

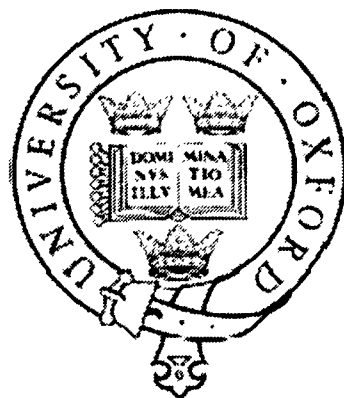
Descriptive Names: A Contribution to the Semantics of Referring Expressions

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ABSTRACT

A theory of *descriptive names* is developed and defended against several objections. Descriptive names pose an interesting challenge to any theory of reference, since they possess both features of proper names and definite descriptions, i.e. of expressions which are often considered to be radically different. These features are referentiality and descriptive sense. The thesis takes as its point of departure Gareth Evans's theory of descriptive names, improves upon it and discusses several other authors and related theories along the way.

Chapter 1 provides an brief introduction to the topic and an abstract of the main lines of argument. *Chapter 2* argues that descriptive names possess both referential status and descriptive sense, and that these qualities constitute the two most basic elements of the notion of descriptive reference (which is contrasted with Russellian reference). It is demonstrated that not all names introduced by description are descriptive names, a claim which is given additional substance by a comparison between Evans's and Kripke's accounts of such names. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with two major challenges to the possibility of descriptive names. *Chapter 3* explores the possibility of a truth-conditional theory of meaning for descriptive names, but it is shown that if we follow Evans's suggestion that the semantic value of a descriptive name is to be construed according to model theory – namely, as an entity distinct from the referent (a set) – such a theory will result in treating descriptive names as predicates, and thus eliminate them qua referring expressions. Similar accounts given by other authors are also examined and found to be problematic. I conclude by rejecting the model-theoretic notion of semantic value. *Chapter 4* addresses a second challenge, posed by the fact that if a descriptive name has a descriptive sense, then given a Russellian analysis of definite descriptions, descriptive names must be quantifier phrases, and thus, again, non-referring expressions. It is argued that if this is true, then the use of negative free logic is unnecessary. Using the idea of rigidified descriptions, it is shown that Evans's arguments, based on modality and simplicity considerations, fail to save both the referentiality and descriptive sense of descriptive names while semantically dissociating them from descriptions. I show that descriptive names can be treated as shorthand for rigidified descriptions and thus semantically on a par with the latter, which, as I demonstrate, is still consistent with Evans's own (convincing) solution of the puzzle of the contingent *a priori*. Nevertheless, this still does not guarantee the referentiality of descriptive names. *Chapter 5* presents in detail the argument that we can only save the referentiality and descriptive sense of descriptive names if we treat definite descriptions as referring expressions. Several negative arguments undermining the most influential defences of the Russellianism are given and three positive accounts of referring descriptions, Wettstein's, Sainbury's and Strawson's, are critically discussed, finally settling, with some *proviso*, for Strawson's. Finally, the principles of a 'Fregean' free logic for Strawsonian semantics are sketched, and I suggest ways in which a truth theory could be expressed by means of these principles. *Chapter 6* summarises the achievements, sketches possible research concerning descriptive names and concludes that the analysis of descriptive names is useful in at least three ways: it provides us with means to, first, solve problems that arise from the introduction of artificial expressions such as descriptive names (e.g. the problem of the contingent *a priori*), second, to better understand our natural language and its relation to formal theories of meaning, and, last but not least, to give a strong rationale for a referential treatment of definite descriptions. *Chapter 7* includes the bibliography and *Chapter 8* a list of axioms and formulas.

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*I know no better way to honour a philosopher
than to continue to find his thoughts
worth taking issue with.*

John McDowell

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the publication of Bertrand Russell's 1905 article "On Denoting", names and descriptions have not been on friendly terms in linguistic theory. Russell argued that definite descriptions, contrary to appearances, are not referring expressions. Instead, descriptions are pseudo-expressions that we can eliminate by paraphrasing 'atomic' sentences in which they occur as complex quantified statements. Thus a paradigm emerged: we have genuine referring expressions on the one hand and definite descriptions as non-referring expressions on the other. In his later work, Russell also eliminated most proper names, with the exception of two genuine, 'logically proper' names: 'this' and 'that', which he did not deem eliminable. Subsequent theorists did not accept this more radical elimination, and preferred instead to treat ordinary names as genuine referring expressions. Still, a large majority of them agreed with Russell: definite descriptions are not referring expressions. But there were and are also dissenting voices, such as Peter Strawson's, who argued that descriptions, at least in some uses, can very well be understood as referring expressions. Thus for the last decades, especially since Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* lectures in the 1970's, we have seen a long-standing debate over the relation between definite descriptions and

names, with the majority vote being given to Russellianism in the case of definite descriptions and direct reference theory in the case of names (I am painting here a very idealised picture). Depending on the account, descriptions are seen either as pseudo-expressions, quantifier phrases, or even quantifiers, while names, and indeed any referring expression, are seen as so different from descriptions that they lack a descriptive meaning or content even if introduced by a definite description. This explains why the direct reference view is sometimes described as ‘non-descriptivism’ or ‘anti-descriptivism’.

But is it correct to say that a name, when introduced by a definite description, cannot take over the latter’s descriptive content? I argue that it is not correct. We have the phenomenon of so-called *descriptive names*. Think of ‘Neptune’ as introduced to refer to the supposed planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus. Such a name seems to have a content, namely that of the introducing description, whether or not it has a referent. We understand ‘Neptune is heavier than our planet’ as saying ‘The planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus is heavier than our planet’. But despite its descriptive content, ‘Neptune’ is nevertheless a *name*, and thus a referring expression. But how can a referring expression have the content of a non-referring expression, if descriptions are really to be treated *à la* Russell? Some theorists have argued that this is not possible. Indeed, Peter Geach (1986) has called descriptive names a ‘myth’. A few others, however, have claimed that such descriptive names do really exist or are at least a semantic possibility. Gareth Evans provided the most sophisticated argument to this effect, and I shall take his theory as my point of departure. I will argue with Evans that descriptive names do exist, have a descriptive sense and are referring expressions. However, I will also point out the unsatisfactory aspects of his theory, and I will detail the ways in which these need to be improved. In

the process, I will also provide a critical discussion of several other authors and theories, and eventually offer my own and novel account of descriptive names.

The argument will develop in the following way.

Chapter 2 argues that descriptive names possess both referential status and descriptive sense, and that these qualities constitute the two most basic elements of the notion of descriptive reference (which is contrasted with Russellian reference). It is demonstrated that not all names introduced by description are descriptive names, a claim which is given additional substance by a comparison between Evans's and Kripke's accounts of such names. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with two major challenges to the possibility of descriptive names.

Chapter 3 explores the possibility of a truth-conditional theory of meaning for descriptive names, but it is shown that if we follow Evans's suggestion that the semantic value of a descriptive name is to be construed according to model theory – namely, as an entity distinct from the referent (a set) –, such a theory will result in treating descriptive names as predicates, and thus eliminate them qua referring expressions. Similar accounts given by other authors are also examined and found to be problematic. I conclude by rejecting the model-theoretic notion of semantic value.

Chapter 4 addresses a second challenge, posed by the fact that if a descriptive name has a descriptive sense, then given a Russellian analysis of definite descriptions, descriptive names must be quantifier phrases, and thus, again, non-referring expressions. It is argued that if this is true, then the use of negative free logic is unnecessary. Using the idea of rigidified descriptions and treating descriptive names as shorthands for the former, it is shown that Evans's arguments, based on modality and simplicity considerations, fail to save both the referentiality and descriptive sense of descriptive names while semantically dissociating them from descriptions. I show

that descriptive names can be treated as shorthands for rigidified descriptions and thus semantically on a par with the latter, which, as I demonstrate, is still consistent with Evans's own (convincing) solution of the puzzle of the contingent *a priori*. Nevertheless, this still does not guarantee the referentiality of descriptive names.

Chapter 5 defends the referentiality and descriptive sense of descriptive names by offering arguments in favour of a referential treatment of definite descriptions. Several negative arguments undermining the most influential defences of Russellianism are given and three positive accounts of referring descriptions, Wettstein's, Sainsbury's and Strawson's, are critically discussed, eventually settling, with some *proviso*, for Strawson's. Finally, the principles of a 'Fregean' free logic for Strawsonian semantics are sketched, and I suggest ways in which a truth theory could be expressed by means of these principles to capture the semantics of descriptive names.

Chapter 6 summarises the achievements, sketches possible research concerning descriptive names and concludes that the analysis of descriptive names is useful in at least three ways: it provides us with means, first, to solve problems that arise from the introduction of artificial expressions such as descriptive names (e.g. the problem of the contingent *a priori*), second, to better understand our natural language and its relation to formal theories of meaning, and, last but not least, to give a strong rationale for a referential treatment of definite descriptions.

Chapter 2: Two Basic Ideas

This chapter introduces the theory of descriptive names by presenting the basics of Evans's account. It is shown how his account rests on two basic ideas, the referentiality and descriptive sense of descriptive names, but it is also argued that not all names introduced by description are descriptive. Evans's account is then contrasted with Kripke's.

2.1 An overview

This section introduces the main aspects of the theory of descriptive names in an informal manner. It also mentions the tasks ahead and some challenges the theory faces.

As mentioned in the introduction, the prevailing approach to the semantics of referring expressions is non-descriptive. According to the direct reference view, a singular term contributes an object to the truth-conditions of a sentence containing it.¹ Even if a description is used to fix the reference of the term, the description certainly does not determine its meaning. The referent 'enters' the proposition itself. If there is no referent, the sentence lacks not only a truth-value, but even truth-conditions, and it is thus meaningless and incapable of expressing a thought (object-dependence). An additional aspect of non-descriptivism is rigidity, the fact that the expression picks out the same object with respect to all possible worlds (or at least all those in which the object exists).

¹ See e.g. Recanati (1993), p. 3.

Evans himself accepts, although with important modifications, the direct reference paradigm. He calls terms falling under this paradigm *Russellian terms* and he devotes the greater part of *The Varieties of Reference* to their exploration. Nevertheless, he thinks that there are also *non-Russellian singular terms*, which constitute an interesting exception to the rule. Evans elaborates in the first two chapters of *The Varieties of Reference* ('VR' henceforth) and in his article "Reference and Contingency"² ('RC' henceforth) a complex and compelling case for the existence of non-Russellian terms, in particular of one sub-category, so-called *descriptive names*.³ Briefly put, descriptive names are introduced into language by purely linguistic means, namely by a single reference-fixing definite description. 'Purely linguistic' means: such introductions do not necessarily employ non-linguistic means such as deictic gestures⁴ and their understanding does not presuppose knowledge of relevant truths about the world, especially concerning the possible bearer. Primarily, Evans is concerned with descriptive names for *physical* objects, but one can introduce such names for abstract objects (such as numbers) as well, and they constitute an interesting case to test the theory. According to Evans there are other kinds of non-Russellian terms besides descriptive names, namely 'certain expressions used in connection with deferred ostension' and certain pronouns (so-called E-type pronouns), but he does not explore these in detail in the cited book and article.⁵ I will concentrate here on descriptive names for physical objects and leave the analysis of other types of

² RC, pp. 178-213. Roughly half of this article made it into the first two chapters of VR. There are also scattered remarks about non-Russellian terms in other parts of VR and some of his other articles, and I will refer to them when necessary.

³ Peter Strawson used the label 'descriptive name' to designate referentially used definite descriptions. See Strawson (1974), p. 60, and Evans's acknowledgement in RC, p. 179, fn. 3. There is, of course, also a wider, non-philosophical use of this phrase, singling out names which convey some explicit descriptive information about the bearer, e.g. 'The Virgin Maria', 'Bob the Builder', 'The President'. These significant appellations may be, but don't have to be, descriptive names in our technical sense.

⁴ Of course, this distinction can be disputed. On a Wittgensteinian account the ostensive definition of names is no less linguistic than their purely descriptive stipulation.

⁵ See his fn. 8 in VR, p. 48. On deferred ostension see VR, pp. 143-45, 310, but also Evans (1985a), pp. 21f. Evans explores this issue with respect to pronouns in his articles 4, 5 and 8 in CP.

non-Russellian terms for some other occasion.

A passage from 'Reference and Contingency' will serve as the starting point of our discussion:

'A descriptive name is a name whose reference is introduced by description. This formulation covers two points. First, a descriptive name is a referring expression; it belongs to that category of expressions whose contribution to the truth-conditions of sentences containing them is stated by means of the relation of reference. Second, there is a semantical connection between the name and the description; the sense of the name is such that an object is determined to be the referent of the name if and only if it satisfies a certain description. If we borrow an idea of Frege's (as expressed by Dummett) and think of a statement of what an expression refers to as simultaneously showing, or displaying, its sense, then we may say that a descriptive name has a sense which is displayed by the statement that it refers to whatever it is that satisfies such and such a description. In this way, a descriptive name has a descriptive content' (RC, p. 180).

This passage touches upon several substantial aspects of Evans's doctrine. It tells us in what sense a descriptive name is introduced by description, how it relates to the description, what its semantical features are and how these can be determined within a theory of meaning. All these issues will be dealt with in the course of this investigation.

Nevertheless, already here we should be aware of two of the most remarkable features of descriptive names mentioned in Evans's passage. (i) One is the fact that they are *referring expressions*, since the statement of their truth-conditional role can be

formulated by means of the relation of reference, as is the case with Russellian singular terms. (ii) The other is the fact that the name thus introduced is semantically very close to the definite description: a descriptive name has, like a description, a descriptive content or sense.

Further corollaries are: Sentences containing the name have the same sense, express the same thought, as parallel sentences containing the description. It is a necessary condition for the understanding of the name that one know its relation to the introducing description and grasp the sense of the description (or some other expression with the same sense).⁶ Since a sentence containing a description is usually understood as being meaningful whether or not the description is satisfied by any object, it follows that the sense of a sentence containing a descriptive name is equally referent-independent. Even if empty, descriptive names do not render the respective sentences meaningless. There are further interesting features of descriptive names, such as their scope and rigidity, but I shall defer these issues until later. For now, let us label the two basic ideas guiding Evans's theory of descriptive names:

First Basic Idea: Descriptive names are referring expressions.

Second Basic Idea: A descriptive name has the same sense (or content) as the introducing definite description.

Both these ideas have foundational status and my goal is to defend them. If even one of them is proven mistaken, we will be forced to conclude that there are no descriptive

⁶ It is therefore mistaken to say, as Alan Berger does, that a speaker can understand a descriptive name even if he doesn't have knowledge of the reference-fixing description. See Berger (2002), p. 8, and Soames (2005a) for a reply.

names. But I don't think we are forced to such a conclusion.

Here is one famous example Kripke gives: the naming of Neptune.⁷ That planet was named using a clause such as 'Let us call "Neptune" the planet causing perturbations in the orbit of Uranus' prior to any empirical confirmation about the planet's existence.⁸ Even so, independently of the planet's existence and any knowledge about it, speakers did understand the name 'Neptune' and sentences such as 'Neptune is heavier than our planet'. This places 'Neptune' immediately outside of Russell's paradigm of reference.⁹ Nevertheless, it is a referring expression. For, since the planet existed, 'Neptune' surely referred to it. But even if the planet had not existed, the name could have still been described as a referring expression, since speakers could have indicated *reference conditions* specifying what would have to be the case for the name to refer. Thus 'Neptune' was a non-Russellian term, at least prior to its telescopic confirmation.

⁷ Kripke (1980), p. 79, fn. 33.

⁸ This is not a correct description of the historical events. The name 'Neptune' was given to the planet only after its existence was confirmed (and a serious controversy over its name was settled; Leverrier actually wanted to call the planet after himself). See O'Connor/Robertson (1996). But there are other instances of names which were introduced by description in scientific contexts prior to the empirical confirmation of the existence of the name's bearer. 'The Kuiper Belt' is one such example (see e.g. Valtonen/Zheng/Mikkola (1992), where the authors use the term with the explicit qualification that the Kuiper Belt is yet unobserved).

⁹ 'To understand a name you must be acquainted with the particular of which it is a name, and you must know that it is the name of that particular' (Russell (1918), p. 205).

2.2 First Basic Idea: referentiality

One basic idea about descriptive names, their referentiality, is explored here in general terms. The underlying semantic principles of Russellian reference are formulated and used as a contrast to formulate similar principles for non-Russellian reference.

Before looking specifically at descriptive names, I wish to detail the idea of non-Russellian reference in general. Evans's idea of a category of non-Russellian singular terms is best understood when contrasted with his theory of Russellian singular terms. It is therefore useful to look at this theory first, which is expressed by the following conditions:

For any noun-phrase ' α ':

Reference Criterion: ' α ' is a Russellian referring expression only if the semantic role of ' α ' is determined solely by employing the relation of reference and no other semantical relation.¹⁰

Russell's Criterion: ' α ' is a Russellian referring expression only if it is impossible

¹⁰ VR, pp. 49f.; RC, p. 180, 184. This criterion is 'extracted' from principle (P) *ibid.* We will see later that the term 'relation of reference' has to be further specified, given specific issues about modal contexts.

It should be mentioned that this criterion cannot serve as a fully-fledged definition of 'referring expression', as Dr Stephen Williams has pointed out to me. Not only are there non-referring expressions that are covered by it (e.g. function terms), but a definition of the notion of reference still faces quite formidable difficulties which so far few theorists have tried to overcome (such exceptions being for instance Dummett, Wright, Hale, Williams). According to Dr Williams one promising strategy is to use a paradigmatic explanation of the form: ' α ' is a paradigmatic referring expression if there is a true statement "' α ' refers to α ' and any expression ' β ' is a referring expression if there is a true statement containing ' β ' as a relatum and bearing enough similarity to "' α ' refers to α '. Reference may thus be seen as a family resemblance concept.

that ' α ' is empty and a sentence containing it expresses a thought (VR, p. 43).

In addition, there is a principle for the level of thought:

Russell's Principle: A subject can have and express a singular thought about some object a only if he has identifying knowledge of a . To have identifying knowledge is to stand in a *de re* cognitive relation to a , which cannot obtain if a does not exist (VR, chapter 4).

These conditions are underlying Evans's lengthy analyses of various kinds of Russellian terms in *The Varieties of Reference*, e.g. demonstratives, token-reflexives, and proper names. I shall not go into this. But there are three corollaries of these conditions which are relevant for us, since they articulate the idea of 'referent-dependence' (or 'object-dependence').

Referent-dependence of semantic role: The semantic role of a Russellian term is to stand for its referent. Consequently, if the term does not have a referent, it has no semantic role.

Referent-dependence of sense: The sense of a Russellian term depends on the term having a referent. Consequently, if the term does not have a referent, it has no sense and is therefore strictly speaking senseless. (I will come back to the notion of sense.)

Referent-dependence of thought: A sentence containing a Russellian term expresses a thought (and possesses truth-conditions), only if that term has a referent. If the term has no referent, then the sentence has no sense, expresses no thought and is therefore

senseless (meaningless).

One may hold that the Reference Criterion just makes more explicit what Russell's Criterion only implies, and therefore the latter could be taken to do the job alone. However, this would be erroneous, since the Reference Criterion, on one of the two possible readings I propose, actually provides justification for Russell's Criterion. For to say that the relation of reference is needed to indicate the semantic role of a term could be understood as meaning that such a relation obtains, namely between the term and the referent. Hence, if there is no referent, then no such relation is instantiated either and the name has no semantic role, in other words it is not a referring expression. A sentence in which such an expression occurs is literally meaningless. Russellian reference requires the existence of the referent: the referent itself 'enters' the truth-conditions of any sentence containing the name. Russell's Criterion is already entailed in this reading of the Reference Criterion.

But there is a *second* reading of the Reference Criterion. On this reading to say that the relation of reference is needed to state the semantic role does not mean that such a relation actually has to obtain and that there has to be an actual referent. All that is needed is that the relation of reference is specified in a 'roundabout' way, namely by formulating a *condition for the possibility of its obtaining*. We specify what needs to be the case for some expression ' α ' to have a referent. We say: ' α refers to ... if and only iff condition *C* is met. (This also gives the form of truth-theoretical clauses Evans himself considers, as we will see in the next chapter). But we do this in such a way that the availability of the condition itself comes to be constitutive of the semantic role of ' α ', such that ' α ' would have a semantic role even if *C* is *not* met. For even then we could still specify what *would* have to be the case for ' α ' to have a referent, i.e.

specify the condition itself and thus mention the relation of reference.¹¹ The same holds for the truth-conditions of respective sentences. In other words: the clause introducing the name would be intelligible whether or not the condition it states is met (i.e. whether or not the name has a referent). Conditionality of semantic role is a crucial aspect of non-Russellian reference.

To be sure, the Reference Criterion for Russellian terms also formulates a condition. But it is a condition which, if it is not met, has as a consequence the denial of the referential status of ' α '. By contrast, in the case of non-Russellian terms, the condition just mentioned is not a condition on the referential status of the term, but only on what the referent is, if any. It follows that while in the case of Russellian terms referentiality and the availability of a referent are two sides of the same coin, in the case of non-Russellian terms these notions stand in a different relation to each other. Here 'having referentiality', or more simply 'having reference', is *not* coextensive with 'having a referent'. A non-Russellian term has a reference condition (is a referring expression), but may not have a referent. Introductions of non-Russellian terms are always *reference-fixing*, but only sometimes referent-fixing. This again is a crucial aspect of non-Russellian reference.

We can therefore formulate, purely on the basis of these reflections, a version of the Reference Criterion that does not entail Russell's Criterion:

Non-Russellian Reference Criterion: ' α ' is a non-Russellian referring expression if and only if (i) the semantic role of ' α ' is determined by there being a condition available that states what has to be the case for the reference relation to obtain

¹¹ See also Dummett (1993), p. 298.

between ' α ' and some object (to be appropriately described), and (ii) it is possible for ' α ' to be empty and a sentence containing it to express a thought.

We can see here clearly why this criterion does not imply Russell's Criterion: ' α ' would only fail to be a referring expression if there was no condition available to indicate the circumstances in which the reference relation would obtain.¹² But of course, such a condition will be always available, once it is introduced, even if no entity satisfies it! In a way the specification of the concept of non-Russellian reference is doubly conditional: it is characterised by the necessary condition that a certain reference condition is specified. By contrast, the concept of Russellian reference is simply conditional; here the necessary condition is that a certain reference relation is instantiated. We can contrast the two notions of reference as "conditional" and "relational" respectively. Some theorists, like Evans, accept both notions, while others deny the possibility of either conditional reference (e.g. Gregory McCulloch) or relational reference (Mark Sainsbury).¹³

The above reference criterion allows us to formulate our First Basic Idea in general terms (i.e. not only applied to descriptive names):

First Basic Idea (of non-Russellian terms): Non-Russellian terms are referring expressions.

¹² But what shall we say in cases in which such circumstances are impossible? Can we introduce non-Russellian terms by means of *impossible* reference conditions, e.g. by means of necessarily empty descriptions ('the greatest prime number', 'the man without any weight')? It seems to me that an impossible condition is not really a condition ('impossible' is not an ordinary attribute on 'condition'). Something should be counted as a condition only if we can specify at least in principle what would count as its satisfaction. By saying 'If you kill yourself, you can marry my daughter' king Otto has not stipulated any condition for Prince Eberhard to be allowed to marry the King's daughter (see *Monty Python's Flying Circus: Fliegender Zirkus #2*; example slightly modified). Nevertheless, I shall leave this issue open.

¹³ See my discussion of McCulloch and Sainsbury in 4.3 and 3.5/5.3 respectively.

The possibility of singular terms whose semantic role is independent of the existence of a referent has an important consequence for a concept central to Evans's semantics: *sense*. If sense is defined in broadly Fregean terms as the mode of presentation of the referent, then singular terms which may fail to have a referent seem also to fail to have a sense. But this would be catastrophic, since a senseless expression fails to contribute anything to the sense (truth-conditions) of an embedding sentence, thus making the sentence itself meaningless. We could not really use an empty non-Russellian term to make any significant move in language by uttering a sentence containing it. Such a term could certainly not be characterised as having a semantic role independently of having a referent. Hence, we must modify the notion of sense in such a way that it is not a function of the possibly non-existent referent. Sense must instead be made a function of what is neutral with respect to the existence of the referent. Well, that is obviously the referentiality of the term itself, as established by the referent-independent reference condition. Hence, we could tentatively define the sense of a non-Russellian term as the mode of presentation of the reference condition. We will see later what this exactly means. What is important is that sense is here conceived as referent-independent.

There is a corresponding thesis applying to the level of *thought*. While a thought expressed by a sentence containing a Russellian term is referent-dependent, the same does not hold for a sentence containing a non-Russellian term. And since to understand a sentence containing a singular term, at least on Evans's view, is to grasp the thought expressed, the referent-independence of sense must also extend to the understanding of both non-Russellian terms and sentences containing them. Nevertheless, the referent-independence of such thoughts does not mean that the

sentences expressing them cannot be about singular objects. They surely can, namely just in case there is an object that satisfies the reference condition. It only means that Russell's Principle does not hold for such thoughts, since no identifying knowledge about some object is necessary to entertain them. To summarise:

Referent-independence of sense: Non-Russellian terms have a sense independently of whether they have a referent.

Referent-independence of semantic role: Non-Russellian singular terms have a semantic role independently of whether they have a referent.

Referent-independence of thought: A sentence containing a non-Russellian singular term has a sense (expresses a thought, possesses truth-conditions) independently of whether that term has a referent.

Referent-independence of understanding: To understand a non-Russellian term it is sufficient to grasp its referent-independent sense. There is no need to have identifying knowledge of what the term may refer to.

2.3 Two ways of introducing a name by description

It is argued that not all names introduced by description are non-Russellian. Some such names are actually Russellian – a fact not explicitly dealt with by Evans. Further issues concerning the semantic status of name-introducing clauses and of definite descriptions are discussed.

We have seen in what sense we can speak of non-Russellian terms being referring expressions. But how exactly are non-Russellian terms introduced into language? As stated above, we need to formulate a reference condition whose unique satisfaction by an entity will determine the referent. *Definite descriptions* are good candidates for introducing non-Russellian terms. For definite descriptions can be used to specify uniqueness conditions needed for singular reference. And they may turn out not to be satisfied by any entity without losing their significance – a feature that can be exploited to guarantee the referent-independence of sense of non-Russellian terms. Small wonder that names introduced by definite descriptions, *descriptive names*, are considered paradigmatic non-Russellian terms.

Here are a few examples of putative descriptive names as discussed in the literature: ‘Neptune’ as introduced to refer to the planet causing certain perturbations in the orbit of Uranus, ‘Jack the Ripper’ as introduced to refer to the killer of five women in 1888 in London (Kripke (1980), p. 79), ‘Newman 1’ as introduced to designate the first born child in the 22nd century (Kaplan (1969)), ‘Nappy’ as introduced to refer to the non-existing present emperor of France (Salmon)¹⁴, ‘Deep Throat’ as introduced to refer to Woodward’s and Bernstein’s source of the Watergate-related information in

¹⁴ See Salmon (1998). There is some controversy over ‘Nappy’. Some have argued that this is not an empty descriptive name, rather a non-empty fictional name. See Thomasson (1999), Caplan (2004).

the White House, and, last but not least, 'Julius' as introduced to refer to the inventor of the zip (VR, pp. 31, 48f.). Some authors, for instance Evans, at times use phrases starting with the English quantifiers 'whoever' or 'whatever' instead of explicit definite descriptions, e.g. 'whoever invented the zip', but since such phrases can be translated into definite descriptions and vice versa, the matter is not essential.¹⁵

The first questions we want to answer are the following: What is it for a name to be introduced by description? And are all names introduced by description non-Russellian, i.e. descriptive names? As we will see, in answering the first question we will come to realise that the answer to latter question is 'No'.

Let us first look at standard naming clauses, such as

Let us call X ' α '.

