Guide to Chapter Eleven of Gareth Evans'
The Varieties of Reference

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11.0   What Happens in Chapter Eleven

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11.1   The contrast with 'one-off' devices

In this brief preliminary section Evans sets up a contrast between reference by "one-off" expressions, and reference via expressions that have a more stable semantic connection to a particular object. He discusses a proposal that would treat uses of proper names on the model of one-off devices — on this proposal proper names are akin to predicates or sortals meaning "a person called N", and a use of a proper name such as "Jack Jones is tall" would be analyzed as a sort of demonstrative along the lines of "That person called 'Jack Jones' is tall." He provides some considerations (not a full-blown argument) to the effect that such a proposal doesn't seem to do justice to the facts concerning our actual use of proper names, and he also points out that if this were the correct analysis, then our practice of using such names would not necessarily be up to the task of being a vehicle of knowledge transmission.

Proper names differ from the sorts of referring expressions discussed so far in the text in that they are much less context sensitive. Demonstratives, for instance, depend a great deal on contextual elements, including the thoughts and intentions of the interlocutors, to determine which object they refer to. In the case of proper names, contextual elements may not be entirely absent, but to a first approximation the referent of a proper name is determined by factors not reflected in the context of utterance.

If there are contextual elements, they will typically be elements of the context that the speaker exploits to make it clear which name she intends to use. From the top of p. 374 to the top of p. 375 Evans rejects a suggestion to the effect that proper names can be given a treatment similar to "one-off" expressions like demonstratives. The suggestion would be to treat the name as something like a sortal

designating the type "called N," and the use of proper names is to be understood on the model of *that G is F*, as in "That person called 'Jake Jones' is a mime."

Evans' resistance stems from the conviction that this does not accurately reflect the nature of our practices. He sets up the following situation: a community in which there are two people who look enough alike that they are commonly confused for each other, and who are both called 'Jack Jones'. If the proposal under consideration were correct (proper names are like sortals or predicates), then the only problem in that community with respect to their practice of using the name 'Jack Jones' would be that the two people are often confused for each other. But the name-using practice itself would be fine. Evans thinks it is clear that in such a case the name-using practice would not be fine. It would allow, for example, contradictory information to circulate by means of the name — someone sees one of the people at the library on Monday and comes to believe 'That person called Jack Jones was at the library Monday' and circulates that information using the sentence "Jack Jones was at the library Monday"; and someone else sees the other person at the lake on Monday and circulates this information with the sentence "Jack Jones was at the lake on Monday." The community has one name, but its practices concerning that name are dysfunctional. It is one name that is trying to refer to two people, and hence lacks any referent.

On any occasion of use this may not cause any trouble. Suppose you hear someone say "Jack Jones is a horse thief", and it is clear from context which person the speaker is referring to with that particular utterance (say because that person is in the vicinity and the speaker is glancing in their direction). You can come to truly believe that that person, who is called "Jack Jones" is a horse thief:

> The hearer may acquire a true thought about the person the speaker has in mind, but he has not been *told* something true: he has not been given some information, linguistically represented, which he can take away from the utterance and put to use in further conversations. (VR, p. 374-5)

If this is all you have, you might, in repeating this sentence to others, get your posse to hang the wrong person. Now while someone might just say that in such a case the blame isn't on the name-using practice itself, but on the fact that the two people are often confused, Evans claim is that yes, they are confused and this causes problems, but among the problems it causes is that it undercuts the viability of that name in the community. Recall Evans' principle from Chapter 9 to the effect that a constraint on the use of an expression in language that it be capable of serving the purpose of transmitting knowledge. In the situation envisaged, the name would not be capable of reliably transmitting knowledge, but at best occasional true beliefs.]

In the remainder of the section Evans highlights the two different models: one-off referential devices with a relatively high reliance on contextual factors and relatively low reliance on community-wide practices vs referential devices with the opposite profile — lower reliance on contextual factors and relatively higher reliance on community-wide practices. He will be arguing that proper names are definitely in the latter category. And as such he highlights some questions that need to be addressed:

> …what makes it the case that a symbol has the property of representing, or referring to, a particular individual? Is the connection with the thoughts and attitudes of users of the expression wholly severed? (VR p. 375)

The obvious contrast here is with Kripke's view, which does pretty much entirely sever the referential features of a name from the thoughts and attitudes of the users of the name. On Evans' view this connection will not be *entirely* severed. And then:

> …how are the social facts (e.g. the fact that such-and-such an expression is a name of such-and-such an object) dependent upon facts about the psychology of individuals? Secondly, and conversely, what is the role of linguistic symbols, whose semantic properties are a social matter, in the psychology of the individuals who use them? (VR, p. 375)

Or, what is the interdependence between the social practice of the use of the symbol and psychology of the users of the symbol? Evans' proposal will provide a lot of detail here.

11.2   Proper-name-using practices

In this section Evans describes the key notion in his account of the semantics of proper names, proper-name-using practices (PNUPs). These are social practices in which information about the doings of some individual x *is circulated by means of a name NN. For example, people use sentences such as "Rosa got a job", "Rosa bought a car", "Rosa is having a party this weekend" in order to transmit and receive information about the doings of some particular person* x. *The practice relies upon a special set of people,* producers, *who know* x, *can recognize* x, *and who know that information about* x *can be fruitfully circulated in the community via the name NN – that is, the producers know* x *as NN. And the practice rests upon a bedrock of individual episodes in which a producer gains information about* x, *and puts this information into circulation in the community via the name NN because the recognize* x *as NN. There will also often be consumers, people who can receive information and pass it along, but aren't in a position to put new information into circulation under the name.*

Evans starts describing his key notion: a *proper name using practice* (PNUP). This is a social practice in which a proper name, NN, is used to refer to a person *x*. There are several interacting components to such a practice:

1. People are introduced to the practice by hearing the name NN used to refer to *x*. This can be by explicit introduction ("This is NN."), overhearing the name NN being used to refer to *x*, or being introduced by description ("The department chair is NN. She'll be at the meeting tomorrow"). The point is that someone who already knows that *x* is known as NN passes this knowledge to someone new. The person who is newly introduced to the practice in this way is introduced in a situation in which they are able to demonstratively identify the person, and they learn that *that person* is known as NN. They will then typically have acquired a recognitional capacity for *x*.

