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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Understanding proper names

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Abstract There is a fairly general consensus that names are Millian (or Russellian) genuine terms, that is, are singular terms whose sole semantic function is to introduce a *referent* into the propositions expressed by sentences containing the term. This answers the question as to what sort of *proposition* is expressed by use of sentences containing names. But there is a second serious semantic problem about proper names, that of how the referents of proper names are *determined*. This is the question that I will discuss in this paper. Various views consistent with Millianism have been proposed as to how the semantic referents of proper names are determined. These views can be classified into (1) *description* theories and (2) *causal* theories, but they can also be classified into (3) *social practice* theories, on which a name's referent is determined by a social practice involving the referent, and (4) *individualistic* theories, on which the referent of the use of a name is determined by the speaker's state of mind. Here I argue against social practice theories of the sorts proposed by Kripke and Evans and in favor of an individualistic approach to name reference. I argue that social practice is irrelevant to determining name reference and that, as a consequence, names have no meanings in natural languages. In the second part of the paper I motivate and propose a new form of individualistic theory which incorporates features of both description theories and Evans's social practice theory.

Keywords Proper names · Names · Reference · Anaphora · Meaning · Semantics

It would appear, then, that the single main requirement for understanding a use of a proper name is that one think of the referent. – Gareth Evans[1]

[1] Evans (1982, p. 400).

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1 Introduction

The semantic facts about ordinary proper names are still poorly understood, or so it seems to me. There is a fairly general consensus that names are Millian (or Russellian) genuine terms, that is, are singular terms whose sole semantic function is to introduce a *referent* into the propositions expressed by sentences containing the term. That names are genuine terms in this sense is at least very strongly suggested by the modal considerations first raised by Searle (1958) and later clarified and forcefully applied by Kripke (1972), in their persuasive arguments to show that names do not have the meanings of contingent definite descriptions.[2]

If we accept a Millian view of names, as I believe we should, then we can take one major semantic question about proper names to be settled. This is the question of what sort of *proposition* is expressed by use of sentences containing names. On the Millian view, the sort of proposition in question will always be singular, in the sense that the proposition will be a strict function solely of the name's semantic referent, and of no other semantic feature of the name.[3]

But there is a second serious semantic problem about proper names for which I think no satisfactory solution has yet been proposed. This is the problem of how the referents of proper names are *determined*. In a way, this problem is more fundamental semantically than the problem about propositional contribution.[4] For there are several other types of Russellian genuine terms besides proper names, including for instance personal, demonstrative, and anaphoric pronouns. Thus what makes a term a proper name must be that it is a genuine term whose referent is determined in a certain way that distinguishes it from other types of semantically different genuine terms. So our question about how the referents of proper names are determined is fundamental in the sense that an answer to the question will tell us what it is for a term to *be*, or be used as, a proper name.[5] This is the question that I will discuss in this paper.

Various views consistent with Millianism have been proposed as to how names' referents are determined. It is natural to classify these views into two main types: (1) *description* theories, on which a name's semantic referent is determined, or fixed, by associated descriptions or clusters of descriptions, and (2) *causal* theories, on which a name's semantic referent is determined by some sort of causal or historical connection between uses of the name and the name's referent . But there is another way of classifying the various views in question, a way that cuts across the description theory/causal theory dichotomy. This second classification also divides

[2] While the Millian view seems to be the consensus among philosophers of language, a significant minority endorses a form of description theory on which names are semantically equivalent to quotational descriptions of the form 'the bearer of "N".'(See for instance Bach (1987, 2002), Katz (1994, 2001), Recanati (1993), and Justice (2001). This quotational view seems to have gained considerable currency among linguists. (See Geurts (1997) and the works cited there, as well as Elbourne (2005).) For dissenting views (among linguists), see Abbott (2002, 2004) and Maier (2009). In this paper, I simply assume the Millian view.

[3] Kripke (1972) did not officially endorse the Millian view, holding merely that names are rigid designators. But the Millian view has been explicitly endorsed by Donnellan (1974), Kaplan (1977), Evans (1982), McKinsey (1984), Salmon (1986), and Soames (1987), among many others.

[4] Contrary to Soames's opinion. See his (2002, p. 21).

[5] I believe I was the first to put the problem this way. See McKinsey (1984, p. 498).

the views in question into two main types: (3) *social practice* theories, on which a name's semantic referent is determined by a social practice that involves the name's referent in some way; and (4) *individualistic* theories, on which each particular use of a name has its semantic referent determined solely by the speaker's state of mind and its relation to the referent.

Again, these two types of classification cut across each other. For instance, the cluster-of-descriptions theories of Searle (1958) and Strawson (1963) seem best construed as examples of social practice theories, while Wilson's (1959) cluster-of-descriptions theory is explicitly individualistic. Similarly, the causal theories of Kripke (1972) and Evans (1982) are also examples of social practice theories, while the causal theories of Donnellan (1970, 1974) and Devitt (1974, 1981) seem best construed as individualistic.

At the moment, social practice theories of names, typically of the causal sort, seem to be the dominant sort of view accepted by philosophers of language. But in Sect. 2 of this paper, I will argue against social practice theories and in favor of an individualistic approach. My main target will be the social practice theory of Evans (1982), which I take to be the most highly developed and best motivated example of this type of view. Defenders of social practice theories such as Wettstein (2004) often emphasize that their sort of view has a great advantage over individualistic views, in that social practice theories, unlike individualistic views, correctly fail to require that the user of a name must have the capacity to identify, or be in some sort of cognitive contact with, the name's referent (when it has one). But my argument against social practice theories will show that on the contrary, the individualistic requirement is in fact correct: speakers whose uses of names semantically refer to objects, I will argue, invariably have the capacity to identify those objects.

In Sect. 3 of the paper I will motivate and propose a new form of individualistic theory which incorporates features of both description theories and Evans's social practice theory. I call this new proposal the 'anaphoric-cluster' theory. Since my proposal is based on a descriptionist, rather than a causal, theory of what it is to have an object in mind, the proposal will be controversial. But I think that my proposal has some distinct advantages over causal theories and moreover, my proposal fits all the intuitive data of which I am aware.

2 Social practice versus individualistic theories of names

2.1 Problems with Kripke's view

The primary source of contemporary endorsement of social practice views about names is Kripke's critical discussion of description theories in 'Naming and Necessity' (1972). In this discussion, Kripke gives several persuasive examples in which, he alleges, some or all users of a referring name either have no beliefs at all about properties that would uniquely identify the name's referent, or they have such beliefs, but the beliefs are all false. If what Kripke says about his examples is correct, then all forms of description theory are false, whether the theory is Millian or not, and whether the theory is a social practice or an individualistic theory.

In some of Kripke's examples (including the 'Jonah' and 'Gödel'–'Schmidt' cases) all of the identifying descriptions that are *commonly associated* with the name by its users are false of the referent, so that social practice forms of description theory are false; and in these same cases, as well as others (such as the 'Cicero' and 'Feynman' cases), individual users of the name would seem to have no way at all of correctly identifying the referent, and if so, it follows that individualistic description theories are also all false. (See Kripke 1972, pp. 291–295.) Cases of the latter sort provide a strong motivation for social practice theories, since such cases appear to show that in general the use of a name by a speaker may successfully refer to an object, even though the speaker has no capacity at all to identify or discriminate the name use's semantic referent. Thus, since apparently nothing about the individual speaker's mental states determines the referent of such a name use, it seems that the referent must instead be determined by the social name-practice of which the speaker's use of the name is an instance. (See for example the discussion by Wettstein (2004, Chap. 3).)

To account for the facts about the cases he describes, Kripke suggests that the semantic referent of a given use of a name is determined by a causal chain of communication that links the use to an original dubbing, or baptism, of an object with the name. The object so dubbed is then the name-use's semantic referent. The chains of communication in question are composed of links in which a given user of a name passes the name on to another person who acquires the same use by intending to refer with the name to the same thing as does the person from whom the name is acquired. (See Kripke 1972, pp. 298–303.)

I think that many philosophers still assume that Kripke's account is basically correct, or at any rate that uses of names are *typically* as Kripke describes them, so that exceptions to his view are rare or unusual. (See for instance Soames 2002, pp. 19–20.) This is wrong. Kripke's account applies at best only to uses of names that are *deferential*, that is, uses in which the speaker relies on other speakers' uses of the name to determine reference for his or her own uses. All of the cases that Kripke describes are like this, and all involve speakers who are either nearly completely ignorant of the referent's characteristics or whose knowledge of the referent is quite limited. Such deferential uses of names are by no means uncommon, but they are generally restricted to uses of names by ordinary speakers to refer to famous or historical persons or objects with which the speakers are not acquainted, and about which the speakers know very little.

It is far from clear that such deferential uses of names are typical. What is clear is that uses of names that are *not* deferential are exceedingly common, and these represent a huge class of name uses to which Kripke's account simply does not apply.