Usually such clauses are applied in the presence of the named entity or presuppose some other kind of identifying knowledge about it. If such knowledge is allowed to have semantical consequences, then ' α ' will be a Russellian name. Note that 'X' itself, the expression by means of which we introduce ' α ', will typically be itself a Russellian term, e.g. an indexical ('Let us call *this man* "Immanuel"') or a name ('Let us call *Tony Blair* "Tom"'). Thus it is a sufficient condition for this type of clause that 'X' be a Russellian term. But, and this is important, 'X' can *also* be a definite

¹⁵ Other qualifying phrases would be expressions like 'Napoleon's left hand' or 'my neighbour's next wife'. These too are considered definite descriptions, although maybe not 'solely in virtue of their form' (as Russell puts it in Russell (1905), p. 41).

As Dr Stephen Williams has pointed out to me, there are semantical differences between whoever-phrases and definite descriptions, but we can ignore them at this stage. For Evans 'whoever is *F*' is practically equivalent to singular 'the *F*'. This interpretation is akin to the reading Martin Davies (who worked closely with Evans) gives to so-called 'whatever-that-is-uses', where a whoever-phrase follows a singular definite description to indicate its 'existence-independence', e.g. 'the tallest philosopher, whoever that is' (see Davies (1981), pp. 96, 150f.).

description, i.e. a non-Russellian term, just in case this description is referential or has a referential use on this occasion. Undoubtedly definite descriptions can also be used to express identifying knowledge and such uses can be taken advantage of when we want to introduce a Russellian name (think of ‘Let us call the woman waving at us “Elisabeth”’). In short: Russellian names can be introduced either by Russellian terms or by certain descriptions.

But what if ‘X’ is not a Russellian term or a special description, e.g. because we don’t have identifying knowledge of the referent or because we decided that such knowledge must not have any semantical consequences? What is left to make sense of the act of naming at all, e.g. of naming *this* object rather than *that* one? One sceptical reply is to say: nothing. As Parmenides once put it: ‘One cannot name what is not there to be named’. To name *a* presupposes identifying knowledge about *a*, i.e. the availability of corresponding singular thoughts. No object – no such thoughts, as Russell’s Principle dictates. (This does not mean that ‘*a*’ is a singular term in a language only if all speakers possess such knowledge, rather that such knowledge is employed in standard explanations of the name by so-called producers. The rest of the community will then be consumers, in whose mouth ‘*a*’ will still refer to *a*, albeit deferentially, relying on the naming-using practice primarily constituted by the producers.¹⁶) Indeed, there are numerous philosophers who insist that Russellian reference is the only kind of singular reference there is. If we don’t have *de re* cognitive access to the referent, then we cannot coin a name for the referent, even less so if there is nothing to coin a name for (after all: ‘A name has got to name something or it is not a name’ (Russell (1918), p. 243.)). Thus the sceptic will

¹⁶ See VR, section 11.2 on the distinction between producers and consumers.

conclude that there cannot be any non-Russellian names.¹⁷

But to this we can reply with the argument developed in the previous section: A referring expression can also be introduced in a more roundabout way, namely via the specification of a condition which determines what would count as the referent of the name. Take, as a simple illustration, a blindfolded speaker who does not know which object she is facing. In fact, she is facing a man. The speaker says, pointing towards the man: I will call the person in front of me 'Immanuel'.¹⁸ Here, the speaker has tacitly specified a condition ('being the person in front of me at time t_1 ') whose satisfaction will determine what would count as the referent of the name. Of course, given that she is facing a man, she obviously *has* named the man 'Immanuel'. For imagine she opens her eyes and sees the man. It would be unproblematic for her to say 'Ah, you are Immanuel!' or 'Ok, so this is who "Immanuel" refers to.' 'Immanuel' thus refers to the man and it did so even before she opened her eyes, although the speaker did not resort to any identifying knowledge in the act of naming. The sceptic is refuted in this case. But equally, and this is the interesting part, even if there were *no* person in front of the woman, and the name thus empty, 'Immanuel' would still be a referring expression! For even then we could still specify the very same conditions of reference.¹⁹ Hence, both cases would satisfy the non-Russellian Reference Criterion. The semantic role of 'Immanuel' is captured by using the relation of reference, but the relation does not have to be instantiated for that. 'Immanuel' is thus a non-Russellian singular term, namely a descriptive name.

¹⁷ To mention a few such sceptics: Kim (1977), McCulloch (1985), pp. 578ff., Wiggins (1998), Soames (2003), Chapter 16. I will return to McCulloch in section 4.3 below.

¹⁸ The example is adapted from Donnellan (1977). Donnellan's example is about a colour name ('murple'), not a proper name.

¹⁹ Hence Donnellan (1979), p. 52, errs when he claims that the name has not been successfully introduced into language when there is no unique *F*.

But it seems that this holds only for the initial period during which the speaker has not acquired any knowledge about the referent. For what if she opens her eyes and becomes acquainted with the man? Does ‘Immanuel’ stay a descriptive name? It would seem that if the idea of non-Russellian reference is to go through, such *epistemic* issues should, in contrast to the case of Russellian terms, be of no semantic relevance. For it seems problematic to say that we can introduce a descriptive name only if we lack a kind of knowledge.²⁰ Descriptive names are names whose mastery and understanding does not *presuppose* any kind of identifying knowledge. But it does not mean that we cannot have any such knowledge. We should be able to introduce descriptive names whenever we want.

This claim of *epistemic independence* is nothing Evans ever stated explicitly, but it can be seen as a plausible implication of his theory.²¹ However, it is neither totally obvious nor without difficulties. Although no author writing on descriptive names has looked at this issue in detail, remarks made *en passant* by several theorists make clear that there is some temptation, if not plausibility, to hold that descriptive names can only be introduced ‘in the absence of any knowledge of who [or what the referent of the name] might be’ (Soames (2005), p. 336), since the namer ‘is not acquainted with [the referent] (at least not qua the *F*)’ (Reimer (2004), pp. 614, 624). ‘The common feature of such names is that their referents (if any!) are epistemically remote from all

²⁰ There is a potential paradox lurking here. If to introduce and master a descriptive name presupposes lack of knowledge about the referent and if once knowledge about the referent is acquired the term is not a descriptive name anymore, then we can never know the reference of a descriptive name.

²¹ According e.g. to Professor Ian Rumfitt or Dr Stephen Williams. All Evans explicitly says is this: ‘For present purposes, it is not necessary to concern ourselves with the situation that would arise if the name [Julius] became associated with other predicates as a result of discoveries made using the stipulation [that “Julius” is to be used for whoever invented the zip]. We need only consider the simple case—the initial period during which the name is unquestionably a “one-criterion” name’ (RC, p. 181). This may imply that once we make discoveries, the name changes its character. But it may also just be a methodological remark. See also Berger (2002) for some discussion about the transition from the early to the later phase.

I discussed the question of epistemic independence in a chapter which, given space restrictions, had to be left out of this dissertation. The following are just a few remarks related to some parts of that chapter.

speakers in the same way, so that all speakers have to base their reference with the name upon the same narrow set of descriptive assumptions.²² However, if the epistemic thesis is correct, then by saying ‘Let us call the man next door “Ben”’ even when we know for sure there is nobody next door, we have still introduced a descriptive name.²³ The same holds for the case in which we know that there is a man next door.

But at least this last case is not entirely unproblematic. For think of an ordinary situation, in which, knowing our neighbour very well (maybe we are even friends with him), we introduce a nickname for him by saying ‘Let us call the man next door “Ben”’. It would seem that such a nickname would function rather like a Russellian name, although the clause introducing the name is just the one we would use in a situation in which we would introduce ‘Ben’ as a descriptive name (certainly in the ignorance case). Or take, as an even more obvious case, our previous stipulation ‘I will call the person in front of me “Immanuel”’, uttered now in front of a man I am directly looking and pointing at. The name is introduced by the same clause we used before, but it would seem now more natural to consider ‘Immanuel’ a Russellian name, certainly more natural than to consider the term a descriptive name. For here the description is used to pick out a salient person and thus goes proxy for a demonstrative, i.e. Russellian term.²⁴

²² McKinsey (1999), p. 537. See also fn. 191 below. See also Stalnaker (2004), p. 318.

²³ This case is clearly counterintuitive. We would, at least for pragmatic reasons, never introduce a name in this manner. But if Evans is right that all that we establish when we introduce a descriptive name is a semantical connection between two expressions, then this case remains at least a theoretical possibility.

²⁴ Of course, not all descriptions containing indexicals can be treated as indexicals. Many such descriptions are likely to be treated attributively, since the respective indexical is ‘buried’ too deep down in the structure of the description to allow for a substitution of the entire description for some indexical; take ‘the first person in Beijing to hear our latest song’, to mention an example by Dr Stephen Williams.

D-type stipulations: semantic or pragmatic?

It seems therefore that *some* introductions of names by description introduce descriptive names, while others introduce Russellian names. Nevertheless, *prima facie* they are all of the form

(D) Let us call the ϕ 'α',²⁵

So when does a D-type clause introduce a descriptive name, when not? Which features of a D-type clause decide which kind of name is introduced? Purely semantic features, which can be read off the introducing clause, or also pragmatic factors such as the knowledge and intentions with which the introducing clause and later the name are employed? I think there is no definite answer to this question.

Evans's initial answer is: a D-type clause introduces a descriptive name when the descriptive phrase is *without existential commitment*.²⁶ This seems to be a *semantic* criterion (and is, in his formalism, represented as such, namely by narrow scope notation). This implies that a definite description *can* have existential commitment. We thus have even in his theory the possibility of names introduced by description which are not descriptive names – *descriptively introduced Russellian names* (as I shall call them). Note that he himself chose not to investigate this possibility. Rather, in a central passage he characterises a descriptive name simply as 'a name whose reference is fixed by a description' (VR, p. 31, RC, p. 179), thus suggesting that all

²⁵ Also possible: Let us call whoever/whatever is uniquely *F* 'α'.

²⁶ He applies this to phrases containing 'whoever' and 'whatever', but this applies *mutatis mutandis* to phrases of the form 'the ϕ ' as well. See RC, p. 181, fn. 5.

names so introduced are descriptive names.²⁷ But this generic characterisation should not deceive us over the fact that the possibility is there in Evans's own theory. Names introduced by description can be either Russellian or descriptive.

Based on this supposedly semantic difference between two kinds of descriptions, we could now venture the following claim: Russellian names are introduced by descriptions with existential commitment, descriptive names are introduced by descriptions without existential commitment. And this would amount to a *semantic* difference between two kinds of D-type stipulations.

But this is too simple. In real life a name that has been introduced by a description without existential commitment may still end up as a Russellian term. Take 'Neptune'. Let's assume the name was indeed introduced prior to any acquaintance, just by the pure description 'the eighth planet in our solar system causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus'. As long as there was no acquaintance, the name stayed descriptive. But at some point the existence of its bearer was confirmed by observation and speakers were able to say true sentences like 'This is Neptune', 'Neptune is over there', indeed to introduce the name to other speakers by saying 'By "Neptune" we mean this planet here' (using a telescope). If Evans's analysis of Russellian names is correct, then such knowledgeable speakers are what he calls *producers* – producers of Russellian names that is, since they have identifying knowledge of the bearer of the name (see *VR*, section 11.2). Under such information-invoking use 'Neptune' will not be correctly described as a descriptive name anymore, especially if these knowledgeable speakers are the ones deciding about the use of the name. It is often impossible to say when exactly the transition is made from the

²⁷ Unlike Evans, Donnellan explicitly acknowledged both kind of descriptively introduced names. See Donnellan (1979), also Jeshion (2001), p. 116, fn. 10.

descriptive name to the Russellian one. But that this transition is made can be seen from the simple fact that if the new name-using practice associating the name with an object of acquaintance catches on and consolidates in the community, the initial description might be seen as entirely inessential to the sense of the name. In this case, if it is found that the initial description actually is *not* true of the referent, the name will not be retracted, but will continue to be used just as before.²⁸ So we see that in real life the connection between the name and the description *may* become loose.²⁹

But it may also not. For assume we become acquainted with some object of which we initially think that it is the bearer of a descriptive name. And now we discover that the description is not true of the object. We could, as just said, choose to continue using the name as a Russellian term. But we could equally well retract the name and reserve it for the object actually satisfying the description, if there is any such object. In this case we stay faithful to the initial D-type stipulation and consider the semantical relation between the name and its canonical description as essential. And we will use the name with the intention to keep this relation no matter what we discover.³⁰ This is why on this use there will be certain judgements containing a descriptive name which will be ‘immune to error through misidentification’, as John Campbell (2002, pp. 92f.) puts it. Take ‘Jack the Ripper’ to be a descriptive name. Then ‘Jack the Ripper killed seven women in London in 1888’ may still not be true, but not because we will have found out that e.g. Nathan Kaminsky killed those women. It would be false to say

²⁸ Our real-life planet name ‘Neptune’ may serve as just such an example (assuming that the name was introduced prior to the discovery, which is not true). The actual description was much more precise than ‘the planet causing the perturbations in the orbit of Uranus’ or the like. Rather, it was more something like ‘the planet which according to our calculations XXX based on the perturbations YYY of Uranus is located at the coordinates ZZZ at time TTT’. But these calculations were not all too accurate, neither in the formulas nor in the result. Nevertheless, the name caught on. See O’Connor/Robertson (1996).

²⁹ See also Sainsbury (2005a), pp. 8f. I agree with Sainsbury that in most real-life cases the connection between the name and the description is a spurious one, especially in cases of such importance that we have overriding social norms, such as when we baptise a child being called ‘John Smith’, even if it was not Mr Smith, but Mr Matzy who begat John. See Sainsbury (2005), p. 109.

³⁰ Evans calls such intentions ‘overriding’ or ‘general’ (CP, p. 21 and VR, p. 48 respectively).

‘Actually, it was not Jack the Ripper, but Nathan Kaminsky who killed those unfortunate women’. We could not misidentify Jack the Ripper as that heinous killer from 1888, unless we found out a new fact about the *name*.³¹ (Then again: where there is no misidentification possible, there is also no identification.)

In conclusion, this is how I want to state the matter at this stage: A descriptive name is introduced, if the D-type stipulation and/or the subsequent intentions with which the name is used establish and guarantee a *semantical* connection between the name and the description which is not affected by knowledge about the referent. In this case the non-Russellian status of the term is guaranteed. How this semantical connection is established depends not just or not necessarily on the semantical status of the D-type stipulation, but very much also on additional pragmatic issues.

The status of definite descriptions

Note that this interpretation of the character of D-type stipulations is indifferent to whether or not definite descriptions are referring expressions. There is, of course, a long-standing debate about the referential status of descriptions. Take for instance Donnellan’s attributive/referential distinction. We could assume that this distinction overlaps with ours³² and then conclude, e.g. with Robin Jeshion, that descriptive

³¹ On the basis of this McKinsey proposes the following ‘test’: ‘[...] one good test of whether or not a name is descriptive is provided by the method Kripke used in his Gödel-Schmidt case. In such a test, we consider the description that allegedly determines a name’s referent as a matter of its meaning, and ask whether it’s possible to use the name in the same way we actually do, to refer to the actual referent, even though some different object satisfies the description in question. If this is *not* possible, then the name is descriptive. Thus consider the absurdity of our asserting such an hypothesis as [...] It wasn’t Jack the Ripper who murdered all those prostitutes in 1890’s London; rather, it was some other man named “Schmidt” ’(McKinsey (1999), p. 537). The test works fine, but it is not a technical marvel. We could instead simply specify the rules with which we employ the name in question and reach the same result. As a matter of fact, this is all the test does, only in a more roundabout way.

³² I.e. attributive uses are uses of existentially non-committing and referential uses are uses of existentially committing descriptions.

names are ‘names whose reference is fixed exclusively with an attributive use of a definite description’ (Jeshion (2004), p. 592, fn. 1), or with Grice, who claims that although descriptions can be used to introduce either ordinary names or names equivalent to descriptions, descriptions themselves all receive a Russellian treatment (Grice (1969), pp. 198-200). But although Donnellan’s distinction, at least in some respect, is not denied by virtually anybody, it is of course problematic with respect to its status. Is it a semantic or a pragmatic distinction? Kripke has interpreted Donnellan as suggesting that it is a semantical one, and advanced himself powerful arguments against this suggestion.³³ Instead, Kripke takes the distinction between attributive and referential uses of descriptions to be pragmatic in nature. The debate surrounding this issue is not over, indeed it has led to increasingly sophisticated arguments and distinctions from either side.³⁴ I will review some of the issues at stake in Chapter 5.

Evans himself makes a terminological distinction between information-invoking, i.e. referential, and pure uses of descriptions³⁵, but he seems to deem this a pragmatic distinction, where pure uses are characterised as those for which ‘no link-up with antecedently existing identificatory knowledge is intended’ (RC, p. 202 fn. 28). It is clear that such pure uses are the ones by means of which he thinks that descriptive names are introduced, since in the context of his discussion of descriptive names he explicitly points out that when speaking of definite descriptions he is concerned solely with pure uses and that Donnellan’s distinction is therefore irrelevant for his purposes (ibid., also VR, p. 52, fn. 14). On the other hand, his discussion of referential uses is,

³³ Donnellan himself denied that the distinction is a semantical one. See Donnellan (1966), p. 297, also Kripke (1977), pp. 12f. An explicit defence of this claim of Donnellan’s against Kripke is found in Recanati (1993), pp. 281ff.

³⁴ With some authors actually pointing out that the referential/attributive distinction is neither sharp nor exhaustive. See Davies (1981), pp. 155-7, Levinson (2000), pp. 225-9.

³⁵ I shall use here and below (especially Chapter 5) the phrase ‘referential descriptions’ in a neutral sense that does not prejudice whether they are, from a semantic point of view, referring expressions or not. ‘Referring descriptions’, by contrast, will be a label for descriptions understood as genuine referring expressions.

despite an overall preference for a quantificational account of descriptions, left somehow in the open, since he does seem to allow for the possibility that certain types of descriptions are semantically referential.³⁶ Hence, even if we stay within Evans's own framework and conclude that existentially committing descriptions are information-invoking, while existentially non-committing descriptions are pure, we still don't have a clear answer as to whether D-type clauses for descriptive names are semantically distinct from D-type clauses for Russellian names.

But we don't need an answer, at least not at this stage. For *both* the semantic and the pragmatic account of referential descriptions are able to explain the indisputable fact that while some D-type stipulations introduce descriptive names, others introduce Russellian names. While Kripke's example of 'Neptune' is an instance of a descriptively introduced Russellian name, Evans's 'Julius' is an instance of a descriptive name. No account of descriptions denies that descriptions have at least referential uses. Therefore, there is no reason why such referential descriptions should not be seen as capable of introducing Russellian names. And no account denies that descriptions may be used without any *de re* knowledge. We thus have two kinds of descriptions or at least two kinds of uses available, and this is all we need to employ D-type stipulations in two different ways. D-type clauses fall therefore into two classes: those introducing Russellian names and those introducing descriptive names.³⁷ Consequently, we do not have to decide at this preliminary stage which account of descriptions to commit ourselves to and what 'existential commitment'

³⁶ See *VR*, section 9.3, also p. 380.

³⁷ There are not many authors who have noticed this fact. Reimer is one (see above), McCulloch is another. The latter believes that not all names introduced by description count as descriptive names, because the speaker may have 'demonstrative access to the object'. Only when the description is the only form of access to the object do we have 'pure cases', as in those situations in which we use 'outward-looking descriptions'. But in this latter case the term so introduced is a quantified phrase according to McCulloch. See McCulloch (1989), pp. 247ff. 289f. and my discussion in 4.3 below.

exactly means. However, since descriptions are supposed to determine some crucial semantic features of descriptive names, such as their sense, the semantic status of definite descriptions will be brought to fore again (in Chapters 4 and 5).

It will be useful to distinguish on merely notational grounds between clauses introducing Russellian names by description and those introducing descriptive names. The former would be represented as before, namely as

(RN) Let us call the F ' a ',

whereas the latter could be represented by

(DN) Let us call the F ' DN ',

where ' DN ' is a dummy indicating a descriptive name. We can call these clauses respectively *RN-type* and *DN-type clauses*. Evans's own example of a DN-type stipulation is the following:

(DN1) Let us call whoever invented the zip 'Julius'.

It is obvious that we can understand this name independently of whether there ever was an inventor of the zip and whether we know anything about this.³⁸ I will use 'Julius' from now on as our main example of a descriptive name.

Before I conclude this section I would like to point out one more interesting issue.

³⁸ Actually there was such an individual and we know who he was: the zip (zip fastener) was invented by the American inventor Whitcomb L. Judson (1836-1909) in 1893.

Following what I previously said about the conditionality of non-Russellian terms in general, it seems that we have a further option to characterise clauses introducing descriptive names, namely in the following way:

Let us call the F , if there is any such entity, ' DN '.

This *can* be seen as formulating a condition in a stronger sense than just formulating reference conditions, namely if we rephrase the clause thus: If there is a unique F , let us call the F ' DN '. This sounds like a conditional intention, a conditional promise, making the *act* of naming depend on the existence of the referent.³⁹ That is precisely what we don't want, since we want to say that a DN -type introduces a name right away. What about: If we discover that there is a uniquely F , let us call the F ' DN '? Again, we make the act of naming depend on something extra-linguistic, this time on our discovery of the F (and thus on the existence of the F as well, since 'to discover' is a factive verb). Such conditional intentions can be formed, of course, e.g. when a pregnant woman says 'If it is a boy, I shall call him "Daniel"'. Here the act of naming is indeed only announced, not really performed. It is true that sentences such as 'Daniel will be nurtured well', 'Daniel (the embryo!) is now five months old' can already be understood, thus suggesting that the name has actually been successfully introduced, despite my claim that the act of naming has not been performed yet. How can this be explained? Maybe by the availability of the fall-back option to *reinterpret* 'Daniel' as a descriptive name, namely as simply meaning 'the boy I will give birth to' or something of the sort? I am not sure. The case is interesting, since quite a few descriptive names in the literature, e.g. Kaplan's 'Newman 1' are introduced in this

³⁹ I take the antecedents of such conditionals (form: 'I promise that if p , then q ') to formulate 'necessary' conditions for q to obtain as a fulfilment of the antecedent. As far as I can see, this is very different from material implication.

‘outward-looking’ manner.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, I will focus on our ‘Julius’, which is not a name of this kind.

⁴⁰ I borrow the term ‘outward-looking’ from McCulloch (see fn. 37 above).

2.4 Second Basic Idea: descriptive sense

Substance is given to Evans's claim that a descriptive name has a sense distinct from its reference, and it is pointed out that this sense is the same as that of the introducing definite description. This raises two important questions: Is a descriptive name not an abbreviation or shorthand for a description? How can a referring expression have the same sense as a non-referring expression?

If the theory of descriptive names presented so far is correct, then (DN1) does introduce 'Julius' as a referring expression into our language, since we have specified reference conditions for it. Even if these conditions are not satisfied, we will still be able to say what would count as a referent of 'Julius'. And if they are satisfied, then the name will refer to the inventor of the zip. Note that the *existence* of the inventor of the zip is all that is required for 'Julius' to refer. As mentioned before, no peculiar relation between the name and some entity, whether causal or cognitive, is needed for that, and (DN1), by itself, cannot establish such a relation (unless it is a magical one). The question 'Does "*DN*" refer to the *F*?' is thus answered by the question 'Does the *F* exist?'.⁴¹

Consider now some sample atomic sentence containing 'Julius':

(1) Julius was an Englishman.⁴²

As Evans puts it: '[...] it seems impossible to deny that someone speaking, and known to be speaking, "within the scope of" this stipulation could express a thought, and

⁴¹ Bede Rundle remarked this to me in conversation. Evans says something similar in *CP*, p. 125.

⁴² The complication given by the tense of the verb is ignored for sentences of this kind henceforth.

convey that thought to another person [...]’ by uttering (1), ‘[...] even if the name is empty’ (VR, p. 31). Why does Evans think that the referent-independence of thought is guaranteed for such a sentence? Well, what is that thought? Intuitively, there are various ways to specify the content of (1), e.g. by ‘The inventor of the zip was an Englishman’ or ‘Whoever invented the zip was an Englishman’, etc. What matters is that all these paraphrases exploit in one way or another the *reference-fixing description* or some other phrase with the same equivalent content. We can therefore say that this description is crucial for the semantics of the descriptive name, since it determines both the content of the name and that of sentences containing the name. It seems indeed undeniable that whoever knows how ‘Julius’ was introduced should be able to understand (1) by an appropriate paraphrase, e.g. by

(2) The inventor of the zip was an Englishman.

We should bear in mind that Evans’s technical term for content is the notion of *sense*, which Frege initially defined as the mode of presentation of the referent. Evans gives this notion his own interpretation, namely in terms of ‘a particular way of thinking about the referent’⁴³. Although I am not sure whether this interpretation is helpful for us,⁴⁴ I do follow Evans in accepting a sense-based theory of names (see also next section). Something is certainly understood by a knowledgeable speaker when she comes across (1). And this understanding cannot be described in terms of there being a referent and of speaker’s knowledge about this (as some no-sense theorists might argue). All that is really necessary for understanding the name is knowledge of how

⁴³ See VR, section 1.4, also Evans (1985a).

⁴⁴ The proposal is that the sense of ‘Julius’ is individuated by a particular way of thinking about the referent, namely by thinking of him ‘descriptively’. This may make sense, if there is a referent. But what if there is none? Thinking that the planet between Mercury and the Sun is very hot is not thinking about any object, since there is no such planet. Simply saying ‘Well, I am thinking about it *descriptively*’ still does not put me in the position to think in a particular way *about* an object that actually does not exist.

the name was introduced, what its sense is, and how it relates to the canonical description.

Since I regard this matter concerning their sense, together with their referentiality, as crucial for the possibility of descriptive names, it will be useful to consider the central passages where Evans deals with this matter:

‘[Descriptive names] have a sense whether or not they have a referent. It is sufficient to understand ‘Julius’ that one know that it refers to whoever invented the zip. This knowledge can certainly be possessed whether or not there is such a person, and possessing it, one is in a position to know exactly what conditions have to be satisfied for sentences containing the name to be true, and hence to understand them’ (RC, p. 182).

‘In the case of descriptive names there is a public, semantical connection between the name and the description: the sense of the name is such that an object is determined to be the referent of the name if and only if it satisfies a certain description. Anyone who understands the name must be aware of the reference-fixing role of the description’ (VR, p. 48).

‘Even if someone did invent the zip, (DN1) does not introduce a semantical connection between “Julius” and [a] person. [...] (DN1) [is not] existentially committing, and knowledge of [it] cannot constitute knowledge of a relation between “Julius” and some item; one cannot know of the existence of a relation between two things, not even a semantical relation, without knowing that those things exist. (DN1) instituted a semantical relation between a name and a description as fixing its

reference [...]’ (RC, p. 207).⁴⁵

‘In saying that the thought expressed by “Julius is *F*” may equivalently be expressed by “The inventor of the zip is *F*”, I think I am conforming to common sense. Someone who understands and accepts the one sentence as true gets himself into exactly the same belief state as someone who accepts the other. Belief states are distinguished by the evidence which gives rise to them, and the expectations, behaviour, and further beliefs which may be derived from them (in conjunction with other beliefs); and in all these respects, the belief states associated with the two sentences are indistinguishable. We do not produce new thoughts (new beliefs) simply by a “stroke of pen” (in Grice’s phrase) – simply by introducing a name into the language’ (VR, p. 50; see also RC, p. 200).

‘Remember that we are interpreting the sentence “Julius is *F*” in such a way that it is capable of being understood by one who knows only the reference-fixing stipulation (DN), and that what he says must be capable of being specified in the absence of any referent. Given these conditions, I cannot imagine how the belief that Julius is *F* might be characterised which is not simultaneously a characterisation of the belief that the inventor of the zip is *F* [...]’ (RC, p. 202).

There are several interrelated claims emerging from these passages. First, we have here the referent-independence of sense, thought and understanding reasserted. Second, we have the claim that all a DN-type stipulation necessarily achieves is to establish a *semantical relation* between two *expressions*, a name and a description, hence not a relation between an expression and its referent. Third, we have here the explicit statement of the so-called *sameness of sense* which explains why what (1) expresses is what is expressed by (2): ‘Julius was an Englishman’ and ‘The inventor

⁴⁵ For reasons of conformity I have modified ‘(D)’ to ‘(DN1)’.

of the zip was an Englishman' have *the same sense*, express the same thought, say the very same thing. In order to understand the former, you must understand the latter, or at least some other description sentence with the same sense as (2). This can also be articulated by saying that both sentences have the same truth-conditions, the same epistemic or *assertoric content*. In both cases what is said is the same. Now it is a fact taken for granted by Evans, and I think correctly so, that a sentence such as (2) will be meaningful, have a sense independently of whether the definite description is satisfied by any entity. This is of course particularly true, if we accept a Russellian analysis of description sentences such as (2).⁴⁶ Since (1) has the same sense as (2), the referent-independence of the sense of (2) will carry over to that of (1). The referent-independence of the sense of sentences of the form '*DN is G*' is thus explained.