2. Given the above, it is possible to recognize a group of people who are able to recognize *x*, who know that *x* is known as NN, and who have dealings with *x* (and know people who have dealings with *x*) such that they become merchants of information about *x* under the name NN. They will see *x*'s doings and pass that information along to others by using the

name NN ("I'm pretty sure NN is here, I saw him in the hallway earlier. Maybe try looking downstairs"; "NN is having a party tomorrow. Want to go?"; "Did you hear? NN got into a big argument with the CEO yesterday."). They are also consumers information about x from other producers via their use of the name NN.

The result of the above is a social practice in which the name NN is used to circulate information about x in the community. The practice keys on a select group of people who recognize x as NN, and because of this are able to put information into circulation in the practice, and also to exploit information that other producers put there.

The practice of using NN to circulate information about x may initiate in any number of ways. One, but only one, could be a Kripkean baptism:

> The practice of using the name may originate in a baptism, or in a situation where a speaker manifestly uses an expression which is not x's given name as if it were x's name, whether knowingly (a nickname) or unknowingly (a mistake). But the expression does not become a name for x unless it has a certain currency among those who know x — only then can we say that x is known as NN. (VR p. 376)

Evans then points out another feature of common PNUPs. Not only will there be those who have dealings with x and put information about x into circulation under the name NN (producers), but in at least some cases, there will be people who have been introduced to the practice, but are *consumers only*. Consumers will trade in information already circulating in the practice: hearing about NNs dealings and passing such information on via the name NN. But they do not produce new information about x, because they don't have dealings with x.

How are consumers introduced into the practice? Producers must be introduced in such a way that lets them *produce* – typically a demonstrative identification and introduction, which provides an opportunity to gain a recognitional capacity for x as NN. But consumers don't need to produce. While they might be introduced to the practice in a circumstance where they are demonstratively identifying the person ("That guy on the stage is NN, he's the new mayor"), more often the introduction will be via a description ("The film was directed by NN. She also directed film y. And she was married to actor z").

Importantly, though, Evans points out that even though such an introduction to the practice might employ a description to try to let the initiate know who the referent is, the person introduced to the name (if they know that they are being introduced to a normal proper name using practice and not a descriptive name) will typically not take the descriptive content to be *necessarily* true of the name's referent:

> A consumer who hears and accepts a sentence of the form 'NN is the φ' knows, if he takes 'NN' to be an ordinary proper name, that the statement amounts to a substantial hypothesis about a particular person, a person known as NN, and that, if it can be known to be true, this will be either because an individual observed to be the φ is recognized or identified as NN, or because it can be warranted by propositions known in this way. Knowing 'NN' to be an ordinary proper name, no one would dream of responding to a challenge to the statement 'NN

is the φ' by saying 'Oh! I was under the impression that "NN" is just our name for whoever is the φ.' (VR, p. 377-8)

For example, suppose that you heard the name "Paul Ryan" on TV, you asked about it and I told you that "Paul Ryan is the speaker of the House of Representatives." And let us suppose that I am a bona fide participant in the practice — I was introduced by someone who has met Paul Ryan, I interact with Paul Ryan occasionally in addition to following Ryan's doings in the news, etc. But suppose it turns out that I'm wrong: Paul Ryan isn't the Speaker of the House. Perhaps my information is old (he was ousted), or was never right (I misread a newspaper report, and although I know a lot of facts about Paul Ryan, I used that description to introduce you to the practice because I thought it would be the most useful way to introduce you to it). Evans' point is that you, unless you are really out of step with cultural practices in this respect, will not be treating "Paul Ryan" as a descriptive name that just refers to whoever is the speaker of the house, if anyone is. You will know that it refers to a person who is most likely the speaker of the house (and such that, if they are not, there is probably a story about how that mistake was made). Or to put it another way, anyone who took "Paul Ryan" to necessarily exhibit the properties in the description φ could never accept that Paul Ryan is not φ. For that person, the name just is a name for whoever is the φ.

So there are two ways of being introduced to the practice. Producers are those who know x, can recognize x, have dealings with x, are the sources of the bulk, if not all, of the information circulating about x in the community via the name NN. Their introduction to the PNUP is one that attaches a name to a person that they have met and can identify independently. But the consumers are introduced in a different way, usually be means of an identifying description (though this description is not a reference-fixing stipulation as with a descriptive name).

> It follows that a consumer who takes 'NN' to be an ordinary proper name knows that simply by being led to accept various sentences employing the name, he cannot have been given a complete introduction to the use of the name. He has been given certain propositions which require defence, without the means, on his own, of providing that defence. (Only a producer can provide the defence.) (VR p.378)

Evans points out that this practice (the one the consumers are full members of) is sustained by the fact that people make an effort to learn people's names, and also that they tend to use those names when distributing information. Distributing information about x using the name NN incentivizes the learning of the name by anyone who wishes to gain knowledge of x's doings. And the greater the extent that the name NN is learned, the greater will be the motivation for people to use NN when they wish to refer to x, since it will be known to be a reliable way to get the audience to think of the right person.

Another factor favoring the use of a name to refer to x rather than, say, a description, is that people typically associate very different descriptive information with the same individual. But even if an expression in the form of a description were used as a name, to the extent it is actually used as a name it would not function as a description. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Evans closes by making a couple of remarks about name-using practices as he has described them so far. First, one can recognize stages in the development of a name using practice: an early stage in which there are perhaps only a handful of producers and no consumers; a mature stage in which there are

many producers, and perhaps some consumers; and a late stage (after the death of the producers) where there are only consumers. Evans will discuss these stages in more detail in Section 11.4.

