

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

Rick Grush
Department of Philosophy 0119
University of California, San Diego
La Jolla, CA 92093

8.0 What Happens in Chapter Eight

In the early chapters of the book Evans pointed out that there have traditionally been three ways deemed to be sufficient for providing individuating thought about objects: description, acquaintance/perception, and recognition. Evans hasn't discussed description much, mostly because he is mainly interested in information-based thoughts and purely descriptive thought are not based on information about the world. And he has discussed acquaintance/perception at length in Chapter 6 as a demonstrative mode of identification. That leaves recognition. Evans does three main things in this chapter. First, he argues for the importance of recognition in our communicative and even non-communicative practices. Because we are concerned to acquire knowledge about individuals, as opposed to types, we need a way to recognise when we are confronted with the same individual s again. Second he argues at length that recognition can't be reduced to, or understood as a form of, descriptive identification. Third, he addresses the objection to the effect that there is no guarantee that recognitional capacities are genuinely individuating, for there may be duplicates that one would misidentify as the recognized object. Evans responds to this by pointing out that our recognitional capacities have spatiotemporal constraints built into them. Though in the appendix he gives a different account of how potential duplicates are handled.

8.1 Introductory

In this section Evans introduces the idea that an encounter with an object can be not only a source of information about the object, but can also allow the subject to gain a recognitional capacity for the object. Evans claims that in some (common) circumstances the possession of such a capacity is sufficient for an adequate Idea of the object, and thus allows for the satisfaction of Russell's Principle with respect to thought about that object. Evans brings up two objections to this proposal. One he addresses in this section is that sometimes objects change their appearance, and so we can't recognize them any more. While of course we may no longer be able to recognize the object, Evans says we can still have thoughts about it through our recognitional capacity, and our knowledge of how objects

persist through time. The second issue is the possibility of duplicates, and discussion of this gets deferred to section 8.3.

Evans opens by discussing the issue of how one might think of something that one encountered previously, and from which one retains information. The source of individuating knowledge during the encounter — a perception of the object's location in space — is no longer available. One possibility is to try to exploit some individuating facts about the object to construct an information-based definite description (e.g. *that G was F*, see the examples from Chapter 5), including possibly the fact that it is the source of the retained information. This may work in many circumstances.

But this is all prelude to another source of discriminating knowledge: recognition. Prototypically this happens when one's previous encounter and the information one derived from that encounter provides one with a capacity to *recognize* that object if presented with it again. Having such a recognitional capacity for an object is sufficient, in some circumstances at least, for the subject to have an adequate Idea of the object.

The first issue is the fact that such initial encounters typically provide two things: information that can be marshaled to form a description of some degree of specificity, and a capacity for recognition. So there is an issue concerning how to understand the differences between these two. Some might want to assimilate recognition to knowledge of a description (Evans will argue against this later), or less radically give equal or heavier weight to the descriptive material than the recognitional capacity. But Evans will argue that the recognitional component is 'dominant' (in a manner analogous to how, with demonstrative identification, location is dominant over any descriptive element):

...if a subject is disposed to identify a particular object as the object of his thought, and in so doing is exercising a genuine recognitional capacity stemming from the encounter or encounters from which the memory-information that saturates his thought derives, then, it seems to me, that object is the object of his thought, irrespective of whether or not it can be identified by means of any descriptions which the subject might otherwise use. The subject may have a perfectly erroneous view of the place and time of the encounter, and quite misremember what took place in it, without this preventing him from having a perfectly clear Idea of the object he means. We would certainly not obtain this result if we thought of a recognitional capacity as merely amounting to the knowledge of one description (presumably a description of the thing's appearance), to be thrown with the other descriptions into a composite descriptive identification; for if the subject was radically mistaken in his other beliefs, such a composite description would identify nothing. [p. 269]

In the middle paragraph of p. 270 Evans points out that there are cases in which recognitional capacities are clearly involved and dominant in our thought: he gives the example of observational concepts, such as *red*, where it is our capacity to recognize the color *as red* when presented with something red that is the relatively uncontroversial foundation of our ability to think thoughts involving the concept *red*.

At the bottom of p. 271 Evans points out two challenges to the view that a recognitional capacity can provide for an adequate Idea and thus satisfy Russell's Principle. The first, which he will mention now but not address until 8.3, is that Russell's Principle requires discriminating knowledge in the sense that the subject must be able to distinguish the object of thought from *all other objects*. And it seems as though a recognitional capacity cannot do this, since it seems always possible that there might be

more than one object that one would be inclined to 'identify' as the one previously encountered — a physical duplicate, for instance.