For instance, consider the fact that there are many ways in which one can independently identify a person or object, then afterwards learn the person or object's name from publicly available sources, and go on to refer to that person or object by name without at all having to defer to anyone else's use of that name. For instance, I can see a person's nameplate on an office door, or a name tag on the person's jacket, and I can then proceed to refer to the person by name without ever intending that my uses refer to whomever some other person refers with the name (contrary to Kripke's picture). Or a salesman can read my name in a telephone book,

see it on my mailbox, or find it on a list provided by a bank, and then go on to refer to me by name without deferring to anyone else. (The salesman can independently identify my name's referent, namely me, because for example he knows my telephone number, my address, or my social security number).[6]

Moreover, as Evans (1973) first pointed out, one can learn the name of a person or thing merely by knowing a conventional system for giving names to a given kind of person or thing, and can thereby go on to refer to the person or thing by name without having had any causal contact with either the name's referent or with any dubbing of the referent. For instance, the traditional Scottish practice was to name an eldest son 'after his father's father, the second after his mother's father, the third after his own father, an eldest daughter after her mother's mother, the second after her father's mother, the third after her own mother, and younger children after available uncles and aunts' (Sinclair 1990, p. 7).[7] Thus, merely knowing that a man has sons and knowing the man's father's name, one can refer to the man's eldest son by name, even though one bears no causal connection to either the son or his baptism. Similarly, as Evans pointed out (1973, p. 201), one can refer by name to streets in such U.S. cities as New York and Washington D.C., merely by knowing the system for naming streets in those cities.[8]

Another very common and large class of non-deferential name uses are those in which names are used to refer to extremely familiar things, including family pets, frequently visited locations (towns and cities) and geographical objects (lakes, rivers, mountains), spouses, family members, good friends, and close colleagues. In such cases of course, the speaker typically has an enormous amount of identifying knowledge of the name's referent, and so the speaker need not and certainly would not defer to anyone else's use of the name. Such non-deferential name uses are all exceptions to Kripke's theory. This may not seem obvious, since it is true that even in these kinds of cases one will no doubt have typically learned the referent's name at some time in the (perhaps distant) past, and such learning episodes are no doubt typically related causally (in some way or other) to baptisms. But contrary to Kripke's picture, I shall now argue that these past episodes of learning a name and baptism are strictly irrelevant to determining the semantic referents of present non-deferential uses.

Consider for instance the case of Fred, who regularly refers to his wife Helen by name and has done so for the past thirty-odd years. Suppose also that before meeting Helen for the first time, Fred learned her name from someone else who knew her, so that Fred acquired the intention to refer with the name to the same person as did the person from whom he first heard the name. Moreover, suppose, a Kripkean chain of communication in fact traces back to a baptismal ceremony in which Helen was first

[6] It is true of course that in these cases there will typically be *some* sort of causal connection between the speaker's use of a name and the referent's acquiring the name. (Sean Stidd pointed this out to me.) But first, these causal connections will be wildly different from each other, and second, none of the connections will satisfy Kripke's characterization of his deferential chains.

[7] My thanks to Pamela McKinsey for calling my attention to this. Evans (1973, p. 201) mentions a very similar practice by the Wagera Indians.

[8] Searle gives an additional nice example of this kind concerning the ancient Egyptian name 'Rameses VIII' (Searle 1983, p. 311).

given her name. Nevertheless, it seems quite obvious, contrary to Kripke's view, that Fred's current uses of Helen's name do not have their reference *determined* by the relevant chain of communication, since even if Fred's current uses of 'Helen' *had not been* traceable back to Helen's baptism, these uses of the name by Fred would *still* refer to her.

For suppose counterfactually that Fred's current uses of 'Helen' originated in his being introduced (thirty-odd years earlier) to a beautiful young woman named 'Helen', whom he promptly asked out on a date. Shortly thereafter, and without Fred's knowledge, this Helen disappeared, never to be heard from again. But her identity and her place in Fred's life were immediately taken over by Helen's twin sister Ellen, again without Fred's knowledge. Of course, Fred persisted in calling Ellen 'Helen', and they were eventually married. Clearly, Fred's present uses of 'Helen' would all refer to his wife Ellen, now known as 'Helen', who is of course Fred's wife Helen in the actual situation. Thus even if Fred's current actual uses of 'Helen' *had* originated in the introduction of someone else who had been baptised with that name, the referent of these uses would be unchanged and would be the same as in the actual situation. This fact shows that in the actual situation, the Kripkean chain which connects Fred's uses of 'Helen' with Helen's baptism is simply irrelevant to determining reference for these uses.

The counterfactual case of Fred and 'Helen' is structurally similar to some other important cases that Gareth Evans first described. (These include the 'Madagascar' and baby-switching cases, Evans (1973, p. 202). In these cases of Evans, the referent of a name *changes*, due to some misunderstanding or mistake, so that the new referent is distinct from the person or object originally given the name. Such cases show that a name use's connection via a Kripkean chain of communication to a person or object originally baptised with the name is strictly neither necessary nor sufficient for that person or object to be the use's semantic referent. Thus such cases show that Kripke's account is inadequate.

Now it is true that Evans's cases are rare and unusual. This seems to have led some, like Soames, to believe that such cases do not "falsify his [Kripke's] guiding idea" (Soames 2002, p. 20). However, this attitude underestimates the importance of Evans's cases. For as we've seen, cases of this sort can also be used to show the important result that in many cases of referring but *non-deferential* uses of names that *fit* Kripke's model, where there is in fact a Kripkean chain of communication that traces back to the use's actual referent, that chain of communication is *irrelevant* to determining name reference. For cases of the sort that Evans gave show that in such normal, typical non-deferential cases, even *had* the relevant Kripkean chain begun with a baptised object other than the name use's actual referent, the use would nevertheless have had the *same* actual object as referent, and would not have referred to the baptised object, just as in the Fred and 'Helen' example.

Thus Kripke's model doesn't merely fail to apply to a few rare and unusual cases of the sort that Evans described. Rather, the model also fails to correctly account for the reference of a *vast* number of common and typical non-deferential uses of names.

One reason why Kripke may have based his causal theory on deferential uses of names, and thus seriously limited his view's applicability, is that the examples he used to argue against *description* theories are all of the deferential sort. For instance,

consider Kripke's famous Gödel-Schmidt example, in which the speaker's only substantive identifying belief about Gödel is that he was the man who discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic (Kripke 1972, p. 294). Kripke is surely right to claim that the speaker's use of 'Gödel' would still refer to Gödel even if not Gödel but an unknown Viennese named 'Schmidt' had discovered incompleteness. But one natural explanation for this is that such a speaker would not primarily intend to refer to the discoverer of incompleteness, whoever that may be. Rather, desiring to communicate successfully with others, and having so little knowledge about the referent of 'Gödel', the speaker would primarily intend to refer to the man named 'Gödel' to whom she has heard others refer, or to the man named 'Gödel' of whom she has heard that he discovered incompleteness. (For details, see McKinsey (1978a, 1978b, 1981).) So this example, and the other similar cases that Kripke describes, fail to show that in deferential uses of names, the name's referent is not determined by description. At most, such cases show that, contrary to the 'public' description theories of Strawson and Searle, names' referents are not always determined by publicly or *commonly associated* descriptions, since the 'buck-passing' descriptions that appear to determine reference in deferential cases involve essential reference to the speaker. So Kripke's cases do not show that description theories are all false; rather the cases show that only an individualistic description theory is in a position to give an adequate account of deferential name uses.

It is important to emphasize that the 'buck-passing' account that an individualistic description theorist could give of deferential name uses is in effect co-extensive with the account provided by Kripke's chain of communication theory.[9] So contrary to Kripke's assumptions, cases of this sort can provide no rational basis for choosing between the two sorts of view. But individualistic description theories have a big advantage over theories of Kripke's sort. For as we've seen, Kripke's view is inadequate precisely because it cannot account for most ordinary *non*-deferential name uses, while individualistic description theories have no such limitations in their application.

So one direction in which one might try to develop a general account of name reference is to attempt to construct an adequate form of individualistic description theory. I will motivate and propose such a theory below. But there is another interesting possibility that we ought to consider which is closer in spirit to Kripke's idea, namely the possibility of an adequate social practice theory that can account for both deferential and non-deferential uses of names. I will now turn to discussion of an important example of this kind of theory that was proposed by Evans (1982).

2.2 Evans's Social Practice Theory

On Evans's theory, names acquire referents *via* the establishment of proper-name practices in communities of speakers. As a result of a name-type's being used in a given practice to refer to a given object, the object becomes the name's semantic referent (relative to the practice). A particular token or use of a name in turn has an

[9] I emphasized this fact in "Names and Intentionality" (1978a, pp. 198–199). Searle (1983, pp. 314–315), later made the same point.

object as its semantic referent when the use is an instance of a practice wherein the name refers to that object. (Evans 1982, p. 382).[10]

According to Evans, a proper-name practice is established by a core group of speakers whom Evans calls 'producers'. These producers regularly communicate with each other about a given person or object *x* by use of a name **N**. The producers normally will each be acquainted with *x*, will have dealings with *x*, and will have the ability to recognize *x*. As a result of the producers' use of **N** as a name of a given object, that object becomes *known as* **N**. While use of a name may originate in a baptism, this is not necessary; the producers may simply have all begun to use the name as a nickname of a given person, or as a result of a mistaken belief that the person already bears the name (1982, p. 376). Other speakers, whom Evans calls 'consumers' may come to participate in a given name practice *via* introduction of a name's bearer by a producer ('This is **N**') or merely by hearing uses of the name by producers or by other consumers.

Evans's theory does justice to Kripke's emphasis on the 'social character' of names, while avoiding the overemphasis that Kripke's view places on the deferential use of names. On Evans's view, a consumer may exploit a given name practice and thereby refer by name to the object referred to in the practice. A consumer might do this while knowing next to nothing about the referent, and even when *all* of the 'information' associated with the name by the consumer is false of the referent (1982, p. 385).

