

Guide to Chapter Three of Gareth Evans' *The Varieties of Reference*

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3.0 What Happens in Chapter Three

In this chapter several inter-related things happen, most hinge on ways that thought and language are related. One point concerns Evans' own proposal concerning two ways in which a singular term might be Russellian (such that, if empty, atomic sentences employing it in subject position are meaningless). First, it might be the case that in order to understand a sentence using an expression of some category, the subject must have a Russellian (object-dependent) thought. In such a case, if there is no object, there is no thought, and hence nothing that counts as understanding the sentence, and hence the sentence has no meaning. Evans will argue in Chapter 6 that demonstratives fall into this category. The second route does not go through an analysis of thought in this way. Rather, it is that there might be expression types that require, in order for the public norms that imbue them with meaning to work, that those terms have a referent. Evans will argue in Chapter 11 that proper names fall into this category.

*The second point, or set of points, center on Russell's Principle (RP), which maintains that in order for a subject to think about an object, that subject must be able to discriminate that object from all other objects. Russell took it that definite descriptions and acquaintance were two ways to do this. Evans brings attention to the fact that some have thought that Kripke's work subverts RP, since on Kripke's theory the right kind of causal history is **sufficient** for a proper name to concern (be about) its referent. Evans points out that in fact Kripke's theory is not a theory of the semantics of **thought**, but rather of words in a public language. Even if Kripke is right that one may use a sentence that employs a word whose meaning is fixed by causal factors, it no way follows that the person who utters that sentence need be credited with a thought concerning that object.*

*Evans then draws attention to the fact that some philosophers have argued that causal connections are **necessary** for thoughts to concern objects in certain conditions. Evans will in fact agree with this. But Evans points out that this is still not in conflict with RP. It would be in conflict with RP if the right sort of causal connection were **sufficient**, since then the subject could entertain the thought in question even without discriminating knowledge, so long as the right causal history is there. Evans will argue (Chapters 5 and 6) that while the right kind of causal link is necessary, it is not sufficient, since the subject must also have discriminating knowledge of the object of the thought, hence satisfying RP. Evans argues that those who think that RP has been overturned have elided Kripke's theory with the considerations about the referent of thoughts, and convinced themselves, incorrectly, that there is reason to think that a certain causal history is sufficient for a putative thought to concern an object.*

3.1 Going Beyond Russell: Singular Thoughts

Evans sketches a way that Russell's work has exerted influence on Evans' contemporaries: by regarding a distinction between types of natural language expressions as grounded in a distinction between ways of thinking about objects, namely i) thinking of them by way of description and ii) thinking of them by way of a direct, prototypically perceptual, link between thinker and object (for Russell this relationship was 'acquaintance'). Russell was drawn to these two ways of thinking of an object because he felt that they were the two ways that one could have discriminating knowledge of the object one is thinking about. And Russell felt that in order to think of an object, one had to be able to distinguish it from all other objects. Evans calls this Russell's Principle. The post-Russell literature has moved away from Russell's Cartesian interpretation of acquaintance, to interpretations focusing on perception and causation, nevertheless the specifics have been difficult to nail down. And in any case, much of the work on this has given up on Russell's Principle.

Evans traces out some features of Russell's thought, features which have had a continuing influence on the topics Russell was concerned with. The first is the idea that one can make headway on understanding different types of expressions in natural language (e.g. NPs) by examining different ways language users are related to the objects talked about. The two types of relation recognized by Russell were i) by description, and ii) acquaintance, understood as a direct relation between a subject and their own mental items. The idea, then, is that given these two kinds of relation to objects, it is possible to ground a distinction between two different *semantic kinds*, two kinds of NPs for which different accounts of their semantics is appropriate. Roughly, reference by description and (mental) demonstratives.

While post-Russellian philosophy of language has inherited this division of ways of being related to objects, it has tried to extend the range of application of the 'direct' type of reference beyond the Russell's Cartesian limits. The most obvious is to extend it to perception-based demonstratives. Potential avenues of extension from perception involve memory and testimony, but this has not yet been done in any clearly adequate way (Evans will be addressing both of these in later chapters).

Russell's motivation for restricting thought about objects to just these two varieties was what Evans will call *Russell's Principle*. It is this:

Russell's Principle: A necessary condition for S to be able to think about an object O (or to make a judgment about) it is that S know which object he is thinking (or attempting to think) about — he must be able to distinguish O from all other objects.