The second problem is the reverse: cases where the recognitional capacity fails to recognize the right object — for instance cases in which the object has undergone alterations of appearance that would foil a current recognition attempt. Evans discussion of this challenge begins with a parallel case: one's thought to the effect that some object was *red*. In this case, one's recognitional capacity for the property *red* allows one to have an adequate Idea, so to speak of red, an Idea whose employment is not tied to thoughts about objects whose time indication is such that the subject can effect the recognitional capacity at that time. Evans discussed this sort of case in Chapter 4. The suggestion is that the recognitional capacity for red allows me to understand $[\delta \text{ is red}]$ for arbitrary δ . And my knowledge of identity conditions through time for objects of the relevant sort allows me to understand statements such as $[\delta_t = \delta_{t'}]$. So my thought now, at t' , that this object was red at t , is a product of my knowledge that $[\text{this} = \delta_t]$, $[\delta_t = \delta_{t'}]$ and $[\delta_{t'} \text{ is red}]$.

The situation with recognitional capacities for particulars is similar. Evans introduces the notion of something's being *recognizably a*. Upon an encounter with an object a , one can gain a capacity to recognize a . This capacity endows the subject with a concept of something's being *recognizably a*, a concept which gives the subject an adequate Idea of the object, and which is applied to a again when recognized. If a goes out of existence, or changes appearance so that it would no longer be recognized by the subject as a , this does not obliterate the concept or the capacity to think of a by means of that Idea. One can entertain the thought $[\text{This was recognizably } a]$ in a manner parallel to my grasp of *this was red* discussed above.

8.2 Recognition and the Informational System

This section does not describe the workings of recognition and its role in thought so much as provide reasons why such a capacity has selective utility and is so important in our dealings with the world. The basic idea is that it is really important for us to be able to collect information about individuals (as opposed to types). And both the collection of this information, and its exploitation, require us to recognize individuals. In this section can also be discerned two distinct (but related) roles that recognition will play in Evans' project: the first is the ability to recognize objects and landmarks that set and define the cognitive map which undergirds our objective thought about the world. The second is the capacity to recognize specific people and places (and some other things that receive proper names) — this will play a significant role in Evans' account of proper names to be developed in Chapter 11.

After pointing out that much of our information about the world, both present and past, has been gathered in a way that makes essential use of recognitional capacities, either by ourselves or by those from whom we have received the information, Evans goes on to briefly discuss one particular application of recognitional capacities: the ability to recognize physical objects is arguably a prerequisite for a capacity to re-identify them, which itself is arguably a prerequisite for having a conception of an objective world. Evans cites Swinburne here, but he might as well have cited work of his own in Chapter 6, as well as his 'Things without the mind', and his teacher Strawson's work in *Individuals* and

The Bounds of Sense. Evans does not expand on this issue here, which is unfortunate since it plays such a huge role in his program.

What he does expand on is the utility of recognition of particular agents. His discussion opens with a consideration of the difference between two kinds of learning systems: a system that, on the basis of encounters with individuals, retains information only about the *type* of individual encountered. Evans' examples here are perfectly clear. The result of such learning would be that objects of type *G* are liable to perform certain kinds of acts with certain probabilities: dogs are very likely to bite; men with beards are quite unlikely to give me ice cream; or whatever. Contrast this with a learning system that, in addition to learning such propensities of kinds, is also able to initiate and maintain dossiers of information about *individual agents*. There are clearly many conditions under which being able to do so yields great utility. A subject might learn that while in general dogs are very friendly, the particular dog *d* is almost certain to be aggressive and violent.

While the utility of such informational dossiers initiated and maintained with a single particular in mind is clear, less appreciated is that in fact recognitional capacities equal to the task of reliably recognizing the individuals that are the target of the dossiers is almost always a precondition for having such individual-targeted dossiers. After an initial encounter, when a dossier is started, all future encounters will need to be recognized as encounters with that same individual in order for the subject to be able to invoke the correct dossier — whether the goal at the time is simply to add more information to the dossier, or to bring the information already in it to bear on the subject's thoughts and deliberations during the encounter. And descriptive information is seldom up to the task.

At the top of p. 277, Evans lists some ways in which this system can break down or evolve: the dossier and the recognitional capacity may outlive the individual it is associated with, or outlive the reliability of the capacity's ability to recognize that individual; more than one object may, unknown to the subject, be 'recognized' as the same by the subject's recognitional capacity; and so forth. Many of these will be discussed, especially in Chapter 11. But the occasional problems of this sort don't undercut the tremendous value of the overall process.

