MOU Bo

On the Double-Reference Character of “Hexagram” Names in the *Yijing*: Engaging Fregean & Kripkean Approaches to the Issue of How Reference Is Possible

Abstract This paper aims to examine the general issue of how reference is possible in philosophy of language through a case analysis of the “double reference” semantic-syntactic structure of ideographic hexagram (*guaxiang* 卦象) names in the *Yijing* text. I regard the case of the “hexagram” names as being quite representative of the “double-reference” semantic-syntactic structure of referring names. I thus explore how the general morals drawn from this account of “hexagram” names can engage two representative approaches, the Fregean and Kripkean ones, and contribute to our understanding and treatment of the issue of reference.

Keywords Chinese language, Frege, hexagram names, Kripke, reference, Locke, *Yijing*

This paper is intended to examine the general issue of how reference is possible in philosophy of language through a case analysis of the “double-reference” semantic-syntactic structure of ideographic “hexagram” names in the *Yijing* text. I regard the case of the “hexagram” names as being quite representative of the “double reference” semantic-syntactic structure of referring names. I thus explore how some general morals drawn from this “double reference” account of “hexagram” names can engage two representative approaches, the Fregean and Kripkean ones, and contribute to our understanding and treatment of the issue of reference. One central point to be made is this: a referring name makes double reference in the predicative context in which one says something about a
designated object, i.e., the semantic-whole reference and the contextual reference. Their relationship can be highlighted in this way: the designated “actual-whole” referent (the semantic referent) without the signified/denoted “contextual” referent is (linguistically and epistemologically) blind; the “contextual” referent without the actual-whole referent is (semantically and metaphysically) empty. This point is made both as a general theoretical point as to how it is possible for a referring name to refer and as a specific interpretative point as to how to understand the semantic-syntactic structure of “hexagram” names in the *Yijing* text.

My strategy in this paper is as follows. In Section 1, I will first give a case analysis of how the distinct “hexagram” names in the *Yijing* text jointly designate the same actual world as a semantic whole while signifying a variety of changing patterns as distinct “contextual” referents, yielding a number of lessons in the process. In Section 2, I will then explain in which regards the two aforementioned representative approaches in contemporary philosophy of language capture some central features of reference while also pointing out how they have yet to give a complete account—to which a “double reference” account of the semantic-syntactic structure of “hexagram” names might contribute.

1 A Double-Reference Analysis of the Semantic-Syntactic Structure of “Hexagram” Names in the *Yijing* Text

In the following discussion, to save space and avoid unnecessary distraction, I assume that the reader already has due general working knowledge of the *Yijing* text.¹ Some preliminary knowledge of the structure of the *gua* and its terminology in need is highlighted here. A *gua* (卦) unit, i.e., a “hexagram” referring name (“a hexagram name” in what follows) together with its original “predicative” interpretation) consists of three parts: (1) the “guaxiang” (卦象) part, an ideographic symbol (as a hexagram name) like “☳”，which consists of six divided or/and undivided lines, i.e., (*yinyao* 阴爻 or/yand (*yangyao* 阳爻), each of which stands for one of the six stages of the changing pattern signified by the hexagram; (2) the “guaci” (卦辞) part, an explanatory judgment which gives the name of the *gua* unit (e.g., “乾” [qian] of the first *gua* unit) and the “contextual” meaning of the whole guaxiang (i.e., the hexagram name as a whole); (3) the “yaoci” (爻辞) part, an explanatory judgment of the meaning of each yao line (a divided or undivided lines) in the context of the hexagram. In the