Russell took it that in order to know which object was in question, one would have to have a discriminating conception of that object capable of distinguishing it from all others, and he felt that the two ways of doing this were i) to think of the object as the unique satisfier of some description, or ii) to be in direct "perceptual" contact with the object. (A third possibility, recognized by Strawson, and to be taken up in greater detail in Chapter 8, is that the subject have a capacity to recognize the object.) But the point is that it is not obvious how to extend the more intimate relation. Progress had, Evans says, ground to a halt until recently.

Evans cautions that much work aimed at extending the acquaintance half of the equation has been concerned not with a distinction between types of *singular terms*, but rather between types of *belief* — those reportable *de re* and those reportable only *de dicto*. In very rough terms, beliefs reportable *de re* are beliefs that lack anything corresponding to Fregean Sense, whereas those reportable only *de dicto* involve an element corresponding to Fregean Sense. Much more could be said about this distinction, but for present purposes this isn't necessary.

The prevailing view has been that the distinction between these types of belief rests on a distinction between two kinds of a relation a thinker may have to the objects of thought: a conceptual (descriptive) relation for *de dicto*, and a contextual (prototypically perceptual) relation for *de re*. Evans provides a quote from Burge who claimed that there was no theoretical unity in the sorts of contextual relations that would support *de re* belief attribution. Evans doubts that the distinction between the two kinds of belief is legit. But more to the point, he claims that, as far as the task of trying to use such relations to undergird a demarcation of semantic kinds in natural language, this view obviously won't do. We can't just say that what sets semantic kind K apart is that it depends on the language user having some (unspecified) contextual relations to the relevant object.

3.2 Russellian Sayings: The Two Strategies

This section has three connected parts. The first part, from the beginning of the section to about the middle of p. 69, makes some general remarks on the relationship between language and thought. This topic is important because, as pointed out in the last section, much contemporary work in the vicinity has not been on singular terms (as elements of a public language), but rather on types of belief. To this point the discussion has (like Russell) more or less slid back and forth between the content of language and of thought. But there is a need to start being more careful. In particular, because language is a public thing subject to public norms, the content of what one says when uttering a sentence need not derive from the thought that prompted the speaker to utter it. The second part, running from the bottom of p. 69 to the top of p. 71 argues that proper names are an example where these come apart. Their public semantic purpose is simply as a tag for the referent. Language users can think of the referent in any way, so long as they think of the referent. In the third part, which is most of p. 71, Evans cleans up his terminology concerning Russellian singular terms, and argues that as explicated above, proper names are Russellian. Finally, the fourth part, running from the top of p. 72 to the end of the section, describes a different manner in which NPs might turn out to be Russellian, and gestures towards his account of demonstratives (Chapter 6) as examples.

Evans begins by highlighting the fact that, so far, the discussion has not done a great job of distinguishing features of language from features of the corresponding or associated thoughts. We can no longer just assume that the semantic analysis appropriate to a given linguistic expression is always mirrored by an equivalent or isomorphic analysis of the semantics of the thought expressed or otherwise involved. Rather, Evans points out that language has an ineliminable social component in that there are norms which govern the correct use of expressions in the language. And norms *can* supply natural language expressions with their standard meaning, regardless of what the individual language user intends to say by means of that expression or what thoughts or even kinds of thoughts are being entertained when the sentence is being uttered. (I emphasized the 'can' in the above sentence because

in some cases the public norms might make some appeal to the sorts of thought one must have in order to understand sentences using the expression.)

Evans first points out that it is obviously the case that in order for someone to *say that P*, it is not *sufficient* that they intend to say that P. I might intend to say that P by uttering a string of random phonemes, but this obviously would not count as me actually saying that P.

Evans also argues that intending to say that P is not necessary for saying that P. First, Evans articulates an argument that tries to show that intending to say that P is a necessary condition for saying that P, and then Evans shows where the argument fails. I reconstruct the argument as:

Consider the case where a speaker utters "The ship is veering to port." There are two things that this can mean, because of an ambiguity in the term 'port'. The speaker intended only one of these meanings, and it is the one intended that determines the meaning of the expression (we would be acting in a needlessly belligerent way if we maintained that the speaker's utterance meant that the ship was veering away from starboard even though he intended to say that the ship was headed toward a port). Therefore, on this line of thinking, a necessary condition for the speaker to say that P is that the speaker intends to say that P.