Evans closes with a plausible explanation for why we are ready to allow recognitional capacities (and location in space) to trump descriptive modes of identification. Evans remarks in this final paragraph are sparse, but I think his point is this. Descriptive resources are built on the basis of conceptualizations of information that have been derived from one or more information channels. But it is the nature of many of these channels that misinformation is not infrequent: especially in the testimony system, but memory as well. And even if the information was initially fine, the features of objects that are most likely to be of use in a definite description (but are not involved in recognition) are often likely to change from encounter to encounter. In many such cases (though certainly not all) a conflict between an identification via spatial location or a recognitional capacity on the one hand, and descriptive elements on the other, signals a problem (being in error or outdated) in the content of the information that is the basis of the description. Of course, it can work the other way as well in certain circumstances. This issue is one of the relative overall reliability of the accuracy of the information or the non-descriptive mode of identification, and Evans is here claiming that the latter have a significant edge most of the time. (E.g., if I meet someone and thus gain a recognitional capacity and also information to the effect that he is clean shaven, and a few weeks later I meet someone I am inclined to recognize as the same person but with a beard, my initial impulse is to trust the recognitional capacity and assume either that I misremembered the facial hair situation, or that it changed in the interim.)

8.3 Recognitional Capacities and Space

Here Evans does two things. First, he addresses a concern that was raised in 8.1 but put off, to the effect that recognitional capacities cannot be sufficient to distinguish an object from all others because of the possibility of confounding duplicates. He points out that our use of recognitional capacities is constrained by our implicit understanding of spatial and temporal factors. We understand their implicit boundaries. Second, Evans discusses the possibility of 'mixed Ideas' that have a recognitional component as well as some other component, such as descriptive or demonstrative. The idea is that in some cases, especially when one realizes that there is a duplicate around, or when one just sort of knows that the spatial and temporal boundaries that constrain their recognitional capacity have been exceeded, subjects have an ability to construct a mixed-Idea that essentially supplements their recognitional capacity with further materials in order to render the Idea adequate. (This proposal will be modified considerably in the Appendix.)

Evans claimed in 8.1 that a subject's having a recognitional capacity for an object was sufficient for that subject's satisfaction of Russell's Principle — that is, it gives the subject an adequate Idea of the object. Evans there brought up the following possible objection: since we can never know that there are not exact physical duplicates of these objects, we can never be justified in claiming that these capacities allow us to distinguish the object from all others, as Russell's Principle requires. Thus recognitional capacities cannot underwrite adequate Ideas.

Evans' reply to this is effectively the claim that there is more to a recognitional capacity than just that aspect that this objection focuses on. The objection focuses on what might be called *narrowly* recognitional aspects, based on the object's appearance. But Evans claims that *spatiotemporal location* is also an aspect of a recognitional capacity. For example, Evans says that:

However good a child is at responding differentially to presentations of his mother's face, he cannot be credited with recognizing a particular person, rather than a comforting type of person, unless he has the resources for rebutting, on spatio-temporal grounds, provisional re-identifications of other objects rendered plausible by their appearance. (P. 279)

So if the child responded to a mother-looking person who entered from a door on the left in the same way that she responded to a mother-looking person who exited the door on the right just a half second prior, then this would be evidence that what the child is exercising is not a recognitional capacity for an individual, but for a type. This seems plausible, and the explanation seems to be that spatiotemporal constraints are built in to our capacity for recognizing individuals.

There are two kinds of location that can serve as the supplement to appearance-based recognition: egocentric and allocentric. The commonality is that in both cases, the location sets up a sort of default domain within which one takes it that one's narrow appearance-based capacity suffices to single out just one individual.

Evans' sheep example is of the egocentric variety, and it is clear enough. The radio example is of the allocentric variety. With these spatial considerations articulated, Evans cashes out (at the bottom of page 279 and the top of p. 280) what it is for a subject to have a recognitional capacity for some

particular individual: i) the subject must be disposed to recognize x on the basis of its appearance; ii) there must not be another other individual y other than x in the relevant search domain that the subject is disposed to recognize with the same capacity; and iii) x is the right individual, that is, the individual the encounter with which provided the subject with the recognitional capacity to begin with.

