

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

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3.0 Chapter Three Overview

There are two main points in this chapter. The first is to point out that we should clearly distinguish discussion of the semantic features of language from the semantic features of thought. They are intimately related, of course, but we can't just switch back and forth (as Frege and Russell often did, and as the discussion so far has). In particular, in some cases the semantics of an expression might be determined by the sort of thought one must have to understand it; and in other cases it might be determined by other factors (e.g. social or causal).

Singular terms manage to latch on to a single object (whether a name or definite description). If, like Russell, one thinks that the semantic capacity of

language derives from thought, then we can see the motivation for Russell's Principle: it is the fact that the person is capable of distinguishing the object from all others in thought (via acquaintance or a uniquely individuating set of features) that explains why the singular term they use is able to refer to or denote a single object.

Kripke showed that in fact names are able to refer to their referent independently of any ability of the person using the name to single out the referent in their thought. The person might know very little about the referent (much less than would be required to satisfy Russell's Principle), and might even associate incorrect information with the name that would point to the wrong object. On Kripke's theory causal relations (understood in a particular way) between the referent and the use of a name explain how the word refers to the name. What discriminating information or misinformation the speaker of a name might have is irrelevant to the word's ability to refer.

This leads to the second main point. If one slides back and forth between the semantics of language and the semantics of thought, then one might take it that a lesson of Kripke's account is that (in cases like this) the subject is able to *think about* the object that the word refers to. This would directly contradict Russell's Principle. And in fact, Evans argues that a great deal of resistance to Russell's Principle comes from this sort of consideration. But Evans points out that a defender of RP has an easy reply: in such cases, the language user is able to use a word that refers to some object even though they are not capable of thinking a thought about that object — or to put it perhaps a bit overly colloquially, it is possible that sometimes people don't know what they are talking about.

At the end of the chapter Evans describes what he calls the *Photograph Model* — inspired in part by Kripke's work, and also in part by work that took causal connections to be necessary for certain kinds of beliefs — that holds that causal

connections between the thinker and an object are sufficient for the person to have a thought about the object. Evans argues that this position is the product of confusion. Detailed arguments against PM, and in favor of RP, will be developed in later chapters.

3.1 Going Beyond Russell: Singular Thoughts

Evans describes how Russell's work has exerted influence on subsequent thinking. First, by making a connection between ways in which singular terms can refer to ways in which people might think of objects. And second, by adopting something like Russell's division between two kinds of ways of thinking of an object — by description, and by something akin to acquaintance in that it involves perception or causal contact. 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 requirement on thought Russell's Principle. The post-Russell literature has largely given up on Russell's Principle, and has also moved away from Russell's Cartesian restrictions on acquaintance (to the effect that one is acquainted only with the contents of one's own mind), but the specifics concerning what sort of causal or perceptual contact is sufficient for the acquaintance-esque relation have been difficult to nail down.

Evans traces out some features of Russell's thought that had a continuing influence on semantics. The first is the idea that one can make headway on understanding the semantics of different types of *expressions in language* by examining different ways the language users can *think about* objects talked about. The two types of relation recognized by Russell were i) by description, and ii) acquaintance, the latter understood as a direct relation between a subject and their own mental items. And for Russell this grounded a distinction between two different semantic kinds of singular terms — (logically proper) *names*, which referred to private mental items, like mental demonstratives pointing at inner sense data, and *definite descriptions*. Though keep in mind that for Russell, *ordinary proper names* were almost all actually covert definite descriptions, hence the technical term 'logically proper names'.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Russell adopted this in part because he embraced the principle that one could have a thought about an object only if one knew which object one was thinking about, that is, only if one had discriminating knowledge of that object. And acquaintance and description were the two ways Russell thought this could be done. Evans calls 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.

This principle will figure significantly in the rest of the book.

Here is a different way of framing the points Evans is making in the rest of this section. The predominant semantic views immediately following Russell kept the basic division, but tried to extend the acquaintance relation beyond one's

inner 'perception' of private mental items to things perceived in the environment. These would be demonstratives as normally understood — *that cat*, *this plate*, and so forth. Names — meaning ordinary proper names, not names in Russell's restricted sense of 'logically proper names' — were understood as underwritten by one or a cluster of descriptions. This was as Russell had it, since Russell also thought that ordinary proper names were really descriptions. This was still consistent with Russell's Principle in that either way, one still had discriminating knowledge of the object. One either could perceive the object directly, or one had a description or cluster of descriptions that that object uniquely fit.