Evans argues that this does not follow. According to Evans, ambiguous terms are best thought of as two different expressions that happen to share a phonological (/typographical) form. Where the speaker's intentions come into play is in determining which of the expressions — which of the tokens in the language game — is being employed. But once this is determined, the meaning of that expression is a matter of social practices, of the 'meaning with which that linguistic counter is endowed in the community', and not at all a matter of the speaker's intentions or possibly 'half-baked ideas and misconceptions'. Once we know that the speaker intended to use the token that specifies a particular side of the ship (and not a large commercial harbor), then we know what the speaker has *said*, even if the speaker is confused and thinks that 'port' is the right side of the ship.

Next, near the end of p. 69, Evans transitions from this to the second topic of the section, by noting that proper names are not typically associated with any particular descriptive content such that that descriptive content is necessarily entertained when one understand the name. And as such, they are an example where the meaning of an expression is not beholden to the way that the speaker is thinking of the referent. [Note: Descriptive names would be unlike normal proper names in this respect.] It is true of course that each language user may associate this or that descriptive content with the name, but the descriptions and other ancillary information that an individual speaker associates with it need have nothing to do with the conventional meaning of that name in a language community.

The possibility that follows from the above considerations is that an individual's thought and belief may be related to some object via particularities of the individual's cognitive situation (such as the entertaining of some description or other), but that when it comes to unpacking the content of what the speaker *says* about that object by means of a proper name, this description (or other distinctive aspect of the speaker's cognitive contact with the object, such as perceptual contact) may be entirely irrelevant. Call this the *composite theory*: i) the individual's *thought* about the object she intends to refer to by using some proper name *N* is determined by the speaker's cognitive compartment (such as the entertaining of a description), but ii) the *meaning of N* in the language is not tied to any particular descriptive content or any other particular way of thinking of the object. In other words, the point of the proper name is just to get the interlocutors to think of the referent. *How* each of them thinks of the

referent is irrelevant. Note that on this view, proper names would not be associated with a Fregean Sense, exactly because correctly understanding the name would not hinge on any particular way of thinking of the referent.

The third part of the section starts at the middle of p. 70. Evans provides a quick argument to the effect that proper names, as just described, are Russellian. The reasoning is as follows:

1. In order to understand a sentence 'a is F' (where 'a' is an ordinary proper name), one must think of the referent of 'a', *in whatever way one is accustomed to think of it*, and take the sentence to be true just in case the referent is *F*.
2. If a name has no referent, then nothing counts as understanding what is said by a use of the utterance (by (1)). (One cannot *think of the referent* if there is no referent, just as one cannot eat the pie if there is no pie. The latitude for idiosyncrasy in how the referent is thought about does not abolish the requirement that it be thought about in *some* way.)
3. If nothing counts as understanding what is said by an utterance, then nothing is said by that utterance.

Therefore,

4. If an ordinary proper name has no referent, then nothing is said by someone using it in an expression; that is, it is Russellian.

Premise (1) is based on the prior discussion. But in addition to abandoning any requirement that the subjects must think of the referent in a particular way, why think that the subject must think of the referent at all, as (1) and (2) require? The idea here is that given that proper names don't require that there is any particular type of thought or descriptive content required to understand the name, if we don't at least require that the language user be thinking of the referent, then it becomes impossible to see how the putative proper name could actually be a proper name, or indeed a useful part of language at all. We would have to make sense of there being a type on NP in the language which i) I might use and in so using associate some some content c_1 which may or may not refer to this or that individual; and ii) which you would hear and as a result entertain some completely unconnected content c_2 , which may or may not refer to some object or other. Such an NP would be a pointless wildcard, unfit for any sort of communication.

Notice also that Evans has, without drawing attention to it, introduced a principle for getting at the meaning of sentences of public language. The principle is that the meaning of a sentences is *what is said* by someone uttering it, and that what is said by an utterance of a sentence is explicated in terms of what counts as *understanding* the utterance. This principle does two things. In accordance with the prior discussion of this section, it eliminates reference to any thoughts in the speaker's head. Second, it tells us what sorts of public norms to look for, specifically, public norms that indicate what thought or range of thoughts counts as understanding the expression. In the case of proper names, the public norm is just that the hearer must think of the referent in some way or other.