The last remark about name using practices concerns their individuation, and in particular that they are not individuated by the individuals involved. There can be one practice that concerns two individuals:

> A good number of the producers may regularly confuse two individuals; or, alternatively, the producers may divide into two groups, each regularly and consistently recognizing one of the two individuals, without this being known, so that information from two different individuals is pooled as information 'about NN'. (VR p.381)

And there can be two practices with a single individual (Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde). Though Evans is quick to point out that even in such a case, it is not necessary that the names be phonologically distinct:

> Stevenson could easily have told the story with the same name used in two distinct practices, with no one having the least idea that the nice Mr Hyde and the terrible Mr Hyde are one and the same person. (VR p.381)

And note also (Evans doesn't say this, but it is also true), a single name using practice doesn't require that there be only one 'name'. People often have full names, last names, nicknames, and people who know the practice will typically know that any of these names are inter-substitutable. It might be best to think of a PNUP as concerning not a single phonological string "Katherine Jones", but as concerning a set of such strings: "Katherine Jones", "Kathy Jones", "Katy", "Kat", "Ms. Jones," etc.

11.3 The determination of the reference of a proper name

Now that the general structure of PNUPs has been explained, Evans discusses two crucial elements in more detail. First, how can someone be introduced to the practice such that they can start using the name NN to refer to x? There will be different answers here depending on whether the initiate is a producer or a consumer. A producer must be initiated into the PNUP in a way that let's them be a producer – they must be told that NN is a name for x and have a capacity, typically a recognitional capacity, to identify x. A consumer need have no capacity to recognize x, but they must be given enough information to know which practice they are engaging in, usually by being given some information about the referent, such as "NN is the φ." The second element is, given social practice of using a name NN to circulate information about an individual, what determined which individual the name refers to? The short version is that NN refers to the individual x that is recognized by the producers as NN. The account explains how, if producers start recognizing a different individual as NN, the name might lose a clear referent, or eventually change referent.

Evans starts by pointing out an analogy between his account of proper name using practices and the semantics of natural kind terms. According to a standard account of the meaning of natural kind

terms, the reference of those terms is settled by experts, and non-experts can use the term to refer to the natural kind because the practice involves their deferral to the judgment of the experts concerning what the term refers to.

In the case of proper names, the role played by experts are the *producers*, the people who *know x as NN*:

> It is the actual pattern of dealings the producers have had with an individual — identified from time to time by the exercise of their recognitional capacities in regard to that individual — which ties the name to the individual. (VR p. 382)

The case of natural kind terms is a bit more complicated, because in that case there are many individuals of the kind, and experts don't have dealings with all of them. Yet the term is taken to have all members of the kind as its reference. From the bottom of p. 382 to the top of p. 383 Evans points out that in the case of natural kind terms, there are two kinds of "identifications" by experts(/producers). On the one hand, there are run-of-the-mill identifications when an expert runs across a particular and identifies it as a member of that kind: "That's an elm over there." On the other hand there are special uses:

> … there will be a subset of utterances involving the term in which some particular tree or trees may be said to have been (authoritatively) called by that term. (VR p.383)

Only a small subset of the members of the kind in question will have ever been called by the name. But the extension of the kind term is set as something like "all the things that are of the same kind as those (authoritatively) called NN."

In the case of normal proper names, the same work is done by the producers: it is their direct dealings with *x* (known to them as NN), and their distribution of information about *x* by using the name NN that determines that *x* is the referent of the name. As a note, the "known to them as NN" clause is important, for it is not merely the fact that the producers interact with *x* and distribute information about *x*. To see this, suppose x is Dr Jekyll. Friends of Dr Jekyll were encountering *x* when they encountered Mr Hyde. And they may have gained information about *x* in those encounters. But clearly what is required for the mechanisms to work is that the producers, on the relevant occasions, not only encounter *x*, but recognize *x* as the individual they call NN (Dr Jekyll). And any information they pick up on that occasion they put into circulation under the name NN, This is especially important when it is recognized that, as Evans pointed out in the last section, the story could have easily been told with the same name used for Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, with the producers just thinking that the name was ambiguous. (Ambiguous names being a common occurrence, who doesn't have multiple friends who all have the "same name"? The names have to be individuated not phonetically, but in terms of the practice by which producers associate a given recognitional capacity with the name.)

The issue of individuation of practices is important not only for individuating names, but relatedly because when using a proper name a speaker must ensure that it is clear which name she is using (that is, which PNUP she is engaging in). And as we've seen, this can't be a matter of making it manifest which is the intended object, since one object may have multiple names, unbeknownst to those who are competent in the various practices.

The last paragraph of p. 384 is important in this regard. Evans recognizes that often speakers will employ descriptive material if they believe that mere mention of the name is not enough to make it clear which practice they mean to be exploiting — I might say "Karen got fired yesterday, I mean the 'Karen' who owns the red Tesla." It might be thought that in such cases I am including the descriptive information to help make manifest *which object* I am talking about. Evans agrees, but he claims that I am only doing this indirectly, but through making it manifest *which practice* I intent to engage in. The idea is that I may know that a piece of information is in circulation in the community in connection with a particular PNUP, and because of this I can help make it clear which PNUP I intend to be invoking by mentioning that piece of information.

The key argument Evans employs here is that I might employ such a piece of information for this purpose *even if I know that it is inaccurate, and know that you know that it is inaccurate*. Given this, my use of that piece of (mis)information would make no sense if I were trying to indicate which object I was intending to refer to. However, if I know, and I know that you know, that this piece of misinformation is nevertheless one of the pieces of (mis)information circulating in connection with the PNUP I am intending to exploit, then my invocation of that information makes sense.

From the top of p. 385 to the end of the section Evans brings his account into sharper focus by comparing it to Kripke's. Kripke's account has two components: a component designed to explain how it is that a name refers to an individual, and a component designed to explain how a speaker can use that name to refer to an individual. The first component is the famous *baptism*, an event whereby a name is assigned to an individual. The second component, the *recursive principle*, makes appeal to a causal chain of uses of the name: a speaker can use the name NN to refer to *x* if one can trace back a causal chain from that speaker's use to the initial baptism. That is, S heard someone else use NN, and that person heard someone use NN, and so on until one gets back to the initiating baptismal event.