Evans then points out that a good chunk of the work that was exploring the role that perceptual contact played was concerned not with language, but with belief (that is, with thought, as beliefs are thoughts judged to be true). The distinction was between beliefs that could be reported *de re*, and those that could not be, that is could be reported only *de dicto*. If you believe something about an object you can see, then it is possible for that belief to be reported *de re*. What this means is that the report on your belief can describe the object of your belief in any way. If you see a chair and believe it is broken, I can report that belief using any singular term for that object: you believe that chair is broken; you believe my grandmother's antique chair is broken (even if you don't know that that chair is my grandmother's antique chair); and so on. Any singular term for the object (*re* = thing, object) can be substituted without changing the truth value of the report. But if you have a belief about object mediated entirely conceptually (meaning, without perceptual or causal contact), then it cannot be reported *de re*, meaning that some substitutions of co-referring singular terms will turn a true belief report into a false one. It is true you believe that the next winner of Lotto will be happy, but not true that you believe that your (depressed) mother will be happy. The point is just to say that the general idea that certain kinds of causal contact could

license some kinds of belief reports — a fact sometimes expressed in terms of it creating the possibility of certain kinds of belief — was in the works. But there was not much specificity concerning the sort of causal contact that was needed. And the topic only concerned belief, not language.

3.2 Russellian Sayings: The Two Strategies

This section has five 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. To this point the discussion has (like Frege and 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 an expression means when being uttered need not be reflected in the thought of the speaker. It might rather be established by public norms concerning the expression. 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, Evans argues that so understood, proper names are Russellian, in that if there is no object then sentences using them are meaningless. In the fourth 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 fifth part, running from the top of p. 72 to the end of the section, describes a different way in which singular terms might turn out to be Russellian, and gestures towards his account of demonstratives (Chapter 6) as examples.

The first part of the section runs from the beginning to the middle of p. 69. Evans begins by highlighting the fact that so far the discussion has not distinguished the semantic features of language and thought, but we can no longer keep sliding back and forth. 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, norms that *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 are being entertained when the sentence is being *uttered*. (I emphasized the 'uttered' in the above sentence because Evans will want to draw a connection between what a sentence means and (correctly) *understanding* it.)

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*. And I get no closer to saying that *P* if instead of random phonemes, I utter a well formed sentence whose conventional meaning has nothing at all to do with *P*.

Evans also argues that intending to say that *P* is not *necessary* for saying that *P*. Evans discusses 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 Evans envisions 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 thinks that this sort of argument is why many people believe that a speaker's intention to say that *P* is necessary for saying that *P*. But Evans argues this argument misses the point. 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 phonologically identical tokens in the language game — is being employed. But once this is determined, Evans claims that the meaning of that expression is a matter of social practices — a matter 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.

The second part, from the bottom of p. 69 to the middle of p. 70, concerns proper names, and notes that they are not typically associated with any particular descriptive content such that that descriptive content is necessarily entertained when one understands 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. 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** considerations about how a subject's thought relates to an object don't necessarily carry over to how an expression in language manages to relate to an object. Evans illustrates this with what he calls a 'combined' view (note, this is just an illustration, not a position he is adopting). On this view, i) a language user might associate the name with some descriptive content that allows them, when they hear the name and 'activate' that descriptive content, to think of the correct object, but ii) the name itself, as a public object, has as its meaning simply the object, and so long as someone manages to think of the right object when they hear the name — regardless of how — they understand the name. 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, but rather, just thinking of the referent (in whatever way one wants).

The third part of the section starts at the middle of p. 70 and runs to the end of p. 71. 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 *the referent* 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 argument is compressed and may not be entirely clear. Here is what is going on. The one requirement on any expression in language is that it be able to play a role in communication. I need to be able to use an expression in a way that will reliably get you to have some sort of thought, the thought I am trying to communicate. If my use of an expression leaves it completely open that you could understand the expression correctly and yet it be completely unspecified what thought you have in understanding it, then the expression simply isn't a useful tool for communication. There are two ways that an expression can not leave things completely open. First, the expression might be associated with some way of thinking of the referent (possibly a particular description, or some other kind of Sense). If this is the case, then I can use this conventional association to communicate a thought to you. The other way is that the expression might leave open how one thinks of the referent, so long as one thinks of the referent in one way or another. In that case, I could still use the expression to communicate information to you. But any expression that had neither of these requirements

would not be such as to be useful for communicating. It would be an expression whose correct understanding by a listener would be consistent with their thinking, in any way, of any object. If I know that in hearing the singular term “Topam” you are allowed to think in any way of any object, under what circumstances could I use it to communicate to you anything useful? Evans expresses this, not entirely helpfully, in terms of the name’s lacking a ‘principle of unity’. (Note that the argument here concerns only normal proper names that purport to be of actual individuals. Proper names known to be names of fictional characters function differently. This will be discussed in Chapter 10. Also, it does not apply to descriptive names exactly because for that type of name there is a particular way one must think of the referent in order to understand the sentence, one must think of the referent in terms of the description that fixes the referent. If I told you ‘Julius is an Englishman’ and nothing about the inventor of the zip entered your mind, then you didn’t understand the name.)