Evans uses this as an opportunity to clean up his use of the expression 'Russellian'. Up to this point, the expression has been used ambiguously as a description for kinds of public language expressions (if the name is empty, sentences using it are meaningless), and for kinds of thoughts (if the

object of thought does not exist, then there is no thought to be had). Evans will from here on out take a definition in terms of language as primary:

... a term is a Russellian singular term if and only if it is a member of a category of singular terms such that nothing is said by someone who utters a sentence containing such a term unless the term has a referent — if the term is empty, no move has been made in the 'language-game'. To say that nothing has been said in a particular utterance is, quite generally, to say that nothing constitutes *understanding* the utterance. (p. 71)

This definition allows for some expressions to be recognized as Russellian regardless of any specific requirements concerning the nature of the thoughts that might be involved in understanding those expressions. This is the upshot of the discussion of proper names.

The last and fourth section, starting at the top of p. 72, describes a different sort of way in which a type of expression might turn out to be Russellian. This second way *does* appeal to specific kinds of thoughts. In broad strokes the idea is this: there is a type of expression such that in order to understand sentences using it, the listener must entertain a certain kind of thought. If that kind of thought turns out to be such that it requires an object — if the object of the thought-attempt does not exist, then the episode is an unsuccessful thought-attempt — then there is nothing that counts as understanding such a sentence. And so the expression is a Russellian singular term. Notice that though the official definition of 'Russellian' is now in terms of expressions in public language, the term can still be understood, by extension, as applying to the object-dependent thoughts that are required for understanding these kinds of Russellian singular terms.

In Chapter 11 Evans will discuss proper names, whose Russellian status is established by considerations of the first sort, in great detail in Chapter 11., And in Chapter 6 Evans will discuss demonstratives, whose Russellian status is established by considerations of the second sort. Notice also that while there is nothing corresponding to Fregean sense for proper names as Evans explicates them, demonstratives will have a Fregean sense, because in order to understand expressions using demonstratives, one must think of the referent in a particular way, in terms of a particular kind of thought.

3.3 Russellian singular terms and descriptive names

In this section, Evans discusses Kripke's causal theory of names, which was a response to the prevailing descriptive theory of names according to which proper names were covert descriptions or clusters of descriptions. Kripke's theory is that the referent of a proper name is determined by a causal chain that extends from a use of the name back to an initial baptismal event in which the name was bestowed on an individual. The name-user need have no specific descriptive information about the referent, and might even have a good deal of inaccurate information. But so long as the causal chain is there, the name user will be referring to the referent. Moreover, because the user of a name need have no knowledge of the specifics of the causal chain, or which individual was baptized with it at its origin, it can seem like the theory runs counter to Russell's Principle. Evans argues that this is not the case

*because Russell's Principle concerns a subject's ability to **think** of an object, while the causal theory of names is a theory not about **thought**, but about the referential properties of **words** in a public language. An adherent of Russell's principle can also accept Kripke's theory — such a person would maintain that a language user can use a name that refers to an object without being able to think a thought about that object, a consequence that does not seem obviously far-fetched.*

Kripke, in *Naming and Necessity*, criticizes the Strawson-Searle cluster description theory of proper names. This theory maintains that for any proper name, there is a large set of facts, or descriptive content, publicly associated with that proper name. It is possible for a language user to use and understand a name if that language user associates with that name a cluster of descriptive content that is a sufficiently weighty subset of the descriptive content publicly associated with the name. This is an obvious successor to Russell's view according to which proper names are just covert descriptions. This cluster theory offers the promise of the language user's conforming to Russell's Principle because the sub-cluster of descriptive content might pick out the referent uniquely.

The core of Kripke's criticism hinges on the observation that it seems correct to say that a person can refer to an object *O* by using its name, even when the person i) has no descriptive content associated with the name, or even ii) inaccurate descriptive content associated with the name. This is an empirical claim about the conventions of public language use, which in English at least appears to be true. Evans will discuss Kripke's positive proposal in the next section.

Evans points out that Kripke's negative account, which shows that a language user can refer to an object *O* without having discriminating knowledge of *O* does not present a challenge to Russell's Principle. Recall, that principle states that in order for a subject to have a thought about *O*, the subject must have discriminating knowledge that distinguishes *O* from all other objects. The key of Evans' point is that Kripke's theory concerns the referential properties of words in public language, whereas Russell's Principle concerns requirements for, so to speak, referential properties of thought. And given that (as was discussed earlier in this chapter) words can have their semantic properties fixed by public norms in such a way that it is entirely possible for someone to utter a sentence that means *P* without the subject herself thinking *P* (or perhaps even without having the capacity to think *P*), this is not a surprise.