Sameness of Sentential Sense Thesis: A sentence containing a descriptive name possesses the same sense or assertoric content, i.e. expresses the same thought as a sentence in which the name has been replaced by the introducing definite description.

Last but not least, there also seems to be an implicit claim made in the quoted passages. The sameness of sense applies explicitly to *sentences* such as (1) and (2). But does it not also apply to individual expressions, namely the descriptive name and its description? Evans does not make such an explicit claim, although he does say that descriptive names have a 'descriptive content'⁴⁷. But I think the claim follows from what we just said. What could be responsible for the sense of 'Julius' if not the description? (1) and (2) have the same structure, consisting of the predicate '*... is F*'

⁴⁶ But it is also true on a Strawsonian analysis of description sentences.

⁴⁷ RC, p. 180. Jeshion (2004), p. 595, fn. 13, takes this passage to probably imply the sameness of sense ('content' in her words) thesis. In any case, she too believes that the name and the description have the same sense (*ibid.*). So does Bostock, who writes that 'Julius [...] *does* take its sense from that of the description' (Bostock (1988), p. 355). Reimer (2004), pp. 615, 621, believes the same, but only concerning the period prior to any acquaintance with the name's referent.

and a noun-phrase, the name and description respectively. Now, given the sameness of sentential sense, the sameness of the sense of the embedded predicate and the compositionality principle for sense, 'Julius' and 'the inventor of the zip' must be contributing the same sense to their respective sentence.

Such an inference may be doubted on the following grounds: We cannot infer from the fact that 'Socrates killed Socrates' means the same as 'Socrates was killed by Socrates' that '... killed Socrates' and '... was killed by Socrates' mean the same, even though all we have done here is to subtract one and the same expression from two sentences with the same meaning. This would be what Geach called the 'cancelling-out fallacy' (Geach (1962), p. 61). But note that I am not concerned here with determining the meaning of two *predicates* by removing the same *subject* term.⁴⁸ It is exactly vice versa with 'Julius was an Englishman' and 'The inventor of the zip was an Englishman'. It is obvious that we are dealing here with the same predicate and given the sameness of meaning of the sentences, I wish to determine the meaning (sense) of the subject terms. We are dealing with the same predicate, because we gain it by the very method Geach himself indicates somewhere else: we remove the subject term from our sentences and *see* that they share the same predicate, namely '... was an Englishman' (see Geach (1962), p. 30). And only then we infer to the sameness of sense of the subject terms 'Julius' and 'the inventor of the zip'.

Of course, one may reply that only 'Julius is *F*' has a subject, but not 'The inventor of the zip is *F*', given Russell's analysis of descriptions, and consequently my method of obtaining the same predicate does not work out. Hence, the sentences don't share the same predicate and have very different structures. We cannot infer from their

⁴⁸ See also Geach (1972), p. 90, where he formulates the fallacy, here called 'subtractive fallacy', in just this way.

sameness of sense *anything* about the senses of their components. I have two replies to this: In this case (i) Geach's test for a subtractive fallacy does not apply anymore; (ii) the claim that a descriptive name has a descriptive sense has no basis, since this is an inference from the sense of a sentence to that of a component of the sentence; (iii) the very idea that the sentences themselves have the same sense, express the same thought becomes questionable. In fact, this is precisely one unwanted consequence from a Russellian treatment of definite descriptions, which is why I will argue later on that we need to give up such a treatment to save the phenomenon of descriptive names.

So I will assume from now on that a descriptive name and its canonical description have the same sense. This in my view crucial claim deserves its own label:

Second Basic Idea: A descriptive name possesses the same sense as the introducing definite description. The description is thus not only reference-fixing, but also sense-determining.

At this stage we may wonder, however, whether the claim that a name has the same sense as a definite description does not imply that they are synonymous, whether the relation between the two expressions is understood in terms of a strict *abbreviation* or some weaker notion, e.g. a *shorthand*.⁴⁹ After all, if two expressions are intersubstitutable *salva senso*, as 'Julius' and 'the inventor of the zip' indeed are, what

⁴⁹ We have here two ideas of sameness of sense articulated, a stronger and a weaker one. According to the stronger, one must associate the name with one and only one description. This is strict abbreviation. According to the weaker idea, one must associate the name with the canonical description or some other phrase with the same sense. This is the shorthand reading ('shorthand' has here a slightly technical meaning). The stronger idea makes the relation between the name and the description a strictly intra-linguistic matter, while the weaker idea leaves open the possibility that the relation may be inter-linguistic (between languages). See also 3.3 below.

Authors who claim that descriptive names are, at least on one reading, abbreviations or shorthands include McCulloch (1989), pp. 291ff., Chrisley (1998), Wiggins (1999), Stalnaker (2001), Campbell (2002), p. 24, Reimer (2004). Some remain undecided, e.g. Davies (1981), pp. 238f. See also Bostock (1998), who adopts first an abbreviational and then an opposite reading.

prevents us from claiming synonymy? And if they are synonymous, do they not belong to exactly the same semantical category, namely that of referring expressions? Since descriptive names have been established as referring expressions, are definite descriptions not the same? We thus face two main alternatives:

(i) We accept that descriptive names are referring expressions. Since they are synonymous with descriptions, those descriptions are referring expressions as well.

(ii) We do not treat definite descriptions as referring expressions. Since they are synonymous with descriptive names, descriptive names are not referring expressions either.

Neither scenario is acceptable for Evans. But the challenge is not a trivial one: he needs to keep a close semantical affinity between descriptive names and definite descriptions in order to establish the peculiar non-Russellian status of the former by means of the latter, but at the same time he has to find a good reason for not bringing them semantically too close to each other. How does he manage to navigate between Scylla and Charybdis? Evans rejects the synonymy claim by showing that despite possessing the same sense, they behave differently in modal contexts. ‘Sameness of sense’ and ‘synonymy’ are far from being synonymous. Descriptive names are therefore referring expressions, while descriptions are, following Russell, better understood as *quantifier phrases*. I will discuss these claims critically in Chapters 4 and 5.

We can label Evans’s claim as the

Postulate of Semantic Difference: Descriptive names and definite descriptions

belong to different semantic categories. Descriptive names are referring expressions, descriptions are not referring expressions.

Note that this postulate, taken together with the Second Basic Idea, generates something of a paradox. Sense is usually a constitutive feature of an expression's belonging to a certain semantical category. The sense of a name can never be that of a predicate, a quantifier, a sentence.⁵⁰ But this is exactly what we seem to arrive at here. I will discuss this in the next chapters in more detail.

One alternative way to formulate this paradox is by contemplating what kind of thoughts are expressed by sentences such as (1). 'Julius' is supposed to be a genuine referring expression. A sentence containing such a term is described by direct reference semanticists usually as expressing a *singular thought*, a *de re* thought – a component of which is the referent of the term itself. *De re* thoughts, thus seen, are object-dependent.⁵¹ But of course, (1) cannot be described as expressing this kind of thought, since even if 'Julius' fails to refer to somebody, (1) still expresses a thought. And that thought, given the sameness of sentential sense thesis, must be the same as the thought expressed by (2). But (2) expresses a *general thought*, if we are to give it the standard Russellian analysis. Here is the paradox *in nuce*: 'Julius was an Englishman' expresses a thought standardly articulated by a *quantified sentence*, while at the same time it is an *atomic sentence containing a singular term*.⁵² Moreover, if Julius exists, then 'Julius' will refer to Julius, and the sentence 'Julius was an Englishman' could be plausibly described as predicating Englishness of an individual man, predicating '*F*' of the referent of '*a*'. But this latter description is a

⁵⁰ For Frege, for instance, the sense of a proper name/predicate/quantifier/sentence is the mode of presentation of a person or object/a first-order concept/a second-order concept/a truth-value.

⁵¹ This is denied by some authors, e.g. Jeshion (2004).

⁵² Aspects of this paradox have been noted before in the literature, e.g. in Stanley (2002), pp. 333-5.

description of primitive predications whose content direct reference theorists describe as singular thoughts. So what is (1) doing in this case? Predicating something of an individual while expressing a general thought? Can this work?

An affirmative answer to this question is not that obvious. In fact, some have concluded to the contrary. Gregory McCulloch, for instance, has argued from the Second Basic Idea to the conclusion that descriptive names really abbreviate quantifier phrases, thus rejecting the aforementioned postulate and The First Basic Idea (McCulloch (1989), pp. 291ff). In effect, McCulloch denies that there are descriptive *names* (see 4.3 below). By contrast, David Kaplan has argued that a DN-type stipulation does endow us with *de re* knowledge about the referent: If there is a unique inventor of the zip, then I know of Julius that he invented the zip.⁵³ This relates to the problem of the so-called contingent *a priori* (see section 4.5). Kaplan clearly affirms that at least certain sentences employing a descriptive name do express *de re* thoughts, thus rejecting The Second Basic Idea. The sentences he considers are different from (1), namely e.g. ‘Julius invented the zip’. But if such sentences express contingent *a priori de re* thoughts, why could sentences such as (1) not be taken to express contingent *a posteriori de re* thoughts?⁵⁴

But neither McCulloch’s nor Kaplan’s positions will be my conclusion. As we will see, both Basic Ideas can be defended, and thus the possibility of descriptive names – *if* we give up the Postulate of Semantic Difference. But this is no small a task. I will discuss the relevant arguments in the remaining chapters. In any case, the Second

⁵³ See Kaplan (1979). Critics of his position include Donnellan (1979), Stanley (2002), Bach (2004). A recent defence is found in Jeshion (2002).

⁵⁴ This is a position endorsed for instance in Harman (1977), McKinsey (2002), p. 220. See also McKinsey (1999) on related questions about belief ascription involving sentences containing descriptive names.

Basic Idea concerning the sameness of sense of descriptive names and descriptions, as established in this section, is of fundamental importance for the possibility of descriptive names. Without it, no names introduced by description would have a referent-independent sense. And without that they would not be non-Russellian terms at all.

We have thus given an overview of the main aspects of Evans's theory of descriptive names. This theory comprises The First and Second Basic Idea, The Sameness of Sentential Sense Thesis and The Postulate of Semantical Difference. I shall occasionally refer to this theory also as The Standard Account.

2.5 Kripke and Evans on introducing names by description

This section points out some important, and hitherto little noticed, differences between Kripke's and Evans's accounts of names introduced by description. It turns out that Kripke's names introduced by description have more affinity with descriptively introduced Russellian names than with Evansian descriptive names.

As Evans himself acknowledges, the idea of names whose reference is introduced by description stems from Kripke (CP, p. 300, fn. 14). Kripke's discussion of names thus introduced, e.g. 'Neptune' or 'Jack the Ripper', has been widely noticed in the literature. But the question is: do Kripke and Evans speak about the same thing? Are Kripke's names introduced by description Evans's descriptive names? Building on what I have developed so far, my answer in this section will be 'No'. Kripke's names introduced by description are just like other names: non-empty rigid designators that happen to have been introduced in a different, and less usual way than names introduced by ostension. The former differ only *pragmatically* from the latter, not *semantically*. Thus Kripke, unlike Evans, does not really make any distinction between Russellian and descriptive names, which is a semantical distinction. A comparison between the two theorists is therefore useful for better appreciating each of their accounts and for a better understanding of the idea of genuine descriptive names.

The difficulty such a comparison faces, however, is that Kripke and Evans work within very different semantical and terminological frameworks. The main differences between Kripke and Evans concern the notions of meaning, reference, sense and semantic value. Here is a brief comparison:

(i) Kripke's notion of meaning is humdrum: the meaning of a term is either its referent (in the case of proper names) or that feature which synonymous expressions have in common. The notion of synonymous meaning is hardly based on any theoretical considerations.⁵⁵ The reference of a term, in turn, is its referent. Kripke is suspicious of the notion of sense, so sense does not play any central role in his theory.⁵⁶ The notion of semantic value does not even occur in Kripke's writings, as far as I know.

(ii) The notions of sense and semantic value, by contrast, play a major role in Evans's overall framework, while the notion of meaning does not. He is strongly influenced here by Dummett's Fregean semantics.⁵⁷ The *semantic value* of a term is connected to its semantic role.⁵⁸ The latter is broadly speaking the truth-conditional function of the term, its 'power to affect the truth-value of the sentences in which it occurs' (VR, p. 8). The semantic value itself is that feature of a term which contributes to deciding the truth-value of a sentence containing the term.⁵⁹ It is the truth-conditional contribution itself. Semantic values are usually taken to be objects of various ontological kinds.⁶⁰ 'Reference' means here the same as 'semantic value',

⁵⁵ Some theorists (e.g. Dummett (1978), p. xlvii) have criticised Kripke for not explaining his notion of meaning.

⁵⁶ He does not totally reject the notion though, indeed he mentions it in *Naming and Necessity*: the sense of '*a*' is the constant (possibly partial) function assigning to '*a*' a referent in each possible world *w* (Kripke (1980), p. 59, fn. 22). But this is a much more modest notion of sense than the Fregeans'.

⁵⁷ See *Collected Papers*, p. 300, where Evans follows Dummett's approach in the latter's (1981a), pp. 409ff. See also Dummett (1978), pp. 120-2.

⁵⁸ But not identical with it. I think Dummett misses the ambiguity of the word 'value' in the phrase 'semantic value' when he equates it with 'semantic role' (e.g. in Dummett (1981a), p. 199). The latter is a more general notion, while the former, as intended in semantics, a more specific one. This can be seen from the fact that the semantic value of 'Napoleon' is a man, whereas its semantic role cannot *be* a man.

⁵⁹ See Dummett (1978), pp. 120f., Dummett (1981a), p. 199. The main reason to adopt the term 'semantic value' instead of 'reference' is based on the fact that 'semantic value' sounds more general than 'reference' and it can be applied without any awkwardness to terms other than singular terms, e.g. predicates, sentences, etc. A precursor of the notion of semantic value is Tugendhat's 'truth-value potential'. See *ibid.*

⁶⁰ See for instance the entry on 'semantic value' in Hale/Wright (eds.) (1999), p. 684. Dummett characterises the semantic value of a sub-sentential expression '*a*' as 'that feature of it which must be ascribed to it if every sentence in which it occurs is to be determined as true or otherwise' (Dummett (1978), p. 120).

which may only in particular contexts be translated as ‘referent’.⁶¹ Finally, we have seen that Evans accepts a ‘thick’ notion of *sense*, namely as the mode of presentation of an expression’s reference and further as a ‘mode of thinking’ (see section 2.4 above). The main rationale for adopting this concept is his conviction that without it we can’t explain the informativeness of identity statements containing co-referring singular terms, as his discussion of Frege’s Puzzle shows (see *VR*, pp. 14ff.). Hence, Evans is, unlike Kripke, not a no-sense theorist, even though he does accept Kripke’s criticism of naïve descriptivism.

Note that Evans disagrees with Frege’s occasional claim that names may have a sense without necessarily having a reference, e.g. as with ‘the celestial body most distant from Earth’.⁶² This incoherence in Frege, Evans believes, can only be removed if we cease to equate the reference of a name with its referent. For if we accepted this equation, the reference-failure of descriptive names would be catastrophic, since their sense would have to be explained as the mode of presentation of the reference=referent – and there would be none if the name is empty. But surely descriptive names do have a sense, i.e. have a truth-conditional contribution even when empty. Therefore, Evans identifies reference with the more general notion of semantic value. Thus a descriptive name’s semantic value is not identical with its referent, unlike in the case of a Russellian name (where lack of a referent is catastrophic). I will discuss the problems involved with this move in Chapter 3.

The consequence of these terminological and conceptual differences is twofold: First,

⁶¹ Evans states suggests the difference between ‘referent’ and ‘reference’ in *RC*, p. 180, *CP*, p. 124, *CP*, p. 300, fn. 15.

⁶² Frege (1990a), p. 145. Evans thought that this was indeed an occasional slip on Frege’s side and that in most of his writings Frege is more of a Russellian. See *VR*, p. 32. Whether this interpretation is correct has been disputed, e.g. by Bell and McDowell. See Bell (1990), McDowell (1998), p. 213.

when Evans speaks of a descriptive name having its reference fixed, what is primarily fixed is its *semantic value*, but not necessarily, although possibly its referent. Second, when we fix the semantic value of a descriptive name, we also determine its *sense*, according to Evans.

This suggests that descriptive names are quite unlike the names introduced by description discussed by Kripke. For Kripke to introduce a name by description is simply to fix its referent. We use the description merely to pick out an individual. As soon as this is done we discard the description; it does not play any further role in the life of the name. Nothing else is achieved by such an introduction; it does not establish any synonymy relation or determine the sense of the name.⁶³ Kripke does not tell us what would be the case if the description were to *fail* to pick out any object. Since in his view a name's entire semantic role consists in its standing for an entity, the name would be probably meaningless in such a case. Kripke's names introduced by description can therefore be called referent-dependent in the sense elaborated in the previous section, i.e. they are *Russellian names*. To be sure, there is one other way to introduce an expression ' α ' by description according to Kripke: we can stipulate it to be synonymous with the description and thus determine its meaning by description. But this does not amount to fixing the reference of ' α '. On the contrary: given the lack of rigidity of definite descriptions, ' α ' would not be a name, but only an abbreviation of a non-rigid designator. We would only 'determine its meaning', but not 'fix its reference'. This is why Kripke distinguishes sharply between fixing the reference of a name and determining its meaning.⁶⁴

⁶³ We could say that the description fixes the meaning of the name, but since the meaning of a name is its referent, this does not amount to any interesting thesis, certainly to no claim of synonymy.

⁶⁴ See Kripke (1980), pp. 32, 53-60, 79-80, 96.

While for Kripke introducing a name by description amounts to fixing its referent, not determining its meaning, *if* the description is satisfied, for Evans to introduce a name by description amounts to determining ‘meaning’, namely sense, *and* semantic value, but not necessarily the referent. This is a significant difference between Kripke and Evans. For Kripke the alternative is either to fix the referent of a name – or to determine its meaning. Only in the first case do we introduce a name as a referring expression. You cannot do both at once in the case of terms introduced by description.⁶⁵ From Evans’s point of view you can do both at once: you can fix ‘meaning’, i.e. sense, *and*, if the description is uniquely satisfied, the referent. But you can also fix only ‘meaning’.⁶⁶ What you can’t do, according to Evans, and contrary to Kripke, is to fix only the referent.

Kripke and Evans both speak about descriptions whose function is to be ‘reference-fixing’, but this term, as we now see, cannot mean the same for both.⁶⁷ For Kripke reference-fixing simply amounts to referent-fixing, while for Evans it primarily amounts to fixing the sense and semantic value of a singular term, and only contingently to referent-fixing. On his account DN-type clauses are not the only reference-fixing ones, for ordinary stipulations of Russellian names, e.g. ‘Let us call *this* man “Marilyn”’, are so too. Both RN-type and DN-type clauses are reference-fixing, but, unlike for Kripke, Evansian reference-fixing cannot in general amount to the stipulation of some *referent*, since some DN-type clauses might fail in doing so.

⁶⁵ For this reason, Kripke has drawn criticism upon himself from McCulloch, who objects that, given the dichotomy mentioned, Kripke is not able to explain how the description manages to contribute to the sense of the name (McCulloch (1989), p. 291. But this objection might lose its weight once we assume that Kripke is only concerned with Russellian names, which do not have a descriptive sense.

⁶⁶ Either if we introduce a descriptive name that fails to refer to anything, or if we stipulate a term to abbreviate a description (a non-referring expression for Evans).

⁶⁷ Indeed, Evans acknowledges that he takes over the term “‘reference-fixing’ stipulation’ from *Naming and Necessity*. See VR, p. 31. On a slightly different interpretation of ‘reference-fixing’ see Davies (1981), pp. 233, 236. Davies takes a clause fixing the reference of an expression by description (i) to have the same effect as abbreviating a rigidified description, (ii) not to introduce a genuine singular term. Both claims would be rejected by Evans.

This failure is something left to reality, but the character of a DN-type stipulation is not. The real reason why both types of clauses are reference-fixing is because each of them accords with a reference criterion: with the Russellian and the non-Russellian Reference Criterion respectively. ‘Let us call “Vulcan” the intra-Mercurial planet’ is thus a reference-fixing clause on the Evansian account, while it could not be one on Kripke’s account.

Kripke’s examples only deal with those kind of descriptively introduced names which are ‘successful’, i.e. fix a referent. This is clear even from the wording of his examples: ‘[Leverrier] indeed gave the name “Neptune” to *the* planet before *it* was ever seen’, ‘I shall call *that* heavenly body over *there* “Hesperus”’ or ‘By “Alpha Centauri” I shall mean *the* star right over *there* with such and such coordinates’.⁶⁸ He is not concerned at this stage with possible reference failure, which is a good indication that these names are not descriptive names.⁶⁹ He takes D-type clauses merely to use descriptions to fix the referent of particular names, in which case a name’s entire significance will be just the referent itself. The description will not determine any other semantic feature beyond that. Hence, such naming clauses are of the *RN-type*, not, like Evans’s, of a *DN-type*. There does not seem to be any place for Evansian descriptive names in Kripke’s framework.

There is, however, one passage in *Naming and Necessity* which suggests that when a description is used to fix the reference of a name, the description does stand in a closer association with the name, at least for a certain period (cf. Kripke (1980), p. 79, fn.

⁶⁸ Kripke (1980), p. 79 and fn. 33, p. 95 (my italics).

⁶⁹ This is a desideratum true of his entire analysis of names, not just of descriptively introduced ones, as he himself points out in Kripke (1980), p. 21, fn. 21. Of course, Kripke has thought and lectured extensively on the problem of reference failure, namely in his *John Locke Lectures* (1973), but these lectures have not been published and anyway his elaborations of the notion of reference-fixing occurred prior to those lectures.

33.). Kripke discusses there the case of the naming of Neptune *prior* to the empirical confirmation of its existence. He writes that ‘at this stage, an *a priori* material equivalence held between the statements “Neptune exists” and “The planet causing the said perturbations exists”’.⁷⁰ After the confirmation of Neptune’s existence the equivalence is weakened, as the reference of the name is fixed ostensively and does not depend on the description anymore, which might turn out to be false without the name losing its assigned referent. The question is now: why does this equivalence hold? Of course, according to Kripke’s own account of naming, it cannot be because the name is synonymous or at least replaceable *salva senso* with the description.⁷¹ For in that case ‘Neptune is the planet causing the said perturbations’ should be an analytic truth in the pre-discovery period, which Kripke would surely deny, since the statement is not necessary.⁷² Instead, the statement is true in virtue of Neptune happening to be the planet in question. But this cannot be the entire story, since the equivalence is *a priori* true, which is knowable prior to finding out whether Neptune in fact exists. What sense does it otherwise make to speak of *a priori* truth at this stage? In fact, the equivalence would be *a priori* true even if there were *no* such planet, since we know that in that case both sides of the equivalence would be false.

⁷⁰ Incidentally, it is noteworthy that at this point Kripke only considers existential and conditional statements, but no atomic sentences containing the name, e.g. ‘Neptune is smaller than Uranus’, although these sentences can undoubtedly be formed, since the name has been introduced into language. Would such a sentence not also be *a priori* equivalent to its descriptive counterpart ‘The planet causing the said perturbations is smaller than Uranus’? If so, would this not suggest that there is a semantical connection between the name and the description stronger than a merely reference-fixing one?

Undoubtedly, it would be immensely clarifying to know what Kripke thinks in this context about the case of the non-existence of a referent. Would he still describe D-type clauses as reference-fixing in such a case? If so, this would suggest that his descriptively introduced names are referent-independent in the sense in which Evans’s descriptive names are. The question to ask Kripke then would be: in virtue of what is this referent-independence achieved, if not the introducing description? If, on the other hand, he denied that his name stipulations are reference-fixing when there is no referent, we would find clear confirmation of my interpretation. (One possible way to continue the discussion of Kripke at this point would be to look carefully at his own examples of descriptively introduced names and check whether *they* actually belong to the same category, but there is no scope for this in the present discussion.)

⁷¹ Having the same sense and being synonymous is not necessarily the same. See McCulloch (1989), pp. 294f.

⁷² Remember that for Kripke a statement is analytic if it is both necessary and *a priori* true. See Kripke (1980), p. 122, fn. 63.

But how is this *a priori* knowledge to be explained? Proponents of a close semantical connection between the name and the description such as Evans or McCulloch have a straightforward answer to this: the name takes over the *sense* of the description, although this does not have to be explained by the ‘thicker’ notion of synonymy. It suffices to say that some kind of replaceability is allowed for by a DN-type stipulation. For instance, McCulloch (who follows Evans closely in the question we are interested in at this stage)⁷³ explains that knowledge of the clause ‘Let us call “Neptune” the planet causing the said perturbations’, provides us with necessary and sufficient conditions for the understanding of ‘Neptune is *F*’, because we know that and how the description determines the sense of the name (see McCulloch (1989), pp. 290f.). Hence, according to him, nothing would be more natural than to say that ‘Neptune is *F*’ and ‘The planet causing the said perturbations is *F*’ express the same thought (Fregean sense). To understand the latter is a necessary and sufficient condition for understanding the former. And this is the only kind of replaceability we need. Evans holds something similar, as we have seen in the previous section. In conclusion, Kripke is overall concerned with descriptively introduced Russellian names and may not be capable of explaining the above mentioned *a priori* truth and knowledge, but the above passage indicates that at least once he comes across a phenomenon explored to a much greater extent by Evans.⁷⁴

Before closing this section, let me advance one more exegetical remark. Evans himself makes clear that there is a substantial difference between his and Kripke’s account of names introduced by description. In “Reference and Contingency” he

⁷³ For differences between Evans and McCulloch see section 4.5 below.

⁷⁴ The question is whether Evans’s ability to explain this *a priori* knowledge translates into a better account of the related problem of the contingent *a priori*. See Chapter 4 below.

characterises descriptive names as ‘Fregean’ terms and portrays Kripke as denying precisely this claim.⁷⁵ In his view Fregean terms have a referent-independent sense guaranteed by ‘the close semantical connection between a descriptive name and a description’ (RC, p. 181). For according to Evans whoever says that *DN* is *G* also says that the *F* is *G*, since both utterances involved have the same assertoric content. It was of course Kripke who denied any such close connection between names and descriptions, and the discrepancy between Kripke and Evans noted by Evans himself at this point is significant. He obviously takes Kripke to believe that his (Kripke’s) names introduced by description are non-Fregean, in other words: Russellian. Kripke’s descriptively introduced names do not have a sense if empty, and therefore are not Evansian descriptive names. Rather, they are more akin to Russellian names which cannot be empty. Last but not least, evidence that my interpretation is along the right tracks is given by Evans himself in *The Varieties of Reference* when he explicitly indicates that in his *John Locke Lectures* (1973) Kripke takes a ‘Russellian line about names like “Julius”’.⁷⁶

To take stock of our comparison: Kripke’s D-type clauses are solely referent-fixing and introduce Russellian names. By contrast, Evans’s DN-type clauses are meant to primarily fix sense and semantic value; they are only secondarily and contingently referent-fixing. It seems to me that both thinkers get something right and something wrong about D-type stipulations. Evans fails to realise that we can introduce Russellian names by description, which Kripke does acknowledge, while Kripke fails

⁷⁵ See RC, p. 182. The trouble with understanding this passage is that ‘Fregean’ is an attribute Evans adopted while writing “Reference and Contingency” (published in 1979) and which he later dropped after writing “Understanding Demonstratives” (published in 1981). This explains footnote 5a in RC, p. 182. Initially he took ‘Fregean’ to apply to singular terms that possess a sense independently of whether they possess a referent, since he thought that Frege allowed any singular term to have a sense independent of a referent. When he came to think of such an interpretation of Frege as incorrect, he gave up the term (see *CP*, pp. 295-303).

