is the least bit mysterious, I imagine, more the least bit deep, either, in any philosophically central use of "deep."

Now, as it just might be, for all that I can really tell, *nothing even remotely* like that happy hypothesis is anything like true, or correct - the hypothesis that an ordinary table could not have been first made of entirely different matter. If *that* should be so, well, then what should we think about the propositions in this currently considered neighborhood?

As seems most likely to me, we should think very much the same thing: *Whatever* might be the *reason* for it, there's a *world of difference*, I feel sure, between (1) what's said when it's claimed that a certain wonderfully powerful wand, like Warren, couldn't first have been made out of any very different matter, disjoint from the rare healthite from which it was carved, or formed, and, on the other hand, (2) what's said when it's claimed that Tood (our ordinary table first made of some wood) couldn't have been (first) made of matter entirely disjoint from, or distinct from the ordinary wood from which *it* was first carved, or formed. And, whatever might

be the reason for it, that great difference may be indicated, plenty well enough, by noting that the former thought, the proposition prefaced with (1) just above, is a *substantial* idea - in the sense of this term that I've been usefully employing - whereas the latter idea, our (2) just above, will be nothing more than a thought that's quite *inane* - in the correlative sense of that contrasting term.

As you know, I'm friendly to the idea that the inanity of our claim about Tood, our (2), is largely the product certain logical features of the concepts that, in fact, we happen to use for delineating certain portions of concrete reality, so to put it, from others. (Not that any inane necessities involving Tood, whether they're concerned its alleged origins or whether they're concerned with other things, depend on which concepts we happen to employ. Rather, which external (complex) objects we happen to be *interested* in, and what are, to us, the (maybe just very modestly) *interesting* inanities involving them, may depend, pretty largely, on which concepts we actually do employ.) But, it's not my main aim here to marshal support for any such hypothesis. Far from that, and as I'm taking pains to make perfectly clear, even if all my preferred hypotheses, about this matter, should be entirely untrue, there'll still be a world of difference between our (1) and our (2). (As we might then say, this difference will be owing to *reasons that are different* from those that I suspect.) And, what's more, it will still be fair to say that our (1) is a concretely *substantial* idea - in the sense of the term that I've been usefully employing - whereas, and by contrast, our (2) will be a thought that's concretely *inane*

## **9. Sequentialistically Propensitied Concrete Particulars**

Though I think it was awfully well worth doing, I'll certainly agree that, in the just previous section, the issues discussed were some terribly far-fetched matters - where far-fetchedness is

assessed relative to how (we take it that) things are in our current Eon, in the actual world. Indeed, it's fair to say, I think, that our extreme deviation from current concrete reality may enable our discussion of just those matters, so very far-fetched, to be a philosophically most worthwhile discussion, as should become clearer, and clearer, as this book progresses further, and further. But, as I know full well, there'll be quite a few who'll resist being friendly to anything that's as very far-fetched as that.

Partly toward helping them become more friendly to (what I regard as) aptly imaginative substantial metaphysics, and partly to notice more of the variety that may be found with such substantially imaginative philosophical thinking, in this present section I'll be discussing some ideas that, in some respects, involve only far less far-fetched matters. So, the issues just presently to be explored won't, then, be quite so wildly removed, from our Scientiphical suppositions, as what we've just recently been contemplating. Still and all, they'll be pretty far removed, I hasten to admit, from the propositions that, as we Scientiphically accept without question, all hold true for all of our current Eon, a temporally vast era of our actual world.

Eventually, the section's discussion will explore a certain metaphysically substantial thought that may be expressed, quite happily, I think, with such an ordinary modal sentence as "A wooden table could not first be made of ice." Right now, and before exploring that, I'll engage us in a discussion that focuses on frogs.

Whether it's tables we're talking about, or whether it's frogs, in very many contexts we're not much concerned with any metaphysically basic substantial matters; comparatively, it's only in a very few contexts that we're very much concerned with any such deep and substantive issues. Just so, and in the vast majority of much more ordinary contexts, we *won't* be concerned

to affirm our shared Scientiphical Metaphysic. Nor will we even be concerned to cleave closely to that entrenched worldview, whether we explicitly affirm our Scientiphicalism or whether we're only just tacitly accepting it. For, in all these quite ordinary circumstances, it's not any metaphysical matters, really, with which we're concerned.