Nevertheless Evans points out that in a few places Kripke suggests that the lesson applies not only to referential properties of words, but to the content of beliefs as well. And if the lesson did generalize in this way, it would indeed be a challenge to Russell's Principle. But despite Kripke's suggestions, Evans thinks that the theory does not generalize.

This will turn out to be a major issue in the book, and one of the more controversial issues at that. Evans will go to lengths to defend Russell's Principle despite widespread belief that various Kripke-inspired considerations (or other kinds of causal considerations more generally) show that Russell's Principle is false. I think Evans is right on this score, but making the case is difficult.

As Evans points out, main line of evidence supporting the anti-Russell's Principle line is that in some cases it can seem natural to say that a subject in these circumstances has a belief about the

referent. For example, if a child in a history class hears the name 'Socrates' in the sentence 'Socrates was snub nosed' and repeats the sentence, it might in some circumstances seem natural to say that the child believes that Socrates was snub nosed. We would be crediting to the child an ability to have beliefs about, to *think* about, Socrates despite the fact that the child has no discriminating knowledge of Socrates whatsoever.

Keep in mind that the sort of case we are envisioning is one in which the child has no discriminating knowledge. The child doesn't know if this person is alive or dead, perhaps not even if they are real or fictional, perhaps not even whether Socrates is a human or a whale — the same point could have been made with the name 'Moby Dick', where the sentence that was repeated was "Moby Dick had a snub nose".

One way to approach the topic is to initially forego intuitions concerning whether or not the child has a belief about Socrates, for such intuitions hinge on what counts as holding a belief, and so far there is little to go on other than intuition. Rather, at least initially, it should be uncontroversial that there is a difference between what the child is able to do in terms of having mental states concerning Socrates and what a specialist in ancient philosophy is able to do. While both might utter the sentence "Socrates was snub-nosed", it would be natural to mark the difference by saying that the child *doesn't know what he is talking about*. Or imagine a slightly different case: you and I are walking past a hotel and notice that a mathematics conference is taking place. I convince you to attend a session and, if an appropriate moment presents itself, to speak up and say "if a subgroup of a profinite group has a finite index, it is open" You might utter the sentence perfectly, but i) there is surely a significant difference between you and the mathematicians, and ii) it seems natural to mark this distinction by saying that you have no idea what you are talking about, and they do. One consequence (not the only one) is that you will have no idea whether the sentence is true, or even what it would mean for it to be true.

The above paragraph is not intended as a full defense of Evans' view, but rather an initial stab at making plausible the idea that there is *some* important difference between someone who does, and someone who does not, have discriminating knowledge of the objects referred to by names that they use. Whether this difference amounts to an ability, or inability, to *think* about the relevant object is another question.

Returning to Evans, he has two arguments against the position that a person who can use a name to refer to an object in absence of discriminating knowledge (as per Kripke's theory of reference) can actually *think about* the object. The first relies on the *generality constraint*, which Evans will not introduce by name until section 4.3. In short, the objection is that in order for a subject S to be able to think of object a that it is F , the subject must be in a position to be able to entertain (though not necessarily judge to be true) the thoughts that a is G , a is H , and so forth for all predicates G, H, \dots , not semantically anomalous with a . And he claims that this capacity is not possible for someone who is merely exploiting a link in a reference-preserving causal chain. This argument will be expanded at various places later in the book. But the overall strategy is to articulate a theory of thought, or at least a partial theory, and then assess whether Kripke-subjects count as having thoughts on that theory. This is at least a step up from simply relying on intuitions about whether the subject has beliefs or not.

The second, connected, response is the claim that we cannot without argument use 'untutored linguistic intuitions' to establish theoretical claims about thought, reference, belief, etc. The untutored linguistic intuitions in question are the ones which make it seem *natural to say* that such a person (e.g.

the child in the above example) believes something about the referent of the name. (Evans will later, in sections 5.3 and 11.5, explain these untutored intuitions in a way which defuses their challenge to Russell's Principle.)

3.4 The Photograph Model

*In this section, Evans discusses a theory of mental representation which purports to be a genuine challenge to Russell's Principle, and which was, in some sense, inspired by Kripke's causal theory of names. Evans calls this the **photograph model** (PM). Evans argues that the PM is quite distinct from Kripke's theory, enough so to render suspect any argument in its favor from analogy to Kripke's theory.*

The main structure of Kripke's theory — a theory of the reference of proper names — is as follows. Objects and people are given names, and these name-givings are specific events. For example, parents decide at some specific point to give a name to their child, perhaps even before birth. Those present at the initial naming “baptism” are competent users of the name. Others can be introduced to the name by hearing sentences uttered by competent users that employ the name. These ‘hearings’ of the name are causal links whereby competence the name gets passed along. On any given occasion of use, a name *N* used by language user *S* refers to *O* if *S*'s use of the name is a link in a causal chain of the sort just described. Note that this is entirely a theory of the referential properties of *words*, and says nothing about whether those who use the words are able to have beliefs or thoughts about the objects referred to.