¹ Here I will also not repeat my previous ideas concerning the *Yijing* philosophy, Chinese language and its involved semantic basis and ontological insight, and some relevant central issues in the philosophy of language which appear in Mou (1998; 1999; 2003; 2006; 2007; 2009). My thought in this paper can be viewed as a further development of my previous relevant ideas in these writings.
Yi system, the sixty-four hexagram names represent sixty-four changing patterns of the universe, or our environmental nature, i.e., this actual natural world in the process of change. Each hexagram talks about the same world as a whole while respectively focusing on its distinct changing patterns. To this extent, they designate the same one nature, as a semantic whole, while also signifying distinct “contextual” referents, i.e. the distinct sixty-four changing patterns symbolically identified by their distinct yao-line-arrangement structures, which respectively and explicitly provide distinct symbolic or linguistic “contexts.” Indeed, this semantic “double-reference” point is delivered via the hexagraphic structure (so to speak, a kind of quasi-“syntactic” structure) of the sixty-four distinct hexagram-referring names.

Putting aside the issue of whether or to what extent the “contextual” referents of these hexagram names, whose distinct “predicative” implications are presented via their associated “(guaci 卦辞)” and “(yaoci 爻辞),” really capture how the universe proceeds with regard to its changing patterns, what is actually at issue is whether or not, and how, these hexagram names “hook up” to the world. There is a description in the Xici Zhuan (Yizhuan 易传, the commentary remarks on the Yijing text—cf., Huang 1989) of how Fu Xi, as the legendary creator of the Yi system, gave the various hexagram names.² It is noted that, for

² Excerpts of the Xici Zhuan 系辞传 (my translation):

“...Therefore closing the door [to encompass all things] is called ‘(kun 坤)’ while opening the door [to generate all things] is called ‘(qian 乾,).’ The interaction of closing and opening constitute change and transformation. The alternation of going and coming without exhaustion is called ‘penetrating through’ (tong 通). What is manifested in changing is called an ‘image’ (xiang 象); what comes into physical form in changing is called an ‘implement’ (qi 器); creating implements and putting them in use is called ‘emulation’ (fa 法); using implements to advantage in all their applications is called ‘subtle’ (shen 神). Therefore, in the Yi system, there is the Great Ultimate (tai-ji 太極) which generates the Two Norms (liangyi 两仪) [(major yin 太阴), (major yang 太阳), (minor yin 少阴), and (minor yang 少阳)]; the Four Images generate the Eight Trigrams (bagua 八卦); the Eight Trigrams determine fortune and misfortune; fortune and misfortune produce the great enterprise…” (Xici Zhuan, Part I, Ch.11)

The alterations of the divided line (yin yao 阴爻) and the undivided line (yang yao 阳爻) at the six yao positions [in the sixty-four hexagrams which result from the combinations of two of the eight trigrams] presents the changes of the heavenly dao, the earthly dao and the human dao. (Xici Zhuan, Part I, Ch.2)
the current purpose of philosophical interpretation, it is not important whether or not Fu Xi is really the historical figure who formulated the Yi system into what is currently presented as the sixty-four-gua-unit system. For convenience, Fu Xi can be taken as a proxy figure who speaks for the historical creator’s way of working out the hexagram names in the gua units. What is reflectively interesting is how the “trigram (Bagua 八卦)” names (“☰”) and “hexagram” names (such as “☱☱”) were given. Looking to relevant explanatory resources in contemporary philosophy of language, we can see that there was a kind of “naming” ceremony where the name giver (whoever he/she was) assigned the eight “trigram” names to designate eight basic forces or processes, and then assigned the “hexagram” names to designate the same natural world as the actual-whole referent and to signify sixty-four distinct changing patterns as distinct “contextual” referents.3 (Note that, for each of the changing patterns, all eight basic forces jointly play a role, though the interplay of two certain forces plays a dominant role and thus a certain combination of their “trigram” names results in the hexagram that signifies the changing pattern being addressed.)