Evans thinks that Kripke's account points in the right direction, especially compared to the descriptive accounts of proper names that Kripke was engaging with. Nevertheless he thinks that Kripke's account is inadequate. Evans' account also has a component corresponding to an explanation concerning why it is that a name has a particular object as its referent, and a component corresponding to an explanation for how a speaker can use that name.

From the bottom of p. 386 to the bottom of p. 387 Evans discusses that part of his account that corresponds to Kripke's recursive principle, the part of the account designed to explain how it is that someone can use a name to refer to *x*. It should be kept in mind that here Evans is talking about consumers. Producers are introduced to the practice typically by being presented with *x* in one way or another in a situation in which they demonstratively identify *x* and gain a recognitional capacity for *x*, and being told that the practice involves using the name NN to talk about *x*. This will be discussed more shortly. For now the topic is consumers. Consumers will, prototypically not have met (demonstratively identified) *x*, and may have no recognitional capacity for *x*. Though in recent times with the proliferation of photography and video, many consumers now may have something like a recognitional capacity for many names they know. But it must be kept in mind that this is a very recent development, and probably doesn't change the analysis much, since in many of those cases the consumer will seldom actually meet *x*.

As a preliminary to his own account, Evans points out a respect in which he thinks Kripke's account is too weak:

If someone overhears a snatch of conversation, say, 'Harry Lyons was angry last night', that being the entirety of his introduction to the 'Harry Lyons' practice, then he is not in a position to use the name in order to make statements — he has not been adequately introduced into the practice. An adequate introduction must, surely, enable a speaker to go on on his own, using the name in the transmission of information to other members of the practice who are unacquainted with the particular facts of his introduction into the practice; whereas the person who picks up the name by overhearing a snatch of conversation is not an adequate link in any chain of transmission of knowledge. (VR p. 387)

In the full paragraph on p. 387 Evans gives a supporting argument for the conclusion that the introduction for the practice must be sufficient for the newly initiated to at least have an idea of the specific practice that is involved. The argument is that this is a general feature of all words in language, though it comes out most clearly with terms that are phonologically ambiguous. A person, to use a word in such a way as to serve as a reliable vehicle for knowledge transmission, must not just memorize a sequence of phonemes, but must be given enough information about that string to indicate which practice they intend to be participating in (which set of experts will ultimately be deferred to). Evans claims that this explains the intuition behind Kripke's recursive principle, since it is a necessary condition for someone to be initiated into a PNUP that they be introduced to it (even if by eavesdropping) by people who are already participants in the practice, and this will trace back ultimately to producers who have dealings with x. But it is only necessary, not sufficient. One must also be put in a position to be able to indicate to others reliably which PNUP one is invoking.

So to summarize, for someone to be initiated into a PNUP, they must be given the name, obviously, and also information that will allow them to know which PNUP they are participating in. And this will typically be in the form of some information (or sufficiently widely circulated misinformation) circulating via the PNUP about x. For example "Paul Ryan is the current Speaker of the House." As we'll see in Section 11.5 this information will also serve another purpose. But for now, the purpose it is serving is that it allows the initiate to know which PNUP they are now a participant in.

From the bottom of p. 387 to the end of the section Evans discusses the aspect of his theory that corresponds to Kripke's baptismal name assignment. That is, the aspect designed to explain which object a name refers to. Kripke's account was very simple: there is an initial baptism, and from that point on the name carries that referent with it like an incurable disease that infects anyone who comes in contact with it for as long as it lives. There is no room for any social practices, nor any room for a change of referent (a phenomenon that in fact occurs, and so any adequate account must explain it).

The basic claim is that the referent of the name NN employed in a proper name using practice is the individual x that the producers *recognize as NN*. Before getting into more detail, notice that if one envisages a situation in which changes of referent don't occur, then this proposal will converge with Kripke's, at least in terms of the answers it gives. If there is no divergence in the producers' practices, then all producers will recognize the same individual as NN, and so what any one of them says will be the same as what the group says. And presumably whoever initiated the baptism is a producer. The differences emerge when the produceers' practices aren't entirely uniform. Such cases (as will be discussed shortly) bring out the fragility of the Kripkean approach. Evans' account, though, has

sensible things to say about such cases while simultaneously doing justice to the "causation" requirement that drove Kripke — because producers are all in causal contact with x.

Consider a case where there is an individual x who is known as Sean Archer by many producers. There are also consumers who partake in this mature practice. Now suppose that y (aka 'Castor Troy') manages to remove x from the situation. Moreover y looks just like x, and knows enough about x to pass as x in the community without question. So far, we have a situation in which there is a PNUP, but the producers are now identifying y as 'Sean Archer,' not x:

> At this early point, of course, the name 'NN', as used by anyone who participates in this practice, still refers to x. All these uses of the name involve a manifest intention to be participating in a practice which undeniably concerns x, since the previous and well-established use of the name by the producers in the practice determined x as the referent of the name in that practice. This will remain the case even if, as we shall suppose, the mistake spreads to a large number of the producers. (VR p. 388)

Evans is clearly right that if the switch were discovered, it would be reported as "That's not Sean Archer!" said by someone demonstratively identifying y, say. So clearly y is not the referent at this point, x still is. Evans introduces the following terminology and notation. Let's call each event whereby a producer, in their role as a member of a PNUP, recognizes someone as NN and uses that name to inject information into the practice, u_i. So u_1 would be the first use (possibly the bestowal of a name), and u_2 the second, and so on up to u_n. Each of these uses will involve the recognition of some object by a producer as NN. The proposal is that if the clear majority of $u_1 - u_n$ were such that it was x who was recognized as NN, then x is the referent of NN.

There is a crucial clarification on p. 398:

> We must remember that a use of a name by a producer has two aspects. One is the purely semantical aspect — enquired into by the question 'To what does this use of the name refer?' The other might be described (very vaguely) as an epistemological aspect: it is enquired into by the question 'Which object's identification as NN underlies this use?'