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 sentence is *what is said* by someone uttering it, and that *what is said* by an utterance of a sentence is analyzed as (*properly*) *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. It is the thought that the listener must have in order to *understand* the sentence that is key. 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 a thought that is of *the referent* — in some way or other. And clearly, if there is no referent, then there is no norm, and hence no meaning.

In the fourth part of this section, which consists of the three full paragraphs on p. 71, Evans cleans up his use of the expression 'Russellian'. Up to this point, the expression has been used ambiguously as a description for kinds of singular terms (if the expression 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 linguistic 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. On Evans' analysis, they would be Russellian even if the thoughts people had in thinking of the referent were not "Russellian", perhaps because they were all via description.

The fifth 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: suppose that there is a type of singular term such that in order to understand sentences using it, the listener must entertain a certain *kind of thought* — not just a thought of any kind about some specific object (like a proper name), but a specific type 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. And in Chapter 6 and 7 Evans will discuss demonstratives and some indexicals, 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 and indexicals will have a Fregean Sense, because in order to understand expressions using demonstratives, one must think of the referent in a particular way. Evans gives a quick outline of this at the end of the section, but for now it is just an illustration. The details of the proposal about demonstratives will be filled out in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.3 Kripke: singular thought without discriminating knowledge?

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 not by any descriptive material associated with the name, but

*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. On this theory the user of a name need have no knowledge of the specifics of the causal chain, nor any descriptive knowledge of the individual who was baptized with the name. This theory can seem to run counter to Russell's Principle, which maintains that in order to think about an object, a thinker must have discriminating knowledge of the object. 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 could accept Kripke's theory — such a person would maintain that a speaker can use a name, and thereby successfully refer to an object, without that speaker being able to think a thought about that object.*

Russell held that normal proper names were covert definite descriptions. After Russell, this idea was refined to what might be called the Strawson-Searle cluster description theory of proper names, which has two parts: first, a proper name has associated with it a set of descriptive material. For instance, for Obama, it might include that he was elected President of the US in 2008, that he was a senator from Illinois, that he attended law school, and so on. Second, to use the name a language user would have to associate with the name some subset of that descriptive material. One might not know that he was a senator from Illinois, but so long as someone knew enough of the descriptive material to pick out Obama from all other people, that would be enough. This cluster theory at least 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.

Kripke's criticism of this view has two aspects. The first is the negative part, the criticism of the cluster view itself. The second is Kripke's own positive proposal. The negative part consists of Kripke pointing out that even when a language user knows almost nothing about the referent (not enough to distinguish

the referent from all other things, as required by Russell's Principle), or even when they believe false descriptive information to be true of the referent, they can still refer to the referent by means of the name. The key examples involve cases where it seems clear that someone can say that, e.g. Socrates was snub-nosed, and make a statement *about Socrates*, even if they know next to nothing about who Socrates is.

Evans points out that despite the fact that some have taken this to flout Russell's Principle, as described it does not. The distinction between language and thought is key. Kripke's examples point out that a *name*, as an item in a public language, might refer to an individual, even when a speaker of the name knows nothing about that individual. In order to threaten Russell's Principle, we would have to accept that this subject could grasp a thought about Socrates, not just use a word to refer to Socrates.

Kripke's positive account of how it is that a name comes to be able to refer to an object (or better: how a language user comes to be able to refer to an object by using the name) is as follows: all objects that have proper names acquire them at some point in what Kripke calls an *initial baptism*. In the case of people this typically happens around birth, and is effected by the parents. The people that are present at this initial baptism — that is, were in causal contact with the baptismal event — are then able to use the name to refer to the object. Other people can be made competent users of the name by being introduced to the name by those who were part of the initial circle. This passing of competence is a causal link, a causal interaction between someone competent with the name and someone not yet competent with it, often during an introduction ("This is Smith", or even "I met a man called Smith yesterday. He gave me a stock tip."). By continuing a chain of such transactions, more and more people can come to learn the name — the chain of referential competence potentially reaching far beyond the referent's spatial travels and temporal lifespan.