It's in just such philosophically indifferent contexts - where metaphysics is the furthest thing from our minds, so to say - that we're happy to accept the idea that, for an entity to be a frog, the individual must "first" be a tadpole, *before it's ever* a frog (and, *before it's ever* a tadpole, it must "first" be a zygote). Or, much the same, for present purposes, the candidate frog must *develop from* a tadpole (and, before that, the tadpole must *develop from* a zygote.) To be sure, in the course of all purely natural occurrences here on earth (without any highly creative intervention) there never are any frogs without each of the eventual frogs first being a tadpole.

Of course, with our ordinary "modal claims," as with the common claim that a frog *has to develop from* a tadpole, we claim far more than that a certain exceptionless correlation. Even if we're not being all that serious about any very substantive metaphysical matter - and we're not - still, we're claiming something like this to be so: It's in the *nature of how things are* that a frog *must develop* through a certain sort of *natural sequential process*, which process involves there first being a tadpole, before there's any fully formed frog.

If we were to take such a claim absolutely seriously, or if we were to accept it even when we're most comprehensively metaphysically concerned, then we'd think that, in order for any entity to be a precise intrinsic duplicate of a certain frog, say, an exact duplicate of one Fred the Frog, that candidate duplicate must develop from a tadpole, much as Fred did. As was true of Fred, any perfect intrinsic duplicate of him also must be the product of a temporally significant

sequential process, a process that first issues in a tadpole, before it ever issues in a full-fledged Frog. Thinking that to be so, we'd then also think that, in the actual world at least, and at least during this world's current Eon, it's quite impossible for there to be any Swamp Frog, so to say. In other words, it's quite impossible, we'd think, to circumvent the temporally protracted process just outlined. It would be quite impossible for a frog to come into being in any much more direct way – as with the quite haphazard and sudden arrangement of just the right number of Fred's basic physical constituents, with each physically related to all the others precisely as Fred's basic physical components are now related, within Fred.

In such a metaphysically serious mood, we may be looking to deny our entrenched Scientiphicalism. In such a circumstance, we might well be thinking, perhaps, some such moderately specific thoughts as these ideas: Either it would be impossible, in any circumventing would-be duplication happening, for any candidate frog's basic constituents to be appropriately (physically) arranged, or else, even with such a presumably nice (physical) arrangement obtaining, the relevant particles still must fail to constitute a frog - perhaps for failing to constitute any complex with anything like a frog's profile of propensities.

As far as the actual world goes - at least as concerns its present Eon - we *don't* really think that, or even anything much like it. Rather, even as we tacitly accept the dictates of our entrenched Scientiphicalism, we think that, for the obtaining of even very full-fledged frogs, the only difficulties with a *short-circuiting process* - a short and sudden sequence circumventing any presumably required protracted development - they will be only some *technological* problems, or some difficulties of some similarly superficial sort. As far as the deep nature of things goes, our Scientiphicalism says, very many frogs each *could have* come into being quite *directly* - as with

a lightning bolt rearranging, appropriately enough, just an apt number of (each of the basic sorts of) the basic particles that, just before the lightning struck, served to compose part of a tree.

Even though we think that, in our current Eon, at least, there never were any such very directly produced frogs, or any such suddenly existent frogs, we also think, in line with our Scientiphical Metaphysic, it was metaphysically possible for – or it was really possible for - very many particles to have become arranged, quite directly, in some such way that they'd (have quite directly come to) constitute a full-fledged frog.

Now, there may be those who'll suppose, quite wrongly, I think, that such a directly arrived being *won't properly be called a frog*. But, even if they should be right, it will cut no ice here. For, as we'll then be Scientiphically thinking, it's perfectly possible for there to be quite suddenly produced a *shmog* at least, where “shmog” may be properly applied to both naturally developed frogs and also, at the least, precise duplicates of frogs as well. In all *nonrelational* respects - including absolutely all purely propensitive regards - a suddenly produced shmog will be just like an ordinarily developed shmog, that is, a frog, properly so-called even on the sticklers' (overly) stringent understanding of what it takes to be a frog. So much, at any rate, for such sticklers; even if they weren't wrong-headed, they'd offer just a correct inanity.