Evans says he has two misgivings about the influence of Kripke's work in the philosophy of mind (as opposed to language). The first is simply that many have taken the lesson of Kripke's work to be a denial of Russell's Principle. And as we have seen, by itself it is not.

Evans then provides a gloss on Kripke's account, and has a parenthetical remark on how it elides two questions. We can safely ignore the point about elision, it won't matter until Chapter 11, where it will be explored in greater detail. Kripke's account properly understood connects the referential properties of words to a causal chain going back to the referent. In particular, the existence of the causal chain is *sufficient* for the word to refer. Independently of this, work in philosophy of mind had come to the conclusion (with which Evans will agree) that certain kinds of causal chains linking the formation of certain kinds of belief to the object the belief is about are *necessary*.

These two facts invited what Evans thinks is an illegitimate slide to the conclusion that for certain kinds of belief (and other mental states), appropriate causal links are *sufficient* for the state to refer to the object, or be about the object. Evans calls this the Photograph Model (PM), and will argue against it quite a bit as the book progresses. To be clear, though, Evans is not disagreeing with the general idea of Kripke that causal stuff might be *sufficient* for referential properties of words. And he is not

disagreeing with the idea that causal stuff might be necessary for the representational features of some kinds of mental states. It is the confused amalgam with which he will disagree.

Evans' second misgiving (aside from his pointing out the slide just noted), is that although the word "causation" appears both in Kripke's account of the referential properties of names, and also in the work in mental representation that some kinds of causal links are necessary for some kinds of representational content, the specifics of the kinds of causation involved are very different. The sort of chains Kripke discusses involve names and name using practices and the passing of name-using competence. In the case of belief, the causal chains involve objects and perceptual systems. The stark disanalogies between the two kinds of causal schemes should have prevented people from thinking of the two accounts as illuminating a unified phenomenon.

As a final note of clarification, the Photograph Model is a view of mental representation according to which certain kinds of causal links are sufficient for representational content. One might come to hold this view for any number of reasons, though Evans has identified Kripke's work as aiding its acceptance. Evans will argue that the PM is misguided. What Evans critiques at the end of this section – the "unified theories" called *The Causal Theory of Reference* or *The Historical Explanation Theory of Reference* – are theories that take Kripke's views and the PM to be intimately related, as different facets of a single representational phenomenon. Evans also thinks this is misguided. In much of the rest of the book Evans will take on the PM, but the "unified theory" as such isn't really a target for him.

It might be helpful to quickly go over the various ways in which Russell's name is used to name tests and principles and properties, since there are a number.

Russell's Criterion: A test used to determine whether or not a singular term is Russellian. If sentences employing the singular term would be meaningful even if the term were to have no referent, then the singular term is *not* Russellian. If the term's being empty would render matrix sentences meaningless, then the term is Russellian.

Russellian Singular Term: A singular term that is identified as Russellian according to the above criterion.

Russell's Principle: A constraint on thought, to the effect that in order for a subject to think a thought about X, the subject must know which object X is. Or to put it another way, the subject must be able to distinguish X from all other objects.

3.A Appendix

The appendix is part regurgitation of some of the things that have already been covered in the chapter, and part argument against the claim that the PM poses a serious threat to Russell's Principle. The argument is, in effect, that the PM can make no room for an analog of sense, and since any adequate account of representation must make such room, the PM is not an adequate account of mental

representation, and hence cannot pose a challenge to Russell's Principle. The appendix closes with some remarks about the general strategy of the book.

Evans¹ opens by recapping the two strategies for arguing for the Russellian status of singular terms. (Note that he discusses the two strategies here in the opposite order of that in which they were discussed in section 3.2.) Recall, the first sort of strategy establishes that a kind of expression is Russellian by showing (i) that expressions of that kind require, in order to be understood and hence to be meaningful, that the audience have a certain kind of thought; and (ii) that the kind of thought in question is Russellian. Thus, no object, no thought; no thought, no possibility of understanding; no possibility of understanding, no meaning.