A double-reference interpretation of the semantic-syntactic structure and referential function of hexagram names in the gua units can be characterized in terms of the following points. First, a hexagram name is a referring name that says (or that, with a certain focus and in a certain perspective, comments on) something about the natural universe, which constitutes a distinct “predicative” context on its own (that is, a hexagram name stands on its own without any extra linguistic attachment). Second, a hexagram name, on the one hand, rigidly designates (“hook up to”) the actual universe4 whose two fundamental forces, yin and yang, interact and jointly contribute to the development of the universe, such that a hexagram name is about the actual universe, instead of something else, logically and metaphysically prior to its commenting on (contextually referring to) anything. Third, a hexagram name, on the other hand, simultaneously signifies or denotes (in a quasi-Russellian sense of the term “denote”) a single distinct changing pattern possessed by the universe, which is focused on in this specific “hexagram” predicative context; in this sense, its signified “changing pattern” referent is a single distinct “contextual” referent.

3 Note that in my previous schematic discussion in Mou (2007), I used “semantic reference” and “pragmatic reference” respectively to label the two dimensions of the double reference in question. However, I now think that the latter label “pragmatic reference” is both inaccurate and misleading, as the addressed double reference (thus including the latter reference) occurs on the “semantic” or non-pragmatic level and can be identified explicitly or implicitly through a certain linguistic context. In this way, the misleading label is replaced by the current label—“(linguistically) contextual reference”—here. The point is addressed at the end of this section and illustrated in the sample statements given in footnotes 6 and 7 below.

4 The treatment of associating the notion of rigid designation with the actual world is not new; see Stanley (1998, Section 5), and Jackson (1998).
Fourth, in this way, the sixty-four hexagram names rigidly designate the same universe as the actual-whole referent but signify its sixty-four distinct changing patterns as distinct “contextual” referents. Fifth, the actual-whole referent of the hexagram names is established, secured, and passed on through a communication link that can be traced back to the occasion of the Yi-hexagram-system creator’s “ceremony”-like “acquaintance” designation, which was essentially carried out in a double-reference way: the people who read the Yijing text and make subsequent employment of the Yi system use hexagram names to designate the same semantic-whole referent as that which the ancient thinker designated (i.e., our surrounding natural world) while denoting their distinct contextual referents (those distinct changing patterns). Sixth, the “contextual” reference is both linguistic and predicative: it is linguistic because it is presented in a certain form of “ideographic” linguistic expression, i.e., a distinct yao-line-arrangement structure that explicitly provides a distinct symbolic or linguistic “context;” it is predicative because, in such a distinct linguistic context, the “hexagram” name assigns a certain attribute to its designated referent through identifying, singling out, and commenting on this attribute of the designated referent.

It is reflectively interesting and significant to note that, through the double-reference feature of a hexagram name in a certain gua unit, the gua unit has a double-level “contextual-reference” structure. First, as far as the first level of the contextual reference of the gua unit is concerned, the hexagram name both designates the universe (its actual-whole referent) and signifies a certain changing pattern (its contextual referent), as explained above. Second, as far as the second level of the contextual reference of the gua unit is concerned, the gua unit consists of <1> the “predicative” reference presented in the gua-ci part, which identifies some general characteristic attributes of the signified changing pattern, and <2> the “predicative” reference presented in the yao-ci part, which gives a further illustrative explanation of the signified changing pattern via how a single exemplary subject (such as the dragon in the first gua unit, i.e., the Qian-gua unit) or multiple subjects (such as those in the eleventh gua unit, i.e., the Tai-gua unit) can go through a six-stage process that shows the changing pattern. Third, the second-level “contextual” reference relies on the first-level “contextual” reference: clearly, the second-level “contextual” referent metaphysically and semantically relies on the first-level “contextual” referent.