According to true Anti-Scientiphicalists in these matters, it's not only a concretely substantial thought that's expressed with “A frog must develop from a tadpole,” but, what's more, it's a concretely substantial thought that's a characteristically philosophical idea. Now, some of the Anti-Scientiphicalists endorsing this idea may accept, as well, that each frog is a complex concretum, wholly composed of very many perfectly basic spatial individuals, concreta not entirely unlike our Scientiphically comfortable quarks and electrons. Very different from

Extended Scientiphicalism in a certain salient way, what philosophically interesting view might these opponents of our Scientiphicalism have it in mind to propose?

Well, as you'll recall, our Scientiphicalism says that, even as many complex spatial concretum will be propensitized in quite a complicated way, still, the propensities of each will be just so many physically derivative powers. Spelling that out just a bit, the thought is this: In the case of each complex spatial concretum, all of its powers will derive, in what we may rightly reckon to be a fully physical way, from both (1) how the complex's elementary constituents themselves are each (intrinsically) propensitized and (2) how these basic physical individuals are physically related, each with respect to all of the others, while they're all, then and there, constituting the complex in question, and, perhaps, from (3) some other current physical factors, as with how the complex's constituents are spatially related to other physical things, each occupying only some space quite beyond the space occupied by the complex in question.

Now, let's go beyond these mere reminders.

To move beyond these dictates of our Scientiphicalism, and to do so in a way that's potentially quite instructive, we'll suppose that, with very many complexly constituted individuals, the complex's constitutive nature *isn't wholly* derivative, physically or otherwise, from *just those two or, perhaps, three* conditions. Rather, it's also derivative from this fourth condition, quite as well: (4) how the complex's constituting particles *were previously* related, at least with respect to each other and, perhaps, with respect to some other particles, too. Unlike (1), (2) and (3), which allow that the potency of a particular's past may be entirely used up in, and by, its contribution to how things are quite currently, this fourth condition, our (4), may be rightly regarded as a *sequentially selective* condition or, for short, a *sequentialistic* condition.

When one endorses all four of these conditions, including especially the fourth, then one will be endorsing, quite instructively, I imagine, suggest, that, at least in certain Eons of certain worlds, spatial complexes will be constituted of basic spatial concreta at least some of which *will* have some “memory-like” propensities, in contradistinction to what our Scientiphicalism dictates.

Due to the “memory-like” propensitive nature of our instructively presumed particles – that is, due to their having sequentialistic powers, it will be impossible for these concreta to constitute a frog without some of them, at least, first serving, before that, to constitute a tadpole, from which tadpole a properly constituted full-fledged frog may then develop. What’s more, during an Eon when all of a world’s matter is exhausted by such particles, with each such basic individual quite replete with such a temporally sensitive propensitive nature, it will be utterly impossible for a frog to come into being without the frog first having been a tadpole and, indeed, without the frog’s developing from a tadpole.

So, in all of a temporally vast Eon, it may be quite impossible, for there to be a frog which comes to exist, fully-formed, quite suddenly and directly, without its ever developing from a tadpole, through a protracted and sequential natural process.

Indeed, even with Eons where all the frogs will be complex spatial concreta, perhaps even complex physical individuals, there will be many specific ways for there to be Sequentialistically propensitized particles that will ensure that the Eon’s frogs must all develop from tadpoles. Here is one such relevantly specific way: For a certain Eon’s particles to constitute a frog there must be some appropriate number of particles involved - not too many, and not too few - in the constituting arrangement. Not too many: For example, there shouldn’t be (nearly) as many elementary particles constituting any frog as, say, the number of particles now actually serving

toward constituting the planet Mars. And, not too few: For example, in the constitution of any frog, there should be involved (very many) more than just ten elementary particles. An apt number of elementary particles, for constituting a frog, will be, then, any one of those within a certain range of consecutive natural numbers, a range whose smallest number is (far) great than ten, and whose largest number is (far) less than the number of particles currently constituting Mars. (Of course, this is how things are with us right now, with respect to (the bodies of) our frogs, in the actual current Eon.)