The second sort of strategy does not involve considerations of thought about objects (at least not in this way), but rather tries to show that in absence of a referent, the public-norm mechanisms that endow a kind of expression with a meaning are not operative. Evans thinks that ordinary proper names are Russellian, and will employ this strategy in his arguments for that conclusion. I included the parenthetical expression "at least not in this way" above because this strategy does involve a premise concerning thoughts. Recall, the norm was that when understanding a name, one would have to think of the referent *in some way or other*. And the referent was required because the only thing that would allow the name to be useful as a communicative tool, given that individuals could think of the referent in any way, was argued to be that it was the same thing they were all thinking about when understanding the name. It was the necessary principle of unity. So while both strategies involve a premise about thought, the way that thought is involved in the two cases is very different.

Evans recaps the point that Kripke's work has been commandeered in an effort to establish a theory of mental representation — the photograph model — which would, if viable, flout Russell's Principle. He points out that if the PM were viable, the resulting thoughts would be Russellian, since they would require the existence of the object that is the causal antecedent in order to have the relevant content. But the PM would still flout Russell's Principle, in that it would credit to subjects an ability to think about the causal antecedent independently of the subject having any discriminating knowledge concerning that object.

The text at lines 15-16 of page 81 says that the PM holds out the promise of expanding the class of Russellian singular terms. One may be puzzled by this, since the Photograph Model is concerned not with language, but mental representation. But the best way to interpret this is that the PM could play a role in the expansion of the class of Russellian names, via an argument of the first type: in order to understand an utterance using an expression of semantic category *S*, one must have a thought of kind *P*, a thought underwritten by the PM. Since such thoughts would be Russellian, then so would the expressions piggy-backing on them.

Starting at mid-p.81 and running to the bottom of p. 84 is the argument to the effect that the Photograph Model is not an adequate model of mental representation, and it can be broken up into three parts.

The **first** part of this argument (from mid-81 to near the bottom of 82) is just a reminder to the effect that, Russell's opinion notwithstanding, one can recognize the possibility of Russellian terms which also have a sense. There can be two Russellian terms, with the same referent, which are

¹ I am here continuing the practice of referring to the author as 'Evans', though of course in the appendices, more so than the main text, McDowell is behind the pen.

nonetheless not synonymous because they differ in sense. The belief to the contrary arises from thinking of (monadic) Russellian thoughts along the lines of the 'ordered-couple' conception of thoughts, the idea that the object literally is a component of the thought. Of course, this is one way a thought could be Russellian, but not (Evans argues) the only way.

The **second** part of this argument (which is the paragraph bridging pp. 82 and 83) is an argument to the effect that the photograph model is in its essentials an *ordered couple* model, at least to the extent that it makes no room for a notion of sense. Evans gets there by means of the following circuitous route:

1) if one tries to extend the class of Russellian singular thoughts while observing Russell's Principle, then one has the tools for a theory of sense. This is because the extension will take the form of exposing the non-descriptive means of identification the subject uses to identify the object in thought — that is, the subject's way of *knowing which* object is thought about. But these very means of identification will play a role in the content of the particular thought. In effect, identifying the same object in two different ways amounts to different senses for the same particular thought.

2) Because the PM flouts Russell's Principle, claiming that no means of identification of the object is necessary, it does not have the tools to construct a notion of sense.

The **third** (final) part (the bottom third of p. 83 to the very bottom of p. 84) argues that *no* notion of Russellian *thought* which lacks an analog of sense can be adequate. Evans starts by pointing out that if the topic is *sayings*, that is, what is said by one who uses a sentence of a public language, then it might be coherent to maintain that there could be Russellian singular terms involved which lack a notion of sense. Indeed, Evans thinks that normal proper names are an example. He pitches this point in terms of transparent reports of sayings. This is some different apparatus than what has been appealed to so far, but it is straight-forward enough. A transparent report of a saying is one where I report what someone says by appeal to the object they are talking about regardless of how that object might be identified by the NP they use. Thus if Smith says "Superman can fly" I could report this saying transparently either by saying "Smith said of Superman that he can fly", or "Smith said of Clark Kent that he can fly".

But a notional report, which is one that reports the content of the saying in a way that captures the way that the speaker's utterance identified the object is more informative. "Smith said that Superman can fly" is true, while "Smith said that Clark Kent can fly" is false. The transparent report thus loses information, exactly because it foregoes any attempt to capture the Sense of the NP used in the original saying.