There are two interesting observations concerning the addressed “double-reference” structure of the hexagram names and their associated gua units, from whose reflective examination some explicit and implicit morals can be drawn. Firstly, a referring name given in a predicative context has its own deep “subject-predicate” structure which fulfills the function of saying something about its designated object. In so doing, it neither intrinsically relies on nor necessarily involves a surface grammatical “sentential” structure; rather, such a
deep structure is essentially and primarily captured and delivered through the foregoing “double-reference” structure of a referring name when it is set or “used” (not in the “pragmatic,” but rather in the “semantic,” sense of the term “use”) in a certain predicative context of saying something about what it designates, as is prominently illustrated in the case of a hexagram name where the hexagram referring name delivers the deep “subject-predicate” structure via its “double-reference” semantic-syntactic structure in a fundamentally independent way. To this extent, it is quite superficial and misleading to judge the deep “subject-predicate” structure of language expressions merely via a surface grammatical “sentential” structure: we cannot judge whether a (semantic) proposition together with its related semantic things (such as truth) is involved merely based on whether the grammatical sentential predicate is explicitly given. In the case of the hexagram name, no grammatical “sentential” predicate, but rather the “predicative” context, is involved: something is talked—via the “contextual” reference in focus—about the designated natural world.

Secondly, there are two related kinds of “contextual” reference: the subject-expression-related “contextual” reference and the predicate-expression-related “contextual” reference. The latter is derivative of (or relies on) the former in one of several representative ways: (1) the latter is (typically) derivative of (or relies on) the former: the latter is either simply the explicit linguistic conveyance of the former\(^5\) or a further explanation or illustration of the former (if the former is a kind of attribute common to or shared by many particular things that is linguistically conveyed in the subject expression in a general or abstract way), or a derivative attribute;\(^6\) (2) the latter can be some “opposite” attribute to the

\(^{5}\) This happens when the subject expression is a proper name like “John”—the subject-expression-related “contextual” reference is given implicitly when the referring name used before the predicate expression is explicitly given in this context, which can be reasonably inferred from the whole sentential context. This differs from Frege’s case in several respects: (1) for Frege, the pre-fixed “inter-subjective” sense might exclude some less knowable attributes or he would not allow a “contextual” referent beyond the pre-fixed (cluster of) sense/description stock; (2) for Frege, the predicate expression points to the incomplete “function” instead of the referent’s own particular attribute; (3) Frege would not allow the actual whole referent beyond what inter-subjective senses/descriptions capture.

\(^{6}\) For example, consider Gongsun Long’s thesis that “the white horse is not [identical to] the horse” (for my detailed discussion of this, see Mou 2007). In this case, the primary subject-expression-related “contextual” referent is the attribute of being white, and the secondary predicate-expression-related “contextual” referent is the attribute of being different from (or being not identical to) the horse with regard to its attribute of being white: the latter is derivative of the former. Also consider Donnellan’s well-known sample statement in Donnellan 1966—“Her husband is kind to her”: the predicate-expression-related “contextual” referent (i.e., being husbandly-kind to her) is a sort of “derivative” attribute which is supposed to result from the subject-expression-related “contextual” referent, i.e., the designated referent’s specific identity attribute in this context—being her husband.
2 Engaging the Lockean-Fregean Approach and the Millian-Kripkean Approach

2.1 Engaging the Lockean-Fregean Approach

John Locke’s general conception of language is a succinct characterization of an understanding of language dominant in the Western philosophical tradition since Aristotle, and major parts of it are still be widely accepted now in that tradition. Locke’s points can be summarized in the following assumptions.  

(L1) The nature of language is defined by its function. [People find out or create “some external sensible signs” as some kind of artifact to language, in order to do a certain job with a certain purpose.] (L2) The function of language is to communicate. [By language “those invisible ideas which [one’s] thoughts are made up of, might be made known to others” or language is to be created and used for the sake of “communication of thoughts.”] (L3) What language is meant to communicate is thought. [See the above.] (L4) The components of thought are Ideas (in Locke’s sense of “idea”). [One’s thoughts “are made up of” “invisible ideas.”] (L5) Words stand for the components—Ideas—of what language is meant to communicate. [“[W]ords stand for [Ideas].”] (L6) The words for which words stand are thus meanings of the words. [“[I]deas [words] stand for are their proper and immediate significance.”] (L7) One person’s Ideas cannot be perceived by another. [One’s Ideas are “invisible and hidden from others.”] (L8) The relation between words and what they stand for is arbitrary. [There is no natural connection between “particular articulate sounds and certain ideas.”] (L9) Words are not intrinsically meaningful. [Words only come to be meaningful by being “made use of by men” as “sensible marks of ideas.”]  