As well, the constituting particles must be in one of a certain range of apt spatial arrangements: For example, for some particles to constitute a frog, the particles must not be arranged in the shape of a turtle - or, what's here much the same, in the shape of a life-size statue of a turtle. And, they also mustn't be arranged in the shape of an oak tree. Positively, it's very difficult to characterize this requirement of shape - other than saying the particles should be arranged so as to form a complex that's shaped very much like each of many frogs are shaped. But, for present purposes, that's plenty.

And, beyond such matters of (general or exterior) shape, much else is required of an arrangement of particles, if those particles are to constitute, in our instructively envisioned Eon, any genuine frog. Quite obviously, a life-size statue of a frog isn't any real frog, though its particles may be of the right general (exterior) shape for a frog. Even if so shaped, still, such a statue's constituting particles won't be suitably arranged, in our instructively envisioned Eon, in a way that's apt for their constituting a frog. (Of course, this also is how things are with us right now, in the actual current Eon. And, of course, that's part of what may make our envisioned Eon an *instructively* envisioned Eon.)

Now, each of our assumed Eon's particles may be propensitized so that it's suited for involvement in many an apt frog-constituting arrangement - along with enough other particles, of course. But, in our happily imagined Eon, that won't be nearly enough for them to constitute a real frog. Saliently, this must also obtain: Many particles - an apt number for constituting a tadpole - must *first be involved in another sort of arrangement - a tadpole-constituting arrangement, before any of these* particles ever should be involved in a frog-constituting arrangement. And, any particles *not* first involved in constituting a frog will serve (somewhat later) toward composing a frog only if (somewhat later) they become involved in a frog-constituting arrangement *along with* some particles that *did* first serve toward constituting a *tadpole*, with the whole sequential course of arrangements being a sequence in which an eventually aptly constituted frog develops from a tadpole. So, in our imagined Eon, it's quite impossible for there to be, just willy nilly, a frog that's wholly constituted of just so many particles that are ever so nicely currently arranged in one of the ways most suited for having there be a frog. That's not enough. What's more, there must be, amongst these nicely arranged particles, more than a few that served to constitute a tadpole – and not just any tadpole – but the very tadpole from which the frog in focus will have developed.

In our envisioned Eon, and *working with just its* “unusually propensitized” particles, even a God-like Arranger can't make a frog suddenly *de novo*, or *right off the bat*, or just *willy nilly* – leastways not if He should limit Himself to working with just the basic building blocks already available. Rather, the God-like Arranger must *first* arrange lots of particles in such a way that they constitute a *tadpole* - and not yet any full-fledged frog - *before* He arranges *some of those* particles - perhaps along with other particles - in the intended way, the full-fledged frog way,

even if this last arrangement persist for only a mere moment. If, working within the noted limits, our Arranger should try to short-circuit the indicated sequential process - first a tadpole, and only then a frog - he'll fail to produce a (well-constituted, full-fledged) frog, even a frog that lasts for just a moment. Maybe, things will go awry in the manner just so recently suggested: As soon as, quite directly, a very nice number of particles are arranged so as to produce a complex that's nicely-frog-shaped, if only they should keep their collective shape, even if only for a very little while – bang!! - and lickety-split - they'll all collapse, or they'll all go asunder, *immediately* serving to constitute nothing more froglike than a mere puddle of particles.

Here's another way that, in an instructively envisioned Eon, particles may be propensitized so as to make quite impossible their employment, just willy nilly, in the constituting of any real frog: The particles may be so propensitized that, unless some of them are first in a tad-pole arrangement, any "attempt" to bring many particles into a frog-constituting arrangement will have these particles repelling each other, extremely forcefully, so that the attempt will fail: The particles will never be arranged frogwise, so to say, nor even anything all that close to frogwise. In such a circumstance, the particles *won't* ever come to be in any arrangement that's even *roughly* in the shape of a frog, both as regards exterior shape and as regards internal structuring, so to say. In such a severely constraining Eon as we're contemplating, it will be impossible for there to be, even, any *realistic statue of* a frog, without there first being many particles that are involved in a nice tadpole arrangement, at least some of which later serve toward constituting the aforesaid statue.