Thus, Evans's view provides a plausible account of the type of deferential uses of names that Kripke emphasizes. However, as Evans points out, the *connection* between a consumer's name use and the practice that determines the use's referent, though it may be a causal connection, has nothing specifically to do with *reference*, or with the semantics of *proper names*. For this connection is the same relation by virtue of which *any* particular use of *any* particular word has its semantic properties by being an instance of a general linguistic practice (1982, p. 387).[11]

[10] Here is what Evans says (1982, p. 383):

> Provided that some one individual is consistently and regularly identified by producers as NN (known as NN), that individual is the referent of the name as used by participants in the practice. And it is in terms of this notion of a name's having a reference that we should seek to understand particular utterances involving the name, *whether uttered by producers or consumers*. For when a speaker refers to an object by using a name, this will be because he intentionally utters a name which in fact has that object as its referent. [Evans's emphasis]

[11] Of course, an understanding of this connection is extremely important for semantics in general, since it is by virtue of this connection that particular tokens or utterances of word types acquire their specific meanings from the meanings of the word types in the language being spoken. Evans's point is just that the general connection in question has nothing specifically to do with the semantic relation of *reference*, and so could not provide us with a specific semantic theory of *proper names*. Evans also suggests that Kripke's causal theory is best understood as an attempt to account for this connection between particular uses of names and a given linguistic practice involving the names. Viewed as such, Kripke's view does not really provide us with a semantic theory that is specifically about name reference. (Again, see Evans 1982, p. 387.) Kaplan may have been making a similar suggestion, when he said that the causal chain theory is "presemantic" (Kaplan 1977, pp. 562 and 563, note 78.) Also see Almog (1984) for an especially clear statement of these same points. In "Names and Intentionality" (1978a, p. 174), I had pointed out that a causal theory like Kripke's might be conceived as an attempt to account for the connection between the particular use of a name and a general social practice involving the name, a connection by virtue of which a use of a name would count as an *instance* of a proper-name practice. I am now inclined to think that this is an over-charitable interpretation of Kripke's view. My criticisms above of Kripke's view assume that this view is an attempt to provide an adequate account, or at least an adequate picture, of the semantics of proper names.

Thus Evans plausibly assimilates uses of names by speakers who lack any independent way of grasping the names' referents, to the general case in which a speaker uses a word while largely ignorant of the word's meaning. Just as one can use the word 'agronomist' to *say* that someone is an agronomist while not having the slightest idea what the word 'agronomist' means, one can *refer* by name to, say, the famous physicist Richard Feynman while having little or no idea who Feynman is. In both sorts of cases, the ignorant speaker's uses of words derive their semantic properties from the general linguistic practices of which the speaker's uses are instances.

Evans agrees with one moral that is commonly drawn from Kripke's deferential cases, namely, that a speaker can use a name to refer to an object which the speaker cannot successfully identify, and with which the speaker has no epistemic or cognitive contact whatever. I will provide reason to doubt this moral below, but even if the moral is true, it is important to keep it in proper perspective, as Evans does.

Some philosophers of language, such as Wettstein (2004), seem to believe that Kripke's cases show that there is something wrong in principle with the traditional view (held by such philosophers as Frege, Russell, Strawson, and Searle) that the speaker of a name which refers to an object must be able to identify or discriminate the object referred to. But from Evans's perspective, Kripke's cases show at most that the traditional view merely needs to be slightly restricted so as to apply to uses of names by *understanding* speakers. Like other linguistic practices, the existence of proper-name practices rests upon the intellectual abilities and intentions of particular speakers who correctly understand the practice in question. In the case of names, an understanding speaker will grasp a semantic rule or convention to the effect that a given name **N** is to refer to a certain object x. According to Evans—and this is certainly plausible—to grasp such a convention one must be able to *think of* the object in question, and this in turn requires an ability to identify and discriminate the object. Given such a practice, brought into existence by understanding speakers, a speaker who does *not* understand the practice can nevertheless *exploit* the practice and can thereby succeed in referring by name to an object that the speaker cannot think of. But from Evans's perspective, this is a minor point, since it merely illustrates the relatively banal fact that speakers who don't know what they are talking about can sometimes use language to say things which they don't understand. But it is surely uncharitable in the extreme to take the traditional view of Frege, Russell, Strawson, and Searle as intended to apply to such uses of language.

On Evans's view, name practices are established by speakers who have the ability to think of the objects referred to in the practices. Evans (1982) provides interesting, detailed accounts of various ways in which persons can think of objects, including demonstrative-based, recognition-based, and description-based ways of identifying objects. He calls thoughts about objects of these kinds 'information based' thoughts. As I understand him, such thoughts crucially involve both a mode of identification of the object thought about and a causal connection to the object by virtue of which the information in the thought is *of* that object. So on Evans's view, name practices are based on individual speakers' abilities to think of objects, where *thinking of an object* is a partly causal notion. In this way, Evans's social practice theory of names can also be called a 'causal theory'.

2.3 An Argument against Evans's Theory

There of course cannot be any doubt that there are name practices of the sort that Evans describes. But it is doubtful whether these practices have the semantic significance that Evans ascribes to them. In particular, on Evans's view, a specific use or token of a name acquires its referent by being an instance of a social name practice in which the name has that referent. But this is simply false. Specific uses or tokens of names produced by (understanding) speakers typically have their referents independently of the uses' being instances of general practices among groups of speakers.

To see this, it is important to emphasize the fact that natural languages like English allow speakers *complete freedom* to make up and give their own names to objects of their choice, and then to use these names *in sentences of English* as names of the objects in question. (I first made this point in McKinsey (1978a, p. 194).) As a result, the names used semantically refer to the objects named, and sentences containing the names express singular propositions about the objects and are either true or false. Thus I might decide to call my pet canary 'Boris'. As a result, suppose, I often use the name 'Boris' in sentences which are about my canary. (Perhaps I talk to myself about Boris, or write entries in my diary about Boris's health.) Now my use of 'Boris' might or might not become part of a general practice among a larger group of speakers that includes me. Semantically, it makes no difference. Obviously, my uses of 'Boris' semantically refer to my canary, whether or not these uses are instances of any general 'social' practice.

Contrary to Evans's view then, specific uses or tokens of names do not always acquire their semantic referents by being instances of social name practices. But something stronger is true. When an understanding speaker's own way of using a name is an instance of a general practice, that speaker's uses of the name would still retain their semantic properties, even if these uses were *not* instances of the general practice.[12]

For instance, suppose that my use of 'Boris' as a name of my canary becomes a general practice followed by my family members, neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Let Jones be an arbitrary understanding participant in this practice. Now imagine a counterfactual situation in which Jones continues to use 'Boris' in the same way as a name of my canary, but no one else does. In this counterfactual situation, suppose, everyone besides Jones, including me, instead uses the name 'Morris' as a name of my canary. Jones's use of 'Boris', we can suppose, results from his having misheard my introduction of my canary as 'Morris' (perhaps I had a bad cold at the time). In these same circumstances, it seems clear, Jones's idiosyncratic uses of 'Boris' would nevertheless still semantically refer to my canary, and could even form the basis of a new general name practice by other speakers.[13] For example, if Jones moves away and so is never subject to correction by me or others who call my canary 'Morris', it might happen

[12] Here and in the discussion to follow, I am using 'understanding speaker' in Evans's sense, where an understanding user of a name is one who grasps a certain practice of referring to a given object x with the name, and so must be able to identify and think of x independently of the practice.

[13] A referee asked whether in these circumstances, Jones would still be an "understanding speaker". He would not be an understanding speaker relative to the general practice of using 'Morris' to refer to my canary, but he would be an understanding speaker relative to his own (now idiosyncratic) practice of using 'Boris' to refer to my canary.

that in various later conversations, diaries, and memoirs, Jones continues to refer to my canary as 'Boris', perhaps relating many humorous anecdotes about me and my canary. Surely we should not deny that Jones's uses of 'Boris' would succeed in semantically referring to my canary. Surely also, in a scenario reminiscent of Evans's 'Madagascar' case, it might happen that entire future generations of speakers, as a result of exposure to Jones's stories about me and my canary, would also (successfully and semantically) refer to my canary as 'Boris'.

Thus, when an understanding speaker's way of using a name is an instance of a general social practice, the semantic properties of the speaker's uses of the name would remain the same, even if the general practice did not exist. This shows that the semantic properties of the speaker's uses do not *depend* on the general practice. Thus contrary to Evans' theory, the existence of these general social practices involving names is just *irrelevant* to determining the semantic properties of instances of the practices performed by understanding speakers.

The basic explanation of this fact seems to lie in the permissive semantic rules of natural language which, again, give individual speakers complete freedom to institute their own private practices involving proper names, and which allow name uses that are instances of such private practices to have semantic referents. As a result, when a speaker's own name practice coincides with a general social name practice, the speaker's uses of the name would retain their semantic referent, even if the speaker's practice were to conflict with, rather than conform to, social practice, since the rules of language would still allow the speaker's idiosyncratic practice to determine semantic reference.

The fact that the semantic properties of name uses do not depend on the existence of general linguistic practices involving those names makes the use of proper names an *atypical* use of language. In the case of other singular and general terms, and indeed in the case of *all* other words that have lexical meanings in languages, the semantic properties of such a word in the use of a given sentence will depend entirely on the meaning of the word in the language in question, and this in turn will depend on the existence of general linguistic conventions or practices that govern the word's use in that language. But we have just seen that proper names are not like this, and this is evidence that typically, proper names do not have meanings in, and hence are not words of, particular natural languages.[14] I will return to this topic below.