⁷⁶ See *VR*, p. 350, fn. 12. See also McCulloch (1985), p. 579, fn. 8, for a further confirmation of the difference between Evans and Kripke exposed here.

to realise that in many cases a D-type stipulation is a DN-type stipulation, establishing conditions of understanding of a name by bringing it in a close semantical connection with a definite description.

Nevertheless, there are vital similarities between the two thinkers on the question of names, the main ones being that they both believe that all names are rigid designators, while descriptions are not rigid, at least not essentially so. Therefore they both also believe that to introduce a name by description by no means amounts to abbreviating the latter. I will return to these and related issues in Chapters 4.

Chapter 3: Descriptive Names as Predicates?

This chapter has two tasks. First, Evans's theoretical framework is presented. Second, a basic problem with this framework is discussed, which relates to the notion of semantic value. It is argued that Evans ascribes to descriptive names semantic values which assimilate them to expressions usually taken to be non-referring, i.e. predicates. I conclude that we should jettison this problematic notion.

3.1 The challenge to descriptive names

The task for the remainder of this dissertation is partly positive, partly negative. The main positive goal will be to defend the two Basic Ideas:

First Basic Idea: Descriptive names are referring expressions.

Second Basic Idea: A descriptive name possesses the same sense as the introducing definite description.

But this will involve rejecting anything that threatens these ideas. As we will see the threats to these ideas are more substantial than it may seem. What poses a particular challenge is The Postulate of Semantic Difference:

Postulate of Semantic Difference: Descriptive names and definite descriptions belong to different semantical categories.

As I mentioned before, a challenge arises through the combination of the two Basic Ideas with the Postulate. For descriptive names must be portrayed as referring expressions whose sense is identical with that of non-referring expressions. It is not important whether they really have *exactly* the same sense. Really important is the fact that by claiming that they have the same sense we are committed to the claim that it is *categorically* the same, that the sense of a name can be the same as the sense of a non-referring expression. Evans is not unaware of this problem. He thinks that it can be solved by showing that the Postulate of Semantic Difference simply does not affect the Basic Ideas. The semantic difference between names and descriptions does not manifest itself with respect to their sense (assertoric content), rather with respect to their modal properties (proposition). However, as I will show in Chapter 4, Evans's account can't really accommodate the Postulate with the Basic Ideas. We can only defend the Two Basic Ideas if we drop the Postulate and treat descriptions as referring expressions as well, which will be done in Chapter 5.

Prior to that we will see in this chapter that a similar challenge also arises from the technical notion of semantic value. If the sense of an expression is the mode of presentation of a semantic value (as Evans suggests), then two expressions cannot really have categorically different types of senses and the same kind of semantic values. To ascribe to a referring expression a kind of semantic value which is canonically ascribed to a non-referring expression is a rather fatal outcome, and we should try to avoid this by all means. My solution to this will be to drop the notion of semantic value (see also section 5.3). The task in this and the next chapter is to a large extent negative, namely to show which aspects of the Standard Account are open to challenges. Chapter 5 will then offer a positive solution to these challenges.

3.2 Descriptive names in the context of a truth theory

The theoretical framework within which Evans develops his account of descriptive names is sketched and a first attempt is made to fit descriptive names into this framework.

We need to look now at the more theoretical and technical aspects of Evans's account of descriptive names. Broadly speaking, the theory divides into four parts, three more general and one specific. The three general ones are: (i) a Davidsonian truth-conditional theory of meaning, supplemented with Fregean semantics (which Evans calls 'interpretational'⁷⁷); (ii) a broadly Russellian, quantificational account of descriptions; (iii) a Kripkean understanding of reference based on the notion of rigidity. The more specific aspect is (iv) negative free logic for descriptive names. In this chapter I will mostly look at (i). (ii)-(iv) will be reserved for the next chapter.

(i) provides the general framework within which the theory of descriptive names is formulated and it is accepted here. It should be noted though that Evans's version of (i) is not shared by every Davidsonian. He combines Davidson's basic idea with elements from both Dummett and McDowell such that a theory of meaning is also a modest theory of sense and semantic value (reference).

First, there is the familiar Davidsonian approach to meaning. Central to such a theory is the notion of truth and that of the compositionality of meaning. Compositionality amounts to the fact that words in natural language combine in a systematic way to yield well-formed declarative sentences in such a way that the meanings of the

⁷⁷ See on this slightly idiosyncratic label Evans (1985c), pp. 61, 70. Evans derives the project of 'interpretational' semantics from Dummett (1978), p. 123f.

sentences depend on the meanings of the words. However, since there are difficulties with stating every word meaning in the fashion of a dictionary entry⁷⁸, the theory's approach is instead to determine the meaning of all sentences containing those words, since word meaning consists, as Davidson puts it, in a word's systematic contribution to the meaning of all possible sentences in which it may occur (Davidson (1984b), p. 22). We do this by formulating general recursive principles of sentence composition such that from these principles we will be able to derive the meaning of every individual sentence. And the crucial idea here is to determine sentence meaning via determining truth-conditions expressed by T-clauses of the form '*S* is true iff *p*'.⁷⁹ Truth is thus taken to be the central notion, while meaning is eliminated or at least considered explicable. Since a theory of meaning is a genuine, i.e. testable and predictive, empirical theory, the actual determination of the truth-conditions of any particular sentence is an empirical investigation ('radical interpretation') for the language *L*, amounting to discovering the extension of the truth predicate, i.e. which T-clauses are to be assigned to speaker's utterances at a given time (Davidson (1984d), p. 218). The semanticist's job is complete with a generalisation of these empirical findings establishing general and lawlike axioms⁸⁰, theorems derivable from which would be the T-clauses themselves. Thus a meaning theory consists of the following: vocabulary, syntax, axioms for names, predicates, connectives, quantifiers etc. and their possible modes of combinations, and a metalogic. The key theorems are the T-clauses.⁸¹

⁷⁸ See Davidson (1984b), and Evans/McDowell (1976b), pp. ix, xiii, fn. 6.

⁷⁹ The backbone of this is of course a Tarskian truth theory. There are radical differences between Tarski and Davidson though: Davidson, contrary to Tarski, takes the notion of truth, not of meaning, as undefinable, views T-clauses as functional substitutes for clauses of the form '*p* means *m*', not as a testing ground for an adequate truth definition, and applies his truth theory to languages that are not semantically closed.

⁸⁰ '[...] if a theory of truth is to suffice for interpretation [...] its axioms and theorems must be natural laws' (Davidson (1984a), p. xviii). See also Davidson (1984c), p. 73.

⁸¹ This approach to semantics is of course not without its own problems, but I cannot go into this at this stage. For some important criticism see Rumfitt (1995), especially pp. 854ff., and for an alternative

Evans accepts this approach to meaning in principle. But he gives it a reading based on additional considerations advanced by Dummett and McDowell. From Dummett he borrows the Fregean distinction between sense and semantic value (reference), and the requirement that a theory of meaning also serve as a theory of sense and semantic value of individual expressions, i.e. a theory of understanding, of what it is that someone knows when he knows a language and the meaning of the individual expressions of that language.⁸² However, this theory of understanding can be given two versions, a rich and a modest one. The rich one is Dummett's, the modest one is McDowell's. Taking names as an example, a rich theory makes explicit not only speaker's knowledge that 'Hesperus' refers to Hesperus, but also what piece of practical knowledge is concretely involved in mastering the name, e.g. the ability to recognise what condition an object must satisfy in order to be the bearer of the name (see Dummett (1993a), p. 21). This implies, as a further requirement, that the theory explains what makes such an ability possible, namely the possession of the primitive concepts involved, and thus the concepts themselves, including the concept of reference. Dummett's theory of sense takes Frege's notion of sense as the mode of presentation or determination of the referent in a quite literal and substantial way. A modest theory, by contrast, contents itself with articulating the bare minimum of knowledge required to understand sentences containing 'Hesperus' – and this minimum is captured by the axiom for the name.⁸³

Evans seems to follow McDowell's modesty. I say 'seems', because he pursues a

approach, based on the notion of meaning, see Williams (2005).

⁸² See Dummett (1981a), (1993a), (1993b). Davidson, by contrast, does not believe that there is any need for a theory of semantic values for individual expressions. See Davidson (1984d), especially pp. 215ff.

⁸³ See McDowell (1998c), pp. 177f., also (1998a), (1998b). Dummett's criticism is found e.g. in Dummett (1981b), pp. 92f., Dummett (1993a).

modest theory of understanding only in the first three chapters of *The Varieties of Reference*. Here he does not give any specific definition or explanation of the notion of reference as required by Dummett, but is content to say that the relation of reference is whatever relation between expressions and objects makes the following principle true:

(P) If S is an atomic sentence consisting of an n -place predicate R and the singular terms $a_1 \dots a_n$, then S is true iff $\langle$ the referent of $a_1 \dots$ the referent of $a_n \rangle$ satisfies R .⁸⁴

This can be seen as an implicit definition of reference and satisfaction in terms of truth. (P) will be employed by the radical interpreter to bring order into the interpreted language, namely as a device ‘to identify a class of sentences in which [we] can discern expressions of two characteristic types’, namely referring expressions and predicates (VR, p. 49). Obviously, this presupposes that the interpreter himself has a grasp of the concepts of reference and satisfaction. This is a clear sign that Evans assumes, at this stage, a modest type of theory, as proposed by McDowell.

However, in the rest of *The Varieties of Reference*, his theory is underwritten by an account of the kind of complex abilities required for entertaining singular thoughts, this entertaining being in turn just what the grasping of sentential sense amounts to. This is indicated by the importance Evans attributes to Russell’s Principle. It seems to me that this is a richer account of sense and reference than the one pursued by McDowell.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ VR, p. 49. More on this in Sainsbury (2005), p. 79f.

⁸⁵ Evans acknowledges similarities and differences between himself and McDowell in “Understanding Demonstratives”, CP, p. 291, fn. 1.

Let us, for the sake of the argument, focus now on the McDowell version of Evans's meaning theory. This simplifies our theory of descriptive names considerably. What we must give an account of is the sense and semantic value of any descriptive name, and the truth-conditions of corresponding sentences. Now, the crux of the theory of understanding, and here there is agreement between Dummett, McDowell and Evans, is that we don't have to see the theory of semantic value as separate from that of sense. The latter can, indeed can only be given via the former. Axioms specifying semantic value will simultaneously serve as axioms specifying sense.⁸⁶ We cannot in general say 'the sense of "A" is ...', or even 'the semantic value of "A" is ...' by filling in some synonymous, mentioned term (think of 'and' or 'however'), but we can at least formulate clauses stating the truth-conditions of sentences containing 'A' and thus state indirectly the semantic value of 'A'.⁸⁷ To be sure, things are more straightforward for singular terms, since for them we can formulate clauses of the form 'the semantic value of "A" is ...'. But it will still be difficult to state their sense explicitly. However, here we must remember that a semantic value clause can be described as 'a particular means of determining something as the referent' of a term. And since this is exactly what the sense of an expression is for Dummett, i.e. 'the manner in which we determine its reference' (Dummett (1981), p. 227), we can conclude that an axiom specifying semantic value also determines sense. To use a famous distinction Dummett borrows from the *Tractatus*: by *saying* what the semantic value of an expression is, we *show* its sense.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ The main idea is due to Dummett (1981), p. 227. See also VR, pp. 25f., Evans/McDowell (1976b), pp. x-xiii, and McDowell (1998c).

⁸⁷ See Evans/McDowell (1976b), p. xiii, fn. 6 for an illustration for 'and'.

⁸⁸ Dummett (1981), pp. 147, 227. Actually, if the mode or manner of presentation of the semantic value of, let's say, 'Queen Elizabeth' is an axiom, is the sense of 'Queen Elizabeth' not absurdly that axiom? We have to be careful about the phrase 'mode of presentation'.

I think that this notion of showing is problematic. (i) Dummett's reference to the *Tractatus* is unwarranted. The Tractarian notion of showing cannot simply be detached from the picture theory of propositions, the metaphysics of atomic objects and the ineffability of the logical form of symbols and facts. The showing-saying distinction implies genuine ineffability, but not of the senses of names, since

The sense of an expression can thus not be specified unless we have a semantic value to present. Now, since semantic values are taken to be entities of various kinds, the *assignment of entities to expressions* (and not just names, but also predicates and sentences) becomes an essential task of semantics. This is not part of Davidson's original project, rather a model theoretic expansion of it. In actual fact, for Evans this kind of assignment plays under the slightly idiosyncratic label of 'interpretational semantics' a foundational role: it actually underwrites even Davidsonian truth theory, since the former is needed to show whether a certain truth theory is really interpretive or not, whether it really matches the language under investigation.⁸⁹ Thus if an expression is classified as belonging to a particular semantic category, it must be assigned a certain kind of entity as its semantic value. However, as we will see, the fact that we need to assign some entity as semantic value to descriptive names will turn out to be a very serious problem.

Let us now try to formulate a candidate for the semantic value axiom for 'Julius', i.e. a clause with which the theory would come out if interpretive. To compare, here is an axiom for a Russellian term:

names do not have a sense in the *Tractatus*, rather of the logical form of any symbol, object and fact, including names, concept-words, and propositions. And only of the latter does Wittgenstein say that they exhibit their sense by stating that something is the case. The early Wittgenstein would not merely have denied that one can state the sense of referring expressions, but claimed that axioms such as (3) are literally meaningless. For what they try to state in the disguise of apparently genuine (bipolar) statements is shown by the fully analysed form of proper sentences. According to the *Tractatus* the semantic role of a name cannot be stated in any way, but at most elucidated.

(ii) Frege believed that we *can* state the sense of a name. He stated what the sense of 'Aristotle' *is*: the pupil of Plato and teacher of Alexander (Frege (1892a) p. 144). (Note that at least in this passage sense is specified by Frege not by using the same expression, as McDowell proposes, but a *different* expression with the same semantic value.) Also, given Frege's views on opaque contexts, the semantic value of any expression contained in a non-iterated single that-clause is its usual sense. Since it is not denied by any party that we can state semantic values, why not state *this* semantic value, which is a sense? Formulating axioms for semantic values of expressions occurring in opaque contexts would yield a general method of stating any sense we want, thus making the showing doctrine superfluous.

⁸⁹ See VR, p. 34, also Evans (1985c), pp. 61, 65, 69f.

(3) The semantic value of 'Naomi' = Naomi.

Since here the semantic value coincides with the referent, we can also say:

(4) The referent of 'Naomi' = Naomi (or: 'Naomi' uniquely refers to Naomi).

Alternatively, we can, as it is sometimes done, write a set-theoretical (or model-theoretical) counterpart:

(5) The semantic value of 'Naomi' $\in \{\text{Naomi}\}$ ⁹⁰,

These axioms are each a mode of presenting the semantic value of the name by using the name itself to state its own semantical contribution, i.e. by taking advantage of the way the name itself presents the referent. Hence such axioms also determine the sense of the name.⁹¹ Using satisfaction clauses for individual predicates (e.g. ' $\forall x (x \text{ satisfies "Hungarian"} \leftrightarrow x \text{ is Hungarian})$ ') and clauses for syntactic combination we can derive theorems stating the truth-conditions of sentences containing the name:

(6) 'Naomi is Hungarian' is true $\leftrightarrow$ Naomi is Hungarian.

We see easily that all these clauses could not be stated, would not be intelligible, if the name were empty, which is pointing us back to the referent-dependence of Russellian terms discussed in the previous chapter. But things are different when we consider corresponding axioms for descriptive names. We cannot have

⁹⁰ This axiom could not read 'The semantic value of 'Naomi' = {Naomi}', since in that case if 'Naomi' were empty, the name would still have a semantic value, namely the empty set. Empty Russellian terms do not have any semantic value, not even the empty set.

⁹¹ See *VR*, p. 26f., McDowell (1981), p. 181.

(7) The semantic value of 'Julius' = Julius,

even less so

(8) The referent of 'Julius' = Julius,

since these clauses treat 'Julius' as Russellian. That would not represent the situation given by empty 'Julius', since the axiom would be untrue. Besides, these clauses do not display the name's semantical connection with the canonical description. What we need is a clause which avoids these problems. Since we don't want to view the DN-type clause as establishing perfect synonymy, we should choose a clause that does not mention, but only uses the definite description. An obvious candidate is the following:

(9) The semantic value of 'Julius' = the inventor of the zip.

This clause seems to have both the advantage of showing the name's relation to the description and of being intelligible even if the description turns out to be empty. The second is achieved simply through a feature definite descriptions are almost universally held to possess: that they have a sense even if not satisfied by or denoting anything. There are however a few problems with this clause.

(i) Since the description is merely used, there does not seem to be anything about the clause indicating the special relation between the name and the description. The description appears to be used to simply state the semantic value. If we came across some other truth about Julius, e.g. that he invented the lightning arrester, we

could state the name's semantic value by a clause very similar to (9) (e.g. 'The semantic value of "Julius" = the inventor of the lightning arrester'), but that would not be an indication of the name's (modified) sense either.

(ii) The logical form of the clause is simple: it is an identity statement containing two noun phrases. What is missing is the indication of the *conditionality* of the name: the clause does not say that the semantic value of 'Julius' is the inventor of the zip *if* the latter exists, and that it is not the inventor of the zip otherwise (but what is it in this case?). This cannot be decided from the mere form of (9), indeed not even from a set-theoretic alternative to (9) (similar to (5)).

(iii) As it stands, (9) carries existential commitment. It is an identity statement that is stipulated to come out as true. Unless we adopt some deviant logic that allows for empty terms to occur in true identity statements, neither of the two definite descriptions can be vacuous, which thereby entails that there is a unique inventor of the zip. But this of course cannot be a matter of entailment. We can introduce a name with the sense fixed by 'the inventor of the zip' entirely independent of the existence of somebody who satisfies the description.

I think the first objection can be dealt with. The special relation between the name and the description does not have to be indicated by any intrinsic feature of clause (9); instead, the relation is determined by the fact that the clause is treated as an axiom *within* the theory, not simply as a true statement among others. This is why it is the sense-showing clause and not on a par with other possible statements stating the semantic value of 'Julius'.⁹² The last two points, however, are more serious. We need a very different clause than (9) to specify the role of 'Julius' in our language.

⁹² There must be a difference at the theoretical level between this clause and 'The semantic value of 'Julius' = the inventor of the lightning arrester', since the latter, if also taken as sense-determining, would associate the name with a *different* description, thus making the name ambiguous, indeed even if the inventor of the zip were the inventor of the lightning arrester.

3.3 The main proposal: sets as semantic values

In this section I consider Evans's main suggestion for the semantic value of descriptive names, namely sets. I show that this suggestion gives rise to two problems: it assimilates descriptive names to predicates and it makes the sense of descriptive names depend on the existence of the referent.

As seen, clause (9) is not adequate. The clauses Evans himself considers are syntactically very different. They are not at all identity statements. The immediate reason for this is that Evans is a Russellian, analysing descriptions as complex quantifier phrases, not as entity-invoking expressions. Let us assume, for the time being, that Evans is correct in choosing this analysis. How does this affect (9), if this is the clause we choose to work with? Remember Russell's analysis of ' ιxFx ' as ' $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ \dots x \dots)$ '. We would thus get something like ' $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \text{the semantic value of 'Julius' } = x)$ '. To simplify matters, let us reduce the symbolism to a minimum by introducing a uniqueness operator 'uniquely'.⁹³ The expansion of clause (9) reads then:

(10) $\exists x (x \text{ uniquely invented the zip} \ \& \text{the semantic value of 'Julius' } = x)$.

The immediate advantage of this clause is that it is intelligible even if there fails to be a referent, in which case it would be simply false. But it is still problematic. First, precisely because it could be easily false, it can't be the right clause for our purposes.

⁹³ Evans symbolises ' x is uniquely F ' by a more formal, but typographically cumbersome device, which cannot be reproduced here (VR, p. 36, fn. 42). See Chrisley (1998) for a simplification of Evans's device. The original formula by which Evans introduces his operator contains two misprints: the uniqueness operator has a mistaken scope and the second occurrence of the variable ' x ' is not in italics (see also Geach (1986)).

An axiom for 'Julius' must, of course, be true no matter whether the name has a referent or not. This clause says too much; being true, it commits us to the existence of the inventor of the zip. We need a weaker clause, one without existential commitment, which merely states that if there is a unique inventor of the zip, then 'Julius' refers to him. Here is a possibility:

(11) $\forall x$ (the semantic value of 'Julius' = $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely invented the zip)

This clause has the advantage of expressing the *conditionality* of the name's assignment of semantic value, a conditionality which is crucial for non-Russellian reference (see 2.2 above). It also comes close to meeting at least objection (ii) at the end of the previous section, since it displays the conditionality of the name. However, Evans own axiom differs in one important aspect: his speaks of the *referent*, not of the semantic value. Thus:

(12) $\forall x$ (the referent of 'Julius' = $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely invented the zip)⁹⁴,

or, more generally,

(13) $\forall x$ (the referent of ' DN ' = $x \leftrightarrow x$ is uniquely F).

We see here why there is no need to interpret a descriptive name as a strict abbreviation of a descriptive phrase. The axiom does not *mention* a descriptive phrase (or the corresponding predicate), but only *uses* it.⁹⁵ To understand 'Julius' it is

⁹⁴ VR, p. 50. Evans offers as an equivalent axiom ' $\forall x$ (The referent of 'Julius' = $x \leftrightarrow$ [Julius] x = Julius), which I discuss in 3.5.

⁹⁵ Thanks to Dr Stephen Williams for pointing this out to me. Stanley (2002), pp. 333ff., mentions this

sufficient, but not necessary to understand the sequence ‘the inventor of the zip’. We would also be able to understand the name if we understood some other descriptive phrase with the same sense as ‘the inventor of the zip’, e.g. ‘whoever invented the zip’ or maybe even ‘l’inventeur de la fermeture-éclair’ etc. But we could also have a stricter notion of sameness of sense, according to which it is necessary for the understanding of the name that one understand a certain descriptive phrase. However, as already mentioned, I shall not adopt this stricter notion, but the more liberal one here.

Having stated the truth-conditional contribution of a descriptive name, the theory must also be able to formulate truth-conditions for corresponding sentences as well. From a correct theory we should thus be able to derive T-theorems (specifying what is said) like the following (see VR, p. 50, RC, p. 185):

(14) ‘Julius is filthy rich’ is true $\leftrightarrow$ the inventor of the zip is filthy rich.

Note now that (3) and (4) are perfectly interchangeable alternative formulations of one and the same axiom, whereas (11) and (12) are not. The semantic value of a Russellian term *is* its referent, but this is not true of a descriptive name, since even if the name lacks a referent, it will not lack a semantic value. As we have seen, semantic value and referent do not necessarily coincide in the case of non-Russellian terms.

issue as well, but he concludes that given axiom (12) Evans cannot explain the mystery that ‘Julius is *F*’ expresses the same as ‘The inventor of the zip is *F*’. But there is no mystery. The axiom does not have to mention the description (and thus articulate a strict abbreviation relation) to explain the descriptive sense of the name. Rather, as pointed out above, it is the *interpretation* of the axiom and its privileged place in the theory that explains the descriptive sense of ‘Julius’. Without this axiom the understanding of the name by speakers will be simply not be captured in the theory. How this differs from Stanley’s explanation of the understanding of ‘Julius’ in terms of making ‘the right presupposition’ (namely that ‘Julius’ refers to the inventor of the zip) is not clear to me (Stanley does not formulate an axiom corresponding to his version), since to make such a presupposition is to know (DN1) on my account and thus understand ‘the inventor of the zip’ or related descriptive phrases, which is what (12) captures in the theory.

This is a reasonable way to justify (12), but it falls short of something (11) was at least trying to do, namely to *state the semantic value* of the name, not the referent, be this merely in a conditional manner. Stating the semantic value is an absolute requirement, since, as we have seen in section 2.5 above, the sense of a singular term is generally to be described as the mode of presentation of the semantic value. If the axiom fails to mention the semantic value, we cannot specify ('show') the sense of the name either!

What then shall we say at this stage? That the semantic value too is shown by (12)? This still upsets the theory adopted here, for the semantic value must be stated. Dummett and McDowell nowhere say that by stating the referent we show both sense and semantic value. Shall we rather say that the semantic value is at least stated for the case in which the name has a referent, since in that case the semantic value will be the referent and that is indeed stated in (12)? But what about the other case, the case in which the name has no referent? In that case the semantic value will obviously not be the referent – but it will still be *something*, since this is what distinguishes non-Russellian from Russellian reference. But what is the semantic value of the name in that case? We have come across this question before (in 2.5), but we could not give an answer. In fact I am not sure an answer can be really given. It is not clear what (12) tells us about the semantic value of 'Julius', if the name turns out to be empty. We can only say what it will not be: not a person or no other physical entity either. But what then? An abstract or possible object?

It may be the impasse created by these questions that causes Evans to contemplate a very peculiar solution, namely to take *sets* as the semantic values of descriptive names. He discusses this solution only briefly, but he does attach great importance to

it.⁹⁶ Given his attachment to ‘interpretational semantics’, descriptive names, empty or not, must be always assigned entities as semantic values. Accordingly, the semantic value of an empty descriptive name is the empty set, otherwise the one-member set of the inventor of the zip. The semantic value is thus always a set. Since we don’t want to say that ‘Julius’ refers to a set, the distinction between referent and semantic value must be maintained. This means that, contrary to what was just suggested, the semantic value of a descriptive name can *never* coincide with the referent.

Thus the impasse seems to disappear: the name cannot fail to have a semantic value, even when empty. We can now formulate a corresponding semantic value clause:

(15) The semantic value of ‘Julius’ = $\{x \mid x \text{ uniquely invented the zip}\}$.

This seems to be an elegant solution to the problem of stating the semantic value of descriptive names.⁹⁷ The clause is very different from (11) and (12). Importantly, it tells us explicitly what the semantic value is for *both* reference success and reference failure.

Ultimately, and unfortunately, this solution won’t do. It is not a good idea to have the semantic value of a proper name identified with a set, since this generates some serious problems. I will now discuss these problems for the remainder of this chapter.

One problem is purely exegetical: For a theory which calls itself Fregean (VR, p. 39),

⁹⁶ See VR, pp. 32, 36, also Evans (1985e), p. 300. There is no concrete mention of other alternatives.

⁹⁷ One immediate problem with this axiom is that it does not mention the relation of reference. We could have instead ‘The semantic value of “Julius” = $\{x \mid x \text{ uniquely invented the zip \& } x \text{ refers to “Julius”}\}$ ’. But this would not only lead to the problem of inadequate truth-conditions (see 3.5 below), but also that these truth-conditions would be partly metalinguistic.

this proposal is not very Fregean. Frege did not make a distinction between the semantic value and the referent of a singular term, and above all he did not believe that any semantic feature of a proper name could be a set simply by virtue of being a proper name. Evans's 'semantic value' does not capture Frege's *Bedeutung*. Frege clearly states that the *Bedeutung* of a name or a definite description is the entity the term designates ('*bezeichnet*'; cf. Frege (1990a), p. 144). Sets enter the stage only in one of the following two ways: (i) As semantic values of names of sets. Since sets are entities and we can introduce names for any entity, a set could trivially be the semantic value of a name of a set. But that could not have anything to do with 'Julius', as this is supposed to be the name of a person, not a set!⁹⁸ (ii) As 'attachments' to the *Bedeutung* of a concept-word. The *Bedeutung* of a concept-word is not a set, rather the concept itself. A concept-word refers to a concept and only its extension is a set.⁹⁹ Hence the semantic value of a name of a physical entity, if this is supposed to be the real Fregean *Bedeutung*, can't be a set.

The exegetical objection may not ultimately be decisive. But there are other objections, which are more decisive. First, here is a general consideration relating to the overall conception of reference. How are we to count descriptive names as referring expressions, if we allow for (15)? If we follow the direct reference view, a singular term's truth-conditional contribution is the referent itself. But the truth-conditional contribution of 'Julius' is never the referent, rather a set. So either we say that descriptive names just cannot be referring expressions, or we restrict the scope of the direct reference theory, admitting that referring expressions for physical entities

⁹⁸ And if we introduce a descriptive name for a set *A*, then on Evans's proposal the semantic value of that name will not be *A*, rather a set of a set ($\{\{A\}\}$), if there is such a set *A*, otherwise the empty set, as before. See also footnote 107 below.