With both of the constraining ways just specified, as well as with indefinitely many others, each just as substantially constraining, an Eon's salient individuals will be just so many

*sequentially selectively* propensitized particulars, or just so many *sequentialistically disposed* concreta. In accord with what's been specified as their intrinsic propensitive nature, the Eon's particles will be propensitized so as to become involved in stable frog-constituting arrangements only when there are, in any given such arrangement, at least some particles that have already been involved in constituting a tadpole. And, what's more, that won't be just any tadpole. Rather, it will be the very one out of which our would-be frog will have developed.

For quite a few of us, this vividly personified statement might be a helpful way to put the point just made, providing we're always perfectly clear that the point is wholly objective and utterly impersonal: No particle will "allow itself" to become involved with any (stable) arrangement of frog-constituents just right off the bat. Rather, each will "require" that it be partnered with quite a few other particles each of rather recently helped constitute a certain tadpole.

In an Eon whose absolutely elementary particles are all propensitized just so *sequentialistically*, there *can't be*, in all that Eon, any *Swamp Frog*. And, far from being any analytically inane statements about the Eon, the "modal" claims just made, for the Eon in question, will be concretely substantial statements about how things are, with concrete reality, during all of that vast period. Putting things more positively, there'll be this substantial proposition, holding true of, or for, our envisioned Eon: Owing to the intrinsic propensitive nature of the Eon's most basic individuals, any entity that's a frog (or a shmog), existing in this Eon, really *must develop from a tadpole*.

Even when we're concerned with only the deepest sorts of metaphysical matters, it will still be quite correct, and it will still be perfectly appropriate, to make claims just as strongly general

as, and just as happily substantial as, the thoughts we encountered in the just previous paragraph. Just so, there will be this concretely substantial point for us now to observe: In our just lately contemplated Eon, no frog *could have failed to have developed from a tadpole*. Or, more fully and precisely, if there should exist a certain frog in that Eon, say, one Ferdinand, then, *given that Ferdinand exists, he couldn't have failed to have developed from a tadpole*.

In our present Eon, by contrast, the basic particulars *aren't* sequentialistically propensitied. Well, at least, that's the deliverance of our shared Scientiphicalism. Consider a frog of actual current Eon, one Frank, whom we may suppose to be Scientiphically respectable. Then, quite unlike what we so recently said about Ferdinand, when we're to make a characteristically philosophical concretely substantial point about Frank, we should *not* say that, given that *Frank* exists, he couldn't have failed to have developed from a tadpole. For quite as we're Scientiphically supposing for Frank, his basic constituents *aren't* selectively sequentialistically propensitied.

## **10. Wooden Tables, Ice and Some Sequentialistically Propensitied Basic Particulars**

We've just engaged in an instructive exploration of concretely substantial ideas naturally expressed with an ordinary modal sentence like "A frog could not exist without its previously having been a tadpole, and without its having developed from a tadpole." That done, I'll next turn to discuss thoughts, equally substantial, naturally expressed with another sort of ordinary modal sentence, one more closely related to the passage from Kripke cited near this chapter's start. From that passage, it will be enough for us to recall, at this juncture, just a single interrogative sentence. So, here it is, a sentence Kripke employed to ask a certain question about

a particular wooden table that he then was indicating, during the lecture in which (later transcribed) the interrogative sentence was used: “Now could *this table* have been made from a completely *different* block of wood, or even of water cleverly hardened into ice — water taken from the Thames River?” As is clear from the context, Kripke suggests the question will receive only a negative answer.

Actually, there are several related questions here, each of which the interrogative can be naturally used to ask: First there’s the question, Could the table have first been made from a completely *different* block of *matter*, which matter, at the time of the table’s origin, happened to be so configured as to constitute a block of *wood*? Also, there’s the question, Could the table have first been made from matter that, at the time of the table’s origin, was very different from any wood - as with a batch of brass, for example, or as with a hunk of ice? As far as I can tell, Kripke would prefer a negative answer to all such questions, or at least to the two I’ve just presented. But, whether or not that’s so, (almost) all these complications are, for us right now, no very important matters.