What this is saying is the following: suppose we have a producer demonstratively identify a person and take them to be NN. The producer then uses the name NN to disseminate information collected from this encounter to the practice. Call this recognition event u_{n+1}. There are two different questions we can ask about event u_{n+1}:

1. Which individual did the name NN refer to on that occasion?

2. Which individual was identified (or misidentified) as NN on that occasion.

Evans points out that if (1) were the crucial factor in determining the referent of a name, then there could never be a change of referent. Because if (1) were what was important, then the referent of NN in u_{n+1} would be determined by which object NN referred to in $u_1 - u_n$. And so NN would be guaranteed to refer to the same object in u_{n+1} regardless of which object were identified at u_{n+1}. And then the same would hold true for u_{n+2}, and so on. And so a change of referent would be impossible. The referent would be locked in from u_1 on, as in Kripke's account.

But if (2) is the determining factor, then change is possible. Clearly if no mistakes are made, NN refers to *x*. In the situation imagined above, even if there are a few events where producers misidentified y as 'Sean Archer', the vast number of uses from u_1 to u_n (for some large *n*) outweigh the handful of uses where a producer identified *y*. And we would indeed report this as "That isn't Sean Archer!"

Over time, though, there may be enough recognitions of *y* by producers as 'Sean Archer' that the link between the name NN and *x* erodes, and perhaps even breaks. The situation would be one where there was no clear referent for NN. And in an extreme case where enough uses of producers "recognizing" y as NN, the referent of the name could actually change.

Interestingly Evans discusses a second and third factor involved in reference-fixing, which are something like the *amount of information* circulating via the practice concerning *x* (or *y*). This will be related to the number of situations in which a producer recognizes someone as NN, but is not precisely the same:

> …even if we imagine the gradual replacement of producers who knew *x* with new members of the practice, introduced into it as producers by reference to *y*, so that a point is reached at which only people who are thinking unconfusedly of *y* are producing members of the practice, still it does not seem to me to follow that the name has become a name for *y*. For there may remain, embodied in the practice, a good deal of information derived from *x*, and these are traces of the practice, in the past, of using the name to refer to x. So long as any serious quantity of these traces remains, the practice can still reasonably be said to embody a confusion… (VR p. 390)

> Nevertheless, there is no theoretical obstacle to the loss of all information derived from *x*; and when this happens, the name may finally be regarded as a name of y. (VR p. 390)

Its not entirely clear what the doctrine is supposed to be here. But there's a charitable way of interpreting it. Evans is here pointing to two factors that, on his account, should be factors in determining the referent of a proper name. With this theory and these factors in hand, one can conduct empirical investigations to see the weight these factors have.

11.4   The late phase of a practice

Some proper names, those of people with some fame, can stay in use after the referent and all producers are gone. At this stage there are typically only consumers. For most such names, especially when the producers aren't too long gone, the PNUPs function much the same way as a mature-stage PNUP, only minus the producers. But in some cases, usually for older PNUPs, the amount of information circulating under the PNUP is very small, and shared by all consumers. In such a case there can be a secondary practice of using the name essentially as a descriptive name referring to whoever (if anyone) the descriptive information is true of.

The topic of this section is what Evans calls the "late phase" of a PNUP. This will be the stage at which at all the producers (including the person the name refers to) are dead, and only consumers

remain. Evans begins with the early stages of the late phase of a practice. This would be a period of time shortly after the last of the producers has died off. At this stage, though there are only consumers, as far as the consumers go things are pretty much as they would be in the mature stage of the practice. They are introduced to the PNUP by other consumers, and the introduction will include enough descriptive (or other) resources to make it clear which PNUP is in question:

> Every participant has been introduced to the practice by hearing such sentences as 'Dr Livingstone was a great explorer of Africa' and 'Dr Livingstone was against the slave trade'. (VR p. 391)

Evans points out, though, that any descriptive material included here is merely an aid to make sure the right practice is singled out. It is not to be assumed that the descriptive material must be true of x in order for NN to refer to x:

> … a consumer who uttered a sentence like 'Dr Livingstone was against slavery' would be making, and would take himself to be making, a remark about someone called 'Dr Livingstone' (i.e. known as Dr Livingstone) and that the evaluation of the remark would depend upon discovering which individual this was — a procedure which leaves open the possibility that everything which this, and indeed all other, consumers are prepared to assert using the name might be discovered to be false. The disappearance of the producers, and the passage of time, do not appear to give any reason for taking a different view of the use made of the name by modern consumers, provided, of course, that they do not take a different view of the use themselves. (VR p. 392)

What the last bit about "taking a different view of the use" means will be discussed later in this section, under the heading of 'secondary uses'.

Evans remarks that a significant difference between the situation here (late phase of a PNUP) and one of the situations envisaged in the previous sections (y replacing x). They are similar in that in both cases there are no longer producers recognizing x as NN. But the difference is that in the situation with y taking x's place, the practice continues with producers inserting new information into circulation. In the terminology of that section, the practice continues to accumulate u_is that, because they result from producers (mis)recognizing y as NN, start to erode the semantic connection between NN and x. In the late phase of a normal PNUP, there are no new u_is that erode the connection.

Near the top of p. 393 Evans makes a nuanced point: the account involves a speaker participating, at time t_n, in a practice that exists at t_n. This is a practice that began at t_0, probably when x was born, and survives to the present time t_n. It is not the case that, at time t_n, the speaker is intending to participate in a practice that only existed at t_0-t_d. (t_d = the time of death of the last producer). This is because at t_0-t_d the name NN might have actually been different, for example through changes in pronunciation (across time and cultures). It is for this reason that Evans thinks it best to talk about the late phases as involving a practice that continues through time, as opposed to speakers who intend to participate in a practice that ended when the producers died.