⁹⁹ See Frege (1891b), (1892b). For tensions within Frege's own notion of *Bedeutung* see Gabriel (1984).

can possess two radically different types of semantic value, namely referents which are not sets and sets which are not referents. Of course, this eclecticism would rehearse the rationale for the title of Evans's book. But it would also create a great gulf between Russellian terms and descriptive names to the effect that it would not be clear anymore in which sense a descriptive name refers to its bearer 'in exactly the same sense in which a Russellian name refers to its bearer' and thus belongs to the same 'rag-bag intuitive category' (VR, p. 31) of referring expressions.

3.4 Referent-independence under attack

In this section I show that the view that a descriptive name has a set as its semantic value has an unfortunate consequence: it undermines the referent-independence of sense.

From a Fregean point of view two different names with the same semantic value (*Bedeutung*) may have different senses. But two names with different semantic values cannot have the same sense. Take ‘Venus’ and ‘Vulcan’ as names with different semantic values. Were they to have the same sense, ‘Venus = Venus’ would express the same thought as ‘Venus = Vulcan’, which is absurd. The case is similar when we consider only a single name, e.g. our descriptive name ‘Julius’. Consider the sentence ‘Julius is filthy rich’ and assume that ‘Julius’ refers to Judson. Its sense is thus the singleton of Judson and the sentence expresses the thought that the inventor of the zip is filthy rich. Now even in a counterfactual situation in which ‘Julius’ would have had some other semantic value, e.g. the empty set, the sentence would have expressed the same thought, since, as Evans himself says, all stipulation (DN1) has done is to establish a semantical relation between two expressions, not between an expression and some extra-linguistic entity.¹⁰⁰ Thus ‘Julius’ and ‘Julius is filthy rich’ would each have had the same sense in that counterfactual situation as they each have now.

This is just to restate a corollary of the Second Basic Idea. Accordingly, the sense of a descriptive name is the same as that of the introducing description. Since, as McDowell puts it, ‘Definite descriptions are taken to have whatever sense they have

¹⁰⁰ See RC, p. 207 and my detailed discussion in Chapter 4 below, especially section 4.4.

independently of whether or not objects answer to them'¹⁰¹, the sense of a descriptive name is independent of any entity answering to it. Frege, who took all proper names to have a descriptive sense, came to the same conclusion, since for him the thought expressed by 'Odysseus was set ashore at Ithaca while sound asleep' is the same whether or not 'Odysseus' has a referent.¹⁰²

But this stands in immediate conflict with Evans's modified notion of sense as the mode of presentation of the semantic value. For if there is a referent, the semantic value is a singleton, otherwise it is the empty set. Hence, a sense as the mode of presentation of a singleton will be different from a sense as the mode of presentation of the empty set. To illustrate: assume 'Julius' refers to Judson. Then its sense is:

The mode of presentation of *the semantic value {Judson}*.

If, on the other hand, 'Julius' had been empty, its sense would have been:

The mode of presentation of *the semantic value $\emptyset$* .

These cannot be identical senses, since they present different objects. Hence, sense, on the current understanding, is *not* entirely independent of the existence of the referent.¹⁰³ The same is true of the corresponding sentence, if we construe its sense as the mode of presentation of its semantic value. What 'Julius is filthy rich' expresses

¹⁰¹ McDowell, *ibid.* Note that it is not clear whether this was also Russell's view. 'The *F* is *G*' is a quantified statement for him, but for Russell quantified statements are about propositional functions and the latter are entities, namely universals. Their existence must be presupposed by logic. See Hylton (1990), p. 288, 296f.

¹⁰² See Frege (1892a), p. 149, McDowell (1998), p. 185. The issues involved here have been observed initially by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus* (see Hacker (2001), p. 205-6).

¹⁰³ It is still independent in the sense that the term will have a sense whether or not an object answers to it, i.e. the *existence*, but not the identity of the sense is independent of the existence of the referent.

thus depends on whether the descriptive name has a referent or not.

But this is an unacceptable outcome. It clashes with the aforementioned corollary of the Second Basic Idea. We should not have to wait to see whether ‘Julius invented the zip’ is true or false and there is an inventor of the zip in order to know what thought the sentence expresses.¹⁰⁴ On the contrary: we establish the truth-value of the sentence precisely by recourse to its referent-independent truth-conditions. And these are grasped, because the sense of ‘Julius’ is grasped prior to any empirical investigation about its referent. The *a priori* transparency of sense is constitutive of the conditions of understanding of ‘Julius’.¹⁰⁵

The troublemaker for all this is that which motivated Evans to adopt the model-theoretic understanding of semantic value in the first place: the entity-based approach to sense. An expression has a sense only if it presents some entity in a particular way. No mode of presentation of X without X. An expression ‘ α ’ must present some entity X, even if ‘ α ’ itself has no referent (as can be the case with descriptive names). Choosing X to be a set thus becomes a necessary option. But we now see that it leads us into serious trouble. The referent-independence of sense is more important than the ascription of sets as semantic values, indeed more important than a too literal reading of sense as ‘mode presentation of the semantic value’. Therefore, it may well be that we need to give up this conception of sense and semantic value.

One possible way of trying to rescue the referent-independence of sense is to recourse

¹⁰⁴ As Sainsbury puts it: ‘Semantic theory is one thing, specialist knowledge of non-semantic fact another’ (Sainsbury (2002), p. 209). For a related (and earlier) statement see Dummett (1981b), p. 136f. For an opposed view, see McDowell (1998), p. 206f.

¹⁰⁵ This argument is slightly adapted from Dummett (1981b), p. 135. Dummett, of course, holds it to be valid for *all* expressions of a language. Accordingly, there cannot be any Russellian terms, whose possibility is indeed dismissed in Dummett (1981b), pp. 129-138.

to Californian semantics, according to which the semantic value of an expression is made stable with respect to all possible worlds. Accordingly, the semantic value of a sentence is taken to be a set of truth-values, and the semantic value of a name a set of tuples, each consisting of the (actual or world-relativised) referent and a world. This proposal, although interesting, has little to do with our issue here, since it concerns the modal properties of 'Julius' and 'Julius is filthy rich' (what Evans subsumes under the label 'proposition'), whereas we are interested in sense as assertoric content, which is a non-modal semantic property. I will discuss modal issues in Chapter 4 in more detail. In any case, we should treat Californian semantics with suspicion, since it manages to rescue the referent-independence of sense only by employing an ontologically overloaded notion of semantic value. The puzzling claim that a name like 'Julius' contributes to the truth-conditions of a simple indicative sentence such as 'Julius is filthy rich' a set is not made less puzzling by adding that the set it so contributes is a set of ordered pairs of objects and possible worlds. I will now argue that construing 'Julius' as having a set as its truth-conditional contribution, and similar approaches, is altogether wrong, since this denies the term's referentiality.

3.5 Three ways of eliminating descriptive names

Three different interpretations of descriptive names are examined here: assigning sets or concepts as semantic values to them, or assimilating their reference conditions to satisfaction conditions. All three are equally unacceptable, since they assimilate names like 'Julius' to predicates, thus denying their referentiality.

Sets as semantic values

An axiom such as (15) brings us into serious conflict with our and Evans's broadly Fregean semantics. According to this semantics, every expression type has a certain kind of semantic value assigned to it. In view of this we can now ask a simple question: the semantic value of which kind of expression is a set? The initial answer seems to be: of none. The semantic value of a proper name is a person etc., of a predicate a concept, and of a sentence a truth-value. As mentioned, a set is only attached as an extension to the semantic value of a predicate, but it is not a semantic value itself. Hence, given Frege's canonical assignments of semantic values, semantic values as sets, whether as semantic values of referring or other kind of expressions, do not even fit into his general framework.

There is, however, an obvious objection¹⁰⁶. Given the trivial possibility that we can introduce names for any kind of entity, and given that both sets and truth-values are entities for Frege, we can of course introduce names for sets or truth-values. Thus, if we introduce the name 'Bonbon' for the empty set, don't we have here an example of

¹⁰⁶ Raised to me by Dr Stephen Williams in conversation.

a name whose semantic value is precisely a set? We do! Nevertheless, we can discount this objection for a simple reason: while the semantic value of 'Bonbon' is the empty set, because 'Bonbon' *refers* to this set, the semantic value of 'Julius' cannot be a set because 'Julius' refers to a set. 'Julius' is supposed to refer to a person, if any. We have therefore no analogy here between 'Bonbon' and 'Julius'.¹⁰⁷ On Frege's understanding of predicates, a set can at the very most become the semantic value of a name for a set. We cannot fit axiom (15) and the underlying conception of semantic value into Frege's semantics.

But let us ignore Frege's understanding of predicates for a moment (I will return to it soon) and adopt instead a view of predicates according to which the semantic value of a predicate is a set, as this was done already by Carnap¹⁰⁸. This is an entirely uncontroversial matter; normal semantics for languages with predicates do indeed assign sets as semantic values to predicates.¹⁰⁹ But can we not play our game anew and assign a name to a set again? We surely can, thus assigning a set as a semantic value to a name. On this reading sets thus can be the semantic value of only two types of expressions: predicates and names of sets. Now, as just pointed out, 'Julius' can surely not be construed as a name for a set, hence this possibility drops out. It follows that if we are to assign a set as semantic value to 'Julius', *we must construe descriptive names as predicates!*

¹⁰⁷ And if we make the analogy slightly stronger by construing 'Bonbon' as a descriptive name of some set that may not exist, then its semantic value will not be that set, but the set of that set, if the set exists, otherwise the empty set. Hence, we will have the same problem as with 'Julius' above, since the existence of the referent will determine the sense of 'Bonbon'.

¹⁰⁸ See for instance Carnap (1947), p. 16f. Carnap does not speak of the sense and reference (even less so of the semantic value), but of the intension and extension of a predicate. But it is clear from his own interpretation of Frege that, like Church before him, he mistakenly equates Frege's sense/reference with his own intension/extension distinction. See Carnap (1947), §29.

¹⁰⁹ As is acknowledged in Dummett (1981), p. 173. See also for instance Bostock (1997), p. 83, clause (4), where the semantic value of each n -place predicate-letter Φ^n is a set of objects from the domain D which constitute the predicate's extension, such that the semantic value of $\Phi^n \subseteq D^n$.

This is not as absurd as it sounds. First of all, axiom (15) does not differ in effect from the following axiom:

(16) The semantic value of ‘uniquely invented the zip’ = $\{x \mid x \text{ uniquely satisfies ‘inventor of the zip’}\}$.

This axiom specifies the extension of a genuine first-order predicate by description. What speaks against treating ‘Julius’ as short for such a predicate? Maybe the fact that (16) uses the satisfaction relation, thus indicating that ‘inventor of the zip’ is a constituent of ‘uniquely invented the zip’, while it is not a constituent of ‘Julius’.¹¹⁰ But remember that abbreviation always comes with a price that is at the same time its gain: syntactic impoverishment. If *A* is abbreviated by *B*, we do not in general regard the constituents of *A* as being constituents of *B*, even though they will both have the same truth-conditional contribution and belong to the same semantical category.¹¹¹ We should remind ourselves of a notable line by Geach: ‘[...] an abbreviation is a proxy that can only fulfil the semantic role of its principal’ (Geach (1986), p. 535). Hence, ‘Julius’ could be understood as a shorthand for a predicate, even though superficially the term does not look like one. As an abbreviation ‘Julius’ would be syntactically unstructured, but it would have the sense and semantic value of a structured term. Note that on this reading talk of *atomic* sentences containing ‘Julius’ (which Evans employs, e.g. *VR*, p. 52) would be correct in a syntactic, but not a semantic respect.

The trouble with assigning sets as semantic values to descriptive names is that in

¹¹⁰ This assumes a certain interpretation of satisfaction as specifying syntactic constituents. Tarski did not have this notion of satisfaction.

¹¹¹ For instance, ‘asap’ does not have as a syntactic constituent ‘possible’, although the former does have the same truth-conditional contribution as ‘as soon as possible’.

doing so we assimilate them to predicates and deny them what the First Basic Idea ascribes to them: their *referentiality*. Predicates are an entirely different kind of expressions than singular terms. In addition, we end up with some unacceptable consequences. As Larson and Segal, two advocates of the predicate view, point out, if we understand the semantic values of names and predicates as sets, then the truth-conditions of ‘Chris agrees’ become (after some rephrasing): ‘Chris agrees’ is true $\leftrightarrow \{\text{Chris}\} \subseteq \{x \mid x \text{ agrees}\}$ (see Larson/Segal (1995), p. 133). For ‘Julius is filthy rich’ this means, following (16):

‘Julius is filthy rich’ is true $\leftrightarrow \{x \mid x \text{ uniquely invented the zip}\} \subseteq \{x \mid x \text{ is filthy rich}\}$.

This is hardly an acceptable outcome. An atomic sentence containing ‘Julius’ cannot express a relation between two sets, unless Julius is absurdly a set or the name is short for a predicate. The entire subject matter of the statement is misconstrued in this way, even if Julius exists. Not to mention that homophony, a declared goal of Evans’s ‘interpretational semantics’,¹¹² becomes a chimera on this proposal.

Moreover, we would need to ask about the consequences of treating the semantic value of descriptive names as sets. Does Evans’s proposal really apply only to descriptive names? Or rather to all names, including Russellian names? It seems that the latter is not the case, since the central passage where he discusses the proposal is concerned with the semantics of empty and thus non-Russellian terms (cf. Evans (1985e), p. 300). On the other hand, the main statement is made in very general terms: ‘[...] one formally adequate possibility would be to regard the semantic value of each

¹¹² T-theorems ‘should be no richer in conceptual content or ontology’ (CP, p. 70).

singular term as a set [...]'¹¹³. Also, Evans goes on to say that the proposed change would have to be accompanied by a change in the semantic values of predicates, presumably since now they could not be read anymore as mapping referents, rather sets onto truth-values. But is this meant to apply to all predicates or only to those predicates which concatenate with descriptive names? If the former, then all singular terms must be assigned sets as semantic values, which would lead to an unacceptable analysis in terms of *relations between sets* along Larson and Segal's lines above. If the latter, 'Julius is filthy rich' and 'Judson is filthy rich' will not contain the same predicate 'is filthy rich'. Evans does call this proposal 'strange', but I think we should rather call it 'unacceptable'.

Concepts as semantic values

Even if it is implausible to ascribe a set as a semantic value to 'Julius', is there not maybe some alternative and less problematic kind of semantic value available? We could, for instance, adopt a more Fregean approach and ascribe *concepts*, instead of sets, as semantic values to descriptive names.¹¹⁴ However, unlike Frege, who thought of the relation between a concept and its extension as being internal,¹¹⁵ we could take a concept to be independent of its extension. Thus, 'having a heart' and 'having a

¹¹³ VR, p. 32. Cf. also what he says about proper names as analysed in interpretational semantics in VR, p. 33.

¹¹⁴ This has been seen before. Like me, Joseph Almog draws a distinction between mere fixing of reference by description ('from the outside', 'in the meta-language'), and a more intimate relation between the name and the description, such that 'the *F*' is 'encoded in the syntax' of the (descriptive) name. Hence, 'a is *F*' expresses a singular proposition in the former and a general one in the latter case. Almog concludes that the descriptive name thus contributes 'a complex propositional component', a concept. What he fails to see is the descriptive name is thus not very different from a predicate. See Almog (1986), p. 224, fn. 12.

¹¹⁵ 'The relation between concepts which, according to Frege, is the analogue of the relation of identity between objects is: having the same extension, i.e. having just the same objects falling under them' (Dummett (1981a), p. 207). Concepts are thus completely extensional for Frege; if two predicates have the same extension, they have the 'same' reference (note Dummett's proviso (ibid., p. 209) on talk about sameness of reference of predicates within Frege's system). Thanks to Professor Dorothy Edgington for pointing this out to me.

kidney' have the same extension, but these are not predicates having the same concept as their reference. Equally, 'having a heart' refers to the same concept, no matter how many objects fall or could have fallen under it.

Accordingly, 'Julius' contributes to a sentence the concept *being the inventor of the zip*. This could be expressed by the following axiom:

The semantic value of 'Julius' = λx (x uniquely invented the zip).¹¹⁶

This ascription would have the great advantage of solving the problem mentioned in the previous section, if we take a concept to be independent of its actual, but also of any possible or even counterfactual extension. Thus the semantic value 'Julius' would be contributing to a sentence would be entirely independent of any referent. We could thus explain both the referent-independent and identical sense of both 'Julius is filthy rich' and 'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich'.

Unfortunately, this proposal is no less problematic than the set-theoretic one. The reason is that on Frege's view an expression which has a concept as its semantic value (*Bedeutung*) must be a predicate. The standard Fregean understanding of concepts is functional, with the semantic value of a predicate being like the predicate itself, incomplete.¹¹⁷ A concept maps arguments onto truth-values and is thus to be distinguished from its arguments. Hence, given Frege's understanding of concepts, the semantic value (*Bedeutung*) of any predicate is a concept, a function.

¹¹⁶ This axiom would not be permissible for Frege, since it attempts to refer to an unsaturated entity by means of a saturated expression. See Frege on the problem of 'the concept "horse"' in Frege (1892b).

¹¹⁷ See Frege (1891) or (1893), §21, also Dummett (1981b), p. 163.

Moreover, assigning a stable, world-independent semantic value to a referring expression brings us in an insuperable tension with Dummett's original understanding of semantic value. According to him, semantic value is something which belongs to the *world*. It is not a feature of expressions we will know simply by means of mastery of the language, rather by finding out how things stand in reality.

Now it may seem unfair to consider a Fregean understanding of predicates, given that the Evansian proposal I have discussed so far is one that assigns sets as semantic values to predicates. However, Evans himself is at times inclined towards a Fregean reading. This is most visible when he casts the notion of semantic value in terms of *categorial grammar*.¹¹⁸ Here the framework is clearly Fregean, since terms categorised as names are radically different from those categorised as functional.¹¹⁹ Functional, incomplete expressions are non-primitive and derived from the primitive categories of names and sentences. For instance, first-level predicates are symbolised by 'S/N', being expressions which, when concatenated with names ('N', or noun-phrases, 'NP'), yield sentences ('S'), whereas second-level predicates are symbolised as 'S/(S/N)', being expressions which, when concatenated with first-level predicates (S/N) yield sentences (S).¹²⁰ As Evans stresses, the semantic value of predicates is, given their derivability, always a function, a concept. Surely then, if the semantic value of a 'name' is a concept, it really is a predicate. But this is not acceptable, as I just argued.

In conclusion, we should be very wary about assigning either sets or concepts as

¹¹⁸ See VR, pp. 9f., 58f. One influence here is Lewis (1972). Categorial grammar goes back to Adjukiewicz (1935) and Bar-Hillel (1953).

¹¹⁹ Categorial grammar is ultimately based on the distinction between saturated and unsaturated expressions and this can be traced back to Frege. See Lukes (1992).

¹²⁰ This notation is supposed to display the functional and unsaturated character of predicates itself.

semantic values to descriptive names. Both kinds of assignment deny descriptive names their referentiality (First Basic Idea). If the theory of meaning really is a scientific theory, then if the theory encounters serious problems with some phenomenon (e.g. applying the notion of semantic value to descriptive names), then the theory itself has to be modified. Of course, such modification can be minor and apply only at the edges. But if the phenomenon continues to be recalcitrant, then some core elements of the theory need to be modified. In our case, this concerns either the referentiality of descriptive names or the notion of semantic value as an entity distinct from the putative referent. I suggest we give up the latter. The referentiality of descriptive names is more important than a troublesome technical notion. I will return to this question in section 5.3 below.

Other ways of assimilating descriptive names to predicates

It is noteworthy that even if we drop the notion of semantic value, there are still ways of assimilating descriptive names to predicates. After all, attempts to analyse names as predicates have been put forward in the past outside of any semantics operating with semantic values. Quine's analysis of proper names, or Burge's suggestion to treat all singular terms as predicates go in this direction¹²¹. According to Quine, for instance, 'Julius' would be translated into the predicate 'Juliusises' (or 'is a Julius') and the existential import would be made explicit. Applied to descriptive names we would thus end up with the equivalence ' $\dots$ Julius $\dots \leftrightarrow \exists x (x \text{ Juliusises} \ \& \ \dots x \dots)$ ', where 'Juliusises' is understood as short for 'uniquely invented the zip'.

More recently, Mark Sainsbury has offered an interesting account of reference in

¹²¹ See Quine (1960), p. 178, Burge (1973). For supporters of this view see Hornsby (1976), Larson/Segal (1995), Eluguado (2002).

terms of satisfaction of a predicate. Departing from Burge, he takes a meaning theory to contain for each name a Davidsonian axiom of the following kind: $\forall x$ (' α ' refers to x iff $x = \alpha$).¹²² This axiom establishes 'Hesperus' as a referring expression by stating a satisfaction condition, namely the satisfaction of the predicate '= Hesperus' ('is no other than Hesperus').¹²³ As for Quine, this kind of predicate is crucial on this account, since in this way even if meta-language 'Hesperus' (on the right-hand side) proves to be empty, the predicate '= Hesperus' will still be meaningful, though not true of anything.¹²⁴ Sentences containing empty names turn out to be false on this account. Having thus reduced the truth-conditional contribution of a name to that of a primitive predicate, Sainsbury writes: 'The envisaged semantics also undermines any ultimate difference between reference and satisfaction. What we call reference is just satisfaction under a condition (like being Hesperus) capable of being satisfied by at most one thing',¹²⁵ This reduction of reference to satisfaction suggests that a referring expression is not really much more than a special predicate.¹²⁶

Last, but not least, we have Larson and Segal's theory according to which descriptive names are explicitly understood as covert predicates. The semantic value of each descriptive name is formulated by a clause that specifies conditions picking out an individual object, if any. Thus we have for instance: $\forall x$ (x is the semantic value of 'Hesperus' $\leftrightarrow x$ is uniquely the brightest body visible in the evening sky). Similar to Quine's and Sainsbury's accounts, the statement of the truth-conditions of a sentence

¹²² Sainsbury (2002), p. 206, Sainsbury (2005), p. 46. A very similar axiom and argument occurs in Dummett (1981b), p. 136.

¹²³ Following a suggestion in Frege (1892b), p. 169. I shall leave the question aside whether for every object there is a property of *being it* (*haecceity*) just because we can formally construct appropriate predicates.

¹²⁴ See Quine (1960), pp. 178ff., also Dummett (1981b), p. 136.

¹²⁵ Sainsbury (2002), p. 207, fn. 4. Cf. Sainsbury (2005) for a detailed statement of his theory. Horwich's minimalism could be seen as following a similar, although less reductive paradigm, given his claim that satisfaction and reference are *interdefinable*. See Horwich (1998), p. 108.

¹²⁶ Evans describes even the ascription of satisfaction conditions for sentences as an assimilation of sentences to predicates (*CP*, p. 81).

containing 'Hesperus' will be one which contains only quantifiers and predicates.¹²⁷

As Larson and Segal stress, descriptive names have exactly the same kind of object-independent conditions of application as predicates, even though the conditions are here singular, not plural. Note that although the authors arrive at this predicative analysis without assigning sets as semantic values to predicates, they hold such an assignment as entirely compatible with their semantics (see Larson/Segal (1995), section 4.3.1). Accordingly, in their view 'Julius' is a predicate either because its semantic value is stated by means of a predicate, or, more specifically, because its semantic value is a set.

All these alternative approaches must be rejected, since they eliminate descriptive names as referring expressions. This is obvious for Larson and Segal's account. But Quine's, Burge's and Sainsbury's accounts in terms of special predicates like '= Hesperus' etc. are equally problematic. It is true that Frege recognised the possibility of such predicates. We *can* say of something that it is no other than Alexander the Great. But in doing so it is not the name itself which is the predicate. The real predicate is 'no other than Alexander the Great' and an object might fall under it, but never under the predicate corresponding to 'Alexander the Great', since there is no such predicate. 'Alexander the Great' is a name and can never become a predicate. 'The *Bedeutung* of this word can never be a concept, but strictly only an object' (Frege (1892b), p. 169). To use a name with the indefinite article is to use a concept-word.¹²⁸ In conclusion, even such predicates as '= Hesperus' presuppose the sharp

¹²⁷ See Larson/Segal (1995), section 5.2. Definite descriptions are themselves interpreted as predicates here. Note that Larson and Segal consider a theory which interprets all names as descriptive names. Understandably, they dismiss this theory eventually, given Kripke's argument that it is very unclear what we are to take as *the* definite description underlying a name's meaning. But they fail to realise that this is not at all a problem for what Evans's calls a descriptive name. Thus we can take their theory as being entirely applicable to our descriptive names.

¹²⁸ Frege (1884), §51. It is clear what Frege would have said about Quine's 'Pegasises' and Burge's 'is an Aristotle'.

distinction between names and predicates, hence the irreducibility of the former to the latter. A predicate could never be used to state the *Bedeutung*, the semantic value of a name (as being a concept or a set).¹²⁹ Indeed, Quinean predicates used to eliminate names are *constructed* out of names and hence depend for their intelligibility on that of the name. ‘Pegasises’ must mean something like ‘being no other than Pegasus’ – but there is the name again. The property expressed by the predicate could not be defined and explained without presupposing understanding of the name in some substantial sense. Hence, the Quinean method is ineffective where such understanding cannot be presupposed.

Sainsbury’s assimilation of reference to satisfaction is an additional problem of these predicative accounts. There is little to oppose to the idea of allowing for referring expressions to be accountable in terms of *both* reference and satisfaction, given especially the liberalisation achieved through the Reference Criterion in section 2.2 above. In fact, Evans himself allows for this when he considers a single axiom introducing descriptions as referring expressions. The axiom reads:

$$(17) \forall \phi \forall x (\text{‘the’} \wedge \phi \text{ refers to } x \leftrightarrow x \text{ uniquely satisfies } \phi).^{130}$$

Assuming we have a criterion to pick out predicates qualifying as suitable for the construction of definite descriptions this axiom is perfectly general and defines the *reference conditions* of these supposed referring expressions in terms of satisfaction

¹²⁹ Otherwise we could analyse ‘Venus is a heavenly body’ in such a way that the *Bedeutung* of ‘Venus’, a concept, is subsumed under the concept ‘is a heavenly body’. But this would confuse Frege’s fundamental distinction between the falling of an object (Venus) under a concept (‘ε’) and the subsumption of a concept under another concept (‘⊂’). Frege (1892b), p. 168, fn. 2, p. 169. See also Frege (1884), §51, Frege (1892/1895), pp. 27ff., Frege (1906), p. 8, and Buckner (2003).

¹³⁰ VR, p. 53 (following Burge (1974), p. 315f).

conditions.¹³¹ So in this passage Evans seems to hold such an axiom perfectly acceptable as stating the semantic value of definite descriptions qua singular terms. He ultimately discounts descriptions as referring expressions, but not because (17) also mentions satisfaction, rather on grounds related to modal and simplicity considerations (see next chapter). This suggests that he could have perfectly well accepted satisfaction conditions for 'Julius'. He even mentions satisfaction in an informal characterisation of the sense of 'Julius': '... the sense of the name is such that an object is determined to be the referent of the name if and only if it *satisfies* a certain description'.¹³² A corresponding axiom for 'Julius' would read:

$\forall x$ ('Julius' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely satisfies 'inventor of the zip')

One could, along these lines, even formulate a general axiom for all descriptive names, since the semantic value of any descriptive name can be seen as a function of the semantic value of the corresponding description.¹³³ In any case, what is to be

¹³¹ Note, however, that Evans occasionally seems to hold that formulating *conditional* semantic value axioms for some expression generally means that the expression is a predicate. See *CP*, p. 31, also *CP*, p. 81. But by this token not even descriptive names would be referring expressions.

¹³² *VR*, p. 48; my italics. However, this clashes with the much more restricted characterisation of reference on the next two pages (*VR*, pp. 49f.), where an expression is a referring expression only if its semantic value is stated by means of the relation of reference alone (and no other semantical relation). The problem is pointed out in Chrisley (1998), [28] as well.