Although the assumptions (L1), (L2), (L8) and (L9) have generally been accepted without question in the mainstream tradition, the other assumptions have been more or less challenged in contemporary philosophy of language. Among others, the most relevant assumptions to the current discussion are (L3) and (L4); although now almost nobody really subscribes to (L4) when the key

---

7 Consider the statement “His father treats him badly”: although in this context the designated referent is his father as a whole person and the primary subject-expression-related “contextual” referent is the attribute of being his father, the secondary predicate-expression-related “contextual” referent is the attribute of treating him badly (what the evaluative term “badly” signifies is opposite to a derivative attitude of being his father).  

8 Locke (1690, Book III). See also Morris' summarization of Locke’s points in Morris (2007, 6–8). I restate them with some modifications: (L6) is added; (L7), (L8) and (L9) as represented here are thus (L6), (7) and (L8) in Morris’ original account.
term “idea” is understood in Locke’s original manner, that is, as something private and unintelligible to others; (L3) meanwhile is essentially still maintained by many philosophers especially when the term “thought” is understood in a Fregean way: thought is the sense expressed by a sentence and is inter-subjective instead of private. Frege revolutionarily puts forward the distinction between reference (Bedeutung) and sense (Sinn). However, as for the relation between them, Frege maintains that the reference of a referring name is determined by its sense. At this point, Frege suggests the basic line of the (Fregean-Russelian) description theories of referring for (proper) names, which is widely known as follows: (FR1) the sense of a name “a” is given by a (set of) definite description(s) “the F”; (FR2) sense is supposed to determine reference; (FR3) a name is an abbreviation of a (set of) definite description(s) regarding its sense and reference: “a” designates x in virtue of “the F” denoting x (in this way, the original problem of explaining reference for names is reduced to that of explaining reference for definite descriptions); (FR4) due to Russell’s Theory of Descriptions, we have an answer to the problem for descriptions: “The F” denotes x if and only if “F” applies to x and to nothing else (in this way, the problem of explaining reference for definite descriptions is reduced to that of explaining for general terms that fill the place of “F”; the remaining problem is merely this: in virtue of what does a general term apply to an object?) In sum, the description theory of referring for names, together with Russell’s Theory of Descriptions, reduces three problems of referring to one: the problem of designation for names, denotation for definite descriptions, and application for general terms are reduced to the problem of application for general terms.

Aneo-Lockean-Fregean approach like Jackson’s tries to avoid talking about half-mysterious “sense” (Sinn) which, according to Frege, is neither objective nor subjective but is claimed to have the status of the “third” world (Frege 1918, 369); Jackson moves one step further in talking about the properties that are associated by us with words (descriptions), instead of the “sense” that is associated with words; for him, the term “property” is simply shorthand for way things we take to be (thus a way things might be); he tries to “objectivize” Locke’s Idea and Frege’s Sinn, putting them on the level of properties as ways things might be, and he intends to retain a Fregean description theory of reference for spoken and written language based on a Lockean picture of language as follows:

Language…is a convention generated set of physical structures that has as a principal function making it easy to articulate, and in consequence easy to record, transmit in communication, debate the correctness of, and so on, how someone—you, me, the enemy, the ideal observer,…—take things to be. I am going to presume this Lockean picture of language. To avoid misunderstanding,
though, I should note an unfortunate ambiguity in talk of language having the capacity and principal function of capturing and thereby facilitating the communication of how we take things to be. It might be read as saying, implausibly, that language is principally about states of belief, or it might be read as saying, plausibly, that language is about what states of belief are about, namely, how things are...[W]e must associate various words with various ways things might be; or, as we will put it, we must associate words with properties. Here the term “property” ...is simply a short for a way things might be in the wide sense that includes relational and dispositional way things might be. (Jackson 1998, 135–36; the underlined emphases are mine)