Evans begins discussing, on the bottom half of p. 393 to the top of p. 397, a "secondary" use of some late-stage proper names. The idea is this. The primary practice in the late stages of a PNUP is to treat them much the same way as a mature-phase PNUP, only with no producers and hence no or very little new information being injected into circulation via the practice. On this view, any or all of the information in circulation via the name could end up being false of the name's referent.

A secondary practice would be something like the following. If there is a name such that only one or small manageable number pieces of information are in wide circulation in association with NN, and it can be assumed that anyone who uses the name knows this, it can be possible to use NN as a sort of descriptive name:

> Everyone who is introduced to the 'Homer'-practice nowadays learns 'Homer was the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey'; and everyone who is introduced to the 'Robin Hood'-practice learns more or less of the legend: the bandit in Sherwood forest who used a longbow, who robbed the rich to give to the poor, and so on. These facts, which are of course known to speakers, make possible the general use of such a name with an intention other than the simple intention of using it to refer to whatever is the referent of a name in a given practice. (VR p. 394)

> Thus, inside the long-lived practices of using the name 'Homer' and 'Robin Hood', there develops, so to speak, a secondary practice of using the name as if it were governed by the stipulation 'Let us use the name "Homer" to refer to the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey', or the stipulation 'Let us use the name "Robin Hood" to refer to that bandit who …'. (VR pp. 394-5)

The idea is that in some circumstances, because of the fact that the association of the name with some specific information can be assumed, the name can be used as if it were a descriptive name. The instructor who tells her students to write out a page of Homer's poetry clearly means for them to write out a page of The Odyssey or The Illiad, and is exploiting the fact that the name 'Homer' is universally associated with the description that it can be used essentially as shorthand for the description. Moreover, one an imagine a situation in which a student learns (somehow) that the historical Homer did not write the Odyssey and Iliad, but some other poem P, and the student writes out a page of P. The teacher *might*, even if appraised of the (hypothetical) facts about 'Homer', still claim that the student failed to do the assignment.

Evans doesn't think this is the *primary* use, though. On the top of p. 396 he expresses the intuition that normally we probably wouldn't think that our practice is to just use 'Homer' as a descriptive name along the lines of Julius. But on a case by case basis, he doesn't want to deny that the name can be used in this secondary way.

Footnote 21 is illuminating in this regard. Kripke treats the cases of 'Gödel discovered the incompleteness of arithmetic' and 'Homer wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey' as completely parallel. And on Kripke's theory they should be treated the same way. In fact, they should be treated the same as an ordinary name with a living referent and producers. Evans agrees with Kripke's conclusion about Gödel and Homer, but points out that the cases are nevertheless different. Because of the much later stage of 'Homer', and the more limited information in circulation, etc., 'Homer' seems more amenable to secondary usages where it functions as a descriptive name.

Starting at the bottom of p. 396 Evans brings up the topic of negative existential statements employing proper names. Recall that in Chapter 10 most of the examples of NESs were demonstratives. And recall also that on his account they worked because, although there was no object, the speaker and audience shared an informational backdrop that had two connected features: the information was as if it was from an object, and the information was largely shared between speaker and audience. He points out that NESs likewise generally presuppose that there is shared information, prototypically that there

is only a small amount of shared information. As is sometimes the case with names in very late stages of their practice.

So consider the name 'Robin Hood'. This name is introduced with a stereotypical bolus of descriptive information. In such a case it becomes possible to use the name to report the non-existence of someone who fits the descriptive information. So "NN does not exist" could mean "That φ does not exist." As Evans puts it:

> Someone who discovered that the story about the bandit in Sherwood Forest was a myth might communicate this discovery by saying 'Robin Hood did not (really) exist'; and I do not think it is clear that we can say that what he says is false, when it is discovered (this seems in fact to be what the historians suggest) that there really was someone to whose name this myth became attached. (VR p. 396-70)

But Evans quickly follows this up by saying that "… I do not think it is clear what we should say." This is his way of registering the fact that at this point this situation is quite different from the sort of situation that most of the norms that usually govern PNUPs are designed to handle. And accordingly those norms are less clear about what should be said.

But what *is* clear is that Evans' account has the resources to handle the situation. He has pointed out that in such a situation, the name can admit of potentially two uses. First, a primary use where its referent is determined by the individuals recognized as 'Robin Hood' by the producers. On this use, the name would actually refer to a person to whom the legends were inaccurately attached. Then there is a secondary use according to which the name is functioning as a sort of descriptive name, where the descriptive content is the small amount of descriptive information that is universally associated with the name.

But though it is at least possible in such cases to use NESs with names of that sort, it is not just less clear, but entirely unclear what should be said about NESs used with names in their (putatively) mature stage. Evans' example is 'Ronald Reagan', but a better example for 2016 might be 'Donald Trump'. The sentence 'Donald Trump does not exist' has no clear sense. What situations might prompt someone to use it? A few examples might be: all the information in circulation is a fabrication produced by a shadowy conspiracy (the photos and videos are all computer generated); an actor has been pretending to be a nutty tycoon for decades as part of a performance art project, and has been trolling everyone; there isn't even an actor, it's all been computer generated; there really is the tycoon, but his name is not really 'Donald Trump'. In any case, the point is that the structure of a mature PNUP – with its presupposition of networks of producers, a great deal of information in circulation under the name, the fact that people often have bits of information that others don't have, and so forth – doesn't support a clear sense associated with NESs. The factors that give "Robin Hood did not exist" a clear sense — a commonly shared descriptive content that made it paraphrasable as "There was nobody who did x, y and z" — is not present in this case.