On this view, what makes it the case that *S* can use a name *N* to refer to *R* is not that *S* associates much or any or even correct descriptive content with the name, but rather that *S* is introduced to the use of the name by someone whose own competence is grounded in having been introduced to the name by someone ... (and here a causal history is traced, perhaps quite long and potentially involving printed matter, books, testimony or reports of witnesses, to the initial baptism).

But again, Kripke's causal theory and Russell's Principle can both be maintained, with the surely plausible consequence that one can use a singular term to refer to some object without being able to think a thought about that object. This consequence is not surprising to anyone who recognizes the distinction, which Evans has argued for, between what a subject can say by means of a name, and what a subject can think. In fact, Evans' own theory (discussed in Chapter 11), which shares some elements with Kripke's account, has this consequence.

Evans then goes on to discuss the claim that a subject might actually be able to *think* about these objects — that a language user, in being introduced to a name in this way, is now able to think thoughts about the referent. He says that Kripke mentioned this possibility a few times, but that it was not essential to his purposes. The only evidence in its favor, according to Evans, is that in some cases it seems natural to say that such a subject 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.

Evans 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. Evans points out that the inclination to attribute a belief to the speaker are strongest only where the predicate that was included in the introduction is concerned: the student heard "Socrates was snub nosed" and we attribute to the student the corresponding belief. But the inclination is much reduced if the belief in question involves a different attribution, such as '... was fat'. The generality constraint holds 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*, ... and so on. And if the student is incapable of genuinely grasping this full range of thoughts, then the student wouldn't genuinely be capable of grasping any thoughts about Socrates. This argument will certainly not be persuasive at this point, but it will be expanded at various places later in the book.

The second 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 intuitions that 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.¹ Evans will

¹ Anyone interested in language must appeal to the intuitions of competent language users, in the sense that the ground level data for any theory of language is what sentences those users take to be felicitous in this or that context. Evans has made appeal to such intuitions in Chapter 2, as part of his argument that descriptive names are referring expressions. For instance, the intuition that *Julius might not have invented the zip*. The sort of "untutored" linguistic intuition Evans is discussing here is different. Evans is here talking about language users' intuitions about theoretical matters: about what theory of reference is correct, about what beliefs a language

later, in sections 5.3 and 11.5, explain these untutored intuitions in a way which defuses their challenge to Russell's Principle. But that will also have to wait.

3.4 The Photograph Model

*In this section, Evans describes what he will call the **photograph model**. He first rehearses Kripke's theory, and points out that its lesson is that a suitable causal history concerning name uses is sufficient for a name (a word in public language) to refer to an object. Next, Evans discusses a cluster of results on the topic of belief (/thought) attribution that show that certain kinds of causal connections in perception are necessary for a thinker to entertain some kinds of thought. Evans claims that some theorists have elided the two theories to produce what he calls the photograph model (PM), which holds that having certain causal antecedents is sufficient for certain kinds of belief. That is, the sufficiency result of Kripke's theory concerning language is grafted onto the necessity result of the other cases concerning thought, resulting in the ill-gotten idea that causal antecedents can be sufficient for certain kinds of thought. He admits that if the PM were viable, it would indeed be a threat to RP, but it is not viable, it is just the result of a confusion.*

Recall the main structure of Kripke's positive proposal. Objects and people are given names, and these 'baptisms' are specific events. Those present at the initial naming baptism are competent users of the name. Others can be introduced to the practice of using the name to refer to the referent by hearing sentences uttered by competent users that employ the name. These 'hearings' of the name are causal links whereby competence with the name gets passed along. Note that this is entirely a theory of the referential properties of *words*, and says

user can have, and so forth. These are completely different things. The psychologist studying vision asks subjects what they do or don't see in various conditions. This is their ground level data. The psychologist does not ask the subjects how they think vision works.

nothing directly about whether those who use the words are able to have beliefs or thoughts about the objects referred to. Even so, Kripke occasionally spoke in terms of the subject being able to have beliefs in these cases (though Evans downplays this as something like a slip on Kripke's part.)

Evans points out that, independently of Kripke's concerns, there was at the time growing consensus that causal connections between a *thinker* and an object – connections routed primarily through the thinker's perception, or perhaps a third party's perception and their subsequent testimony – might be *necessary* for grounding certain kinds of thought about an object. That is, a causal connection between an object and a subject might be necessary for the subject to entertain some kinds of thought about that object.