[14] Various people have objected to the contrast I'm emphasizing here between proper names and other words of natural languages, pointing out that in the same way that I could follow an idiosyncratic practice of using 'Boris' as a name of my canary, following no social practice in doing so, one could also use other words that have meanings in natural language in idiosyncratic ways. For instance, I might decide to use the general term 'canary' to mean 'tennis ball'. Then in a tennis match, I could use the sentence 'I hit a canary over the net', meaning thereby that I hit a tennis ball over the net. However, there is a big difference between this kind of case and the case I described above about the name 'Boris'. In the 'canary' case, while *I* (the speaker) might mean something true by the sentence uttered (namely that I hit a tennis ball over the net), what I have literally *said* in English (the proposition expressed) is that I hit a canary over the net, which of course is false. Thus my decision to idiosyncratically mean 'tennis ball' by 'canary' has no *semantic* consequences. But in sharp contrast, persons' decisions to use certain words as names of their pets (almost) *always* have semantic consequences. Thus when I write in my diary 'Boris became quite ill this morning', I have thereby *said* in English (not merely speaker-meant) something about my canary Boris. As I emphasized above, my use of the sentence obviously expresses in English a proposition about my canary, even though in using the name 'Boris' I am following no social practice.

2.4 The 'Social character' of names

I am not claiming that proper names do not have a 'social character'. Rather, I am claiming that the 'social character' of names is irrelevant to their semantics. We can explain the social features common to the use of proper names by noting the existence of extra-linguistic conventions that are designed to facilitate *communication* by use of names. First, there is the general practice we have of *giving names* to persons and things, and second, there is the general expectation that we should refer to persons and things by means of the names we have given them. These general practices are crucial to the existence of generally successful communication by use of names. We try to learn the names that have been given to those persons and things about which it is likely that we will want to communicate. Then when we use those names, others who have also learned the names will be able to make well-founded inferences, perhaps with the aid of contextual cues, about whom or what we are talking about. But these general practices of giving names and using the names given are not *essential* to the possession of semantic properties by names. Again, we can successfully refer (semantically) by use of nicknames, or by use of names that we mistakenly believe have been given to persons or things. Communication might well fail in such cases, but the name uses will nevertheless have semantic referents.[15]

When we give a name to a person or thing, we provide the person or thing with an arbitrary characteristic that helps others to distinguish or identify the person or thing we are talking about by use of the name. This fact motivates the common suggestion that names are like *tags* or *labels* that we put on things to identify them.[16] Some philosophers have pointed out that, rather than referring to things with the names we've given them, we could instead refer by use of other independent features possessed by the things. Thus, we could refer to persons by use of their birth dates (Evans 1982, p. 380) or by use of their social security numbers (Wettstein 2004, p. 84). Of course, as Evans points out, the resulting linguistic devices (specific series of numerals) would simply by their use *become* names of the persons (even though the persons had never been *given* these names).

Now just as a person's having a given birth date or social security number does not automatically result in any practice of *referring* to the person with these things, a name we've *given* to a person does not automatically result in any practice, on the part of either an individual or a group, of referring to the person with the name. For instance, in some cultures, a person's 'real' name is kept secret, known only to a certain religious authority, and it is positively *forbidden* that anyone should ever use that name to refer to the person whose name it is.[17] Still, the person *has* the name in question. Or consider the International Star Registry, which for a fee of $54 will name a star after anyone you like. (You will be sent an official-looking framed certificate, along with the star's spatial coordinates.) Clearly, this sort of

[15] As Evans points out, "....what matters is not that the name has been *assigned* to the thing but that it is used for the thing" (1982, p. 380, note 7).

[16] The tag/label metaphor has been emphasized by Wittgenstein (1953), Marcus (1961) and Wettstein (2004), among others.

[17] This fact refutes an idea recently suggested by Perry (1997) that to give a name to an object is to establish a permissive convention to the effect that one is *permitted* to refer to that object with the name.

name-giving exercise does not result, and is not intended to result, in any practice of actually referring to the obscure star in question by use of the name you've given it. (Small print indicates that the star's name will not be recognized by the scientific community!) Or consider the common practice of parents' giving more than one name to their offspring; it is clear that at least one of these given names will almost *never* be used to refer to the child.[18]

Thus acts of *giving* names to things need not result in the establishment of any name-*using* practices. I think that some philosophers of language have made the mistake of confusing these two kinds of thing, and as a result, these philosophers have both overestimated the semantic importance of name-giving, and underestimated the semantic importance of the continued existence of stable name-using practices on the part of individual understanding speakers. Kripke and his defenders, as well as Wettstein (2004), pretty clearly make this mistake. A related error is that of confusing the idea that names are like tags or labels that we place on things, with the idea that names are directly referential, that is, are Russellian genuine terms whose only semantic contributions are their referents. (Marcus (1961) and Wettstein (2004) both seem to make this mistake.) In fact, these ideas are quite different and unrelated. The tag/label idea characterizes our name-*giving* practices, and is thus irrelevant to the semantics of names, in sharp contrast to the semantic idea that names are directly referential.

Again, our general practices of giving names to things, and of standardly referring by name to things that have been given the name used, together account for the 'social character' of names. But these are extra-linguistic conventions designed to foster effective communication with names, and they are not essential to the semantics of names. The fact that a given object is the semantic referent of a given use of a proper name is not determined by whether or not the object has been *given* the name (say in some baptismal ceremony). It is rather determined by whether or not the object figures in the name-using practice being followed by the individual speaker.

2.5 Names are not words of language

While Evans was right to emphasize the importance of name-using practices, I argued above that contrary to his view, these practices need not be general social linguistic practices involving groups of speakers. Rather, the name practices can and sometimes do exist only at the level of individual speakers. But this could not happen if the meaningful use of names in language required the names to have specific meanings in the language being spoken. Evans's view of names is motivated by the initially plausible assumption that names are like other words of language, the semantic properties of whose tokens are determined by the words' lexical meanings in the language. But this assumption is false. Another model is needed to understand the semantics of names.

[18] After writing this paper, I learned that both Bach (1987, pp. 160–161 and 2002, pp. 83–84) and Geurts (1997, pp. 326–328) had earlier made similar points to distinguish, as I just did, an object's *bearing* a name from an object's being the *referent* of the name.

On the model that I prefer, proper names simply do not have specific meanings in natural languages, and so in this sense, names are not words of those languages. Now it might be protested that, contrary to my view, names obviously do in fact have meanings in natural languages, or at least in *idiolects* of those languages. For after all, many, perhaps most, of our uses of names like 'Gödel', 'Secretariat', 'Mt. Everest', and 'Madagascar' are instances of quite general social practices in which such names are used to refer to particular persons, animals, objects, and places. Given these social practices among speakers of a given language, or so the protest goes, the names involved *must* have the meanings created and imposed by these very practices.

According to this protest, the existence of a general social practice of referring to a given object with a certain name, would be *sufficient* to give the name a specific meaning in the language. But in effect we've already seen why this claim is mistaken. For as we saw earlier, the semantic referent of a name used by an understanding participant in a general social name practice would remain the same, *even if the general social practice did not exist*.

But this result implies that the existence of a general social practice involving a name is *not* sufficient to give the name a meaning in the speaker's language or idiolect. To see this, suppose for *reductio* that the existence of such a social name practice were sufficient to result in the relevant name's having a specific meaning in the speaker's language or idiolect. In this case, it would follow that the semantic referent of the speaker's uses of the name would be *determined* by the name's specific meaning. (This is simply because, I assume, the semantic properties of any particular use or token of a word type are always determined by the (disambiguated) meaning, if any, of the word type in the language being spoken.) But then, the speaker's name uses would not have had their semantic referent, had the name being used not had this specific meaning.[19] And so these name uses would not have had their semantic referent, had the relevant social name practice not existed (since the meaning in question is due to the relevant social name practice). But this consequence is contrary to what we showed earlier, namely, that the semantic referent of the speaker's name uses would remain the same, even if the relevant social practice did not exist. Hence by *reductio*, the existence of a general social name practice is not sufficient to give the relevant name a meaning in the language or idiolect being spoken.[20]

Names are not words of language, at least in the sense that names do not have specific lexical meanings in existing natural languages. In saying this, I am following several other philosophers and linguists who earlier maintained that names

[19] Why does this follow? After all, perhaps the name could have had a *different* meaning but the *same* referent. However, this can't happen under present assumptions, since the social practice in question is simply that of referring to a specific object x with a given name N. Thus the meaning generated must be a semantic rule to the effect that object x is to be the referent of any use of name N. But then, any different meaning of N of this same sort would have to determine an object other than x as referent.

[20] Though on my view the existence of a general social name practice would be *necessary* for the relevant name to have a specific meaning in the natural language being spoken. Of course, as we've seen, the existence of such a social practice is *not* necessary for a name use to have a semantic referent (on the basis of an individual speaker's practice involving the name).

do not have specific meanings in natural languages. This idea has remained oddly unpopular among philosophers of language, but there is overwhelming evidence that the idea is correct. First, there is the evidence I've cited here, that the rules of English and other natural languages give speakers complete freedom to make up names for objects of their choice, and then to meaningfully use these names in sentences of the language in question. Of course, such names used in individualistic practices would not be words with meanings in the language being spoken. And second, I've argued, even when an understanding speaker is following a general social practice in using a name, the existence of the practice is not sufficient to provide the name with a lexical meaning in the language being spoken.

Additional evidence was provided by Strawson (1950, p. 190) who pointed out that "ignorance of a man's name is not ignorance of the language," and Vendler (1971, p. 117), who noted that names do not require *translation* into another language, and that accordingly, dictionaries do not list proper names.[21] But perhaps the most convincing evidence was provided by Ziff (1960, p. 86) who argued as follows:

> If I say 'Are you familiar with Hsieh Ho's view on art?' I am speaking English: I am not speaking a combination of English and Chinese. Yet if 'Hsieh' and 'Ho' are words then they can only be words of Chinese....and I must speak a combination of English and Chinese, which is absurd.