The final topic (which has nothing to do with late stage PNUPs, but rather NESs) is what Evans calls 'thin uses of names in existential statements.' This concerns names that are fabricated and have little or no information circulating under them. It seems as though Evans is suggesting that in such a

case a metalinguistic analysis might work. He doesn't put it this way, but the two things he does say admit of straight-forward metalinguistic readings. They are:

> All that the receptionist need conclude is that when I uttered the name previously, I referred to nothing. (VR p. 398)

> And in understanding the original utterances, e.g. 'Agatha Hermer needs a first-class flight to Baltimore tomorrow', nothing more was required of the receptionist than the thought 'Someone named "Agatha Hermer" needs … '. (VR p. 398)

Both of these look like metalinguistic statements: *the name "Agatha Hermer" refers to nothing*, and *someone named "Agatha Hermer" needs a ticket.*

11.5   Understanding Proper Names

Evans topic in this section is what is involved in understanding a use of a proper name. So far in this section the topic has been how a name in public language acquires a referent. And the basic story hinges on the referent's being the person that the producers in the PNUP recognize as NN. Or to put it another way, it is the object that has the property of being known (by the producers) as NN.

Evans brings back a bit of terminology that was used in chapter 9, the idea of a "referential feature". Recall, this is a feature associated with an expression that places restrictions on what can count as the referent of the expression. Examples include "I" has as its referential feature the speaker. The RF need not determine reference uniquely, e.g. "they" has as its referential feature that the referent be plural (or, in some context, gender neutral singular).

Evans claims that the referential feature of a proper name is that the referent has the property of being known as NN. But he argues that while any user of a name will know this, it is not enough to understand the use of a proper name that one thing of the referent only in terms of this feature:

> …understanding a use of a proper name requires one to go beyond the thought that the speaker is referring to some person known as NN, and to arrive at a thought in the thinking of which one actually thinks of the object in question (VR p. 399)

What the audience must do, as in the case of one-off expressions (e.g. demonstratives), is to bring to bear the dossier of information associated with the name. Evans provides an argument for this:

> …if one has a dossier of information associated with the name 'NN', and fails to bring it to bear in understanding 'NN is F', going no further than the thought 'Someone named "NN" is F', one has surely failed to do what it was the point of the utterance that one should do. (VR p. 399)

And the suggestion is that this is true even in the case where the audience has no dossier. One might agree that if the audience has a dossier and doesn't employ it then there has been a failure, but nevertheless maintain that if the audience does not have a dossier, then just sticking with the referential

feature is fine. But it is not obvious that this is tenable. The failure in the former case cannot simply be that the audience didn't do all they could have done, i.e., brought their dossier to bear. The failure is that they didn't do something that is requisite. Another way this could be put is that sticking with the referential feature in this case is tantamount to treating the name metalinguistically, and this is clearly not how proper names function. There is always a metalinguistic fallback, but this fallback doesn't let one understand the name. The situation is parallel to how someone who has no idea what p-adic numbers are can think a true thought by going metalinguistic, and thinking that: *There are things known as "p-adic numbers" and they satisfy something known as "the unltrametric inequality."*

So if this is right, the next question (discussed from mid-399 to mid-400) is: are there any restrictions on the way that the audience must think of the referent? He suggests there is not. Not only is it apparent that consumers can have very different ways of thinking of the referent, but clearly consumers and producers will have different ways.

Evans brings up an example that was discussed in Chapter 9. Evans says:

> …when we discussed referential communication involving the one-off devices, in chapter 9, we noticed quite considerable restrictions on the ways in which hearers must think of referents in order to understand remarks. We traced those restrictions to the requirement that the hearer, if he is to understand, must know of some object that it is the referent. But we observed that this source of restriction would lapse if there were other participants in the communicative transaction, on whom hearers could rely to tell them which individual a speaker is referring to… (VR p. 400)

The example (form Chapter 9) Evans has in mind is:

> …consider a case in which salience is exploited: a speaker says 'He's had enough' as someone makes himself salient by fainting. An audience will understand the remark only if he knows, of some object, that it is the object in question; and someone possessed of ordinary epistemic powers, and without anyone else's help, will be able to know this only if he can identify the object in question demonstratively. Of course, if someone trustworthy were to whisper in his ear that Prince Charles has just fainted, he could thereby come to know of someone (Prince Charles) that he had just fainted, and so, possibly, that he was the referent of the speaker's remark … (VR p. 313)

The point of this example from Chapter 9 is that the audience must go beyond the referential feature of the one-off expression and think of the expression's referent. With such expressions there are a variety of ways this can happen. One (which is not often used with such expressions) is that someone can tell the audience which object the speaker is referring to. Evans' point here is that while this isn't a standard feature of one-off expressions, it *is* a standard feature of proper names:

> …we can think of the person (or persons) who introduced the audience to the name in question, and reinforced his pattern of use of it, as just such an authoritative third party — letting the audience know (something that can be done in countless different ways) which individual a speaker is referring to. (VR p. 400)

The suggestion is that when introducing someone to a PNUP, the introducer gives the initiate some means of identifying the referent. This might be some descriptive information ("Obama is the President

of the US"; "Homer is the poet who wrote the Odyssey and the Iliad"), or it could be demonstrative ("That woman over there is Elizabeth Warren").

Given this, Evans points out that it is possible that a speaker might be in a position to use a name to refer to *x* while not being able to understand such an utterance. This has come up before, first in Chapter 3, where the distinction was drawn between the semantical properties of words as elements of a public language, and whose referential properties are determined by norms and practices of various sorts, and the requirements one somebody's thinking of an object.

There are several ways, consistent with Evans' view, that one could fail to be in a position to think of the referent. One is that one could have no information to bring to bear — one just knows there is a name, and the best one can do (which is not sufficient) would be to exploit the referential feature and think via a description of the form "the person known as NN". Another way is to have "wholly baseless information associated with it" (p. 400):

> … those who associate with a name of x only a story (widely disseminated) of the doings of y are thinking of y when they interpret uses of the name by invoking this information. (VR p. 400)

The example of this Evans will give a bit later on in the section is of someone being introduced to the name 'Harold Macmillan' (British Prime Minister from 1957-1963) but is introduced to the PNUP with a bunch of facts actually true of Edward Heath (British Prime Minister from 1970-1974). The claim is that when using the name, the speaker would be uttering sentences concerning Macmillan, but would be thinking of Heath. For a more intuitively clear example, consider someone who is told that Donald Trump is the first African American President, elected in 2008, who got the Affordable Care Act passed, etc. Evans' position is that anyone introduced to the name this way would, when using it, be thinking about Barack Obama. But even so, when they use the name, the name itself will still refer to Donald Trump.

