1 Chapter I. Preliminary Distinctions

• Is Plantinga convincing in claiming that there are different kinds or grades of necessity?

• Is ‘Voltaire once swam the Atlantic’ possibly true, in any sense? How do we know?

• What is it about Voltaire and the Atlantic that make this possibly true, in a “broadly logical sense”?

What are Plantinga’s arguments against the following identifications?

• Necessity = ungivenupability
Necessity = what cannot be rationally rejected

Necessity = self-evidence, a priority

Necessity = deducible from what is self-evident by self-evident steps

Why not knowable a priori? (p. 6)

Knowable by whom?

(Bybes, isn’t there a circularity here – know-able?)

Knowing contingencies a priori: Plantinga suggests: my knowing that I know that $7 + 5 = 12$.

Footnote 5, pp. 8-9. Critique of Kripke’s claim about the standard meter stick. Contrast – knowing a sentence is true, and knowing the truth the sentence expresses.

Pages 10-11. Examples of the contrast between de dicto and de re.

(9) Every animal in this room is necessarily rational.

(9’) It is necessarily true that every animal in this room is rational.

St. Thomas:

(13’) It is necessarily true that whatever is seen to be sitting is sitting.

(13”’) Whatever is seen to be sitting has the property of sitting necessarily.
Chapter II. De Re Objections

Leibniz’s law – the indiscernibility of identicals.

If an object has a property essentially, so does anything identical with it.

Essential predication is not a 3-termed relation involving individual $x$, predicate $P$ and some description of $x$.

2.1 Harman’s argument

- p. 17 (set theoretic reduction)

2.2 Kneale’s argument

Is the number of apostles essentially composite?

2.3 Quine against De Re

Quine: “Necessity resides in the way we talk about things, not in the things we talk about.” (26)

Chapter III. De Re Explanations

How could the necessity of $5 + 7 = 12$ depend on our verbal behavior? The truth of the sentence “$7 + 5 = 12$” – yes.
Even granting Quine’s argument – why is it harder to ascribe de re modality to our verbal behavior? De dicto is just a special case of de re – the de re possession of necessary truth by propositions. (p. 28)

3.1 Plantinga’s explication

(3’) Socrates is essentially a non-planet.

(4) Socrates is a non-planet, and the proposition *Socrates is a planet* is necessarily false.

(3’) and (4) are necessarily equivalent.

Explaining de re in terms of de dicto.

What is the proposition that $x$ has $P$? It is the “kernel” proposition with respect to $x$ and $P$.

To get the kernel proposition of $x$ and $P$, replace $x$ and $P$ with proper names of $x$ and $P$ in the proposition ‘$x$ has the complement of $P$’.

*Proper names of properties* – an extended sense of “proper name”.

Examples: wisdom, being composite, open-hearted friendliness, being more than 7, and “the like.” (31)

- Gerunds: being $F$.
- Adjective plus nominalized adjective: $A$ $B$-ness (e.g. “bright redness”).
- Perfect nominals, like “wisdom”, “knowledge”, “virtue”, etc.
For ambiguous proper names – add a stipulation that $K(x, P)$ predicate the complement of $P$ of $x$. What about objects without proper names? (32)

The kernel proposition = The proposition that would be expressed by replacing $x$ and $P$ with proper names if these were baptized. (32)

Problem – subtle circularity. "The proposition that would be expressed by baptizing $x$ and $P". This incorporates a modal notion: would be.

Better response: if we can explain de re propositions for named entities, surely it is incredible that only they have de re modalities.

3.2 Marcus’s objection

Terence Parsons proved that no “essentialist” proposition is a theorem of Kripkean modal logic.

Plantinga’s reduction is not a logicist one. He doesn’t claim that the equivalence of propositions (3’) and (4) is a theorem of modal logic – only that it is a matter of ”broadly logical” necessity.

3.3 Another problem of circularity

Proper names can function other than as proper names: *He was a veritable Daniel.*
What is “functioning as a proper name”? Can this be defined without use of de re modality?

“Perhaps any revealing and adequate philosophical account of the function of proper names will involve essentialist notions . . .”

Dialectically this doesn’t matter - the skeptic does have the idea of a proper name, and he knows how proper names work. (43)