The addition of egocentric and allocentric spatial location criteria to recognitional capacities rules out the blanket objection to seeing recognitional capacities as capable of satisfying Russell's Principle. Of course such capacities can still be undermined by the unknown presence of confounding individual *within the search domain*, but this is a different sort of worry (to be addressed presently). And a requirement of this sort of recognitional capacity is the ability to make a number of practical inferences about the relevant search domain, based in large part on knowledge of how things, including oneself, moves in space.

So what if there is such a confounding individual, an unencountered duplicate in the relevant domain?¹ This brings up the second issue Evans discusses in this section. There are **two sorts of case** here. In the **first**, we imagine that the subject *continues to assume that her recognitional capacity is adequate* because she is unaware of the confounding individual. In such a case the recognitional Idea will no longer be adequate.

The **second** sort of case is one where the subject becomes aware of the fact that there is a confounding individual in the search domain (but this individual has still not been encountered). Evans is keen to argue that from the fact that in the first sort of case described above the subject would not have an adequate Idea, it does not follow that in the second sort of case the subject must lack an adequate Idea. The reason is that upon learning of the second confounding individual, the subject will, so to speak, switch Ideas from the one that she has just realized is not adequate to one that is. This new Idea is what Evans calls a *mixed Idea*. In this case, the mixed idea in question is based on the recognitional capacity along with a bit of conceptual supplementation of the form '... which I have met' or '... which I saw', or something of the sort that exploits the fact that the individual the subject means to think of is the one that was encountered.

Evans is careful to point out that even if there are no other individuals, this conceptual material is *available* to the subject. But normally it is redundant, and so normally is not exploited in the construction or maintenance of the subject's Idea of the object. But because it *is* there, the subject has an immediately available fall-back Idea to exploit, a mixed Idea. (This will be discussed further in the Appendix.)

8.4 Recognition and Recall

In this section and the next, Evans tries to cement the central place of recognition in a theory of thought and reference by pointing out that it cannot be analyzed away as something along the lines of a description. There are two primary points in support of this. The first is that even if recognition in some sense involves the use of information retained about an appearance (perhaps stored in sub-personal neural systems), it is typically not in a form of a description that subjects can recall, since recognition memory works differently from recall memory, and a description, to be capable of providing

¹ Cases in which the subject encounters both but thinks there is only one will be discussed later on

the content of thought, would need to be recalled into awareness. And second, it appears not to be the case that anything that the subject can recall is actually the basis upon which the recognition is effected. This is in part because subjects will often recall erroneous features which nevertheless they would not recognize. For example, if asked to describe something I recognize I might list features such that if an object with those features were actually constructed and I were presented with it, I would see that the features I listed were inappropriate. (The next section, 8.5, will argue that in fact there is reason to believe that recognition does not in any sense involve the use of a description, not even one stored sub-personally as a memory of an appearance.)

After some preliminary remarks, Evans begins with a distinction between two kinds of memory, recall and recognition. Evans describes the canonical psychological experiment demonstrating the difference: when presented with a list of words that one is to remember, there will be many items which, though one is not able to *recall* them later (if asked to write out a list of the words on the original list, the subject will not include these words), the subject will, if presented with them later, *recognize* them as being words that were on the original list. This is part of common experience: if asked to name all of my colleagues at my former institution of employment, I am sure I would forget a few of the names; but if presented with a list including all of them (even if the list included a large number of 'distractor' names), I would be able reliably to recognize all of them.

Evans then develops another example: our memory for routes and landmarks. My ability to recall the features of a route I often drive may be rather poor; but my recognition ability for items on the route, even crucial landmarks, might be very good.

Evans' point with all this is not to quibble of the term 'remember', but is to point out two things. First, that the information one can recall is often insufficient to serve to adequately describe or discriminate things that one in fact has a very good ability to recognize. My ability to recognize the right route to a location often requires much more by way of discriminatory power than what I can recall. This is one reason giving someone verbal directions to a location often goes awry. Second, the information that plays a role in the subject's recognitional capacities but which is not accessible to recall can not be part of what the subject is *thinking*. The idea here seems to be that this information is stored subpersonally, in the subject's nervous system, and hence not available to the subject as materials to construct a description that they entertain.²

With these points in hand, Evans claims that we must count recognitional capacities as providing for a capacity to support thought that cannot be understood on a descriptivist model. Evans provides an example of the man who thinks "That Russian was drunk." Given that the subject has a recognitional capacity for the object of his thought, we must accept that the subject really can entertain this thought. By the same token, the subject will be unable to recall features of the person sufficient to distinguish him from all others, as a *description* would have to do in order to be adequate to sustain singular thought. (Of course, the subject *could* very well think of the same person by description, as 'the man I saw last night in the corner drinking vodka', but Evans' example is meant to involve a subject essaying a recognition-based thought expressible felicitously as 'That Russian' as opposed to a

² There is a typo at the end of the first paragraph on page 287. It reads "... with his having forgotten that there is such a route", but should say "... with his having forgotten that there is such a house." That 'house' is correct should be clear from the point being made in the text.

descriptive thought of the form just mentioned. Evans' point is that the recognition-based 'That Russian' cannot be understood as a sort of covert description — a description of the Russian's appearance; not that one could not think of what is in fact the same person by means of a description.)