Ziff is clearly right that any speaker can use for the first time any name in a sentence of *pure English*, even though the name had before been used only in sentences of another language. Now as Ziff points out, this simply could not happen if names had lexical meanings in language. For instance, if 'Hsieh Ho' had meaning in Chinese, one could not just go on and use this name in a sentence of English, since the resulting sentence would simply not *be* a sentence of English. Rather, as Ziff says, the sentence would be a hybrid mix of English and Chinese. But of course this is obviously false. One can construct perfectly meaningful sentences in pure English using names previously used only in sentences of other languages. Of course, what holds of English holds of other languages as well, and so in general, names do not have lexical meanings in natural languages.[22]

This fact has important consequences for the semantics of proper names and the sentences that contain them. For it follows that particular uses or tokens of names

[21] Similar points have also been made persuasively and in more detail by Bach (1987, pp. 143–144 and 2002, p. 82). Recanati (1993, Chap. 8) also endorses the view that proper names are not governed by conventions of language.

[22] Abbott (2004, p. 15) objects to Ziff's argument by pointing out that "names, like other words, can be *borrowed* from one language into another" (Abbott's emphasis). But in order for a word that is not a name such as, say, 'entrepreneur' to be borrowed from (in this case) French into English, the word must first *become* a word of English, and this requires the establishment of a general convention or practice among English speakers of using the word with the meaning it has in French. No such requirement is necessary in the case of names. One can use a name previously used only by speakers of Chinese, say 'Hsieh Ho', for the *first* and perhaps the *only* time, in a sentence that, as Ziff points out, would be *purely* a sentence of English. No general practice or convention regarding the name needs to be first established in English in order for this to happen. Thus a name never before used in English can be used in a sentence of pure English without that name's *ever becoming* a word of English. This simply could not happen if names had lexical meanings in language.

cannot just *inherit* their semantic properties from the semantic properties of the name-types in the language being spoken, since the name-types simply don't *have* any semantic properties in the language being spoken. Thus, contrary to Evans's account of deferential uses of names, such uses cannot derive their semantic properties from the name practices being exploited by the ignorant speakers, since name-practices don't exist at the level of language. In short, proper names just don't admit of a 'division of linguistic labor' (Putnam 1975). There can be no 'experts' about the meaning of a name, since names do not *have* meanings.

Since name practices don't exist at the level of language, but only at the level of the individual speaker, only an individualistic account of how names' referents are determined has a chance of being correct. Thus, there really can be no such thing as a name use that both has a semantic referent and that is not understood by its speaker. This implies that speakers whose name uses refer to objects *invariably* have the capacity to identify and discriminate those objects. Thus the traditional view of Frege, Russell, Strawson, and Searle regarding the intellectual abilities of name users is vindicated in the end by the semantic facts about names.[23]

3 An individualistic theory of names

3.1 The name-practice requirement

If names are not words of language, then how is it possible to use a name in a sentence of, say, English, even though the sentence contains a word (the name) that is not a word of English? My answer is that this is possible because natural languages contain a permissive rule that allows speakers to invent and follow their own semantic rules for proper names. (See McKinsey 1984.) In effect, the *only* rule for names that occurs in natural languages is simply the following: it is permitted to use any word as a proper name. Thus, when one uses a word as a name in a sentence of English, one is not following a rule of English concerning *that specific name*, since English contains no such rule. Nevertheless, the speaker would be meaningfully speaking English in using the particular word as a name, since in doing so, the speaker would be doing something that is permitted by the rules of English.

Of course the difficult questions then immediately arise, what is it for a speaker to use a word as a proper name, and when a speaker does use a word this way, how is its semantic referent determined? I think it is important at the outset to agree with Kripke, Evans, and others that to use a word as a name one must be engaging in a *practice*. We saw above that the practice might exist solely as the practice of a single speaker, but it must at least exist at this level, in order for the speaker to be at

[23] To answer a referee's good question, it is true on my view that even a speaker whose uses of a name are *deferential* will have his or her own practice involving the name, and will have the capacity to identify the name uses' referent as for example "the man named 'Gödel' of whom I've heard". (This possibility is allowed by the individualistic theory that I propose below in Sect. 3.) I think that even such deferential means of identification fit the traditional requirement. For instance, Strawson (1963, p. 185) allows 'buck-passing' descriptions to determine name reference, and Russell (1918, p. 243) allowed that a name like 'Romulus' could be short for the description 'the person who was called "Romulus".'

all using a word as a name. If we ignore this requirement, then we shall have to suppose that a speaker could on a single occasion arbitrarily use a word as a name of whatever object the speaker chooses, even though the speaker lacks any tendency to use that name as a name of that object on any other occasion. But to suppose this is to collapse the distinction between speaker reference and name reference, and Kripke pretty conclusively showed that there is such a distinction. He described the following case (1972, p. 343, note 3):

> Two men glimpse someone at a distance and think they recognize him as Jones. "What is Jones doing?" "Raking the leaves." If the distant leaf-raker is actually Smith, then in some sense they are *referring* to Smith, even though they both use 'Jones' *as a name of* Jones. [His italics.]

I think that Kripke is clearly correct to say that the speakers in his case are both using 'Jones' *as a name of* Jones, even though they are both referring to Smith. The explanation of this would seem to be that the speakers' uses of 'Jones' are both instances of name practices involving Jones but not Smith.

The requirement that the semantic referent of a name use must be an object involved in a name practice of which the use is an instance is sometimes less clearly expressed by requiring that the semantic referent of a name use must *bear* the name.[24] This requirement is strictly correct, but note that, as we saw above, it is not *sufficient* to be a name use's referent that an object merely have been *given* the name in question, since again, this does not by itself suffice for the existence of any name practice. But of course it is sufficient for an object to bear a name that there exists a practice in which the object is *called* by that name (even if only by a single speaker). Thus if the semantic referent of a name use must be involved in a name practice of which the use is an instance, it follows that the referent must also bear the name (whether or not the referent has been *given* the name). In short, there are *two* ways in which an object can come to bear a name: (1) by having been given the name, and (2) by the creation of a name practice involving the name and the object. It's only the second of these ways of coming to bear a name that is necessary for semantic reference.[25]

[24] See for instance Burge (1973) and McKinsey (1978a, pp. 172–173).

[25] Recanati (1993, Chap. 8) develops a view which seems similar in some respects to the view I am proposing here, in that he seems to allow that the 'conventions' associating names with given objects may be established and followed by single speakers, and so those 'conventions' need not be conventions of language. (See footnote 15 above.) However, Recanati's view has a central feature not contained in my view, a feature which I think is mistaken. He holds that all names N have the meaning of an indexical whose referent is determined by the description 'the bearer (in this context) of the name N'. I think that this claim is false. First, note (as Recanati does) that the claim implies that all names have the same meaning, a consequence that seems absurd on the face of it. Second, the claim implies that names used in idiosyncratic practices can have 'meanings', even though the names have no meanings in the language being spoken. This also seems obviously false. Finally, Recanati's claim is an unnecessary accretion on any adequate theory. Since on his view, an object x is the bearer of a name N in a context if and only if the speaker is following a practice on which N is to refer to x, the practice alone is sufficient to determine reference for the token of N in question. It is thus quite unnecessary to suppose that the speaker must *in addition* be following an indexical rule to the effect that the referent must bear the name N. (I argue that names are not indexicals of any sort in my (1984), pp. 502–503.)

3.2 Private semantic rules

Our concepts of different types of singular terms correspond to the different reference rules that both govern the use of the terms as well as determine their tokens' referents. (See McKinsey 1984). For instance, it's plausible to suppose that what makes a given term a first person pronoun of a given language, is that it is governed in that language by a reference rule of the following sort:

(I) For any token α of 'I' and any object x, α is to refer to x if and only if $x =$ the speaker of α.[26]

In general, it is a feature of any indexical or demonstrative pronoun that it is governed by a reference rule which specifies a particular *relation* that any referent of a token of the term must uniquely bear to *that token*. (See McKinsey 1984, p. 512, note 13.) As a consequence, the referents of an indexical or demonstrative pronoun will vary (in a predictable way) from token to token: in other words, the referents of such terms are *context-dependent*.

But proper names are not like this. It is much more plausible to assume that all the tokens of a given name, as used in a single practice, must have the *same* referent.[27] If so, then since it is reasonable to assume that proper names, like other genuine terms, are also governed by reference rules, these rules must specify conditions that determine name reference independently of context.

Now it's true that I've argued above that proper names, unlike indexical and demonstrative pronouns, don't have specific meanings in natural languages. This might make it seem doubtful that names are governed by any sort of semantic rule at all. But in fact we should think of names as governed by rules of the kind that they *would* be governed by, if they *were* words of natural language. For we surely cannot rule out the existence of *possible* languages in which there are names with specific meanings. In such languages, names would be governed by specific context independent reference rules, rules by virtue of which the names count as *proper names* of the languages in question. Moreover, in such languages, speakers would use words as names by virtue of their following the relevant rules that govern the names. But surely, the speakers of such languages would be using words as names *in the same sense* as speakers of natural languages do, even though the speakers of natural languages are not following rules of their languages. The explanation of what the two situations have in common would seem to be that in both situations, the speakers would be following the same kind of semantic rule, and it would be by virtue of their following this kind of rule that the speakers in both situations would be using words as names.

[26] As a referee correctly pointed out, the condition (I) would not hold for occurrences of 'I' in direct quotes. But I would add that in such cases, the speaker would not be *following* the rule (I) either. So there's no reason to think that the relevant condition should hold in quotational cases, even though the rule (I) does govern *uses* (as opposed to mentions) of 'I' in English.