Evans point is that if there are sayings such that they can only be reported in the transparent style, then this means that there is nothing more informative that can be said in the report on the saying than that it was about the object (it predicated a property of the object, for example). This means that the content of the saying is essentially of the ordered couple sort — the object itself is what fills that element of the content, there is nothing corresponding to Fregean Sense.

But when it comes to Russellian *thoughts*, Evans argues this won't work. He points out that one way to argue for this would be via Russell's Principle, since on that principle one could appeal to the

different ways one has of identifying the object in thought to account for the different Senses. But this would be question-begging at this point to go this route, because the PM denies Russell's Principle.

The other route is to simply point out that for such thoughts something corresponding to a notion of Sense seems to be required, and the PM, because as an ordered-couple conception makes no room for Sense. Evans' example is someone who sees what is in fact a single long ship through two different windows. It might easily be the case that the man is prepared to believe 'that ship was built in Japan,' (looking at the ship through the first window) but believe 'that ship was not built in Japan' (looking at the ship from the second window). According to the Photograph Model, each mental tokening of 'that ship' must have the same content, because they have the same causal antecedent. The subject will then be affirming two directly contradictory beliefs: "*That* ship was built in Japan, but *that* one was not." The PM thus requires us, or so it seems, to be prepared to suppose normal subjects to be quite irrational in some very ordinary circumstances. That ends the argument against the PM in this Appendix.

The remainder of the Appendix is an attempt to sort of summarize the rhetorical landscape. I'll try to paraphrase in a way that I hope will shed light on what has gone on in the first three chapters.

Russell recognized two ways in which thought might concern objects: acquaintance and description. These were two ways of satisfying Russell's Principle, two ways in which a subject could know which object she was thinking about. Thought by description is obviously not Russellian. For Russell, that is their entire point. Thought by description for Russell explains how we have thoughts even when their putative objects might not exist.

Russell's acquaintance relation was Russellian. Because Russell wanted to rule out cases where a subject could be mistaken about whether or not they were entertaining a certain kind of thought, the acquaintance relation was limited to mental particulars. It was only for such referents that the subject would be incapable of being wrong about the existence of the referent. But this very limitation also foreclosed any possibility that that relation could support anything corresponding to Fregean Sense.

The question is, how can we extend the acquaintance half — the non-descriptive half — of Russell's model beyond the Cartesian limits? Notice that if the thoughts of this sort are Russellian, then we need to bite the bullet on whether subjects can be mistaken about their entertaining of such thoughts. Clearly once we extend beyond the Cartesian limits, the putative referents can fail to exist unbeknownst to the subject. So if the object does not exist, there is no thought, though the subject thinks she is thinking the thought because she is not aware that the object does not exist.

One way is the PM. This flouts Russell's Principle while extending the acquaintance relation to any causal antecedent. The thoughts are still Russellian in that if the causal antecedent does not exist, then there is no corresponding content to be grasped. But because Russell's Principle is flouted, there is no need for the subject to have any discriminating knowledge of the object. The causal link is sufficient on its own. And also because Russell's Principle is flouted, the model can make no room for a notion of Fregean Sense. Evans points out that the PM is Russellian, but he doesn't point out that on the PM, it must be possible for people to be mistaken about whether or not they are entertaining a thought. Most of the time Evans is talking about the PM he is discussing the fact that on the PM a subject *can* have a thought without discriminating knowledge. This is because the causal link is sufficient despite anything

the subject thinks. But it also follows that the subject can fail to have a thought because the causal link is necessary, despite whatever else the subject might be thinking.

What would an alternative look like? If, unlike the PM, we embrace Russell's Principle, we will be looking for a way of having discriminating knowledge of objects of thought which is i) not descriptive; ii) does not take causal relations to be sufficient (though they may be involved, perhaps even necessary); is not limited to mental particulars. Such a proposal would support a notion of Fregean Sense exactly because the proposal is that in order to think of an object, one must have discriminating knowledge. And for any object (other than mental particulars, perhaps) there are multiple ways in which one can have discriminating knowledge. And each of these ways will correspond to a way of thinking of the referent, aka a Fregean Sense. The thoughts will still be Russellian, because (as pointed out in Chapter 1) one must be thinking of something in order to be thinking of it in a particular way.

This is what is going to happen in the following chapters. The goal is going to be an account of demonstrative thoughts, and this will require an analysis of what it means to have discriminating knowledge of objects in a "demonstrative" way.