For reasons to emerge in pretty short order, I’ll now focus on the second of my two questions, Could the table have first been made from matter that, at the time of the table’s origin, was very different from any wood - as with a batch of brass, for example, or as with a hunk of ice? And, yet more than that, I’ll focus on this yet more pointed question, What *concretely substantial* thoughts may be expressed, quite well and very naturally, with such an ordinary modal sentence as “A wooden table must first be made of wood, and can’t first be made of ice.”?

More or less instructively, each of very many thoughts will fill that bill. Among them all, I’ll try to articulate one (or maybe a few) that departs significantly from our accepted

Scientiphicalism, but that doesn't depart drastically from our Scientiphical View. At least roughly, this thought should depart about as much as did the concretely substantial thought that, at least in certain Eons, or in certain concrete worlds, each of the frogs couldn't have failed to develop from a tadpole, as we observed in the previous section.

Accordingly, we'll again become involved with some pretty peculiarly propensitized elementary particles. These will be basic physical individuals whose propensitive nature constrains how, at any given time, they be physically arranged. Quite as their propensity determines, how they may be arranged, at any given time, will depend, in part, on how (some of) the properly powerful particles were previously arranged.

In just such a happily propensitive vein, here's one concretely substantial idea that, for this present section's main topics, appears most appropriate: Each of a certain Eon's basic physical entities may be so propensitized that the properly powerful particle will, in certain circumstances, enter into various arrangements, with ever so many other similarly basic potential constituents, in just such a way that, together, they'll serve to constitute a wooden complex individual, that is, a physical complex wholly "made of wood". What are these certain circumstances? As the propensitive nature of the particles dictates, or ensures, they will be *certain historical* circumstances. And, then, what sorts of historical circumstances will these be? Well, here's an example: Should some particles *first* be arranged in such a way as to compose a *brass* complex, or any batch of *brass*, then, even according to how it is propensitively with *those very particles* - and also according to how it is *propensitively* with (many of) their contemporary particles, too - the particulate individuals *won't ever later* be arranged in such a (very different) way that they'll then serve to compose a *wooden* complex, or, much the same here, any *wood* at all. And, of

course, equally, it may be that, should some of the particles first be arranged in such a way as to compose a completely *icy* complex, or just so much *ice*, then, equally, and even according to how it is *propensitively* with *those* particles, the particulate individuals *won't ever later* be arranged in such a (very different) way that *they'll* then serve to compose a wooden complex, or any wood at all.

Generalizing straightforwardly on what's just been presented, it may be that should some particles first be arranged in such a way as to compose a complex that's *not a wooden* complex - it's a complex of only some *nonwooden* kinds - then, according to how it is *propensitively* with *those* very particles, the particulate individuals *won't ever later* be arranged in such a (very different) way that they'll then serve to compose a wooden complex, or any wood at all.

Now, for there to be any wooden complex, in the Eon I'm imagining, there must be a complex that's constituted from the Eon's basic physical particulars, which concrete particulars must be arranged in a way that's suited for there to be a complex, then constituted by them, of just that materially non-basic kind – the kind *wood*. Given that all the Eon's particulars are propensitized just as they *are* propensitized, that's the only way for there ever to be any wood, in this Eon, or for there to be any wooden complex, as with a wooden table, for example, or, equally, as with a wooden spoon. But, now, given the just previous paragraph's propensitive stipulations, what that means will then be nothing less than this: For a wooden complex to come into being, there must be available, for a suitably wood-constituting arrangement, many particles which *didn't previously serve* to constitute anything of some *other non-basic sort* of matter - *other than wood*, of course. Supposing that one of these other non-basic sorts is *ice* – which we now do very well to suppose – for us to get something made of wood, there must be available

many particles that never served to compose any ice – and also never served to compose any brass, or plastic – also supposing, of course, that *brass* and plastic are *other non-basic sorts* of matter.