¹³³ E.g. ' $\forall \Delta \forall x (\Delta \text{ refers to } x \leftrightarrow x \text{ uniquely satisfies the semantic value of } \Phi(\Delta))$ '. Here the metalanguage variable ' Δ ' ranges over all descriptive names of the language. $\Phi(\Delta)$ is a function from descriptive names to predicates. It yields for any descriptive name Δ whatever predicate ' ϕ ' is gained from decomposing the description associated with Δ into the definite article 'the' and the remaining predicate ' ϕ '. This cannot be done in a merely syntactical way, but that does not matter much, since the theory would contain a list of descriptive names correlated with their canonical descriptions as its empirical input, and this list would be the function $\Phi(\Delta)$, read extensionally.

Chrisley (in Chrisley (1998), [29]) considers a related axiom: $\forall n \forall x$ ('Brutus' _{n} refers to $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely satisfies $D(n)$). ' $D(n)$ ' is the n th definite description yielded from the function D for the argument n . ' n ' ranges over numbers. The axiom is supposed to be true of a language in which to each name 'Brutus'₁, 'Brutus'₂ etc. we have assigned unambiguously one of the definite descriptions available in the language via a *recursive* DN-type stipulation. But I don't think that this would really *introduce* names (descriptive or not) into language. It would only be a rule to *generate* names for each available description. A language might contain innumerable many descriptions and it is implausible to think that we could use one simple recursive clause to actually introduce innumerable many names. Also, it is not clear what the function $D(n)$ is supposed to be. In what sense are descriptions ordered? Nevertheless, an axiom similar to Chrisley's can be built, if we choose a slightly different recursive rule, e.g. 'Let us call

rejected, is the view that just because we specify reference conditions by also mentioning satisfaction conditions, reference is just a kind of satisfaction. For thus we really would be saying that descriptive names are not referring expressions, rather special predicates.¹³⁴

So what are we to hold of all these approaches reducing descriptive names to predicates? I think not very much. They all deny the First Basic Idea. As we have established in Chapter 2 descriptive names are clearly referring expressions. Given our broadly Fregean framework, with its sharp distinction between singular terms and predicates, if these approaches were correct, there would be no reason to treat descriptive names as referring expressions.¹³⁵ But I think there is good reason for this.

whoever/whatever uniquely satisfies ϕ “Brutus-the-” $\wedge\phi$, with ‘ ϕ ’ ranging over all predicates qualified to yield a definite description.

¹³⁴ Interestingly, Sainsbury himself rejects Quine’s elimination of singular terms (cf. Sainsbury (2005), p. 98). This indicates that the reduction of reference to satisfaction does not necessarily follow from his theory. See section 5.3 below.

¹³⁵ A similar point is made by Ronald Chrisley: to allow for sets as a descriptive name’s ‘contribution to truth-conditions must involve more than the relation of reference. One can only make the set-theoretic move to deny the Russellian status of descriptive names at the price of also denying their status as referring expressions’ (Chrisley (1998), [27]). Chrisley also points out that if we allow the set-theoretic move for descriptive names, then there is no reason why we should not allow it for Russellian terms as well. See *ibid.*, [26].

Chapter 4: Descriptive Names as Quantifiers?

This chapter argues that Evans's commitment to a Russellian analysis of descriptions leads, given the descriptive sense of descriptive names, to an interpretation of descriptive names as quantifiers, thus denying their referentiality. The same conclusion is reached through an examination of Evans's negative free logic framework. Further, Evans's argument against this conclusion, as based on simplicity and modal considerations, is shown to be ineffective for two reasons. First, Evans's simplicity argument is not very persuasive. Second, his basic distinction between assertoric content and modal proposition does not manage to bring a semantical wedge between descriptive names and descriptions, if we exploit the possibility of rigidified descriptions.

4.1 Russell's heritage: the quantifier interpretation and free logic

In this section it is shown that descriptive names could be interpreted as quantifiers, if we assume the Second Basic Idea and a Russellian analysis of descriptions. Evans's negative free logic is presented and it is demonstrated how it could be interpreted as just another disguise of the same analysis of descriptive names.

Canonical description is a quantifier

As seen, one reason for the failure to establish the referentiality of descriptive names is Evans's model-theoretic understanding of semantic value. However, even if we bracket model-theory, there is another path within his system to the conclusion that

descriptive names may in fact not be referring expressions. The reasoning for this is straightforward: According to the Second Basic Idea ‘Julius’ has the same sense as ‘the inventor of the zip’. Since the latter is a quantifier phrase for Evans, the former is one as well. But, as almost everybody will agree, quantifier phrases are not referring expressions.¹³⁶ Thus descriptive names are not referring expressions either. Of course, this is an interpretation I reject. But it is important to spell it out first.

One way to do this is by reflecting on the semantic value of both expressions. Since both name and description have the same sense, they must have the same semantic value. But what is this semantic value? ‘The *F* is *G*’ classically analyses as ‘ $\exists x (x \text{ is uniquely } F \ \& \ x \text{ is } G)$ ’¹³⁷, and the truth-conditional contribution of ‘the *F*’ is therefore the semantic value of ‘ $\exists x (x \text{ is uniquely } F \ \& \ \dots x \dots)$ ’. Is this the semantic value of a referring expression? It is tempting to say ‘yes’, since such an expression can, like a singular term, combine with an atomic predicate to form a sentence. Russell’s ‘ $\iota x Fx$ ’, meant to abbreviate the longer phrase, *prima facie* behaves just like a singular term, since we can use it to form ‘ $G(\iota x Fx)$ ’ or to flank the identity sign (Russell (1962), pp. 68, 71). But of course, as we know, ‘ $\iota x Fx$ ’ is only an ‘apparent grammatical subject’ (Russell (1962), p. 66) for Russell and hence it is not ‘ $\iota x Fx$ ’ which is the argument in ‘ $G(\iota x Fx)$ ’, rather ‘*G*’. It would be more appropriate to symbolise such a statement by ‘ $(\iota x Fx) (Gx)$ ’, with ‘ $\iota x Fx$ ’ being a quantifier phrase binding a variable and taking a

¹³⁶ See as a representative view McCulloch (1989), p. 21f. But contrast this with Montague’s view according to which names are actually quantifiers. On his view, ‘John’ denotes the set of properties of John. Hence the semantic value of ‘John’ is a second-order set. See Montague (1973), also Barwise and Cooper (1981).

We can also reach the above conclusion, namely that descriptive names are non-referring expressions because they have the same sense as descriptions, if we adopt instead of a quantificational approach to descriptions a predicative one, as recently done in Graff (2001). Descriptive names will then be simply predicates, a thesis which points us back to the previous chapter.

¹³⁷ Evans prefers to treat definite descriptions as binary quantifiers, contrary to Russell’s unary account (see *VR*, pp. 57-9). The two readings are equivalent with respect to their truth-value course, or rather, the truth-value course of sentences containing the binary quantifier ‘The’ is determined by the Russellian counterpart, at least as far as Evans is concerned. Binary quantifiers can be given other, e.g. Strawsonian, truth-value readings. I am ignoring this complication here.

predicate-letter as argument.¹³⁸ Hence an ‘atomic’ statement containing such a quantifier phrase involves a second order predication, ‘so that it ranks as an expression of the same category as “something ...”, “nothing ...” and “everything ...”’.¹³⁹ The semantic value of descriptions must thus be of the same kind as that of quantifiers, namely *sets of sets* on a standard reading (see Westerståhl (2001), pp. 439f.) and *functions of functions* on a Fregean reading.¹⁴⁰ On both accounts we must treat descriptive names in a similar way to quantifiers, namely as at least *second order predicates*. This can also be seen from the way Evans casts quantifiers in terms of categorial grammar. Accordingly, quantifier phrases, including ‘the *F*’, belong to the *S/(S/N)* category and their semantic value is therefore also a (second-level) function.¹⁴¹ Evans uses this notation to display the radical distinction between singular terms and descriptions-cum-quantifiers, but our current interpretation suggests that if the sense and semantic value of a term is that of an *S/(S/N)*, then that expression *will* be an *S/(S/N)*, namely a second-order predicate.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ See Hughes/Cresswell (1996), p. 326. Russell’s original notation ‘ $f(\iota x)(Fx)$ ’ may be less confusing, for it can be read as treating ‘ ι ’ as a variable-binding operator (especially if we write ‘ $(\iota x)(Fx)f$ ’, which is already pointing towards the binary treatment). I think the best thing is to use the scope indicator and realise that *it* is the quantifier sign; see Hughes/Cresswell (1996), p. 326 and next section. I ignore scope at this stage.

¹³⁹ Williams (1981), p. 155. See also Soames (2005), pp. 10f., who rightly says that Russell views quantification as ‘the attribution of a higher order property to a lower level property’.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. Frege (1893), §21, Dummett (1981a), p. 512, Dummett (1981b), p. 289f.

¹⁴¹ Note, however, that ‘the *F*’ does not really have to be classified as an *S/(S/N)* (or *S/(S/NP)*), as Evans believes. Categorial grammar was originally designed as a notation for the description of immediate syntactic constituents (see Bar-Hillel (1953), which is not connected to Russellian revisionism. This notation also allows for nouns (‘*NN*’) as a primitive category, and we can therefore treat ‘the *F*’ as a composed noun-phrase (‘*NP*’). Accordingly, ‘The fox is running’ is represented as an $((NP/NN + NN) + S/NP)$, since ‘the’ (*NP/NN*), ‘fox’ (*NN*), ‘is running’ (*S/NP*) really are immediate constituents of the sentence, whereas to analyse the sentence Russellian style as an $(S/(S/NP) + S/NP)$ is not plausible, since the sentence does not have any quantifier as an immediate constituent. Evans combines two very different things here: traditional categorial grammar notation with his attribution of semantic values according to the Russellian analysis of descriptions.

¹⁴² VR, p. 58f. It would have been immensely clarifying, if Evans had told us how sentences containing descriptive names are supposed to be displayed by categorial grammar. Could he have really said that ‘*DN* is *G*’ is simply a concatenation of an *N* with an *S/N* (as he does with respect to ‘*a* is *F*’; is ‘*a*’ here Russellian name or dummy for *any* singular term)? But the semantic value of an *N* is an object, the referent, which obviously could not be true in general of descriptive names, and surely not on Evans’s own initial reading of sets as semantic values of descriptive names.

That a descriptive name can be seen as a quantifier could also be concluded from an inspection into the notion of what is said. We have considered above a theorem such as

(14) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ the inventor of the zip is filthy rich.

Any theory about a language containing 'Julius' must include such a theorem (or a content-equivalent one) as a consequence. Now, on a Russellian analysis, this theorem actually reads

(18) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (x is uniquely invented the zip & x is filthy rich).

This equivalence is material, but in fact a stronger equivalence holds, given the role the theorem plays in the truth theory. Given the notion of assertoric content explicated above (in 2.4), 'Julius is filthy rich' really expresses exactly the same thought, possesses the same assertoric content as the quantified sentence. So when we say that Julius is filthy rich, we really *say* that there is at least and most one individual who invented the zip and that he is filthy rich. Hence every statement containing a descriptive name is, concerning its assertoric content, a quantified sentence which involves an existence claim.¹⁴³ This confirms what I stressed in Chapter 2, namely that the introducing description does not simply fix the reference of the name, but also its sense. The connection between the name and the description is semantical in this stronger sense, and the fact that the name is seen as belonging to the same semantic category (quantifiers) as the description is a reflexion of this.

¹⁴³ Does this mean 'Julius is filthy rich' *contains* a quantifier? I don't think there is any clear answer to this question.

Of course, the assimilation of descriptive names to quantifiers is catastrophic, and Evans has an argument against it. This argument, based on modal and simplicity considerations, will be discussed in the next sections. At this stage, all I want to show is that a supporter of Russell's Theory of Descriptions and an opponent of the idea of descriptive names could well explain important phenomena involving terms like 'Julius', e.g. scope distinctions, negative free logic and The Second Basic Idea, while treating 'Julius' not as a singular term, but as an abbreviation for a Russellian description, i.e. an incomplete symbol, a quantifier phrase. In fact, such an interpretation has been suggested by David Wiggins (1999, p. 284). But since his is not a detailed argument, I shall attempt one on his behalf.

Negative free logic: the basics

Here is (one way) to get to free logic. Assume we could derive the following theorem:

(19) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ Julius is filthy rich.

This would presuppose that the meta-language already contains a name 'Julius'. If such a theorem were derivable without much detour, it would seem to solve all our problems. It would make clear that the content of the sentence is not the same as that of a quantified statement, thus establishing 'Julius' without further ado as a referring expression, and it would also be a homophonic theorem. By contrast, (18) is not homophonic, since it would not be the consequence of a theory in which 'the contribution of the target expression in the object language is specified simply by

using that same word in the meta-language'.¹⁴⁴ (18) is a theorem specifying the assertoric content of an *atomic* sentence by using a *quantified* statement, and not as an option among others, but as the canonical way of making such a specification. This would mean that we could treat the syntax of 'Julius is sad' as misleading.¹⁴⁵

But (19) cannot stay as it stands. It looks too much like the theorem for a *Russellian* singular term. Such a term is always existentially committing, but a descriptive name cannot be. The usual quantifier rules cannot be applied without qualification to the latter. Take existential generalisation (EG) from standard predicate logic: $\dots a \dots \Rightarrow \exists x (x = a \ \& \ \dots x \dots)$ ¹⁴⁶. Using it to infer from (19) ' $\exists x (x = \text{Julius})$ ' may well be fallacious, since there may be no Julius. As a matter of fact, similar fallacies could arise from the application of EG to all kinds of other contexts as well. Take

$\neg(\text{Julius is filthy rich}) \Rightarrow \exists x (x = \text{Julius})$.

Given the sense of 'Julius', this would mean

$\neg(\exists x (x \text{ is uniquely invented the zip} \ \& \ x \text{ is filthy rich})) \Rightarrow \exists x (x = \text{Julius})$.

But this could be invalid, if there is no unique inventor of the zip: the antecedent

¹⁴⁴ Sainsbury (2005), p. 40. See also Evans's understanding of homophony in *CP*, pp. 100, 135. Unfortunately, introducing a meta-language version of 'Julius' will not provide us with homophony either. For this name would still have the same sense as object language 'Julius', as Evans himself mentions *en passant* (RC, p. 185), and the latter is still 'quantificational' on the current reading.

¹⁴⁵ Evans's objection against a non-homophonic theory 'would not be that such truth-conditions are not correct, but that [...] the syntactic shape of the sentence is treated as so much misleading surface structure' (*CP*, p. 100). Homophony is not just a pragmatic constraint for him. For what would be that allegedly misleading syntax of 'Julius is sad'? It would be the syntax of a sentence allegedly containing a *name* and a predicate (N + S/N). But 'Julius is sad' *does* contain a name. Here, as elsewhere, my impression is that Evans is inclined towards stricter non-regimenting requirements for delivering an analysis of *our* language than e.g. Davidson.

¹⁴⁶ This is Evans's version of it. See *VR*, p. 36.

would be true and the consequent false. Universal elimination ($\forall x (\dots x \dots) \Rightarrow \dots a \dots$) is equally problematic. Such inference rules are available in classical logic, because there every name-letter is taken to refer to an entity, with the domain of the discourse being non-empty. But as soon as we admit possibly empty names such as ‘Julius’, these quantifier rules must be restricted, thus adopting a non-classical logical framework. A logic which drops the assumption that singular terms cannot be empty, or (also) that there cannot be empty domains,¹⁴⁷ is called *free logic*, and Evans does adopt such a logic for descriptive names. Several versions of free logic have been proposed, differing for instance in the assignment of truth-conditions to elementary sentences. Evans favours negative free logic, where all atomic sentences containing empty names are considered *false*.¹⁴⁸

The explicit decision to have a negative logic may be found problematic.¹⁴⁹ Why should ‘Julius = Julius’, with ‘Julius’ empty, be considered false instead of true (or without a truth-value)? However, if we remind ourselves that the assertoric content of statements containing ‘Julius’ is quantificational, the choice of negative free logic becomes obvious. ‘Julius = Julius’ says ‘ $\exists x (x \text{ is uniquely invented the zip \& } x \text{ is filthy rich \& } \exists y (y \text{ is uniquely invented the zip \& } y \text{ is filthy rich \& } x = y))$ ’, and the latter statement is false if there is no inventor of the zip. This could be seen as an exception from Kripke’s account of identity statements as necessarily true, if true at all.¹⁵⁰ By contrast, for Evans ‘Julius = Julius’ must be contingent. This gives rise to some questions when we consider the assumed rigidity of such names, but I will

¹⁴⁷ Dropping the second assumption also commits us to dropping the first, but not vice versa. See Bostock (1997), pp. 348ff. I am not sure whether Evans drops the second assumption.

¹⁴⁸ See VR, p. 36-8, also Sainsbury (2001), pp. 241ff., Bostock (1997), pp. 348ff.

¹⁴⁹ Evans himself criticises positive free logic in VR, p. 37, fn. 43. For a defence of negative free logic see Bostock (1997), section 8.5. For neutral free logic see Lehmann (1994).

¹⁵⁰ Evans could escape this, if he believed that ‘Julius = Julius’ is not atomic, but molecular, having the quantificational structure. But he clearly believes this statement to be atomic (VR, p. 37, fn. 43). This is why he gives the law of identity a weak formulation: $\forall x (x = x)$.

discuss this later (see 4.4–4.5 below).

Now the apparently notational novelty which Evans introduces for his negative logic for descriptive names is a *scope device for names*. He uses square brackets ‘[α]’ as a scope-indicating device for ‘ α ’, writing ‘[α] ... α ...’ and ‘+++ [α] ... α ... +++’ to mark wide and narrow scope respectively.¹⁵¹ This is unusual, given that traditionally names have been taken to be ‘scopeless’, at least if we exclude hyperintensional contexts.¹⁵² This scope device is needed by him for the application of the restricted quantifier rules.¹⁵³ For instance, where in classical logic EG applies to any name, now it applies only to names with the widest scope:

EG* [a] ... a ... $\Rightarrow \exists x (x = a \ \& \ \dots x \dots)$.¹⁵⁴

Since as a default descriptive names have the narrowest scope possible (as in ‘¬[Julius] (Julius is filthy rich)’), EG will usually not apply to sentences containing them.¹⁵⁵ By contrast, Russellian terms have by default the widest scope possible.

¹⁵¹ VR, 37, RC, 186. The scope does not always have to be marked explicitly. It suffices to adopt rules similar to those considered by Evans and Kripke, namely that whenever the scope of a singular term is not explicitly indicated, it is meant in the narrowest sense possible. See RC, p. 186, fn. 12, Kripke (1976), pp. 373f..

¹⁵² For scopelessness see VR, p. 60, fn. 27, Geach (1972), pp. 117, 140, 144. For hyperintensional contexts see Davies (1981), p. 95.

¹⁵³ The alternative is to have different name-letters for descriptive versus Russellian names and apply the quantifier rules unrestrictively to the latter (see for instance van Fraassen (1966), (1968) on this). Evans seems to have considered both options. See RC, p. 186 and VR, p. 37 and fn. 43. Note, however, that a distinction between Russellian and descriptive terms at the logico-syntactic level carries its own problems. ‘Effecting this segregation does not seem to be part of the job of a logician (traditionally conceived): logic is supposed to be *a priori*, and not to involve the kind of astronomical or literary knowledge required to determine into which category a name like ‘Vulcan’, ‘Homer’, or ‘Patanjali’ should be placed’ (Sainsbury (2005), p. 65).

Another option is to keep syntax uniform, but to consider all singular terms as having narrow scope, which would amount to an emasculation of Russellian terms and the restriction of the said rules to the smallest formula in which a term occurs.

¹⁵⁴ Or ‘[a] ... a ... $\Rightarrow [a] \exists x (x = a \ \& \ \dots x \dots)$ ’. These rules do not have to be understood as elimination rules of scope indicators. Universal elimination now reads: $\exists x (x = a) \ \& \ \forall x (\dots x \dots) \Rightarrow \dots a \dots$ (UE*). Other quantifier rules may also have to be modified, e.g. existential elimination. See Bostock (1997), p. 360ff., Williams (1996), p. 66f.

¹⁵⁵ See also VR, p. 38 where Evans says that in the ‘homophonic’ semantic value axiom for ‘Julius’ the

However, this is an observation about the *semantics* of descriptive names, not simply an elaboration of some optional logical notation, an observation which amounts to having two kinds of T-theorems in a meaning theory.¹⁵⁶ From the point of view of logical syntax a descriptive name can be given any kind of scope (to carry out *reductio* proofs, but also for other purposes).

We can now reformulate (19):

(20) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ [Julius] Julius is filthy rich.

Evans believes this expresses homophonic truth-conditions (VR, p. 38). But this is not true. Since there is no scope device in the object language sentence, we don't really have the same semantic sources employed on both sides of the equivalence. The theorem can only be established via the detour of a proof involving a quantifier phrase that is the result of analysing away not just the descriptive name itself and the scope indicator, but even the corresponding definite description. Indeed, as I will show now, the scope device notation turns out to be merely an alternative to the quantifier notation.

name occurs with narrow scope.

¹⁵⁶ 'The idea is to mark a Russellian name by awarding it wide scope not merely in the object language sentence, but in the whole of any T-theorem containing a Russellian name, and thus in the proper expression of a metalanguage report of what was said in the object language. By contrast, descriptive names always take less than widest scope in the T-theorems, however wide their scope may be in the object language sentence the theorem addresses. The Russellian/descriptive contrast is represented by wide/narrow T-theoretic scope' (Sainsbury (2005a, p. 5). We can therefore conclude that if a statement like ' $DN = a$ ' (see Russell (1962), p. 70 for the analogue for descriptions), and in general any formula allowing for the greatest possible scope of a descriptive name were to be adopted as an axiom of the *meaning theory*, the term would lose its descriptive character. The same inference rules would apply to sentences containing Russellian or descriptive names.

According to EG* a descriptive name with narrow scope is usually not subject to existential generalisation. I say 'usually', because we have, as a limiting case, atomic sentences with respect to which narrow and wide scope simply coincide (see also Kripke (1976), p. 373f.). And there are even certain contexts in which 'Julius' occurs with narrow scope to which EG* does apply.¹⁵⁷ These applications of EG* are harmless, however, since they cannot lead to fallacious inferences.

However, on reflection we realize that *all* contexts containing descriptive names entail, indeed contain some kind of existence claim, be it even an embedded one. This is simply due to the interpretation of the sense of a descriptive name and the assertoric content of the overall context. For even when I say '¬(Julius is filthy rich)' I do say, after all, that ¬(∃x (x uniquely invented the zip & x is filthy rich)), a statement which entails '¬(∃x (x = Julius & x is filthy rich))'. Following this, the scope device for descriptive names could be defined in the following way:¹⁵⁸

$$(21) [DN] (+++ \dots DN \dots +++) =_{\text{def}} \quad \exists x (x \text{ is uniquely } \phi \& (+++ \dots x \dots +++))$$

$$(22) +++ [DN] (\dots DN \dots) +++ =_{\text{def}} \quad +++ \exists x (x \text{ is uniquely } \phi \& \dots x \dots) +++ ,$$

ultimately dissolving the name into the corresponding description. We can see immediately that the scope distinction on which the scope device is based is already

¹⁵⁷ Take '[Michael] ([Julius] Julius is an Englishman & Michael is a Frenchman)'. From this we can infer via EG* '[Julius] Julius is an Englishman & ∃x (x is a Frenchman)', via conjunction elimination '[Julius] Julius is an Englishman', and then again via EG* '∃x (x = Julius)'. There are infinitely many other similar contexts. See Williams (1996).

¹⁵⁸ For the method of distinguishing between two sentential matrices (contexts) see Carnap (1947), p. 33.

available *prior to any free logic*: it is the scope distinction available from the complex quantifier phrase, and this is precisely what Russell has offered us as an analysis of the two basic occurrences of definite descriptions. Indeed, the scope device for descriptive names can be seen as construed entirely parallel to the way Russell construed his scope device for descriptions, as Evans himself acknowledges.¹⁵⁹ And of course, such a device is an indication that we are not really dealing with a singular term. In the *Principia Mathematica* scope devices for descriptions disambiguate sentences containing ‘ ιxFx ’ by apparently specifying what is predicated of ιxFx , with ‘ ιxFx ’ *prima facie* taken as a singular term.¹⁶⁰ But what really happens is that ‘ ιxFx ’ is a quantifier phrase which has, as every quantifier, a scope, and by specifying that scope we determine which first-order function the second-order function ‘ ιxFx ’ takes as an argument. So really the scope device is, together with what it binds, just a shorthand notation for a complex statement containing a quantifier phrase. It is the underlying *quantifier* that explains the existence of the scope of the apparent singular term ‘ ιxFx ’. Russell defines it as: $[\iota x\phi x] (\dots \iota x\phi x \dots) =_{\text{def}} \exists x (x \text{ is uniquely } \phi \ \& \ (\dots x \dots))$.¹⁶¹ Using this we can, as his examples show (Russell (1962), pp. 69f.), distinguish between wide and narrow scope occurrences of descriptions:

$$(23) [\iota x\phi x] (+++ \dots \iota x\phi x \dots +++) =_{\text{def}} \exists x (x \text{ is uniquely } \phi \ \& \ (+++ \dots x \dots +++))$$

$$(24) +++ [\iota x\phi x] (\dots \iota x\phi x \dots) +++ =_{\text{def}} +++ \exists x (x \text{ is uniquely } \phi \ \& \ (\dots x \dots)) +++.$$

We see here that this scope distinction is entirely parallel to that of descriptive names

¹⁵⁹ VR, p. 37. See also Russell (1962), pp. 69f., 173. This parallelism is hinted at in Wiggins (1999), p. 284 as well.

¹⁶⁰ As can be seen from Russell’s notation ‘ $f(\iota x)(Fx)$ ’, which has the form ‘ $\phi(\alpha)$ ’.

¹⁶¹ Russell (1962) pp. 70, 173. I am using our simplified notation here.

formulated above. We have the same definiens for each (21)/(23) and (22)/(24). Given this striking similarity, why should we not say that '[DN] (... DN ...)' is just a shorter version of '[$\iota x \phi x$] (... $\iota x \phi x$...)'? Of course, '[$\iota x \phi x$] (... $\iota x \phi x$...)' abbreviates a quantifier phrase, a non-referring expression *par excellence*. And in general, a shorthand for a shorthand also abbreviates the principal. We could conclude that the scope indicating notation of a descriptive name abbreviates a non-referring expression, thus not having any meaning 'in isolation' (to use one of Russell's phrases). It may be more appropriate to say that it is not the scope of the name which is signalled, but that of the underlying quantifier phrase. Like ' $\iota x Fx$ ' 'DN' only looks like a singular term, but it actually is dissolvable into a quantifier phrase, whose scope explains the name's scope.

The four definitions just mentioned can actually be seen as elimination rules of what appear to be singular terms.¹⁶² What occurs inside the square brackets on the left-hand side of, let's say, (24) could be seen not so much as a term, but as an entire quantifier sign (like ' $\exists x$ ' or ' $\forall x$ ') binding a variable and restricting its domain, which is shown by the fact that what takes the place of '[$\iota x Fx$]' on the right-hand side of (24) is not a term, but an incomplete expression, namely a quantifier phrase, i.e. ' $\exists x$ (x is uniquely ϕ & ...)' (easily to be turned into a numerically definite quantifier) binding ' x '.¹⁶³ This is why Hughes and Cresswell, for instance, say that 'it is really the scope indicator which marks the [variable-binding] operator, not the occurrence of the description

¹⁶² Unambiguous elimination is the ultimate purpose of the scope device. As Kripke puts it, 'The scope operator indicates to what context the elimination of descriptions should be applied' (Kripke (1976), p. 371).

¹⁶³ But could one not, following this reasoning, argue that even Russellian terms are quantifiers? After all, we could always infer ' $[a] (... a ...) \Rightarrow \exists x (x = a \ \& \ (... \ x \ ...))$ '. But the scope device is really superfluous for Russellian terms, whereas it is not superfluous for descriptive names because of possible scope ambiguities. In addition, and more importantly, ' $[a] (... a ...) \Rightarrow \exists x (x = a \ \& \ (... \ x \ ...))$ ' is a quantifier rule which does not specify *what is said* by ' $[a] (... a ...)$ ' (i.e. what this context means), rather only what is entailed, whereas this is exactly what (21) and (22) do according to Evans's own account of assertoric content.

which replaces the variable'.¹⁶⁴ Accordingly, '[ιxFx] G (ιxFx)' and '[Julius] G (Julius)' should both be really analysed as ' ιxFx (Gx)', and we see through this that the notation '[α] ... α ...' is more like the shorthand version of restricted quantification than a mere syntactic device binding a singular term.