Evans then discusses what he calls the *Photograph Model* (henceforth PM). The PM will figure prominently in many subsequent chapters, since it is the primary source of resistance to Russell's Principle, and Evans wants to stump for RP. According to Evans, PM resulted from a confusion or elision of these three strands. The three strands are

1. Kripke's theory of the referential power of *names in public language*, which states that causal connections tracing from the use of a name back through a **chain of name uses** to an initial naming event are sufficient for the *name* to refer to an object
2. Kripke's 'more contentious' proposal that a language user using a name that refers to an object because it satisfies (1) will be able to have a *thought* about the referent of that name. That is, the sort of **causal chain of name uses** mentioned in (1) could be sufficient for *thought*.
3. Work that showed that there are some kinds of *thoughts* about objects such that it is a necessary condition that the thinker stand in an appropriate

causal connection to the object. The kind of causal connection here is **information transferring** (via perception, or perhaps perceptual information passed from one subject to another via testimony).

In (1) - (3) I've put the sort of representational state in bold. In italics I have indicated the type of causal connection. Part of Evans' argument is that there has been an elision of i) causal links understood as introductions of name uses (which concern a name, and may not carry any information about the object) and ii) causal chains understood as passing information about an object (which in perception, and even much testimony, may not require anything corresponding to a name). Whether the connection is necessary or sufficient I have indicated in underlined text. Through confusion or elision of (1)-(3), Evans claims that some philosophers have held the photograph model (PM). It would be characterized as:

4. A causal link between the subject and an object is sufficient for the subject to have a *thought* about the object.

Evans' point is that there is no legitimate route from (1)-(3) to (4), except simply failing to keep track of which parts of the proposals (type of causation, type of representation, necessity vs sufficiency) go together.

Note that though Evans thinks (2) is a mistake, his own account will incorporate considerations relevantly similar to (1) and (3). But the point here is that even if someone adopts all three of (1)-(3), (4) still doesn't follow.

Also note that I will not here discuss Evans' example of the polish grocers, because this example and similar ones will be given much more complete

treatment in Chapters 4 and 5. I will discuss it in more detail in the discussion section of Chapter 5.

3.A Appendix

The appendix re-traces some of the ground that was covered in the chapter, and also contains an 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 the content of thought must make such room, the PM is not an adequate account of the content of thought. Moreover, the proponent of RP has materials for an account of Sense, in the form of the way that the subject is satisfying RP — their discriminating knowledge. How the subject discriminates the object can (for some kinds of thought) be the 'way of thinking' of the object to which a Fregean Sense attaches. The appendix closes with some remarks about the general strategy of the book.

Evans 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.) The first goes via considerations in “philosophy of mind”, meaning that it establishes that a kind of singular term is Russellian (meaningless if empty) by i) claiming that the term's meaning derives from a certain kind of thought one must have to understand it, and then ii) showing that that thought is object-dependent. Putting (i) and (ii) together, if there is no object, there is no thought, hence no possibility of understanding the singular term, hence the term is meaningless if there is no object. (Evans will argue that demonstratives are Russellian for these reasons.) The

second strategy is to show that a singular term is Russellian without doing so by linking those terms to object-dependent thoughts. (Evans will argue that proper names are Russellian in this way).

Evans points out that Kripke's account of names makes them Russellian by the second sort of strategy. If there is no object, there there is no causal chain tracing back to that object's baptism, and hence the name is meaningless. And the sorts of thoughts that the PM takes to be licensed by causal contact with an object would likewise be Russellian, in that if there were no object, there could not be the sort of causal connection to an object that is putatively providing the thought with its content.

If we frame it in terms of Russell's distinction between description and acquaintance, both Kripke's theory and the PM are attempts to explain reference that is non-descriptive, that is, is by acquaintance. The expansion of the "acquaintance" relation beyond Russell's application of it to one's inner experience of one's own sense impressions is effected by allowing causal contact to do the work of acquaintance. But in the case of the PM, the generalization would flout Russell's Principle.

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) points out that for Russell, reference (as opposed to denotation) did not allow for a notion of Fregean Sense. Since the referent was just the sense impression, the two issues that motivated Sense (informativeness of identity statements, and empty singular terms) did not arise. With sense impressions, one would know if the impression didn't exist, and one would always know if two of them were the same. The object itself, the sense impression, was just a part of the grasped thought. Evans calls this the ordered-couple conception of a (Russellian) thought,

according to which it is the object itself that occurs in the thought as a required component. Such an ordered couple thought would indeed be Russellian, since if there were no object, it could not be used as one of the components required to build the thought. And it also would preclude any notion of Fregean Sense. The object is there as a component or it is not, there is no room for a 'way of illuminating' the object, or 'way of thinking' of the object on this view. Evans states that he himself will embrace Russellian singular terms (and Russellian thoughts), but will insist that in some cases — e.g. demonstratives — they do also have a Fregean Sense.