Of course, their being relevantly “virginal,” in this way, *won’t be enough* for some particles to constitute some wood. It will mean only that - certainly propensitively (and just maybe otherwise, too) – these particles are fit for serving toward constituting some wood. So, then, of course, for some of these fit candidates actually to serve in some wood-constitution, enough of them should all be physically related (largely a matter of their being spatially arranged) in a way that’s conducive for them to constitute some wood. In short, the point here is this: To begin, we need particles each with a relevantly “virginal” propensitive nature. And, then, quite as *their propensitive* natures will fully *allow* them to do, we need the particles to become suitably arrayed, or arranged – in a way that’s suited for them to serve toward constituting a wooden complex and, in the bargain, something that’s (made of) wood.

Thus, in an Eon like that we’re right now envisioning, it will be only when it’s involved in some such historically apt sequence as that any basic physical concretum will ever serve to constitute any wood and, what’s yet more, that there’ll ever be any wood.

When talking about the complex wooden particulars present during such an Eon, it won’t be any mere inanity that’s naturally offered when saying that the Eon’s present-day wooden individuals, or certain indicated ones among them, *couldn’t (first) have been made* of some non-basic sort of matter *other than wood*, of ice, for example, before they were composed wood, as now they are. Using such words as these, in our suitably robust way, we’ll be offering not only a

correct idea, about these peculiar wooden individuals, but, more to our present main purpose, we'll be offering a correct thought that's a concretely substantial thought, not any inane idea.

By contrast with that, Kripke's use of such words differed on both of the two most salient counts: First, and most importantly, it was only an analytical inanity, or some several such inane thoughts, that he was ever centrally placing on offer. And, second, it was never any correct inanity, but only some unhappily incorrect inane thoughts, that, in the matters we've been discussing, he centrally placed on offer.



## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The initial publication of the work is Kripke's "Naming and Necessity," a very long essay, I suppose, that appeared in G. Harman and D. Davidson (eds.) *The Semantics of Natural Language*, Dordrecht, 1972, 254-355. Differing only very slightly from that original presentation, the material appeared as a self-standing book, *Naming and Necessity*, eight years later, in 1980, published by the Harvard University Press. In my references to Kripke's main work, I'll be citing the book, the 1980 publication. (Almost all the difference between the long essay and the short book, so far as I can tell, is that only the book contains a Preface, Addenda, and an Index. None of these will figure importantly in my discussion.)

<sup>2</sup> As we'll soon enough see, virtually all of Kripke's analytically inane offerings are only incorrect ideas, and not any truths at all, not even truths that are analytically inane. Of course, for our inquiry, that's a secondary matter. Still, it may be well worth our noting, even quite recurrently, if only for this reason: Much as happened with Putnam's pretty pathetic proposals in the chapter just preceding, when we gain confidence that an author is in *one central* respect, and he's even doing so drastically and dramatically, that helps us gain confidence that he may be failing, even drastically and dramatically, some *other central* respect, as well. In this way, our becoming confident that Kripke's relevantly targeted thoughts are incorrect, may help us become confident that these targeted thoughts are insubstantial, as well. Of course, you know all that. But, especially right here, it may be useful to signal it clearly.

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<sup>3</sup> When lecturing on matters of material origin, one part of Kripke's quite Scientiphical concerns Queen Elizabeth II, the person herself, the fully sentient being, endowed with the power to think quite complexly, and to experience very variously. In his Scientiphical discussion of Elizabeth, Kripke considers whether that very woman, Elizabeth herself, could have developed from a different *fertilized egg* than the zygote which, as Kripke materialistically assumes, Elizabeth actually did develop from. In himself just this question, Kripke is presupposing that Elizabeth herself is a fully and purely material individual. Despite its having been favored by ever so many analytic philosophers, over the last several decades, this is a very controversial presupposition.

Beyond concluding that Elizabeth II couldn't have developed from any zygote other than the one from which she actually did develop, Kripke also concludes that old queen couldn't have been produced from a different sperm, and from a different egg, than just the very sperm and the very egg that, in fact, joined to form the zygote from which Elizabeth developed. As before, a fully materialist perspective is presupposed, no less questionable than just before.