Starting at the bottom of p. 400 Evans discusses what he takes to be sources of resistance to the idea that someone can use a proper name without understanding it. He claims that one source of resistance is the sort of tendency he discussed in Section 5.3 concerning the naturalness of attributing intentional states on the basis of our knowledge of someone's high-level plans:

> …it is true that one could sensibly say 'He must be thinking of x'. … But this would be equivalent to 'He means *x*' on the kind of interpretation discussed in 5.3 that is, it registers that it is the practice of using *x*'s name which the speaker aims to be participating in (a purpose which can be attributed to him without crediting him with the capacity to entertain thoughts about *x*). (VR p. 401)

Another source of conviction that the speaker could have thoughts of beliefs about *x*, a factor not present in the examples Evans used in Section 5.3, is that in the sort of case currently under discussion the speaker is actually using *x*'s name, and uttering sentences such as 'NN is F'. This no doubt reinforces the hankering to attribute the intentional state to the speaker.

Given this, in the paragraph bridging p. 401 and p. 402 Evans says:

… the way in which people employ the notion of thinking of an object, and the notion of the object of thought, when proper names are involved, is confused, because of a failure to distinguish two notions of the intended referent of a use of a name: one in which the <u>intended referent is determined by determining which name-using practice a speaker manifested the intention of participating in</u> (the intended referent is the referent of the name as used in that practice); and one in which the <u>intended referent is the object which the speaker is aiming at with his use of the name</u>. (Underlining added)

    This can be confusing, because in Chapter 9 Evans clearly used the expression "intended referent" to mean the object that the speaker has isolated in thought and was trying to get the audience to think of, by employing an expression that would have that object as its referent.

    At this point Evans gives his example about Heath and Macmillan, but I have changed the example to someone introduced to the name "Donald Trump" by being given information about Barack Obama. He is told, for example, that "Trump was the first African American US President" and "Trump helped pass the Affordable Care Act" and "Trump was a Senator from Illinois before becoming President." As Evans says:

    It would surely not be supposed that this person understands the name '[Donald Trump]', because in interpreting uses of it he would be thinking of [Barack Obama]. (VR p. 402)

    The connection to the above point about there being two different senses of intended referent is this: who does the speaker who is misinformed about the referent of the name 'Donald Trump' intend to refer to when they use the expression 'Donald Trump'? The information they have concerns Barack Obama, and surely in the most straight-forward sense it is Obama that they intend to refer to with their remarks. This would come out quite clearly with remarks such as "Trump must have been the target of a good deal of racism since he was the first African American President" – it is obvious that the person the speaker intends to be speaking of is Obama, despite the fact that the name to chose to achieve that intention was "Trump." But in another sense, his intended referent was Trump – specifically, in the sense that the speaker manifested the intention to participate in the "Donald Trump" PNUP by using the name "Trump". So there are two different speaker intentions in play: what object was the speaker thinking of, which will be the object the speaker is intending to refer to; and which PNUP is the speaker manifesting an intention to exploit? Because Trump was the object of the speaker's referential intention in the second sense – Trump is the referent of the PNUP the speaker intended to exploit – this lends credence to the idea that the speaker has the capacity to think of Trump.

    At the bottom of p. 402 Evans discusses a third source of resistance to the idea that someone can use a name without understanding it. It is that such a person can use the name to communicate information about the referent of the name. First, he admits that someone who has been introduced to a PNUP can use it in such a way as to be a player in the community's practice of disseminating information about *x* even if the speaker can't think of *x*. If the subject above hears the sentence "Donald Trump met yesterday with the Pope" that subject can, by repeating the sentence, let others know, correctly, that Donald Trump met with the Pope. And this will be the case even if the subject (because of the way they were introduced to the name) is thinking falsely that Barack Obama met with the Pope. Evans introduces the expression "kommunication" for the sort of information passing that can

be done by someone who can use, but not correctly understand, a proper name. Evans' opponent is right to point out that, at a minimum, the subject can use the name to kommunicate information. But this leaves the question of whether the subject can understand the name untouched.

The final source of resistance Evans discusses, starting at the bottom of p. 403, hinges on the fact that proper names are capable of producing "individuating force". That is, even someone who subscribed to Russell's Principle might take it that a proper name, apart from a speaker's beliefs about the referent' can by used to satisfy RP. For surely I can form a description "The person known as NN" that will uniquely pick out *x* regardless of any other means I might have of singling out *x* in thought. Hence it seems I can grasp the truth conditions for "NN is F" along the lines of "the person known as NN is F":

> But this thought sticks at the referential feature (cf. 9.2); whereas full understanding (here as in the one-off cases) requires that one move beyond the referential feature and entertain, as expressed by the speaker, a proposition of the form [a is F]" (VR p. 403)

Evans' move here is essentially that a "full understanding " of the name requires someone to move beyond the referential feature in the sense of having an information-based thought. The subject must bring information to bear. I think Evans could have made the point slightly more completely in the following way. Yes, a person could think of the referent in that way. But that sort of metalinguistic/descriptive route to thinking of an expression's referent is not the normal way of thinking of the referent of a proper name that the practice of using a proper name relies on. Our "Donald Trump" speaker would not think of going metalinguistic/descriptive like this, but would use their erroneous information to form a thought that would isolate Obama as its referent.

There is another consideration that Evans might have provided but didn't. It is true that one can always form a metalinguistic description of the form "The person known as NN". But note that this requires no causal connection or practice of any sort in order to form. I can right now think "The person known as Bucky von Sleeznekker is an introvert" and thereby grasp a (descriptive) thought true under the conditions stated. The point isn't whether or not this approach is adequate to the task. It is. The point is that there is good reason to think that this is not at all what people normally do when they use proper names. It would require a cognitive switch in terms of the resources one mobilizes to form a thought, and so it can't be presumed that a subject will adopt this approach in the normal case.