Following (21) and (22) we could formulate the following inference rules (via the implicit detour of a paraphrase by means of descriptions-cum-quantifiers):

EGW [DN] (... DN ...) $\Rightarrow \exists x (x = DN \ \& \ ... \ x \ ...)$

EGN +++ [DN] (... DN ...) +++ $\Rightarrow +++ \exists x (x = DN \ \& \ ... \ x \ ...) +++$ '.

These rules look like variants of EG*. Note, however, that these rules are arrived at without any considerations about free logic, but simply by reflection on the semantic features of descriptive names and their canonical descriptions *as quantifiers*. The scope distinction is already given by the fact that descriptive names, being eliminable by descriptions-cum-quantifiers, receive their scope through those underlying quantifiers on the current interpretation. Were descriptive names primitive terms, it would be much less clear why ' $\neg$ (Julius is filthy rich)' could be true with 'Julius' empty.

Descriptive names are quantifier phrases on this reading. They are formally construed in a manner entirely parallel to Russellian descriptions.¹⁶⁵ There is no free logic really

¹⁶⁴ Hughes/Cresswell (1996), pp. 327f. This is why they prefer a notation displaying descriptions as quantifiers *ab initio*, namely ' $(\iota xFx) (Gx)$ ' (see above, 4.3).

¹⁶⁵ Soames says something similar about Evans's analysis of E-type pronouns. See Soames (1989), p. 146.

involved here, neither for descriptive names nor for Russellian descriptions. As long as we have a notation that distinguishes between Russellian terms and descriptive names, EG applies to Russellian singular terms as before, while the scope indicating notation for descriptive names is just short for displaying the quantified assertoric content of respective contexts. It is a notation that can be eliminated, namely by EGW and EGN.¹⁶⁶

Free logic is not involved, because neither descriptive names nor the underlying definite descriptions are singular terms on the current reading – and free logic is a logic *for* singular (and general) terms without existential assumptions (see Lambert (2001), p. 258). As Kevin C. Klement put it recently:

‘One must remember that Russell’s iota operator was just used as a part of an abbreviated notation. It is not part of the primitive symbolism of his logic, and it is not used to form genuine terms. Indeed, one of the main uses of the theory of descriptions is to *avoid* the need for non-referential terms, which might be described as the defining feature of a Free Logic’ (Klement (2005)).

To be sure, free logic (whether negative or otherwise) will be needed if we interpret descriptive names in a less catastrophic manner, namely not as quantifiers, but more naturally as singular terms (see next chapter). For now the bad news is that unless we revise our understanding of definite descriptions, we end up, again, and absurdly, with treating descriptive names as a kind of predicates, namely second-order predicates.

¹⁶⁶ As Evans himself suggests (in RC, p. 186 fn. 12). But he does not make the parallel observation about narrow scope occurrences. Scope is for instance needed for modal or opaque contexts, as is argued by Hughes/Cresswell (1996), pp. 325-6 and Kripke (1976), pp. 372ff. Bostock argues against this in Bostock (1997), pp. 375ff., following Quine.

We see now that there are many ways to hell. Descriptive names can have their referentiality denied in various different ways, whether by assigning sets or sets of sets as semantic values to them, by assimilating reference to satisfaction or by adopting a non-referential account of definite descriptions. But to interpret names, even descriptive ones, as predicates is to stand in an insuperable tension with a Fregean approach to semantics, an approach to which I am committed and to which, I believe, Evans was also committed. One of the sharpest notional distinctions Frege made was between objects and concepts, and between their expressions, namely names and predicates, which are ‘fundamentally different and cannot replace each other’.¹⁶⁷

Hence, there must be a way to heaven. In my view, it must involve two things: dropping the entity-based notion of semantic value and adopting a referential account of descriptions (see Chapter 5). To be sure, Evans himself has a different argumentative strategy to defend the referentiality of descriptive names. But his strategy is problematic, as I will argue in the next sections.

¹⁶⁷ See Frege (1892/1895), p. 27. The said distinction was of course not only defended by Frege. Strawson, among others, has also defended it, or a version of it, in several of his works, e.g. in Strawson (1974). See also the discussion in Rundle (1979), Chapter 3, *passim*.

4.2 Modality and simplicity considerations

Evans's defence of the claim that descriptive names and descriptions have the same sense, while only the former are referring expressions, is presented here. This defence is based on the difference between modal content (proposition) and assertoric content (sense). Evans's reasons for believing that descriptive names and descriptions have the latter in common, but differ with respect to the former, are explained.

The argument of the last section was to suggest that given the sameness of sense of descriptive names and descriptions and the underlying Russellian analysis of descriptions descriptive names could be coherently interpreted as quantifier phrases. Now an Evansian will look for a way to show that despite sharing the same sense, both expression types still diverge enough semantically that we will have to assign them to different semantic categories. If he can show that the differences between 'DN' and 'the *F*' are greater than their common features, he will have made a strong case against treating these expressions on a par. Note, however, that such a strategy is not without problems; it presupposes that there is a clear-cut method to decide when differences are greater than similarities.

Evans's method for making the said distinction is based on a very familiar argument, namely Kripke's modal argument that names are rigid designators whereas descriptions are not.¹⁶⁸ But the issue at stake is more intricate than it appears, since

Evans's own approach to semantics is far from identical with Kripke's. Remember the

¹⁶⁸ The semantic argument does not work for descriptive names. 'Julius' really refers to whoever invented the zip, and if that was Judson, then to Judson, and if that was Franklin, then to Franklin. If we mistakenly thought that Julius is Judson, then if we found out that actually Julius is not Judson, we *would* withdraw the name, if we intend to keep its descriptive status. There is no similarity here to the Gödel-Smith case discussed in Kripke (1980), pp. 83ff. or to his related remarks in Kripke (1979), p. 12. Kripke would take this as a very clear symptom that 'descriptive names' are abbreviations of descriptions.

differences we discussed in 2.5. Above all, Evans allows for names to have a sense and ascribes to them even a descriptive sense, whereas Kripke does neither. Kripke uses his argument to prove that names and descriptions cannot have the same meaning as descriptions, and that whoever utters '*a* is *G*' does not say that the *F* is *G*, even if '*a*' was introduced by 'the *F*' – unless, of course, '*a*' abbreviates 'the *F*', but then '*a*' is not really a genuine name. The cornerstone of The Standard Account, on the other hand, is that, if '*a*' is a descriptive name, both sentences really say exactly the same thing, although the name does not abbreviate the description. So we have serious disagreement here, which in fact is signalled by Evans himself (RC, p. 182).

Nevertheless, both accounts have one major point in common: the diverging behaviour of names and descriptions in modal contexts.¹⁶⁹ This behaviour serves to semantically dissociate names from descriptions. In Kripke's case this distinction is sharp for both names introduced by description and those not thus introduced, whereas in Evans's case the distinction is only sharp for names not introduced by description (and presumably descriptively introduced Russellian names), but less exclusive for descriptive names, since these have also some similarities with descriptions.

Kripke's modal argument is well known. To fully understand 'Aristotle was fond of dogs' we need to know not only what has to be the case for the sentence to be true, but also what would have had to be the case for the sentence to be true if the world had taken a different course (Kripke (1980), pp. 6f.). The modal argument, a.k.a. rigidity thesis, proposes that the truth-conditions of the sentence concern the same man not only with respect to the actual, but also any possible world; the sentence is true at any world *w* if and only if *our* Aristotle is fond of dogs at *w*. The name is a rigid

¹⁶⁹ Which can be generalised to other intensional contexts, e.g. temporal ones.

designator – it refers to one and the same man at every possible world.¹⁷⁰ By contrast, assuming that Aristotle was the last great philosopher of antiquity, the sentence ‘The last great philosopher of antiquity was fond of dogs’ will not have the same truth-conditions if taken as a description of the actual world versus some counterfactual situation, since the sentence could be easily true at a world in which somebody other than Aristotle, say Seneca, was the last great ancient philosopher. This difference comes out stronger when the modal standpoint is mirrored by the mood of the verb. Thus ‘Aristotle might have been a Thracian’ still says something about our Aristotle, whereas the sentence ‘The last great philosopher of antiquity might have been a Thracian’ *can* be taken to be saying something about our Aristotle (if we evaluate the sentence with respect to the actual world), but may also be about some Thracian not identical with Aristotle.¹⁷¹ Since what the description picks out varies from world to world, it is a non-rigid or accidental designator.¹⁷² Seen from a different angle: ‘Aristotle was fond of dogs’ and ‘The last great philosopher of antiquity was fond of dogs’ have ‘extensionally’, as Kripke puts it, the same truth-conditions with respect to the actual world, but different ones when taken to describe counterfactual situations.¹⁷³ Now if simple descriptivism were right and the name would be

¹⁷⁰ This applies even to worlds in which Aristotle does not exist, according to the thesis of *de jure* rigidity, as long as we assume that Aristotle exists in the actual world. Things become more intricate if we consider *de facto* rigidity and/or a name which is empty in the actual world.

A designator is rigid *de jure* just in case it is stipulated that it picks out with respect to all possible worlds the same object which it picks out in this world, i.e. even with respect to worlds in which the object does not exist. Names are supposed to be *de jure* rigid. A designator is *de facto* rigid just in case it happens to pick out the same object with respect to all possible worlds. Some descriptions are of this kind, e.g. ‘the smallest prime’. See Kripke (1980), p. 21, fn. 21, on this; also Kripke (1971), p. 146 on *de facto* rigidity, which seems to have occurred first to Kripke. For a discussion see Steinman (1985).

¹⁷¹ There is at least a third reading according to which the description sentence expresses what Chalmers calls an ‘epistemic possibility’ (see Chalmers (2006), section 3.1).

¹⁷² Kripke (1980), p. 48. *Nota bene*: Kripke speaks clearly of descriptions being *designators*, just as much as names are designators. *Naming and Necessity* (unlike Kripke (1979)) can be read not as denying the referential status of descriptions, but as pointing out the differences between two types of designators, names and descriptions.

¹⁷³ Kripke speaks of ‘actual truth-conditions’ and ‘truth-conditions, with respect to counterfactual situations’ (Kripke (1980), pp. 7 and 12 respectively; see also Dummett (1981b), pp. 569f.). One might be tempted to make here a distinction between two kinds of truth-conditions, but I shall not do it, since it is misleading. There is, however, a related distinction, which I adopt below and which goes back to Dummett and Evans, namely the distinction between truth-in-*w* and truth_{*w*}.

synonymous with the description, we could substitute the name for the description in every context and hence the said truth-conditions would not diverge. 'Aristotle was the last great philosopher of antiquity' would be an analytic truth (= necessary + a priori)¹⁷⁴. But they do diverge and the sentence does not express an analytic truth. Hence proper names are not synonymous with descriptions and do not abbreviate them.

Although Evans does not discuss this in detail, he does apply pretty much the same argument to 'Julius' as well. His discussion is primarily not intended to semantically dissociate descriptive names from descriptions, but to provide evidence that descriptions should not be counted as referring expressions. Only after having provided this evidence does he briefly consider the rigidity of 'Julius'. It is noteworthy that Evans does not believe that there is a knock-down argument against treating descriptions as referring expressions (VR, p. 57). Remember that he considers an axiom such as ' $\forall \phi \forall x$ ('the' $\cap \phi$ refers to $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely satisfies ϕ)' as admissible within a theory of referring descriptions (see (17) on page 86 above). His argument is rather based on *simplicity considerations*: yes, we can construct a theory treating descriptions as referring expressions via such axioms, but that would come at a high price, whereas treating descriptions as quantifiers results in a much neater theory.¹⁷⁵

What is this high price? It stems from the fact that we would have to relativise the relation of reference for all referring expressions, thus ascribing to ordinary expressions greater semantic potential than most terms of vernacular languages actually ever exploit. For we need to account for the fact of the aforementioned difference between names and descriptions. A name is rigid: it picks out the same

¹⁷⁴ Kripke (1980), p. 56, fn. 21, p. 122, fn. 63.

¹⁷⁵ Evans's simplicity, and hence pragmatist, considerations occur for instance in RC, p. 191.

object in all possible worlds. A description is not: even if we construe it as a singular term, what it will pick out will vary from possible world to possible world, thus making it a non-rigid designator. Hence, the above axiom for descriptions will have to be expanded into

$$(25) \forall w \forall \phi \forall x (\text{'the'} \cap \phi \text{ refers to}_w x \leftrightarrow x \text{ uniquely satisfies}_w \phi).^{176}$$

A truth-conditional theorem for a sentence containing 'the inventor of the zip' will be

$$(26) \forall w (\text{'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich' is true}_w \leftrightarrow \exists x (x \text{ uniquely satisfies}_w \text{'inventor of the zip' \& } x \text{ satisfies}_w \text{'filthy rich'})).$$

But this would introduce a relativised relation of reference, and since we do not want to say that there are two relations of reference, a relativised and an absolute one, the former relation would have to be adopted across the entire theory for all singular terms. All axioms for names would have to be modified accordingly, e.g. "'Naomi' refers_w to Naomi', and the same with principle (P) defining reference and satisfaction in terms of truth, namely as

(P*) If S is a sentence consisting of n -place predicate R and the singular terms $a_1 \dots a_n$, then S is true_w iff $\langle \text{the referent}_w \text{ of } a_1 \dots \text{the referent}_w \text{ of } a_n \rangle \text{ satisfies}_w R$,

instead of a simpler principle using reference *simpliciter* (see *VR*, pp. 55f.). 'Julius' itself would also be affected by this modification, namely as being represented by

¹⁷⁶ See RC, p. 189, also Thomason/Stalnaker (1968), p. 363. See how Evans paraphrases 'satisfies_w' in RC, p. 188. But why is it not 'x uniquely satisfies ϕ in w ', i.e. a condition about what the ϕ is in that world (see *VR*, p. 55, RC 205)?

(27) $\forall w \forall x$ ('Julius' refers_w to $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely invented the zip in w^*)

instead of (12), and

(28) $\forall w$ ('Julius is filthy rich' is true_w $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (x uniquely invented the zip in w^* & x satisfies_w 'filthy rich'))

instead of (18). Note the difference between the subscript '_w' and 'in w '.¹⁷⁷ Also, note the rigidified predicate which is needed to capture the rigidity of 'Julius'. It seems, however, that such a complication is not very economical. As McCulloch paraphrases Evans's argument: 'If (P*) is true of ordinary names, why does not their logical behaviour show this; why does it appear to require only the simpler principle (P)?' (McCulloch (1985), p. 573). Evans's proposal is to have an unrelativised notion of reference applying only to rigid designators, and treat descriptions instead as quantifier phrases.

¹⁷⁷ This is a pivotal distinction for Evans, employed for instance in his solution of the contingent *a priori* puzzle (see 4.5). The subscript notation as in 'true_w' ('refers_w', 'satisfies_w' etc.) means 'is true with respect to w ', which is to be contrasted with 'is true in w ', symbolised by 'true (... , w)' (RC, p. 188, fn. 17, p. 207, fn. 31). ' S is true in w ' amounts to the counterfactual 'If w had been actual, S would have been true', whereas ' S is true_w' appears to mean something like ' S , as uttered in the actual world, is true in w '. So 'true in w ' is about the truth of what S would say if w were actual, whereas 'true with respect to w ' is about the truth of what S does say in our world, but evaluated with w taken as actual. Thus 'true_w' has a counterfactual dimension as well, which seems to be indicated in RC, p. 188f. The truth_w of a sentence does partly rely on 'in w ', but only for the satisfaction of the predicate, not the reference of the (rigid) singular term. However, I am not too sure about this interpretation of 'true_w'. Evans gives nowhere an explicit definition. See also Soames (1989), p. 149, who deplores the same. Soames goes even further insofar as he dismisses Evans's definition of the $\Diamond$ -operator (in RC, p. 188) as a serious misunderstanding of possible worlds semantics, but I will not evaluate that criticism here.

A similar point can be made about reference. However, Evans does not seem to apply the distinction to the notion of satisfaction. Satisfaction_w is clearly defined in terms of 'in w ' (see right-hand side of the satisfaction clause in RC, p. 188). Thus, a satisfies_w 'bald' iff a is bald in w . This has the consequence that clause (25) really captures the *de jure* non-rigid nature of definite descriptions, as it stipulates the referent_w of some description 'the F ' to be whatever object is uniquely F in w , and that will of course not be the same across all worlds. By contrast (27) does not mention any such world-relative satisfaction relation. Indeed, it does not mention any satisfaction relation at all. Instead, it mentions a rigid predicate. If it did involve satisfaction, following the predicative account discussed in 3.5 above, the *de jure* rigidity of 'Julius' could still be captured, namely by 'satisfies_{w*}'.

What is crucial now, according to The Standard Account, is that despite the rigidity of ‘Julius’ and the non-referentiality of definite descriptions the name is still supposed to possess a descriptive sense. In other words: The Second Basic Idea and The Postulate of Semantic Difference does not threaten The First Basic Idea. This is where the distinction between *content* and *proposition* applies, which I will now discuss.¹⁷⁸

(i) First to the notion of *assertoric content*: We have seen in section 2.4 that for Evans the content of a sentence is what is said by a sentence. Content has here an epistemic dimension: two sentences with the same content express exactly the same belief. This makes good sense for descriptive names: if Tom believes that Julius is filthy rich, then he is in exactly the same epistemic state as Ben who believes that the inventor of the zip is filthy rich.¹⁷⁹ But content is also tied to truth-conditions. What Tom believes is true under the same conditions under which what Ben believes is true. We will cite the same fact as evidence that their beliefs are true, namely that there is a unique inventor of the zip and he is filthy rich. But note that to cite the positive (or negative) fact is to cite it in relation to the *actual world*. To check whether what they believe is the case, we will check what *is* the case, not what might have been the case. Hence, content is tied to the truth-conditions of a sentence with respect to the actual world w^* , or, as Evans calls it, ‘absolute truth’ (RC, p. 203). The content of a sentence is therefore what it says with respect to the actual world, not some possible world taken as actual.¹⁸⁰ This is the ultimate reason why ‘Julius is filthy rich’ and ‘The inventor of

¹⁷⁸ This distinction has a precursor in Dummett’s distinction between *assertoric content* and *ingredient sense*. Evans refers to Dummett (1981a), Chapter 10, as an acknowledgement. The said distinction occurs explicitly on pp. 418-20, 446f. (also in Dummett (1981b), pp. 572f., 800f., but this appeared too late for Evans to consult). Evans’s own defence of the distinction occurs in part III of RC, pp. 199-208. See also 2.4 above for some important quotations.

¹⁷⁹ Assuming, to make the case stronger, that Tom understands ‘Julius’, whereas Ben does not.

¹⁸⁰ An important asymmetry follows: the actual world is not a possible world taken as actual. More on this in Dummett (1993d), especially section 8.

the zip is filthy rich' share the same sense/assertoric content. This can be actually seen from the above truth-conditional theorems. For when we evaluate the two sentences with respect to w^* , i.e. take $w = w^*$, (26) and (28) dictate that both sentences have the same truth-conditions, as the comparison between the right-hand sides of the theorems shows.¹⁸¹ Or as Evans expresses the shared content of such sentences schematically, using his preferred binary quantifier notation: $(\text{Ix}) (\phi(x, w^*); G(x, w^*))$.¹⁸²

(ii) Now to the notion of *proposition*. It is essentially tied to truth_w conditions, and as such more general. The proposition associated with a sentence is nothing the sentence expresses or says. Rather, it is what the sentence must be associated with to explain its behaviour in modal contexts, the truth-value co-varying with each possible world with respect to which it is evaluated. In short, it is a function from possible worlds to truth-values.¹⁸³ Clauses (26) and (28) each represent the truth-conditions of the proposition associated with atomic sentences containing a description and a descriptive name respectively. We see clearly that they do not coincide in general, even so they coincide for $w = w^*$. The truth-value of 'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich' is sensitive to what is satisfied by the description in the respective possible world under evaluation, while this cannot be the case with 'Julius is filthy rich', since the name is

¹⁸¹ Assuming that (28) mentions the relation of satisfaction_w.

¹⁸² RC, p. 205. Note the notation expressing an 'in w^* '-relation. Given Evans's definition of ' $F(x, w)$ ', ' $(\text{Ix}) (\phi(x, w^*); F(x, w^*))$ ' needs to be translated as 'The x such that if w^* had been actual x would have been ϕ is such that if w^* had been actual x would have been F ', where all that is really said is 'The ϕ is F '. There are two caveats to be made here: First, what sense does it make to say 'if the actual world had been actual ...', especially given the incongruence of the idea that the actual world is some world considered as actual (see footnote 180 above)? Truth conditions with respect to the actual world should be precisely not a form of counterfactual truth-conditions. Second, why does Evans object to the claim made by his imaginary opponent that truth_{w^*} is a special case of truth_w (if he so objects, namely in RC, p. 203f.)? The lengthy translation just given, which is supposed to capture what 'The ϕ is F ' says, is, we must suppose, gotten by an *instance* of the schema ' $(\text{Ix}) (\phi(x, w); F(x, w))$ ' as it will occur in a T-theorem formulating truth_w conditions. Indeed, Evans himself says that principle (P), connecting absolute truth (truth_{w^*}) with reference and satisfaction, can be derived as a *special case* from principle (P*), connecting truth_w with reference and satisfaction. See RC, p. 189, VR, p. 55.

¹⁸³ See RC, p. 200. Seen from this point of view, truth_{w^*} conditions seem to be just an instance of truth_w conditions for the argument w^* . But really, content is more basic than proposition. See section 4.4 below.

rigid. This sensitivity can also be explained by the way the two sentences are internally built, namely one as containing a name, the other a quantifier (RC, p. 203). Naturally, the quantifier will be sensitive to the context in which it embeds, whereas a name will not. If the context is non-modal, i.e. the sentence is taken as a description of the actual world, this will make no difference and both sentences will have the same content. But if we consider a modal context, e.g. ' $\Diamond$ (Julius is filthy rich)', as opposed to ' $\Diamond$ (The inventor of the zip is filthy rich)', the first sentence will be true with respect to any world in which our Julius is filthy rich, whereas the second sentence will be true either with respect to any world in which whoever invented the zip in that world is filthy rich, which is to repeat the modal argument above, or with respect to any world in which the actual inventor of the zip is filthy rich. So we have different scope readings with respect to ' $\Diamond$ ' for the description, but not for the name. The name always takes wide scope with respect to ' $\Diamond$ '. Since this different behaviour depends on the internal structure of the sentences, we could call the proposition associated with each sentence *ingredient* sense.

(This seems to imply that the modal argument is an argument about scope.¹⁸⁴ Of course, Kripke and others have denied this.¹⁸⁵ But this cannot be entirely wrong at least with respect to the differing modal behaviour of descriptions and descriptive names. For, as we have seen in 4.1, descriptive names are construed as possessing scope. Since scope is primarily a syntactical distinction, the syntactic interaction between the scope device and modal operators could be exploited to represent the

¹⁸⁴ As Dummett has suggested (in Dummett (1981a), pp. 127f.).

¹⁸⁵ See Kripke (1980), pp. 10ff, 61f.. For more recent criticism of 'widescopism' see Soames (1998), (2002), pp. 29-39, 318ff., Caplan (2005). 'Widescopism' was originally proposed in Dummett (1981a), Chapter 5, Appendix, and slightly modified again in Dummett (1981b), Chapter 9 and Appendix 3. Recent defences of 'widescopism' can be found in Sosa (2001) and Hunter (2004).

rigidity of 'Julius', e.g. as in '[Julius] $\Diamond$ Julius is filthy rich'.¹⁸⁶ But what to do then with contexts in which the name must be represented with the smallest scope possible because of some other logical symbol? Take ' $\Diamond (\neg(\text{Julius is filthy rich}))$ '. If we read this as ' $\Diamond (\neg[\text{Julius}] (\text{Julius is filthy rich}))$ ', a notation Evans himself adopts,¹⁸⁷ does this not suggest that the name has the same kind of narrow scope with respect to the diamond as a non-rigid description? Alternatively, if we read the sentence as '[Julius] $\Diamond (\neg(\text{Julius is filthy rich}))$ ', we keep rigidity, but make a possibly fallacious inference of the type excluded in the last section. We need a modified notation to distinguish between scope relative to modal operators versus other logical symbols, e.g. a superscope device or indexed scope indicators, but I will not consider this here, because the rigidity of 'Julius' can be explained by rigidified descriptions as well.)

The difference between content and proposition is vital for The Standard Account, since it purports to explain why 'Julius' has the same sense, but not all semantic features of 'the inventor of the zip', i.e. a non-referring expression. Of course, in his view we *could* treat descriptions as singular terms, but the theoretical apparatus for that would be too cumbersome, indeed more cumbersome than the modal argument suggests, since descriptions behave peculiarly in other contexts as well, essentially in all contexts generating scope differences. To my knowledge, Evans mentions six such contexts across his writings: modal, temporal, negation, hyperintensional, indexical and contexts exploiting the inner structure of the description. Interestingly, he cites the first four contexts also as evidence against the thesis that E-type pronouns are shorthands for, or go proxy for descriptions.¹⁸⁸ Hence, if we decided to use the

¹⁸⁶ In a somehow related spirit, Kripke has pointed out that the rigidity of certain descriptions can be handled, indeed explained away, by Russell's notion of scope (see Kripke (1980), p. 59, fn. 22).

¹⁸⁷ See the two formulas in RC, p. 199.

¹⁸⁸ CP, pp. 132f., RC, pp. 190, 201f., Evans (2005), p. 13. Evans has a second type of argument against the abbreviational reading of E-type pronouns: the description for which a pronoun of laziness goes

relation of reference to analyse descriptions, this relation would need further relativisation, at least with respect to the second and last type of context mentioned.¹⁸⁹

By contrast, a quantificational account is *ab initio* perfectly capable of explaining the scope and context behaviour of descriptions without complicating the relation of reference.

If Evans is right with his modal argument, the quantifier conclusion considered in the last section is mistaken. Nevertheless, for all its subtlety, I do not believe that the modal argument is successful in proving the Postulate of Semantic Difference. The modal argument may be able to prove that descriptions have *in general* different modal properties than *proper* names, but this by itself does not validate the Postulate, which is about *descriptive* names. As I will show, despite the modal argument one could still argue either in favour of (i), that descriptions are quantifiers, in which case so are descriptive names (i.e. the quantifier conclusion), or in favour of (ii), that descriptive names are referring expressions, in which case so are descriptions. Naturally, I believe that (i) has to be dismissed and (ii) accepted. But this does not concern us yet. What I will do in the remainder of this chapter is to sketch two objections showing why the modal argument does not go through. These objections relate to two strands of that argument: Evans's simplicity considerations (4.3) and the distinction between content and proposition (4.4).

proxy is recoverable on purely syntactic grounds, whereas the description fixing the referent of an E-type pronoun is not. This could be seen as an argument from lack of an *immediate predecessor*. As such it does not apply to descriptive names. But there is a related argument and we have mentioned it already: a description is not an *immediate constituent* of a descriptive name (see section 3.5 above). As seen, however, this argument has, although true, little force against the shorthand thesis, given the nature of abbreviations.

¹⁸⁹ Which he does; see *VR*, pp. 56f.

4.3 Simplicity reconsidered

McCulloch's argument that Evans's simplicity considerations do not suffice to establish a semantical difference between descriptive names and descriptions is presented and to some extent accepted, although McCulloch's conclusion that descriptive names must therefore be quantifier phrases is not. A modified version of his argument is presented instead.

Gregory McCulloch is one prominent theorist who has rejected the idea of descriptive reference, because it is too much at odds with the concept of genuine reference.¹⁹⁰ In his view Evans's simplicity argument does not manage to defend the Postulate of Semantic Difference. Descriptive names are, like definite descriptions, quantifier phrases.