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 and renders the relevant thoughts Russellian. Evans gets there by means of the following circuitous route:

- i. if one tries to extend the class of Russellian singular thoughts beyond sense data while observing Russell's Principle, then one has the tools for a theory of sense. This is because conformity to Russell's Principle requires that the subject know which object they are thinking about — that is, that the subject have some means to distinguish the object from all others. Call this the subject's means of identification of the object. This means of identification will be a particular way that the subject is thinking of the object, and hence will provide the materials for an account of Sense.
- ii. 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 key to (ii) is this passage:

And it is quite obscure how, if one mental state represents a particular object in virtue of one sort of causal relation to it, and another mental state (of the same subject) represents that object in virtue of another sort of causal relation to it, the sheer difference between the causal relations could generate a difference in content between the two mental states, given that it need not in any way impinge on the subject's awareness. (VR, p. 83)

One may wonder what the point of the connection to awareness is. But if Senses are distinguished by the intuitive criterion of difference, there must be a connection to the subject's awareness at least insofar that the subject is willing to assent to "a is F" and withhold assent from "b is F". If the subject is unaware of any difference between their a representation and their b representation, why on earth why would they adopt different attitudes to the two?

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 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 mentioning the object they are talking about regardless of how that object might be identified by the singular term they use, or the speaker's thought about the object. Thus if Smith and I both know Elisabeth (aka 'Liz'), and Smith says "Elisabeth is feeling sick today" I could report this saying transparently either by saying "Smith said of Elisabeth that she is feeling sick today", or "Smith said *of* Liz that she is feeling sick today". And even if Smith does not know that Liz

is the person that keyed his car, I could correctly say "Smith said *of* the person who keyed his car that she is feeling sick today."

By contrast, a *notional* report is one that reports the content of the saying in a way that captures the way that the speaker's utterance identified the object, and hence it carries more information. I could not make a correct notional report of Smith's saying as: "Smith said the person who keyed his car that she is feeling sick today."

Hence notional reports carry more information than transparent reports. Both indicate which object Smith was talking about, but only the notional report also indicates *how* Smith's *saying* identified the object.

Evans says he is prepared to admit that there might be sayings — uses of public language — such that a report of the content of what is said should be limited to what is reportable transparently. His own position with respect to proper names is an example. Since Evans takes it that the only thing required to understand a proper name is that one think of the referent — and it does not matter at all *how* one thinks of it — then the content of what is said by using a proper name should be limited to the transparent style. If one tried to use a notional report, one might be able to indicate how in fact the speaker was thinking of the object when she uttered the sentence. But this would not be part of the content of *what was said* by speaker in using the sentence, since one could understand the sentence without thinking of the referent in that same way. Given this, Evans admits that it might be fine to conceive of proper names on the ordered-couple conception.

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 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 person is prepared to believe 'that ship was built in Japan' (looking at the ship through the first window) and also 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, and that ship was not built in Japan." The PM thus requires us, or so it seems, to be prepared to suppose normal subjects to be irrational in some very ordinary circumstances. That ends the argument against the PM in this Appendix.

The remainder of the Appendix, from the last line of p. 84 to the end, is an attempt to 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.

While thought by description was non-Russellian, thought by acquaintance was Russellian. Such thought involved not denotation but reference, and reference works by presenting the referent. No referent, no meaning.

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, he limited acquaintance (and the associated applicability of the semantic function of reference) to mental particulars. It was only for such referents that the subject would be incapable of being wrong about their existence. 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 relation beyond Russell's Cartesian limits? However we do it (allow perception of physical objects to count?) notice that if the relevant thoughts 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 type of thought being attempted is Russellian, and 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 to do this is the PM. This extends 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. Consequently, this the model can make no room for a notion of Fregean Sense.

What would an an approach to Russellian thought that did not flout RP look like? If, unlike the PM, we embrace Russell's Principle, we will be crediting to subjects discriminating knowledge of the objects of thought which is i) not descriptive; ii) does not take causal relations to be sufficient (though they may be necessary); and iii) 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 so long as there are multiple ways in which a thinker can discriminate an object, each of these ways will correspond to a way of thinking of the referent, and these ways will be candidates for Fregean Sense.