[27] For a detailed argument for this (commonly accepted) view, see McKinsey (1984, pp. 502–503). See also Kaplan's seminal discussion of this issue in his (1977, p. 563).

Now there are really only two kinds of reference rules that could determine name reference independently of context. On the one hand, there are rules expressible by use of a context-independent *definite description*, rules of the form:

(D) For any token α of **N** and any object x, α is to refer to x if and only if $x =$ the **F**

where each instance of '**F**' expresses a property. On the other hand, there are rules that specify a name's referent, not by description, but by direct reference. These rules have the form:

(O) For any token α of **N** and any object x, α is to refer to x if and only if $x = b$,

where b is a genuine term that directly refers to a given object.

Rules of the form (O) are *objectual*, in that they are functions of the objects referred to by instances of 'b'. Thus, such rules are analogous to singular propositions, and like singular propositions, the existence of such a rule is contingent upon the existence of a certain *object*, in this case the referent of an instance of 'b'. Now it is initially plausible to suppose that when we use names, we are following rules of this form.[28] That is, in using a word as a name, we seem to typically use it with the intention that the name is to refer to *this* person, or *that* object. Similarly, we often initiate name practices by ostension, saying (or thinking) things like: "Let 'Boris' refer to *this* canary." Moreover, in our earlier discussion it has seemed natural to follow Evans in thinking of name practices as identified in part by the objects that figure in the practices.

However, there is a serious difficulty in supposing that in using words as names we are always following objectual rules of the form (O). The difficulty is that sometimes our uses of names *fail to refer*, and when this happens there simply is no rule of the form (O) that directly specifies the name's referent.[29] Nor of course will it do to suppose that when our name uses refer we are following rules of the form (O), but when our name uses fail to refer we are following rules of some different form, say (D). For surely our uses of names are *homogeneous*, in the sense that whether or not a name use succeeds in referring to an object, it will seem (phenomenologically) that we are doing the same thing in using the word as a name.

This problem of homogeneity is one of the main reasons in favor of endorsing a description theory on which to use a word as a name is to engage in a practice in which a rule of the form (D) is followed.[30] Since such descriptive rules exist independently of whether or not the names used have referents, this proposal automatically solves the problem of homogeneity. Of course, the widespread assumption that description theories have all been shown false has prevented most philosophers of language from taking advantage of this solution to the problem. But

[28] Both McDowell (1977) and Evans (1979) suggest that the conventions for names are objectual in this sense.

[29] A referee asked why this fact does not count *in favor* of objectual rules, since the nonexistence of a rule of the form (O) would apparently explain why the name use in question fails to refer. But the difficulty is that in the absence of any such objectual rule which the speaker is following, there seems to be no way to characterize the *name practice* being followed by the speaker. (It's certainly *not* the practice of using the name to refer to a certain object x!) As a result we would also be unable to explain what makes the speaker's use a use of a word *as a proper name*. (It's of course *not* the fact that the speaker is following an objectual rule concerning a certain object x!)

[30] This is the primary reason that I gave in favor of such a theory in McKinsey (1984).

the main source of this assumption was Kripke's argument concerning such deferential uses of names as occur in his Gödel/Schmidt case, and as we saw earlier, this sort of case simply fails to show that in deferential uses, the names' referents are not determined by description.

For instance, it is perfectly plausible to suppose that the speaker in the Gödel/Schmidt case is (tacitly) thinking of his or her use of 'Gödel' as subject to the following instance of (D):

(G) For any token α of 'Gödel' and any object x, α is to refer to x if and only if x = the man named 'Gödel' of whom I have heard that he discovered incompleteness.

Of course, the description that occurs in (G) is not commonly associated with the name 'Gödel', since the description involves direct reference to the speaker. Thus the practice of following this rule would be quite idiosyncratic. But this consequence fits the independent evidence provided earlier to show that the rules of natural language permit speakers to make up and follow their own semantic rules for proper names. Similarly, a speaker who followed (G) would not be using 'Gödel' with any meaning that the name might have in English. But this result fits the independent evidence that names are not words of language.

Thus it is plausible to suppose that to use a word as a proper name is for one's utterance of that word to be an instance of a practice on the part of the speaker to utter tokens of the word with the understanding that those tokens are subject to a specific reference rule of the form (D). We might call this idea the 'private-rule' theory. (See McKinsey 1984, pp. 507–509.)

3.3 Pollock's problem

Pollock (1980) pointed out that objects about which a person has a great deal of knowledge pose a serious problem for the view that a given thought would be of or about such an object due to the person's thinking of the object under some *one* description. For each of the huge number of descriptions that one knows to be true of a given familiar object, it seems, one could always be thinking of that object, even if it failed to satisfy that *particular* description.

A similar problem faces 'single description' theories of names like the private-rule theory. If one considers one's use of a name to refer to a given spouse, family member, friend, or colleague, one is hard put to say exactly *which* description it is that the person *must* satisfy in order to be the referent of the name use. Moreover, it seems that no matter which description one picks, the referent of one's name use (in such cases) could remain the referent without satisfying *that* description. For instance, my uses of my wife's name would still refer to her, even if due to some ancient error we are not legally married, so that she does not satisfy the description 'my wife'.[31]

The private-rule theory gives a plausible account of *deferential* name uses, since in such cases, where the speaker's limited information provides perhaps just one description to determine reference, the speaker might well agree that the name use's

[31] Pollock (1980, p. 488) gave a similar case.

referent *must* satisfy that description (since otherwise, nothing determines reference). So in such cases it is plausible to think of the speaker as following a descriptive rule like (G). But in non-deferential cases, where the speaker possesses a large number of descriptions by which to identify the referent, there seems to be no *single* description that the speaker would agree *must* be satisfied by the referent. This consideration is quite similar to the considerations which motivated the classic *cluster* theories of Searle (1958) and Wilson (1959), and so it seems that clusters of descriptions must play a role in the correct theory of how name-reference is determined.[32]

But to have an adequate view, we must in addition understand what kind of semantic rule is being followed by name users in non-deferential cases. We've seen that in such cases, the speakers are not following descriptive rules, so that the only sort of rules that they could be following are objectual rules of the form (O). Again, this hypothesis seems phenomenologically correct. In using a word as a name of someone or something about which one knows a great deal, one is not really interested in requiring that the referent must satisfy this or that description. Rather one is really only interested in saying something about a given *object*, and so the only semantic rule that one is really interested in following, is a rule to the effect that one's name use is to refer to *that object*.

3.4 The anaphoric-cluster theory

Of course now the problem of homogeneity returns with a vengeance: How can one be using a word as a name, even though one's use *has no* referent, so that one *cannot* be following an objectual rule of the form (O)? My answer is that typically, to use a word as a name is to be in a certain sort of mental state in which one (in effect) 'attempts' to subject one's use to a rule of the form (O) about a given object. Mental states of this sort involve background descriptive assumptions on the basis of which the speaker would attempt to identify the object that is supposed to be the name use's referent. These descriptions do not figure in the semantic rule that the speaker is trying to follow. Rather, the descriptions serve only to provide a basis on which the speaker can grasp the object that figures in the relevant rule. Roughly, when the descriptive assumptions are true, the speaker succeeds in following an objectual rule about the referent. When the descriptive assumptions are incorrect, the speaker's name use has no referent, and the speaker fails to follow the right kind of rule, but because the speaker is in the right sort of mental state, directed toward the right kind of semantic rule, we should count the speaker as having succeeded in using a word as a proper name.

In order to explain the type of mental state that on my view is typically involved in the use of names, I need to appeal to a kind of anaphoric construction that I call *mental anaphora*. (See McKinsey 1986, 1994, 1999). Consider such sentences as

(G) Oscar wishes he had caught the fish that got away.

Here I wish to restrict attention to readings of (G) on which it does not imply that any fish actually did get away from Oscar. (What 'got away' from Oscar might just have been an underwater branch or an old boot.) Now what would be the content of

[32] I defended a cluster theory in McKinsey (1978a).

the wish that such a reading of (G) would ascribe to Oscar? It cannot be a proposition of the form

(f) Oscar caught at t the fish that got away from him at t,

since such a proposition would be contradictory, while the wish that (G) ascribes to Oscar is clearly consistent. My suggestion is that we should follow a proposal made by Geach (1967, p. 63) for analyzing similar cases, and understand (G) as meaning

(GA) Oscar assumes that just one fish got away, and he wishes it had been the case that he caught *it*.

Contexts of this sort, in which a pronoun in the scope of one cognitive operator is anaphoric on a quantifier antecedent in the scope of another cognitive operator, I call contexts of 'mental anaphora'. (GA) has the advantage of implying neither that any fish actually got away from Oscar nor that Oscar's wish is inconsistent, and so (GA) seems to capture the most natural reading of (G).

But as Geach pointed out, an analysis like (GA) raises a new problem, that of how to understand the anaphoric pronoun '*it*' as it occurs in (GA). I've argued elsewhere (1986, pp. 162–163) that in many of Geach's cases that are structurally like (GA), the anaphoric pronoun is going proxy for a definite description that is recoverable from the clause governed by the pronoun's quantifier antecedent. (In such cases, the anaphoric pronoun would be what Neale (1990, p. 187) calls a 'D-type' pronoun.) But I've chosen (GA) precisely because this cannot be so: again, if '*it*' were proxy for 'the fish that got away', then (GA) would ascribe an inconsistent wish to Oscar, which it does not do.[33] Nor can '*it*' be a variable bound by its quantifier antecedent 'just one fish', since in (GA) '*it*' is not in the *scope* of this antecedent.