At the top of page 288, Evans turns to his next point, which is that *even if* we could recall a detailed image or description, it would greatly falsify the facts of recognition to claim that we recognize something by recalling the vivid detailed image or description and comparing it to the object. The point can be made more strongly than Evans makes it. I can recognize any of hundreds of people as I walk through campus, where I typically see thousands of people walking about. Does it really make sense to think that for each of the thousands of faces I see *I* (not my nervous system, but *I*) run through each of these hundreds of descriptions (the vast majority of such attempts yielding a 'no match' assessment), and when one of them corresponds to the description of, for example, the department chair I effect a recognition? Surely not. The mechanisms of recognition are best understood, as Evans claims, by neural mechanisms, not mental (e.g. formulating and applying a description) ones.

8.5 Recognition by Description

Having argued in the last section that recognition does not appear to involve anything like recall of an appearance, and that even if we could recall such information, we do not appear to make recognitions on the basis of recalled information, in this section Evans argues that the information contained in a recognitional capacity typically cannot be captured in descriptive terms.

Evans will argue that the information on the basis of which recognition is effected cannot typically be captured in descriptive terms. Or more accurately, that the attempt to treat the stored information as capable of supporting a description won't work. Evans will use the example of the recognition of faces, and the first kind of proposal he canvasses is a crude one to the effect that we use descriptions such as 'receding hairline' and 'eyes widely spaced'. He points out that in fact it appears that these things are *not* the features to which we are responsive in recognizing faces. Rather, it is the nervous system that is sensitive to things such as the ratio of the distance between the eyes to the distance between the nose and the mouth.³ And again, this does not seem to be anything of the sort that subjects are conscious of when recognizing faces. The point is that if it can be captured in terms of a description, it does not seem to be the sort of description that most people would think of or be able to consciously apply.

The opponent Evans envisages then makes the following move: granted, the *stored information* is not used by the subject to construct a description of the form *the φ*. Rather, the information is used to construct a mental image that the subject does have access to, and the description used by the subject

³ The investigation of how the brain codes for facial recognition has advanced since Evans wrote this, but in a way that only makes his point stronger. The manner in which the nervous system effects face recognition hinges on features even more abstract than the sorts of features Evans mentions here, and hence features even farther from anything the subject could have conscious access to.

is something like 'x looks like *this*' or 'x looks more like this than anyone else I have met' where the 'this' is a sort of inner demonstrative aimed at an internally generated image of the face. In order to make the discussion easier, Evans' suggests that we pretend the image is an external one. This won't affect the points being made. So the idea is that the subject is using the image to construct a description *the φ*, where the key concept in this description is "... looks like [image]" or "... looks more like [image] than anything else."

So now Evans turns to the assessment of similarity, since the only way this could work is if the subject can assess the similarity between the image and the object. His first point is that the similarity assessments made by individuals are not judgments but *reactions*. I think that it is safe to say that the point here is that my assessment as to whether *x is similar to y* (in some respect or other) is analogous to my assessment as to whether *z is delicious*, or *w is cold*. Evans seems to be saying that in order to be a judgment it must be truth-evaluable, and such reactions are not truth-evaluable. This may or may not convince every reader, but I think we can skirt this issue by pointing out that if these assessments are judgments, there are two ways to understand them: as indexed to an individual or not. That is, as *x seems, to s, to be similar to y*, or as *x seems similar to y* (full stop). In order for one to be said to be making an assessment of the latter objective sort, one would have to treat the assessment as beholden to public agreement. That is the only possible source of correctness for assessments such as this. If the subject maintains that *x is similar to y* despite everyone disagreeing, then at best we can see the subject is making an assessment of the first sort, which involves seeing it as having the form *x seems to me to be similar to y*.

