

object (pp. 75–6).<sup>9</sup> What about reference borrowing? We state the basic idea as follows:

People not at the dubbing acquire the semantic ability from those at the dubbing. This acquisition is also a causal, indeed perceptual, process. The name is used in conversation. Hearers of the conversation, if of suitable linguistic sophistication, can gain the ability to use the name to designate the object. The exercise of that ability will designate the object in virtue of a causal chain linking the object, those at its dubbing, and the user through the conversation. (1999: 67)

Those who have borrowed reference can then lend it to others. Thus, our competence with ‘Aristotle’ is the result of centuries of reference borrowings that take us back to Aristotle’s contemporaries who grounded the name many times in the famous philosopher.<sup>10</sup>

I have recently (2006b) added some more details in responding to criticisms by Dunja Jutronic (2006). Clearly reference borrowing is in some sense an intentional act. This is not to say that the borrower forms an intention deploying a concept of reference borrowing or deference: that would be far too intellectualized a picture of the process. Still the borrower must process the input supplied by the situation in whatever way is appropriate for gaining, or reinforcing, an ability to use the name to designate its referent. The borrower must intentionally set in motion this particular sort of mental processing even though largely unaware of its nature and perhaps not conscious of doing so. So, reference borrowing is not just any old causal process in the communication situation: it is a special one involving that particular mental process.

It is important to note some things that are *not* required by the theory. If a person’s current use of a name is to designate its bearer then that use must be caused by an ability with that name that is, *as a matter of fact*, grounded in the bearer whether via reference borrowing or directly by the person herself: *the efficacious mental state must have the right sort of causal history*. If it has the right history, that is sufficient. Contrary to what Thomas Blackburn (1988: 184) claims we need not require a borrower to recognize or acknowledge this history. And contrary to what Adele Mercier claims (1999), we need not require that a

- 9 We think that the “*qua*-problem” poses a serious problem for this theory of reference fixing. (1999: 4.5)
- 10 We think that a “pure-causal” theory of reference borrowing is appropriate for names and natural kind terms but contemplate a “descriptive-causal” theory for some others. A descriptive-causal theory requires a competent borrower to be not only appropriately connected causally to the referent but also to associate a certain description, albeit not an identifying description, with the word; for example, requiring the borrower of ‘sloop’ to associate ‘boat’ with it. (1999: 5.5).