He goes on to say:

[U]sing the pre-analytic or folk term “about”: terms like “London,” “Pluto” “water,” and “inert gas” are used by speakers to talk about whatever has the properties they associate with the term in question...; or, as philosophers of language might say it, a name T used by S refers to whatever has the properties that S associated with T. (Jackson 1998, 137)

However, one crucial thing is missing in the foregoing neo-Lockean-Fregean approach: it has the referential function of referring names lose its independent root or foundation in what we take things to be; for what a referring name refers to is eventually still “whatever has the properties they [speakers] associate with the term in question” (Jackson 1998, 137). In this way, given that linguistic referring names do “hook up to” their extra-linguistic referents when being normally or adequately used, the neo-Lockean-Fregean approach cannot really explain how a referring name does in fact “hook up to” the extra-linguistic referent that is independent of how we take the referent to be nor how much we know of the referent. The reason is this: once the alleged properties the speaker associates with the referring name turn out to be mistakenly associated, whatever properties the speaker associates with the term would lead to a mismatch with the genuine referent.

Now, as for how the hexagram name establishes, identifies, and keeps track of what it refers to (or doubly refers to via designating and signifying), the Yizhuan gives a such account: “Fu Xi...observed looking upward on the heavenly images and looked downward on the way of earthly things. He observed the patterns of birds and beasts and how they fit their environments on the Earth. He learned from nearby things and from distant things” (Xici, Part II, Ch.2). The creator of the hexagram name then designated the surrounding actual world as what he was talking about and signified a certain actual changing pattern of this designated world. Note that this changing pattern is not something that was derived from a certain conceptual content; rather, it resulted from Fu Xi’s direct observation of
the actual changing happenings of the actual universe. With this "naming" ceremony, the hexagram name “hooked up to” its double reference—via designating the surrounding actual world and signifying a certain changing pattern; the hexagram-gua system has been thus passed on generation by generation in a “communication” link. This significant dimension of the issue of reference has been captured by the Kripkean account, though only partially, in the sense to be explained in the next sub-section.

2.2 Engaging the Millian-Kripkean Approach

In contrast to the Lockean-Fregean approach, the Kripkean causal-historical account of referring is intended to do justice to the aforementioned “communication” link by way of which a referring name reaches its designated referent.

According to Kripke, a term is a “rigid” designator that designates the very same item in all possible worlds in which that item exists (in contrast, a [non-rigid] description is a “flaccid” designator because it designates different things in different possible worlds). The reference of a name, or even a singular term, consists in rigid designation (designation through rigidly designating). Indeed, in contrast to the Millian “direct reference” approach (Mill 1881), for Kripke, definite descriptions can be rigid when they designate the same item in all possible worlds—their rigid designations would be secured by exploiting their conceptual content. However, Mill and Kripke do share the essentially same line of thought regarding the nature of the reference of referring names and their semantics: the reference of a proper name consists in direct (rigid) designation (designation “directly” through rigid designating, rather than “indirectly” through describing), which can be summarized in a well-known way: (MK1) a proper name is only accidentally associated with a certain (non-rigid) definite description; for the same person designated by the proper name might have different attributes in different possible worlds; (MK2) a proper name is thus only accidentally associated with the sense/properties provided by the (non-rigid) definition description; (MK3) a proper name cannot designate its reference, which is supposed to be necessarily the same in all possible worlds, “indirectly” through the sense provided by the description; (MK4) a proper name has no sense insofar as such sense is supposed to determine its referent; (MK5) in this way, it is not merely intuitive that a proper name designates its referent “directly” [in (MK1) we appeal to this], but it is also impossible that a proper name designates its referent “indirectly” through the sense provided by the description; (MK6) therefore, a proper name designates its referent “directly” in the above strong sense. That is, as far as the
nature of reference of proper names and their semantics are concerned, the Millian-Kripkean answer is this: a proper name has its rigidly designated referent as its meaning. As far as how, or in virtue of what, a referring name refers to its bearer, Kripke’s well-known causal-historical account of referring applies (Kripke 1980): a referring name rigidly designates its bearer through a causal historical link, or (more accurately speaking) a communication link that traces back to its original “naming ceremony.”