Because Kripke's entire discussion of the queen rests on a controversial metaphysical thought about Elizabeth's basic nature, the discussion may well conflate matters that should always be kept quite separate and, in the bargain, what are clearly separate issues may well become quite confused. In the present work, I don't want to confuse matters by making, or by denying, any questionable metaphysical presuppositions. Accordingly, I'll avoid commenting on even this contentiously presented case itself, let alone on the conclusions Kripke appears to draw from the unfortunate example. In so doing, we may gain clarity, and we will lose nothing.

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<sup>4</sup> *Naming and Necessity*, page 113-14.

<sup>5</sup> This supposition may be, in fact, a very generous assumption. For putative counterexamples to various formulations of Kripke's thesis see David Barnett, "The Problem of Material Origins," *Nous* 39: 529-540 (2005). For another discussion that raises problems for Kripke, see Chapter 3, Section 3 of Christopher Hughes, *Kripke*, Oxford University Press, 2004, especially the material starting at the top of page 114. Along lines not terribly different from those mined by those authors, later, in this present chapter, I myself also won't be so generous. But, that will be then, whereas this is now.

<sup>6</sup> Later in the Third Lecture of *Naming and Necessity*, Kripke suggests that pain, for example, might not be a physical phenomenon – and that the same may hold true of all sorts of conscious mental events, and processes, and phenomena. By the same token, he doesn't say anything much about the beings who experience pain, for example – for all I can find him explicitly to say, each of these beings – as with Queen Elizabeth II – may be a fully physical beings – as hard as that may be, perhaps quite impossible, to reconcile with the thought that her experiencing pain isn't any fully physical event, or physical process, or other sort of physical whatnot.

On the final page of this Lecture, page 155, which is also the final page of the *body* of the book, Kripke observes this tension in his thought about the physicality of experiencing beings and, on the other side, about the apparent non-physicality of their experiencings or, more colloquially, their experiences.

<sup>7</sup> On this last point, our basic entity will always remain the same not only as regards all its generalistically directed propensities, but, as well, as regards any individualistically directed

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propensity that it should have. And, at least presumably, each will have *plenty* in the way of individualistically directed propensity, even if for no other reason than this fact, a reason that may be as widely unobvious, I fear, as it may be crucial to (explaining) the persistence of basic concrete particulars: Each basic physical individual will be propensitized individualistically with respect to *itself*, *whether or not* it's (also) individualistically propensitized with respect to *any other* individual. So, at least presumably, our electron, our Elliot, will be propensitized for (its own) continued existence, and for its continuing to be intrinsically propertied in just the way that *it is*, or *it's been*, intrinsically propertied. And, most saliently in this last regard, our Elliot will be *propensitized to continue to be propensitized in just the way it's been* - it's thus "having an aptly all-encompassing propensity for stable continuance." Even as all of what's in these present parentheses is of the very first importance philosophically, it can provide a philosophical explanation, of sorts, for the intrinsic temporal constancy that, in our standard Scientiphical thinking, we implicitly presume to hold, for the likes of our Elliot, our pondered perfectly basic particle.

<sup>8</sup> One consequence of these suppositions, pretty notable for us right now, is that, on our Scientiphicalism, it is only certain physical complexes and, again, it's not any of the basic physical things that have any memory-like powers. Typically, these powers, including powers of memory properly so-called, are acquired by the complexes when their basic components come to be physically related in certain suitable ways. A most notable example of this may be when the certain basic concreta serving to constitute your brain become so related that, as we say, "memory traces are laid down" in your brains. Even as our Scientiphicalism has it, when there is a nice arrangement of your particles, to such an effect, you will have the *power to apparently*

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*remember*, at least, certain events, facts, objects and people. (This last thought is, of course, purely and wholly a concretely substantial proposition.) And, when the nice arrange arises owing to your being involved in certain temporally extensive causal chains that also aptly include those events, facts, objects and people - for instance, those doing well by the semantic requirements of “remember”, “recall”, “recognize” and cognate terms – then you will have the power to actually remember those events, facts, object and people. (*This* last thought is, of course, at least partly an analytically inane proposition: perhaps it’s equivalent to a conjunction of such an inane thought with the concretely substantial thought about “the power to apparently remember”.)