3.D Kinds of thoughts (Part 1/4): General remarks

Many readers don't buy Evans' claim that in the steel ball case one cannot think about just one of the balls; or that the student who hears "Socrates is snub-nosed" cannot think about Socrates; or that the hallucinator who says "that little green man is charging!" is having no thought, and expressing no thought, and nothing counts as understanding him. Many people have the intuition that they can think about one of the balls, that the student can think about Socrates, and that they understand the hallucinator's sentence perfectly well. But most of the resistance comes from not correctly understanding Evans' position, and when they are properly understood are less objectionable than is often thought.

My explication/defense of Evans on these topics will be distributed across discussion sections at the end of several chapters. In this discussion (for Chapter 3) I will make some general remarks aimed at explaining the doctrine and the general source of resistance. In a discussion section for Chapter 5 I will discuss the steel balls and polish grocers examples in more detail; in a discussion section for Chapter 9 I will discuss attempted demonstrative identification of non-existent objects; and in a discussion section for Chapter 11 I will discuss proper names (e.g. the student's understanding of 'Socrates'.)

The large-scale view of the problem is that Evans expresses his doctrines by describing some circumstances, and then claiming that in those circumstances there is no understanding (the student), or no thought (that ball, that green man). And this suggests a certain kind of all-or-nothing assessment: thought or no thought, understanding or no understanding. What he fails to adequately address is the fact that although his position is strictly speaking right (as I shall argue), the circumstances he describes often allow for *different* thoughts that approximate, to some extent or other, the thought that one, strictly speaking, cannot have. And it is these easily imaginable *surrogate* thoughts that fuel the skeptics' conviction that, despite Evans' claims, there *are* thoughts, or understanding, in these circumstances. The doctrine is that the student cannot think a thought about Socrates. But this does not mean that the student can do *nothing* — the student can grasp an existential thought filled out with some plausible specifics: e.g. *There was an ancient philosopher who is currently very famous and who had a snub nose.*

That's the very basic idea. In the remainder of this discussion I expand a bit on this basic idea. I won't go into great detail in any of the three problem cases, but rather will try to give enough of the flavor to take the immediate sting out for those who find Evans' pronouncements chafing. The idea is that this part can be read at about the time Chapter 3 is read, since that is where most of these examples come up, and where readers' skepticism about Evans' intuitions starts to mount. I discuss the steel ball and polish grocer examples in more detail after Chapters 4 and 5 have been read. Then I discuss cases of attempted demonstrative identification of non-existent objects (like a hallucinated little green man) after Chapter 9. And finally, cases such as the student who hears about Socrates will be discussed in the context of the material from Chapter 11. But first to the general points.

Evans is concerned in these cases with a specific kind of thought, what we might call a *particular-thought*. This is a thought such that in order to specify its

content, mention would have to be made of some particular object. This contrasts with thought by description or quantificational thoughts. This is an important point, so let me develop an example. Suppose I make a wager with you: I bet you \$100 that Obama will, at some point before he dies, move to California. And you accept the wager. As part of this exchange, we are both grasping the thought that *Obama will move to California*. Under what conditions would this thought be true (what would count as me winning the wager)? No quantificational existential thought would do. If *a former US president moved to California*, that would not suffice for me to win. In fact, even if *all former US Presidents* moved to California, this would not suffice. Suppose it turned out that Obama never was a US president, it was all an elaborate hoax orchestrated by the media, the RNC and DNC: McCain won, and in fact was secretly sworn in, but it was decided that Obama would be the fake public face of the office. In that situation, all former US presidents could very well move to CA. But unless *Obama* moved to California, I still wouldn't win the bet (you would hardly pay me the \$100 if, though Obama lived in Illinois, I showed you definitive proof of the conspiracy. You would rightly reply that our bet was about *Obama*, not about 'former US presidents'). Moreover, suppose that in 2028 the surname of the person elected US president is "Obama". And that after leaving office, this person moves to California. You would still not pay up. For you would rightly say that our bet was not about whether "a former US president whose name is "Obama"" would move to California, but is rather about whether *Obama* moved to California. The point of all this is to highlight a way in which the content of a thought (a content that could be picked up in a wager) can be attached to a specific object, a *particular*.

I want now to turn to the topic of what I will call *surrogate thoughts*. If you utter the sentence "Paul Churchland is in the next room", then, since I know Paul Churchland personally, by any account I can grasp the thought *Paul Churchland is in the next room*. This is a particular-thought in the sense described above. But a

third party who overhears your sentence but doesn't know Paul isn't completely powerless to form beliefs on the basis of what you've said. Depending on what general world and linguistic knowledge the third party has (e.g. "Paul" is a name for human males) or the nature of our conversation (you told me "Paul Churchland is in the next room" with an expression and intonation that suggested that we both know the person you are talking about), a third party could formulate any of a large number of beliefs:

A famous philosopher who has written about eliminative materialism is in the next room.