However, there seems to be something significant missing in the Kripkean picture of referring. Indeed, at the purely semantic level, one can innocently claim that what “Aristotle” rigidly designates is Aristotle; however, what is the identity of Aristotle? The Kripkean account tells us that what a referring name rigidly designates is a kind of “essential” referent (such as the “essential” Aristotle) that would cut across different possible worlds where it exists. Clearly, this picture excludes the contribution made by all the alleged “accidental” attributes to the identity of what a referring name rigidly designates. Quine’s criticism of Kripke’s Aristotelian conception of essentialism is well-known (Quine 1961), and it will not be repeated in this article; rather, the issue is examined here from the lesson drawn from reflection on the “double-reference” structure of the hexagram names in the Yi system.

Now look at the case of the hexagram names: what is the “essential” world that the sixty-four hexagram names jointly designate in a rigid manner? What relevant moral can we draw from the “double-reference” structure of hexagram names (this being one generic kind of referring names in language)? In the case of hexagram names, the identity of what hexagram names jointly but rigidly designate is this actual world as a whole, which is inclusive, dynamically developed, and fundamentally yin-yang interactive. Whether or not one would agree to the yin-yang metaphysical account, the point is this: it is arguably right to say that some significant aspect of the referential nature and function of hexagram names, which capture a certain deep semantic-syntactic structure of referring names in general, would be ignored or even mistreated by the Kripkean approach. What the Kripkean account has yet to do justice to is not merely the identity of what a referring name designates as an actual-whole referent, but also the status and nature of its “contextual” reference to the following extent. In the case of hexagram names, those changing patterns signified as their “contextual” referents would be taken to be either the “essential” constituents or the “non-essential” constituents of this actual natural world. If such a “contextual” referent falls within the latter category, then the Kripkean account would overlook this crucial part of what a hexagram name rigidly designates; for a variety of changing patterns (instead of mere chaos) possessed by this actual world, as a matter of fact, constitutes one “essential” or indispensable part of this
actual world, based not merely on the yin-yang metaphysical vision of the Yijing text, but primarily on our pre-theoretic understanding of the identity of our surrounding world. One might object that what is identified by a “hexagram” name as a “contextual” referent can turn out to be mistaken. This would miss the point here: what is really at issue here is neither an epistemological issue concerning to what extent, via her “contextual” reference, an epistemic agent can probably capture the way things are in this connection, nor a pragmatic issue concerning how a speaker actually uses a referring name to refer to what she intends to signify; rather, it fundamentally involves the semantic status of a “contextual” referent and the metaphysical status of what a “contextual” referent is connected with via a “communication” link, a part of the semantic-whole referent.

Now, what if the “contextual” referent falls within the former category (i.e., the “essential” constituents of this actual natural world)? Then the Kripkean account would take what a hexagram name rigidly designates to be the “essential” world that necessarily includes the signified “essential” but “actually generalized” changing pattern that this hexagram name “contextually” signifies, and this “contextual” referent of the hexagram name would consist in and of many particular changing processes in this actual world, which would constitute a collection of such changing processes, a collection part of this actual world. Then, if Kripke takes this collection part of the actual world and thus the actual world as a whole to be rigidly designated, this would simply go against the original point of his conception of rigid designation. In the foregoing sense, the referential case of hexagram names in the Yijing text constitutes an effective thought experiment as well as an actual referential case in real-life language to test the explanatory potency of the Kripkean account and of the double-reference account.