The paragraph bridging pp. 294-5 addresses the possibility that the intended relation here is the objective one. The problem with this is that it leaves open the possibility that the subject is idiosyncratic in their similarity assessments. And this would yield a situation in which the subject has an image that they produced with the police sketch artist after meeting X, and X turns out to not be objectively similar to Y, but rather to Z. And in such a case we would have to say that S's recognitional capacity singled out Z, not Y. And this seems unacceptable. Here is the case cashed out in terms of a concrete example. I meet Barack Obama. On the basis of this meeting I go to a sketch artist to create an image that I can use to tell if I meet him again. I will compare the sketch to people I meet, and when someone is sufficiently similar I will judge that this person is Obama. At the end of the session what is produced is a sketch that strikes most people as a sketch of Donald Trump. For some idiosyncratic reason, if I look back and forth between that sketch and Obama, they strike me as similar. On the account we are currently considering, because the sketch is objectively similar to Trump, my recognitional capacity is for Trump – who I have never met, and who I would not recognize by means of the sketch. As Evans puts it (using the example slightly differently):

Why should *X* not have an idiosyncratic similarity space in this area? Yet it would surely be absurd to be driven to the conclusion that *X* was really thinking of *Y's* brother (whom he has also met), and not *Y*, on the ground that most people find the police artist's representation more like *Y's* brother than *Y*. [p. 294-5]

So with the objective reading of similarity ruled out, can we get by with a subjective notion of similarity? This is what Evans addresses at the top of p. 295. There are two arguments here. The first is that if it is understood subjectively, when it effectively becomes a private concept. And Wittgenstein showed, to many people's satisfaction, that these aren't legit. Evans recognizes that not everyone will find this convincing.

This brings us to the second argument, which is actually related to the first one (and which spells out, in one way, the problem with private concepts, but we don't need to get into that connection to make the current point). The argument is that if we understand the similarity assessment that underwrites the recognitional capacity as subjective, then this proposal gets things the wrong way around. Our goal, recall, was to explain the mechanism by which S is able to recognize X. And we appealed to an image maintained by S that would be used for this purpose. In order for this to work, the image's similarity to X must be independent of S's ability to recognize X. But the purely subjective nature of this image and similarity relation undercuts this requirement:

But by invoking a property of which X possesses a private concept, we have thrown away any semblance of applying this model. We cannot say that X recognizes Y because Y satisfies the property ϕ ; rather, we can say, at most, that Y satisfies property ϕ in virtue of X's recognizing him. (p. 296)

8.6 Mixed Ideas

In this brief final section, Evans expands on a topic first broached in 8.3: the possibility of a subject having an Idea of an object that is mixed in that it involves more than one way of knowing which object is in question. Such mixed Ideas are hybrids of more than one of the pure 'ways of knowing which'. Evans discusses cases which are, and which are not, decomposable into component Ideas. If the information in the dossier is decomposable into sets that each correspond to one object, then each of these Ideas can be well-grounded. If not, then there is no possibility of a well-grounded thought about either object.

Evans opens with an example of a thought that involves two ways of thinking of the same object: a judgment of identity between a man met on a previous day, and a man currently demonstratively identified. Such a thought might be expressed as *This man is that man*, where the 'this man' is a demonstrative identification of a perceptually present man, and the 'that man' is a memory-based thought, perhaps resting on a recognitional capacity, or an information-based descriptive thought. Upon making the identity judgment, the information in the controlling conceptions of each of these Ideas will be combined into a single dossier on the strength of the demonstrative identification. This new controlling conception is the counterpart of one kind of mixed Idea of the object.

Evans points out that in the sort of case just imagined the Idea, though mixed, will be *decomposable* into its components, because presumably the subject will be in a position to recover the original Ideas by segregating the information back into distinct controlling conceptions. This might be necessary if the subject learns that she has made a mistake, and that *this man* is in fact not *that man*. In such a case, Evans says, the subject is not in trouble, for she can recover her original Ideas in such a way as to make sense of the denial of the identity judgment. (She will have adequate Ideas capable of serving on both sides of the identity operator.)

But it is also possible that the subject is not in a position to recover the original Ideas. For example, after a long period of time over which the subject had many encounters with what were in fact two

distinct people, twins perhaps, that she took to be identical. In each new encounter the object is identified demonstratively, and the information gained is added to the growing dossier. We are to imagine that the subject is unable to segregate the information into distinct files that correspond to the two objects. In this sort of case Evans claims that no coherent Idea of the object is available.