Given that '*it*' is neither a bound variable nor going proxy for a description in (GA), I believe that the only workable hypothesis is that '*it*' is here functioning as what Evans (1977) called an 'E-type' pronoun, a rigid genuine term whose reference is fixed by the description recoverable from the clause governed by its quantifier antecedent.[34]

[33] Keep in mind that (GA) is to be read so as not to imply that any fish actually did get away from Oscar, so that if '*it*' were short for 'the fish that got away', the description would have to have small rather than large scope. But then, we get the bad result that (GA) ascribes an inconsistent wish to Oscar.

[34] An appeal to Evans's notion of an E-type pronoun might seem controversial, given the large amount of cogent criticism to which Evans's use of this notion has been subjected, in both the linguistic and philosophical literature. I myself was one of Evans's early critics (in McKinsey 1986). Evans (1977) held that *all* unbound pronouns anaphoric on quantifiers are rigid designators whose referents are fixed (in Kripke's sense) by definite descriptions recoverable from the clauses governed by the pronouns' quantifier antecedents. But in my 1986 article "Mental Anaphora", I showed that the evidence Evans gave to support his generalization is inconclusive, and that in many of the cases he gave to support his generalization, the anaphoric pronouns in question must in fact be going proxy for non-rigid definite descriptions. Soames (1989) later independently made very similar points to argue that Evans's pronouns are really short for non-rigid descriptions. (One of the points made by both Soames and me had been made earlier by Davies (1981, p. 173).) Neale (1990) then appealed to Soames's arguments to motivate his general view that unbound pronouns anaphoric on quantifier antecedents all go proxy for either definite or numberless descriptions (an idea that had been earlier suggested by Davies (1981, p. 175)). (Some of the arguments in McKinsey (1986) have been recently cited and discussed at length by Berger (2002, pp. 171–175) and Salmon (2006, pp. 442–446).)

Now suppose that Oscar is right that just one fish got away from him at time *t* say, and call this fish 'Bubbles'. Then the content of the wish ascribed to Oscar by (GA), the proposition that would make Oscar's wish come true, is clearly the proposition that Oscar catches Bubbles at *t*. But now suppose that Oscar is wrong. Perhaps what Oscar thought was a fish on the end of his line was really just an old boot or an underwater branch. In this case, the pronoun '*it*' as it occurs in 'he caught *it*' in (GA) would have no referent, and since here '*it*' is a genuine term, the sentence 'he caught *it*' would express no proposition, and so the wish ascribed by (GA) would have no propositional content. Yet in these same circumstances, (GA) could still be *true*. Thus it is possible to have a perfectly good wish without that wish's having any propositional content. A similar result follows for all other types of cognitive acts and states except for those which like knowledge cannot be false.

The phenomenon of mental anaphora is useful for explaining how it is possible to grasp an objectual meaning, such as a singular proposition, in a cognitive state whose existence is logically independent of that objectual meaning.[35] Consider for instance the following complex state:

(B) At *t*, Oscar utters a token of 'Bubbles' while assuming that just one fish got away, and with the intention that the token uttered be subject to the rule that:
  (R) For any token β of 'Bubbles' and any object x, β is to refer to x if and only if $x = it$.

Here, '*it*' is an E-type pronoun whose antecedent is 'just one fish'. If Oscar's assumption that just one fish got away is true, then the E-type pronoun '*it*' refers to this fish and so (R) in (B) would express an objectual rule about Bubbles. But even

Footnote 34 continued

While the arguments I had given against Evans's view were later used by Soames and Neale to support a general view on which no unbound pronouns anaphoric on quantifiers are rigid, I did not go down this path in my (1986). Instead I there provided a new argument, based on my example (GA), that there are in fact rigid E-type pronouns, as Evans believed, even though many of the uses of pronouns that Evans called 'E-type' are in fact non-rigid. (For the complete argument, see McKinsey (1986, pp. 166–167).) My example (GA) is one of a wide range of cases that I had adduced in unpublished work of 1974 to show that there are rigid anaphoric pronouns of the sort that Evans later dubbed 'E-type'. These cases show that there are rigid E-type pronouns, even though I agree with Soames, Neale, and Davies that the evidence Evans gave does not show this.

Note that my example (GA) is a *counterexample* to Neale's (1990) view, since on that view the pronoun '*it*' in (GA) must be proxy for the (small scope) definite description 'the fish that got away', so that (GA) would ascribe an inconsistent wish to Oscar, which it does not do (on the most natural interpretation). For the same reason, (GA) is also a counterexample to the views of King (1994, 2004), Berger (2002), and Salmon (2006). On these views, the pronoun '*it*' in (GA) would have to either be going proxy for the restricted quantifier 'just one fish that got away' (King) or would be bound by an implicit (small scope) restricted quantifier 'just one fish that got away' (Berger and Salmon). So on these views as well, (GA) would ascribe an inconsistent wish to Oscar, which again it does not do.

It certainly appears that there is more than one semantic type, and perhaps there are several such types, of unbound pronouns that are anaphoric on antecedent quantifiers. So at the moment there seems to be no single theory that adequately accounts for the wide variety of examples (including the 'donkey' cases) involving such pronouns. For a useful survey of most of the existing theories and their problems, see King (2010). Elbourne (2005) defends an important new version of the D-type approach that is based in part on Heim's (1990) use of situation semantics.

[35] For an application of mental anaphora to explain Putnam's (1975) Twin Earth example, see McKinsey (1991). See also McKinsey (1987, 1994, 1999, and 2009) for additional important applications.

if Oscar's assumption is false, (B) can still be true, and so Oscar can still be in the right sort of mental state for using a word as a proper name, even though he does not succeed in following the right sort of objectual rule.

I will asume that when a person uses a word as a proper name, the person typically associates a non-empty cluster of properties with the use, where these properties provide the 'descriptive backing' for the person's attempt to follow an objectual reference rule about a certain object. In order to be relevant to determining reference, the properties must meet certain conditions. First, the properties must be qualitative to some extent, and cannot be merely, for some object *y*, the property of being identical with *y*. (We can't explain how a person could follow a rule about *y*, by appealing to the person's assumption that *y* exists.) Second, each property in the cluster must have some *weight* regarding the determination of reference, so that if **F** were the only property in the cluster that is uniquely satisfied by anything, the speaker would agree that the **F** is the referent of the name-use in question.[36] I'll also assume that different properties in a cluster may have *different* weights, and that these different weights may play a role in determining reference. Third, for each property **F** in the cluster, the speaker believes that the referent of the relevant name use is the unique object that is **F** and hence for any properties **F** and **G** in the cluster, the speaker will believe that the **F** = the **G**.

Finally, we need to ensure that the relevant properties are not *question-begging* in Donnellan's (1970) sense. Let us say that

(QB) A property **F** is *question-begging* with respect to speaker **S**'s utterance of token $\alpha =_{df}$ necessarily, for all objects *x*, if *x* = the F, then either α refers to *x* or **S** has *x* in mind in uttering α.

For instance, consider the property of being the referent of all tokens of 'Bubbles' uttered by Oscar. By (QB), this property is question-begging with respect to Oscar's utterance of any token of 'Bubbles', and so we should not allow such a property to be relevant to determining reference.

With these considerations in mind, I can now use mental anaphora to express my individualistic theory of what it is to use a word as a proper name, and of how the referent of such a use is determined:

The Anaphoric-Cluster Theory of Names (AC)

(PN) **S** uses **N** as a proper name at $t =_{df}$ there is a token α of **N** such that **S** utters α at *t*, and

either: (1) there is just one property **F** such that:

(a) **F** is not question-begging with respect to α, and no object *y* is such that **F** is the property of being identical with *y*; and

(b) in uttering α, **S** is actualizing a stable disposition to do the following: when **S** desires to say something about the **F**, to then utter a token of **N** with the intention that this token be subject to the rule that:

[36] Here I am indebted to Daniel Yeakel.

(D) For any token β of **N** and any object x, β is to refer to x if and only if x = the **F**.

or: (2) there is no property of the sort described in (1a)–(1b), but there is a non-empty set of properties Φ such that:

(a) (i) no property $\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$ is question-begging with respect to α; (ii) no property $\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$, is such that there exists some object y such that **F** is the property of being identical with y; (iii) for every property $\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$, **S** would agree that if just one object were **F**, but no property $\mathbf{G} \in \Phi$ other than **F** is uniquely satisfied by any object, then α would refer to the **F**; (iv) for all properties $\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$, **S** believes that the referent of α = the **F**; and (v) for all **F**, $\mathbf{G} \in \Phi$, **S** believes that the **F** = the **G**;

(b) **S** has a stable disposition to do the following: when for any property $\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$, **S** desires to say something about the **F**, to then utter a token of **N** that satisfies clause (a), while assuming that just one object is **F** and with the intention that this token be subject to the rule that:

(O) For any token β of **N** and any object x, β is to refer to x if and only if $x = it$,

(where '*it*' is an E-type pronoun whose antecedent is 'just one object');

(c) **S**'s utterance of α at t is an actualization of the stable disposition described in clause (b); and

(d) every set of properties that satisfies conditions (a)–(c) with respect to **S** and α is a subset of Φ.

(RN) If **S** uses **N** as a proper name at t, then for any object x, x is the semantic referent of the token α of **N** that **S** utters at t if and only if: ***either*** clause (1) of **(PN)** holds for **S** and α, and x = the **F**, where **F** is the property that satisfies clauses (1a)–(1b) relative to **S** and α; ***or*** clause (2) of **(PN)** holds for **S** and α, and the cumulative weight of the members of Φ that are each uniquely satisfied by x is greater than the cumulative weight of the members of Φ that are each satisfied by any object $y \neq x$, where Φ is the non-empty set of properties that satisfies clauses (2a)–(2d) relative to **S** and α.