A famous philosopher is in the next room.

Someone, who is probably a philosopher, is in the next room.

A man, probably older than 30, and probably known to both of the interlocutors, and probably a philosopher (since we are at an APA convention) is in the next room.

These are all existential or descriptive thoughts, with varying amounts of descriptive content. Now Evans' position is that in order to understand your sentence, I have to grasp a thought about *Paul Churchland*, in fact, a particular-thought about PC in the sense discussed above. And given that, the doctrine is that anyone who can't grasp that thought doesn't understand the sentence.

Putting things this way causes resistance, because someone who doesn't know Paul Churchland at all isn't unable to get any information from your sentence. They can easily grasp any of the above surrogate thoughts, and this isn't trivial. Any of these beliefs provide potentially useful information that someone who didn't hear the sentence, or who didn't understand English, wouldn't have.

A crucial part of Evans' doctrine is that for most sentences there is what one might call the *prescribed thought* one should have to understand the sentence in the way intended. The use of a proper name often indicates that the prescribed thought is a *particular-thought*. If you didn't want to prescribe a particular-thought, you could have chosen some other locution, like "A famous male philosopher is in the next room", or whatever. So what Evans means when he says that *S* can't understand your sentence is that *S* can't grasp the *prescribed* thought. But expressing this by saying "*S* can't understand your sentence" sounds far too strong, for it sounds as though Evans is claiming that *S*, who may very well grasp any or all of the above surrogates, is being assimilated to someone who doesn't even speak the language.

So far I've described *particular-thoughts*, and also introduced the notions of a *prescribed thought*, and a *surrogate thought*. By extension, we might speak of particular-Ideas, prescribed-Ideas, and surrogate-Ideas. Next I want to discuss various kinds of surrogate-Ideas. Consider a sentence using a proper name, like "Paul Churchland (PC) is tall", and the associated prescribed particular-thought [*a* is *F*], where *a* is a particular-Idea of Paul Churchland. A variety of surrogate-Ideas are available to anyone who doesn't know Paul Churchland. Some, like those mentioned above, are existential or quantificational in form. Others might take the form of definite descriptions, and hence capture *singularity* (they register the fact that only *one* thing is being mentioned), even if they fail to capture *particularity*.

Some descriptions can bring in the names themselves as part of the descriptive apparatus. For example, the subject in the case described above might think of the person in the next room by description as "The person whose name is "Paul Churchland" is in the next room." As seen above in the Obama case (where someone else with the same surname gets elected in 2028), this description still doesn't capture the prescribed particularity.

One way to get particularity with a definite description would be to bring in not only the name, but the *particular people using the name*. When the third party overhears you telling me that PC is in the next room, he can formulate a descriptive thought he might express as “The person that *those people* know as “PC” is in the next room.” The description gets at a particular object by piggy-backing, so to speak, on the ability of people who know PC to have particular-thoughts about PC. Call such an Idea a piggy-back-Idea.

The doctrine is that even though a piggy-back-Idea is a particular Idea that attaches to the right object, it is still not the *prescribed* particular-Idea in this context. (We'll have to wait until Chapter 11 to fully spell out why.)

In all the cases Evans discusses, there is a prescribed thought, but there is not such thought available to be grasped. Even so, there are very many surrogate thoughts available. And normal language users have such felicity formulating surrogates — that often, for contextually relevant purposes work just as well as the prescribed thought — that they don't even notice the difference. The student is able to formulate many surrogates, including some piggy-backing-particular thoughts; the hallucinator's interlocutor is able to formulate many surrogates, including the existential “my friend believes there is a green man who is charging”; and the subject in the steel ball case is able to construct a variety of surrogates, including existential, and even definite descriptions that invoke discriminating features, such as the causal connection itself.

I hope to at least have explained Evans' position more clearly. It is not there there is absolutely no thought available in these cases, but that there is a *prescribed particular-thought* that is not available. In all these cases though there are many potential surrogates, some of which are even particular-thoughts. But Evans is after, in each case, an analysis of a specific kind of particular-thought, and the doctrine is that in these cases, these particular particular-thoughts are not available. My hope is that this much will at least temporarily appease the sceptic,

even if she is not yet won over. This latter task will require going through each of the cases (the steel balls, the green man, Socrates) in more detail. But the discussion of each of these will have to wait.