Evans provides no special argument here, but the proposal is familiar by now. It is the same as that exploited in Chapters Six and Seven, where he argued that in order to be well-grounded (and hence adequate) an information-based thought must identify as its object (via the mode of identification appropriate to that kind of Idea) the object that is in fact the source of the information. Ill-groundedness results when there is more than one causal source of the information associated with an Idea that is taken to single out a unique object (or no causal source). When the Idea is decomposable, it is possible for the two Ideas to support well-grounded thoughts. When they are not decomposable, the inability to reverse-engineer any adequate Idea with a single causal source renders well-groundedness impossible.

Evans does allow, however, that in many cases it will be possible for a subject, when she learns about duplicates, etc., to be able to recover at least some of the information into a dossier capable of supporting an adequate Idea: for example the information gained during the most recent encounter.

It should be noted that Evans discussion here is not entirely clear in one respect. He does not clearly distinguish between two ways in which information might be segregated. One way would be to separate them based on the kind of information-based thought that initially gave rise to the information. This sort of segregation might yield in one file all the information that was gained demonstratively from all the information that was gained via testimony. Another way to segregate it would be by the object of origin. If one learned that all the occasions where one encountered a person one 'recognized' as Smith in the evening were encounters with *A*, while all the encounters with the person 'recognized' as Smith in daytime were encounters with *B*. All information may have been from similar kinds of information links, but the subject may simply be unable to separate the information out so as to be confident that the 'evening Smith' is the one who is married and has a summer home in Italy, and the 'daytime Smith' is the one who plays online poker and has an allergy to pineapple. While the discussion indicates that it is the second sort of information segregation whose success is crucial for re-establishment of adequate component Ideas of the objects involved, some of Evans' language inadvertently and misleadingly suggests it is the first.

It will also help to stay clear on the fact that there are two different kinds of problems discussed here that can be caused by doppelgangers. The first is that any such doppelgangers in the vicinity can render the recognitional capacity inadequate, and render the Idea it supports inadequate (in Evans' technical sense) even if the doppelgangers are not encountered. The second sort of problem can arise only if there are encounters with the doppelganger. It is that the information contained in the dossier associated with the object will end up containing information from more than one object, and hence thought-attempts based on the Idea will be Ill-grounded.

8.A Appendix

In the Appendix McDowell traces some lines of thought Evans probably would have explored more had there been time. These lines concern the right way to understand the aspect of recognition-based thoughts that renders them typically immune to the problem posed by duplicates elsewhere in the universe. There are three parts to this section. First, Evans suggests that what he described in the chapter as a fall-back option — a mixed Idea consisting of a recognitional capacity and a descriptive element to the effect of “which I met” — is in fact the primary mode of identification. Second, he points out that this route still allows for the satisfaction of RP, though in a different way from that explored in the chapter. Third, he points out that if this is the standard mode of identification in recognition-based thoughts, then it provides another argument for their Russellian status.

The body of the chapter maintained that having a recognitional capacity is sufficient for having an adequate Idea of an object, so long as this is understood to include the appropriate spatiotemporal considerations as described in 8.3. In the chapter it was maintained that under normal circumstances the subject would not resort to any sort of descriptive element such as ‘which I have met’ in order to supplement the recognitional capacity, but that such supplementation would be an available fall-back if the subject were to learn that there were a doppelganger in the vicinity. (Keep in mind that the sort of trouble case envisioned here is where there is a doppelganger, but the subject has not encountered the doppelganger. In this sort of case the information is in fact from one object, but the recognitional capacity, on which the subject’s satisfaction of Russell’s Principle relies, will not uniquely pick out one object. If, on the other hand, the subject has unwittingly met this doppelganger and misidentified it, then an additional problem — ill-groundedness — is present in the subject’s attempted thoughts.)

But now the suggestion is that this fall-back case is actually the primary case:

... it seems undeniably the case that at least part of the conception that one has of an individual one can think of, in the way that is the concern of this chapter, is that it is a conception of an individual which one has met. (P. 299)

Note that this would do much of the same work as the spatiotemporal considerations appealed to in Section 8.3, since my own spatiotemporal history places spatiotemporal limits on which objects I may have encountered.

The final paragraph canvasses another potential advantage of this new conception. The argument of 8.4 and 8.5 centered around an attempt to preserve the Russellian status of recognition-based thoughts by arguing that they were not descriptive. One objection to this defense is that merely being non-descriptive is not a guarantee of being Russellian. For example, one might have a recognitional disposition for something that does not exist, in the sense that if that thing did exist it would trigger the disposition to ‘recognize’ that object. But here it is claimed that on the new conception (on which a recognition-based thought aimed at a particular is a sort of recognition-descriptive hybrid invoking an encounter between the object and the subject), the Russellian status of these thoughts is secured.