Indeed, Kripke does not ignore what the speaker specifically intends to refer to with his distinction between speaker’s reference and semantic reference; however, he renders the distinction “pragmatic” and “epistemic” as he characterizes them essentially in terms of the speaker’s (general and specific) intentions on particular occasions. As illustrated in the hexagram-name case, “contextual” reference is signified in an explicit linguistic way and in terms of the “liberal” sense of the hexagram symbol (as given through a certain arrangement of yinyao and yangyao lines). In this way, “contextual” reference is made right at the

---

9 Following Grice’s line, Kripke makes the distinction between what the speaker’s words meant on a given occasion, and what he/she meant, in saying those words, on that occasion; then he makes the distinction between the speaker’s reference and the semantic reference—the distinction is taken as a special case of the foregoing distinction (Kripke 1977, 160–61).
“semantic” or non-pragmatic level, since the identity of a “contextual” referent can be linguistically delivered without involving specific intentions possessed by the speaker in the communication link.

*    *    *    *

In this paper I have endeavored to analyze the “double-reference” semantic-syntactic structure of ideographic hexagram names in the Yijing text for the sake of exploring how, engaging the two influential approaches, the relevant resources of the Yijing text can contribute to our understanding and treatment of a central issue in the philosophy of language, i.e., the issue of reference concerning the relationship between language/thought and reality/objects. First, in Section 1, I have presented a double-reference case analysis of the semantic-syntactic structure of hexagram names in gua units (the core textual source of the Yijing philosophy), in terms of conceptual and explanatory resources from a double-reference account of referring, for the sake of enhancing our understanding of how the Yijing text treats the fundamental relationship between language/thought and the world through its approach to the issue of reference. Second, in Section 2, to show further how the treatment of the Yijing text in this regard can contribute to our understanding of the relationship between language/thought and the world (generally speaking) and an adequate approach to the issue of reference in philosophy of language (specifically speaking), I have explained how the double-reference nature and function of the semantic-syntactic structure of hexagram names expose some weaknesses of both the Lockean-Fregean approach and the Millian-Kripkean approach to the issue of reference and how it lends support to a promising double-reference account that can do justice to the strong points of the two approaches while overcoming some of their weaknesses. One central lesson drawn from the discussion is this: a referring name makes reference in the predicative context in which one says something about a designated object: i.e., the semantic-whole reference and the contextual reference. Their relationship can be highlighted in this way: without the signified/denoted “contextual” referent, the designated “actual-whole” referent (the semantic referent) is (linguistically and epistemologically) blind; without the actual-whole referent, the “contextual” referent is (semantically and metaphysically) empty. This central point has been made both as a general theoretical point regarding how it is possible for a referring name to refer and as

---

10 Given that the label “semantic” here means either the “semantic” relation between a linguistic item and an extra-linguistic item or something presented in terms of inter-subjective liberal senses of the words appearing in the sentence in question. In contrast, the term “pragmatic” here means something that is sensitive to the speaker’s specific intentions at the particular occasion which is not delivered by the literal senses of the involved words and their due implications.
a specific interpretative point regarding how to understand the semantic-syntactic structure of hexagram names in the *Yijing* text.

**Acknowledgments** An early version of this article was presented at the international symposium on the theme “Philosophical Issues Concerning Chinese Language and Development of Contemporary Philosophy of Language” (2013 term of “Beijing Roundtable on Contemporary Philosophy” workshop/symposium series) held at Wuhan University on the 8th and 9th of June 2013. I am grateful to the members of the audience who made helpful critical comments on various points of this paper—especially the following colleagues: Jeremy Seligman, Marshall Willman, Xue Ray, and Byeong-uk Yi.

**References**


On the Double-Reference Character of “Hexagram” Names in the *Yijing*