Clause (1) of (PN) is included to accommodate the relatively rare cases in which a person uses a word as a name by following a descriptive reference rule involving a single description. It is plausible to suppose that speakers at least sometimes use names this way, such as in deferential cases. But at any rate, we must allow for the obvious *possibility* that speakers could follow such rules in using words as names.

But it is by use of clause (2) of (PN) that I intend to capture more typical, non-deferential uses of names. In brief, clause (2b) of (PN) says in effect that a speaker may use a word as a proper name in part by virtue of having a practice (a 'stable disposition') of using the word with a cluster Φ of properties in mind, where on the basis of each property $\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$, the speaker intends to follow an *objectual* reference rule concerning the object that uniquely satisfies **F**. Clause (2b) achieves this effect since, if **S** desires to say something about the **F** ($\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$), **S** will also desire to say something about the **G**, where **G** is any other property in Φ; for by assumption, **S** will *believe* that the **F** = the **G** when **F** and **G** are both in Φ. So whenever a speaker

S acts on the basis of the stable disposition described in (2b), **S** will have all members of the relevant cluster Φ in mind (though not occurrently) and will utter the relevant name token with a corresponding cluster of semantic intentions (also non-occurrent), each of which is based on a member of Φ.[37]

Clause (2) allows my theory to avoid Pollock's problem, since in the cases described by (2), the speakers always intend to follow objectual rather than descriptive rules. Since (according to (RN)) the semantic referent of the speaker's name use is determined by a *cluster* of properties or descriptive assumptions, the semantic referent of a given speaker's name use is not in general required to uniquely satisfy any particular property which the speaker associates with the name. Clause (2) also provides a solution to the problem of homogeneity, since like clause (1), it allows a speaker to be in the same sort of mental states in using a word as a name, independently of whether or not the use has a referent.

The concept of a 'stable disposition' to utter the name **N** with a given semantic intention or intentions, used in clauses (1b) and (2b), is present to insure that use of a token as a proper name requires the use to be an instance of a certain sort of *practice*. That the user of the token has the relevant practice is insured by the user's having the relevant kind of stable disposition.[38] That the speaker's use is an *instance* of the practice is guaranteed by the requirement (2c) that the speaker's use be an *actualization* (or manifestation) of the disposition in question.

Clause (RN) explains how the semantic referent of a token used as a proper name is determined. When clause (1) is satisfied, and the speaker's use is an instance of the practice of following a given descriptive rule of the form (D), the token's semantic referent is simply the unique object, if any, that satisfies the property F mentioned in the relevant instance of (D).

When clause (2) of (PN) holds for a given use of a name, determination of the use's semantic referent can be more complicated, since the referent is determined by the relative weights assigned to the members of the relevant cluster Φ of properties.[39] Various things can happen, depending on the facts. In the best-case scenario, a single object x will uniquely satisfy each of the properties in Φ, and so all of the speaker's semantic intentions will have the same objectual rule, concerning the same object x, as their content; in this case, the object x in question would clearly be the name-use's referent, as clause (RN) implies. In the worst-case scenario, *none* of

[37] Here I make use of the familiar distinction between occurrent mental *happenings* such as pains, twinges, acts of thought and decisions, on the one hand, and standing mental *states* such as aches, memories, beliefs, desires, and intentions, on the other. So while **S** has every member F of the cluster Φ in mind at the time of utterance (since for each **F, G** $\in$ **Φ, S** then desires to say something about the F and believes that the **F** = the **G**), **S** is of course not *actively thinking* about every member of Φ, which could be a very large set of properties.

[38] An alternative, perhaps better, way of expressing the idea would be to use Grice's apt phrase '**S** has the following procedure in his or her repertoire' in place of '**S** has a stable disposition to do the following'. (See Grice 1968, p. 126.)

[39] To save space, I will not here go into how exactly the relative weights of the members of such clusters should be determined, though intuitively the weights should correspond to the relative degrees of importance that the individual speaker places on unique satisfaction of each property in the cluster. An example of a detailed system of weighting can be found in McKinsey (1976, Chapter Two).

the properties $\mathbf{F} \in \Phi$ are uniquely satisfied by anything, and so the name use would simply have no referent. (Since no property in Φ is uniquely satisfied by anything, the cumulative weight of the members of Φ satisfied by any object x will be the same (zero) as that of the cumulative weight of members of Φ satisfied by any distinct object y, and so no object will be the name use's semantic referent.) Note that in a case like this, the speaker would fail to follow any objectual rule, and yet it follows from clause (2) that the speaker is nevertheless using a word as a proper name.

In another sort of case, some of the properties in Φ are not uniquely satisfied by anything, but there is a single object x that does uniquely satisfy one or more properties in Φ, and no object y other than x that satisfies any of these properties. In this case, charity calls for the object x to count as the name use's referent, since the speaker does after all succeed in intending to follow an objectual rule involving x. Clause (RN) implies that in this case, x would be the name use's referent, since by assumption the cumulative weight of the properties in Φ that are satisfied by x is greater than the cumulative weight (zero) of the properties in Φ that are uniquely satisfied by any object $y \neq x$.

The most difficult sort of case is one in which two or more distinct objects uniquely satisfy properties in the cluster Φ. In this case, the speaker ends up having conflicting intentions to follow distinct semantic rules about distinct objects. We *could* insist that in such a case the name use simply has no referent. But I am again inclined to follow a principle of charity and allow (as (RN) does) that when x is one of two or more objects that uniquely satisfy properties in Φ, then x is the name use's semantic referent just in case the cumulative weight of the properties uniquely satisfied by x is greater than the cumulative weight of the properties uniquely satisfied by any object other than x.[40] Note that when the weights assigned to members of Φ are all more or less the same, the result is a criterion of 'best fit' of the sort suggested by Wilson (1959, p. 533), where the semantic referent will be the object (if any) that uniquely satisfies more members of the cluster than any other object.

One important feature of the anaphoric-cluster theory is that it is not a causal theory. A defender of a causal theory of having an object in mind such as Evans's theory might be able to provide an individualistic account that is analogous to (AC) but which requires the speaker's modes of identifying the referent to have a certain sort of causal history that links the name use to its referent when it has one. I myself believe that causal theories of having an object in mind are false. For one thing, as Sosa (1970) pointed out in response to Kaplan (1969), it follows from this sort of theory that no one could ever have beliefs or be in other mental states that are about objects that do not yet exist but will exist in the future. Yet surely this consequence

[40] A referee plausibly suggested that use of a principle of charity in (RN) would seem to be somehow based on social practice. I agree. On my view, it is a social practice and a semantic rule of natural languages that speakers may use words as proper names (as I say on p. 25). More exactly it is a general semantic rule of natural languages that when a word is used as a proper name, its semantic referent is determined accordingly. The principle (RN) of my theory, which includes a kind of principle of charity, can be thought of as corresponding to a semantic rule of natural languages and would exist as a consequence of a general social practice on the part of the speakers of those languages. (See McKinsey 1984, p. 508).

conflicts with common sense. As Sosa said, "Can't it be true that there is to be a meeting that I believe will be fruitless? Can't there be a house which, even when the plans were being drawn, I hoped would please us? And so on" (Sosa 1970, p. 889).[41]

But whether or not a causal theory of having an object in mind is true, it is completely obvious that we can, and often do, *refer by name* to objects that do not yet exist. Thus we give names to our unborn children, to ships we have not yet built, to papers and books we have not yet finished, and to next season's hurricanes and tropical storms. Surely then, given that the things in question actually will exist, we can and often do succeed in referring to these things by use of the names we have given them. The anaphoric-cluster theory is consistent with this obvious fact, unlike theories of names which depend on a causal theory of having an object in mind.

Finally, it is a matter of some controversy as to whether or not my theory implies that the user of a name must have the use's referent in mind when it has one. The theory is intended to imply that typically the user of a name will be in a mental state (an intention) whose *content* is singular with respect to the use's referent, when it has one. I myself would take this to imply that the name user *does* have the referent in mind. But others might prefer to follow Kaplan, and hold that a cognitive state's having a content that is singular with respect to a given object is not sufficient for the state's being *de re* with respect to that object.[42]

4 Conclusion

In this paper, I have provided new reasons for rejecting social practice theories of names in favor of an individualistic approach to the problem of how names' referents are determined. In particular, I argued that there is a large class of non-deferential name uses that are all exceptions to Kripke's causal chain of communication picture, and I argued that Evans's social practice theory cannot do justice to the fact that the rules of natural languages allow speakers complete freedom to invent and use their own names for things. The latter fact, I argued, can be used to show that the semantic properties of proper names are independent of social practice and depend rather on the intellectual capacities and dispositions of individual speakers. In this respect, the use of names is an atypical use of language, since it follows that names do not have specific meanings in language. This in turn implies that particular uses of names cannot just inherit their semantic properties from those of the name-types being used, and thus there can be no such thing as a name use that both has a semantic referent and yet is not understood by its speaker. While these facts show that the 'social character' of names is not essential to their semantics, I tried to do justice to this social character by describing the extra-linguistic practices concerning the giving of names and the use of names given, practices that are crucial for generally successful communication with names. Finally, using a consideration raised by Pollock plus constructions of mental anaphora, I proposed a

[41] For fuller discussion of this and related issues, see McKinsey (2009).

[42] See Kaplan (1989, p. 605 and note 95, pp. 605–606); see also McKinsey (2009).

new form of individualistic cluster-of-descriptions theory of what it is to use a word as a name and of how names' referents are determined.

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