It could be argued that this is perhaps not the best theoretical possibility here. It is true that these mixed Ideas will escape being hostage to the possibility of nearby unencountered doppelgangers, but it is not clear that it does so in a way that immediately secures their status as Russellian. For the non-existence of the object would not render the thought-attempt contentless, even on this new proposal. Indeed, a perfectly coherent notion of the content would be available: an object that would trigger the recognitional capacity and also such that the subject encountered it. Just as a recognitional capacity can be a disposition that would pick out a specific object if it existed, so too the descriptive component

'which I have met' would also be true of an object if I had met it. It seems that truth conditions can be constructed from these materials. Adding these two non-Russellian ingredients together does not obviously result in a Russellian Idea.

But Evans is not without resources here, for it is not clear why the ideas developed in the Appendix to Chapter Five cannot have application in this case. There, recall, the topic was how to understand the difference between *the φ* and *that φ* . In my notes on that Appendix I pointed out that there were three options:

- A. It is taken into account by the well- vs. ill-groundedness criterion. With information-based thoughts, subjects have the *high level goal* of thinking of the object that is the causal source of their discriminating knowledge.
- B. The fact that the object is the causal source could be explicitly included as descriptive content — if *the φ is the tallest spy in the room*, *that φ* would be *the tallest spy in the room who is also the causal source of my information*
- C. The *Idea* of the object reflects the fact that thoughts employing it are information-based.

Option A is taken in the main text of Chapter 5. Evans argues in many places that B is not the way to go. The line he explored in the Appendix to Chapter 5 is to go with C. That is, to reconceive the Idea not as a descriptive Idea that has another requirement strapped on to it, but as an Idea that has, as part of its constitutive requirements, that it is information-based.

Here in Chapter 8 we see Evans exploring recognition-based Ideas. In the main Chapter he argues for something analogous to B as a fall-back Idea, and here in the Appendix he is suggesting that something analogous to B is in fact the primary case. I am now suggesting that the better option would be for him to analyze recognition-based Ideas analogously to C.

The reasons are first that it seems to do the work that needs to be done, but in a way that makes it consistent with what he says elsewhere. Assuming of course we take the notes that became the Appendix to Chapter 5 to represent, so to speak, the cutting edge of the evolution of his thinking on these matters that didn't quite make it into his revisions by the time of his death. And second, that it does a better job of doing what he wants to achieve in this last part of the Appendix, which is produce an argument for the Russellian status of recognition-based Ideas.

How this last bit works may not be obvious, since it might be wondered why working in "which I have met" as part of a supplementation to the purely recognitional component fares any worse than working in a requirement that the Idea has as part of its characterization that it be information-based in this way. A key can be seen in the last parenthetical remark of the appendix:

We can now see that when we say that a recognitional capacity is a disposition to respond in certain ways to an object on the basis of its appearance, we have to give the phrase 'an object' wider scope than the specification of the content of the disposition. (p. 301)

This is enigmatic, but here is one way to cash it out. For ease of exposition let's treat the purely recognitional component (inaccurately) as a description — something that applies, like a description, to

all and only objects that would trigger the recognitional disposition. It is pointed out in the Appendix that it seems that this might provide for a sort of content even if there is no object that would trigger the dispositions. The ways to specify the the content of the recognitional element (now understood not “purely”, but with the specification that the Idea is information-based) would be:

A disposition manifested in response to an object's appearance

But a sentence of this form is familiarly ambiguous. ‘Object’ could be given wide scope, and the reading would be that there is some specific object such that a disposition manifested in response to that object constitutes the content of the Idea. The narrow scope reading would be that the content is the manifestation of the disposition in response to some object (or other). The suggestion here is that the informational element of the Idea establishes that it is the wide-scope version that is in play. The question is, on what grounds is the wide-scope specification established? I am suggesting that the suggestion made in this Appendix doesn't quite do it, because it is essentially just adding more descriptive specifications. But if we see the recognition-based Idea as constitutively requiring that its object be the very object that is the source of the information upon which the recognitional disposition was forged, it becomes a singular Idea (as opposed to a descriptive /denotational one).

This will make exactly as much sense, or as little, in this context as it did in the Appendix to Chapter 5. But assuming it is workable, it would seem to be the best way to understand how to secure the Russellian status of recognition-based particular thoughts in a way most faithful to the lines explored in the appendices to both Chapters 5, 6 and 8.