First, let us sketch McCulloch's overall understanding of reference. For him referring goes hand in hand with having non-trivial knowledge of the object to which a singular term refers. This presupposes some epistemological link between speaker and referent. If there is no such link available, we cannot speak of reference proper (see McCulloch (1985), p. 579f.). In short: McCulloch accepts only one strand of Evans's overall theory of reference, namely the Neo-Russellian strand. His concept of reference presupposes Russell's Principle (see 2.2 above) and the latter is incompatible with the idea that we can refer to an object without knowing which object it is. Descriptive reference, if it were a cogent idea, would seem to allow for a 'prodigious ability to zap across space and time to the object in question (if there is one) [...] and all by uttering a perfectly general sentence in the right frame of mind.

¹⁹⁰ See McCulloch (1985), McCulloch (1989), pp. 289-295.

What an incredible feat!’ (McCulloch (1985), p. 578). But really, we cannot use purely descriptive names as referring expressions simply by wanting, by intending them to refer to the *F*.¹⁹¹ He suggests two alternatives as to how to interpret names introduced by description. If we *know* who the *F* is, the name will not be really descriptive, rather ‘object-indicating’, given the available ‘links with demonstrative encounters’ with the referent.¹⁹² In other words, such terms would be what I have called in 2.3 above descriptively introduced Russellian names. If, however, we don’t know whether the description is satisfied, the descriptive name will be a shorthand for a description, since there is no other way to account for the sameness of sense of the two expressions. This too is in accordance with what I have said in 2.3. But concerning this second alternative McCulloch goes on to say that a ‘descriptive name’ is here by and large abbreviating a quantifier phrase, since this is what descriptions are for him. Hence he holds the quantifier interpretation considered in section 4.1 above to be true and rejects on this basis the idea of descriptive names. ‘Descriptive names’ look superficially like names, but really are quantifiers (McCulloch (1985), pp. 569f.).

Of course, this is not my conclusion, since I believe the quantifier interpretation to be unacceptable, urging us to put forward a referential account of descriptions. McCulloch would disagree with this, since he does not accept the First Basic Idea. But

¹⁹¹ Especially if we consider ever more complex descriptions, which will take us further and further away from intuitions about what can count as the specification of an object of singular thought. His descriptive name ‘Gomez’ is a point in case. It is introduced via a description containing other descriptive names (which I will ignore), ultimately resulting from the stipulation ‘Let us call “Gomez” the first snowball thrown through the entrance of the first igloo completed after the mid-point of the interval between noon on the day on which the last pterodactyl to take off Sicily died and the day on which the inventor of the zip was born’. McCulloch asks suggestively: Would such a name refer to its referent in the very same way ‘Reagan’ refers to Reagan? Cf. McCulloch (1985), pp. 580f.

¹⁹² These links are available only for some of what McCulloch calls ‘backward-looking descriptions’, as opposed to ‘outward-looking descriptions’, which are all pure. The former rely on past (but also present) demonstrative encounters with objects, whereas the latter relate to prospective objects of experience (which might not ever come into being). See McCulloch (1989), pp. 247-53, 292. This raises interesting issues about which descriptions actually qualify as introducing descriptive names, especially since McCulloch’s distinction is not a syntactic one, rather based on other (ontological? epistemological?) criteria.

this is just not plausible. When I say ‘Julius made a great invention’, I am not really asserting of a first order function a second order one; but this would follow from the quantificational account. By contrast, my position is that we are using a name – which will refer, if there is a referent, and otherwise it will not, without losing its namehood and even its sense. For in the case of reference failure we will still be able to indicate what *would* have had to be the case for the name to refer. McCulloch is too seduced by the arrow-picture or acquaintance-picture of reference and can thus not see that descriptive reference is an entirely plausible possibility.

Now although I disagree with McCulloch’s final conclusion, I do agree with him that descriptive names and definite descriptions do not belong to different semantic categories. McCulloch contends that Evans’s simplicity argument is not convincing, since the adoption of free logic actually bears a greater theoretical complication than a rival theory that treats descriptive names as semantically equivalent to descriptions. This is a stronger claim than the one I would like to endorse. I am content to say that Evans has not shown that his theory is indeed the simplest one possible.

Since McCulloch is the only philosopher who has examined Evans’s simplicity argument at length, it is worth looking at it in some detail. His argumentative strategy is not very different from my quantifier interpretation, but methodologically more inventive. Let us label the two competing theories as ‘the free logic theory’ (= the Standard Account) and ‘the rival theory’. McCulloch breaks these two theories into distinct elements. Initially we would have

The free logic theory: $(P) + (DQ) + (FL)$,

where (*P*) is the fundamental semantic principle already mentioned above, which also applies to descriptive names and thus treats them as rigid designators, (*DQ*) the theory treating definite descriptions as quantifiers and (*FL*) free logic. On the other hand, we would have

The provisional rival theory: (*ND*) + (*DQ*) + (*E*),

where (*ND*) stands for a (Quinean)¹⁹³ theory which converts names into descriptions and (*E*) for that principle which makes sure that such a conversion does not yield ‘unwanted consequences’, i.e. descriptions with narrow scope with respect to modal operators.¹⁹⁴ McCulloch argues that these two theories, after cancellation of (*DQ*), are roughly equivalent in terms of complexity (McCulloch (1985), pp. 575f.). Nevertheless, the provisional rival theory would not trouble Evans, because Russellian names are in no way equivalent to descriptions. McCulloch accepts this, but he maintains that Evans does not have the same convincing reply to an improved version of the rival theory, which makes room for Russellian names, nevertheless maintains that descriptive names are still eliminable by quantifier phrases. Thus we would finally have

The rival theory: (*P*) + (*DQ*) + (*DND*) + (*E*),

where (*DND*) is the only new theoretical element, responsible for the elimination of descriptive names as singular terms. This rival theory is in effect the theory we arrive

¹⁹³ McCulloch calls it ‘Russellian’ (ibid., p. 575), but that is less accurate, since Russell distinguished between ordinary proper names and logically proper names, with only the former being subject to (*DQ*). The latter are supposed to be unanalysable.

¹⁹⁴ See McCulloch’s remarks about the related theory element (*E**) in McCulloch (1985), p. 577 (bottom).

at, if we follow the quantifier interpretation suggested in section 4.1 above, which, *nota bene*, dispensed with any free logic. This rival theory is to confront the free logic theory. We would have $(P) + (DQ) + (FL)$ facing $(P) + (DQ) + (DND) + (E)$, which after cancellation of redundant elements would lead to the ‘equation’

$$(FL) < (DND) + (E),$$

stating that Evans’s free logic theory is simpler than the rival theory. But, McCulloch claims, this formula is far from being obviously true. However, for the sake of fairness, we must point out that McCulloch has missed out something on the right-hand side of his equation: classical logic (CL). This is certainly needed, if we don’t want to be accused of comparing apples with oranges. Hence:

$$(FL) < (DND) + (E) + (CL).$$

Now there are two cases here to consider: (E) is void and (E) is not void.

(i) First, consider that (E) is void. This would amount to the fact that descriptive names do not give rise to problematic scope distinctions in modal contexts. We have touched upon this before. Interestingly, McCulloch does not take Evans’s claim that descriptive names are rigid for granted. As he puts it, ‘such names are pretty rare birds. [...] there can be no widely available facts about their use which can be appealed to here’.¹⁹⁵ Of course, such facts and the correlated ‘intuitions’ about their behaviour are crucial in justifying even the rigidity of proper names.¹⁹⁶ McCulloch

¹⁹⁵ McCulloch (1985), p. 574. See also McCulloch (1989), p. 293f.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Kripke’s respective insistence on ‘intuitions’ and what ‘we would say’ in Kripke (1980), pp. 41f., 74.

refers to Michael Devitt, who cites very different intuitions about the behaviour of descriptive names (Devitt (1981), pp. 40ff., 157ff.). Of course, Evans's is free to reply that he is intending a stipulation like 'Let us call "Julius" whoever invented the zip' to be such that it introduces a rigid designator. But McCulloch's reply to this is based on his considerations mentioned above, namely that the relation of reference cannot be simply made to hold by a simple stipulation. I will discuss the rigidity thesis in the next section, so all we need to say for now is that it is at least questionable to claim that (E) could not be void, that descriptive names could not exhibit the same modal scope behaviour as descriptions, at least under the quantifier interpretation. But of course, if (E) is void, then all we have to assess is whether it is true that $(FL) < (DND) + (CL)$. And even with the addition of (CL) I think McCulloch would be right to say that the left-hand side is not definitely simpler than the right-hand side. (DND) amounts to simple syntactic rules transforming descriptive names into definite descriptions qua quantifiers, whereas free logic alters the logico-semantic properties of singular terms and quantifiers (cf. McCulloch (1985), p. 576.). In fact, this is entirely in accordance with my assessment in section 4.1. For there I showed that free logic is not needed. Instead, we could keep classical logic and adopt certain rules (like (21) and (22)) treating the scope device for descriptive names entirely parallel to that of Russellian descriptions, namely as a mere shorthand. The rival theory, we can conclude, is therefore not clearly more complicated than the free logic theory.

(ii) As to the second case, in which (E) is not supposed to be void, the argument is just the same, with one qualification: that (E) contains a rule restricting (DND) to the transformation of descriptive names to definite descriptions with modal wide scope. Would this additional rule make the rival theory more complicated than the free logic one? McCulloch reply is that it 'is not even clear whether there are simplicity criteria

adequate to answer this question' (McCulloch (1985), p. 577). Indeed, even if there were such criteria, the two theories would possess roughly the same simplicity. But McCulloch could have given a slightly stronger reply: We could combine (*DND*) and (*E*) into one principle specifying how to transform descriptive names into descriptions with modal wide scope and this one rule, plus (*CL*), would still be simpler, or at least not more complicated than (*FL*).

In conclusion, following McCulloch we find little reason to favour the Postulate of Semantic Difference. Note, however, that accepting his view commits us to eliminating descriptive names as referring expressions. We need therefore to modify his argument in such a way that we are not committed to such a position. Here is one way to do this: We could let Evans's account ((*P*) + (*DQ*) + (*FL*)) face a different rival theory, one which treats Russellian terms, descriptive names *and* descriptions all as singular terms. This rival theory would be surprisingly simple:

(*P**) + (*FL*).

Admittedly, (*FL*) would here be slightly more complex, since it would apply to definite descriptions as well. But no extra element (*E*) would be needed here. (*P**) characterises Russellian names, descriptive names and definite descriptions all by means of the relativised relation of reference_w. True, this would not capture any *de jure* rigidity. But it would capture any *de facto* rigidity and would not make the questionable normative assimilation of *de jure* rigidity with referentiality. Referring expressions, designators, would fall, according to this principle, into those which happen to be rigid and those which don't.¹⁹⁷ The principle would be thus open to any

¹⁹⁷ For a framework allowing for non-rigid referring expressions see Simons (2001).

extra-theoretical and not always sharp ‘intuitions’ about the use of at least some designators (e.g. descriptive names, if McCulloch is correct).

Despite the relativisation of reference, would this theory really be more complex than $(P) + (DQ) + (FL)$? But the latter has an extra theoretical element as well, namely (DQ) , i.e. Russell’s Theory of Descriptions or some modern-day equivalent. And (DQ) means revisionism, since it transforms sentences containing noun-phrases into entirely different sentences, thus opening up a gap between surface syntax and deep logical form – which could be taken as a heavy theoretical complication, depending on how important one considers surface syntax (Evans certainly does, judging from his commitment to homophony). In conclusion, I am not at all sure whether $(P^*) + (FL)$ would not be the simpler theory or at least as simple as the Standard Account.

Given that Evans has not adduced a knock-down argument in favour of the Postulate of Semantic Difference it is open to a theorist not moved by his simplicity considerations to endorse a referential account of descriptions and thus treat both ‘Julius’ and ‘the inventor of the zip’ as belonging to the same semantic category. The fact that we should not give simplicity considerations too much weight, is actually touched upon by Evans himself, namely in a footnote in *The Varieties of Reference* addressing the relation between the notions of scope and reference, where he cites the general principle that referring expressions are *scopeless*.¹⁹⁸ Since the modal argument shows that descriptions are not scopeless in modal contexts, they cannot be referring expressions. It is not entirely clear whether Evans believes that rigidity and scopelessness are aspects of one and the same thing. However, we have seen that descriptive names too have scope, at least relative to propositional connectives.

¹⁹⁸ See VR, p. 60, fn. 27. The argument was initially developed in Geach (1972). See also Peacocke (1975).

Indeed, we have portrayed them as having wide scope with respect to modal operators as well. *Their* rigidity can be explained by ‘widescopism’. Hence their referentiality is given not in virtue of their alleged absolute scopelessness, rather their ‘scopelessness’ relative to the modal operators.¹⁹⁹ But, as Evans himself explains, even the scopelessness of many Russellian terms, certainly of Russellian names, must be relativised to specific context types, namely all but hyperintensional ones (such as belief-sentences).²⁰⁰ Hence no names are absolutely scopeless. In the light of this the modal relativisation of reference needed to treat descriptions as referring expressions does not look dramatic anymore.²⁰¹ And since there are genuine referring expressions which are not rigid *simpliciter*, it would seem arbitrary to fasten one’s conception of reference onto the notion of rigidity, especially *de jure* rigidity.²⁰²

In conclusion the simplicity argument does not offer strong enough grounds for a semantic dissociation of descriptive names from definite descriptions. On the contrary, it seems possible to endorse, like McCulloch, the quantifier interpretation, or alternatively a referential account of both types of expressions.

¹⁹⁹ However, this is denied in Davies/Humberstone (1980), pp. 11-13, given that with the introduction of ‘actual’ and ‘fixedly’ we would be able to further relativise the relation of reference even in modal contexts.

²⁰⁰ And in a letter to Martin Davies he admits of a further relativisation of reference, namely that concerning indexicals (although he does not say it is a *further* relativisation). See Evans (2005), p. 13.

²⁰¹ See also Soames (1989), p. 143, for the same conclusion.

²⁰² Indexicals, for instance, might be taken to be rigid only on a particular instance of use, hence be *de facto* rigid. And if Soames is right about E-type pronouns, the same holds at least for some anaphora. See Soames (1989), pp. 145f. Kripke himself does not seem to equate rigidity with referentiality. See Kripke (1980), p. 60, also Recanati (1993), section 1.3.

4.4 The primacy of content and rigidified descriptions

It is shown that the notion of assertoric content is more basic than that of proposition, indeed that the notion of content is needed for that of proposition. This is particularly true of sentences containing descriptive names: since their content is descriptive, so must be their proposition. As it is shown, rigidified descriptions are needed to explain this fact. It is concluded, contra the Postulate of Semantic Difference, that sentences containing descriptive names and sentences containing corresponding rigidified descriptions do not differ in the propositions associated with them.

Imagine somebody who is unmoved by the previous criticism of the simplicity considerations and who claims that according to his intuitions descriptive names are doubtlessly rigid. Could they not use the distinction between assertoric content and proposition, point at the widely different propositions associated with 'Julius is filthy rich' and 'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich' respectively to conclude that the Basic Ideas are fully compatible with the Postulate of Semantic Difference? Descriptive names are referring expressions, despite having the same sense as non-referring expressions (namely descriptions), they would claim.

It is true that the content-proposition distinction has not been affected by the previous discussion. However, I believe that at least in the case of descriptive names this distinction does not manage to distinguish semantically between descriptive names and definite descriptions. Moreover, the proposition associated with any sentence containing a descriptive name is *unintelligible* without the canonical description, which therefore must be seen as determining that proposition.

This follows actually from Evans's own conception of sense. For him sense is connected to the notion of *understanding*. Sense/assertoric content is what is understood when a sentence is uttered. The assertoric content of 'Julius is filthy rich' is therefore just the same as that of 'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich'. Now these are only simple indicative sentences. But what about other contexts? Well, even in these contexts what a sentence will say will be determined by the name's association with the description. The name's intelligibility has been established by a D-type stipulation and this stipulation carries no restriction to particular contexts. It is, of course, not the case that the name can only be understood if it occurs in simple sentences. Take the negation of an atomic sentence, ' $\neg$ (Julius is filthy rich)'. This can only be understood if the descriptive content of the embedded sentence is grasped. The same with an oblique context like 'Ben believes that Julius is filthy rich'. Note that questions about scope or rigidity do not matter at this stage. If this analysis of assertoric content is correct, we will be *always* able to extract from a given sentence '*DN is G*', no matter within which context and scope it occurs, the corresponding description sentence. Hence, there will always be a sense-determining definite description available, no matter the context. And this will not be simply a question of optional and superfluous paraphrase,²⁰³ but the necessary exercise of the understanding the name, indeed of grasping its essential semantic features. For the conditions of understanding are intimately linked to semantic form in Evans's view.²⁰⁴

Consequently, what has just been said must also apply to *modal* contexts. Even in such contexts the descriptive name sentence must be sense-equivalent to a description sentence, for otherwise there will be no conditions of understanding of the former.

²⁰³ As Professor Timothy Williamson has objected to me in conversation.

²⁰⁴ Certainly for Evans. See for instance *VR*, pp. 321, 325, where he states that logico-semantic properties of expressions depend on facts required for their understanding.

This may seem puzzling, if one takes the differing propositions associated with ‘*DN* is *G*’ and ‘The *F* is *G*’ as a *factum brutum*. For are these differing propositions not the best proof that both sentences cannot be equivalent in every respect? But I think that we should not take the notion of proposition for granted. A proposition is the result of an abstraction process, arrived at via the analysis of how an atomic sentence embeds in complex contexts, thus relying on assertoric content and the meaning of, for instance, the modal operators. There is an interesting, if controversial, argument in this respect that Dummett has advanced in his discussion of Kripke.²⁰⁵ Dummett denies Kripke’s claim that a ‘full’ understanding of some simple sentence *S* containing some designator is one involving grasp of Kripke’s counterfactual truth-conditions (see Kripke (1980), pp. 6ff.). Instead, all that is needed for such a ‘grade-one’ understanding is the grasp of the sentence’s Fregean sense, which involves grasp of the conditions which have to obtain for *S* to be true, i.e. of assertoric content. Dummett acknowledges that there is a modal aspect to these conditions as well, since whoever grasps them knows not only what must be the case for *S* to be true, but also what would have to be the case for the sentence to be true were the circumstances different. But he points out that this modal aspect simply follows from the fact that what is known here is a condition, and knowledge of a condition trivially involves also knowing what could satisfy it (Dummett (1981b), pp. 564, 566f.). Such knowledge is manifested here by how a speaker sets out to determine *S*’s truth, whether he assents to it or not, etc., and it is irrelevant for that whether the language in question possesses modal expressions (Dummett (1981b), p. 570f.).

By contrast, Dummett claims, ‘grade-two’ understanding, namely the grasp of the ‘ingredient sense’ (Evans’s proposition), which is relevant for bringing out the

²⁰⁵ In Dummett (1981b), pp. 557ff., especially 570ff.

difference in modal behaviour between names and descriptions, and thus settling the question of rigidity, cannot be obtained and manifested unless the language in question possesses modal expressions (Dummett (1981b), p. 571). In that case, the speaker manifests the truth-conditions of *S* with respect to counterfactual situations not by evaluating, uttering etc. *S* by itself, but *S* as placed in a modal context. This observation is directed against Kripke's claim that the question of rigidity concerns already the truth-conditions of simple sentences, namely taken as descriptions of counterfactual situations (Kripke (1980), p. 6). But if Dummett is correct, to take a sentence as such a description is not to consider a simple sentence, rather a simple sentence occurring in a modal and thus complex context, whose truth-conditions will be really the ones evaluated. According to him, grade-one understanding is by itself already full understanding of *S*, while grade-two understanding is understanding of expanded contexts. As Dummett puts it: 'A grasp of the ingredient sense of a sentence always includes a grasp of its content, whereas the converse does not, in general, hold. A grasp of the ingredient sense may therefore be contrasted with a grasp of the content as constituting a full understanding, as opposed to a partial one. On the other hand, it is a grasp of the content of a sentence that is the primary notion' (Dummett (1981b), p. 572).

If Dummett's argument is correct, we will have a means to show that no matter what the proposition associated with '*DN* is *G*' is, its descriptive assertoric content will play an essential role in determining that proposition, and given the role the canonical definite description in turn plays in determining the assertoric content of '*DN* is *G*', the definite description must turn out to determine the modal properties of '*DN*' as well. But even if Dummett's argument is not correct, e.g. because his distinction between grade-one and grade-two understanding does not hold, it is still nevertheless

true that the notion of assertoric content is essential for determining that of proposition. After all, the question of rigidity involves a comparison between what sentences say (assertoric content) taken as descriptions of the actual world and of counterfactual situations respectively.

Thus 'Julius is filthy rich', taken as a counterfactual description of the world, can only be truth-conditionally evaluated by taking the assertoric content of 'Julius is filthy rich' into account. But surely, this assertoric content is *descriptive*. Could the underlying description still be non-rigid? Of course, to answer the question of what makes 'Julius is filthy rich' true as a counterfactual (i.e. to determine its proposition), we can, as a first step, simply say: any world at which our Julius is filthy rich makes the sentence true. This can be contrasted with the case of 'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich' in the usual way, since this sentence is made true as a counterfactual by any world in which whoever invented the zip in that world is filthy rich. 'The inventor of the zip' is thus non-rigid. So far, so good. But surely, to really determine which worlds make 'Julius is filthy rich' true as a counterfactual description, we will have to take into account the truth-conditions of 'Julius is filthy rich' with respect to any given possible world (truth_w). But to do this we would still need to know what the sentence does *say*, what its content is, what Fregean sense it expresses even *as a counterfactual description of the world*. And this would still presuppose the grasp of some content-specifying description sentence. Now if the canonical description were really non-rigid, so would be the name, given the method of determining a proposition just sketched. We would determine the counterfactual truth-conditions of 'Julius is filthy rich' by checking the properties of whoever invented the zip *in* each possible world. But this cannot be right, since descriptive names are supposed to be rigid and their referent can't co-vary with the possible worlds under evaluation. It follows that

the canonical description must be rigid and consequently that it cannot be non-rigid ‘the inventor of the zip’. Unless we want to explain this rigidity by recourse to ‘widescopism’, we need *rigidified descriptions* to explain the rigidity of descriptive names.²⁰⁶ In this way when we consider what makes ‘Julius is filthy rich’ true as a counterfactual description of the world, we consider those worlds in which our Julius is filthy rich, i.e. all the worlds in which *our* inventor of the zip, the *actual* inventor of the zip is filthy rich, if there is any.

This cannot come as a total surprise, since the semantic apparatus considered in section 4.2 above made already clear that what is responsible for the rigidity of ‘Julius’ is a rigidified expression. Without that rigidification, the apparatus could be mistaken for one introducing a non-rigid name. Remember the axiom

$$(27) \forall w \forall x ('Julius' \text{ refers}_w \text{ to } x \leftrightarrow x \text{ uniquely invented the zip in } w^*),$$

where the said rigidification is indicated by the constant w^* . This rigidification could also be displayed by using the actually-operator or Kaplan’s dthat-operator. In that case we would have either

$$\forall w \forall x ('Julius' \text{ refers}_w \text{ to } x \leftrightarrow \text{the actual inventor of the zip} = x)$$

or

$$\forall w \forall x ('Julius' \text{ refers}_w \text{ to } x \leftrightarrow \text{dthat} [\text{the inventor of the zip}] = x).^{207}$$

²⁰⁶ On this argument as a general strategy for defending descriptivism see Nelson (2002). Criticism to be found in Soames (2002), but some of it is anticipated and responded to in Nelson (2002).

²⁰⁷ On the actually-operator see Crossley/Humberstone (1977), Davies/Humberstone (1980), Davies

In any case, we see that the mere fact that the sentences 'Julius is filthy rich' and 'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich' differ in the proposition associated with each of them (even though they express the same sense), cannot count in favour of a strict semantic dissociation of descriptive name and canonical description. For what we need to contrast is 'Julius is filthy rich' and a correlated sentence containing the rigidified version of 'the inventor of the zip'. And these two sentences do not diverge in their propositions.

Hence, if divergence in proposition is taken as the main argument in favour of the Postulate of Semantic Difference, then this postulate is not true and Evans's argument against the shorthand reading does not work. Descriptive names and descriptions must be seen as belonging to the same semantic category. No matter the context, there is always necessarily a way to paraphrase the sentence containing 'Julius' by a sentence containing the canonical description. At one stage, Evans himself proves this, namely in the context of his discussion of the puzzle of the contingent *a priori* (see next section).

Of course, Evans cites some evidence in favour of the modal discrepancy between 'Julius' and its canonical description. He contends that we would not say the following: 'If you had invented the zip, you would have been Julius.'²⁰⁸ I assume that by denying that we would say such a thing, he does not mean that the sentence is misconstrued, rather that it is false. But the question is: why is this sentence supposed to be false? Presumably because, as a counterfactual, it implies that you have not

(1981), Chapter IX, Davies (2004), Humberstone (2004). On the dthat-operator see Kaplan (1989), Kaplan (1989a). For a purported difference between the actually-operator and the dthat-operator see Soames (2002), pp. 49f., Soames (2005), pp. 27f.

²⁰⁸ RC, p. 192. A related example occurs in Evans (2005), p.13. See also Dummett (1993), p. 307.

invented the zip.²⁰⁹ But this presupposes that we know that you have not invented the zip, or stronger even, that we know that you are not Julius (of whom we happen to have identifying knowledge). This, however, is not *a priori* knowledge and hence the sentence is not *a priori* true or false. The rejection of the statement is simply based on a further, and contingent, premiss, namely ‘ $\neg(\text{you} = \text{Julius})$ ’. In addition, there is at least one further circumstance in which we might not utter the sentence, namely when we know that you are the inventor of the zip. (Imagine we address the sentence to Mr. Judson.) In this case, we will not utter it, because the counterfactual is conversationally inappropriate.

In any case, let us assume Evans’s observation about the counterfactual is correct (and we ignore that there may be actually cases in which we could utter the sentence)²¹⁰. But even this observation does not force us to semantically separate descriptive names from definite descriptions. For we can use the argument from understanding again. To understand the counterfactual sentence, one needs to understand the descriptive content of the name, and thus that the sentence says: If you had invented the zip, you would have been the actual inventor of the zip. And as with the sentence above, we would not say that this sentence is true either, given the additional implication ‘ $\neg(\text{You} = \text{the actual inventor of the zip})$ ’. So the fact that the counterfactual ‘If you had invented the zip, you would have been Julius’ would not be uttered sincerely by us is

²⁰⁹ Contrast this with ‘If you have invented the zip, you are Julius’, which could be true.

²¹⁰ Namely if we, like McCulloch, don’t take the rigidity of descriptive names for granted. Here are two possible situations in which we could utter the sentence. (i) Imagine we know that there was no inventor of the zip. The sentence would make perfect sense. (ii) Imagine, we live in a tribe, in which being the inventor of the zip is a great honour and achievement, immediately entitling one to be the tribe’s chief. Again, the sentence would make perfect sense, if we knew you have not invented the zip. At least (ii) seems to be a case of an ‘attributive’ use of a descriptive name. It is not clear why such a case should be dismissed outright. Contextualised and label-like names exist even in our culture. Think of ‘Miss Bennett’ in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* as applying to the oldest unmarried daughter. It is not clear why ‘If you had been the oldest unmarried daughter, you would have been Miss Bennett’, said to Lydia at a certain point, should be false. There are cultures where all proper names are regulated in this or more complex descriptive ways.

compatible with taking the name to be short for the canonical description. This is what Evans denies (see *VR*, pp. 60f.). But given the argument from understanding, how can he explain that descriptive names, occurring in whatever contexts, are rigid?²¹¹

Finally, it should be noted that there are several other issues related to the rigidity of descriptive names. One is a version of the famous puzzle about so-called contingent *a priori* statements (see next section). But there is a probably more basic problem. According to Kripke, identity statements between co-referring proper names are necessarily true, if true at all (Kripke (1980), p. 3). For instance: $\Box$ (Hesperus = Hesperus). This assumes *de jure* rigidity, but also that 'Hesperus' is not empty in our world. There are now two problems here with descriptive names.

(i) Since 'Julius' too is a rigid designator, we expect 'Julius = Julius' (or 'Julius = Judson' for that matter) to express a necessary truth, if it is true at all.²¹² But how can this be? The assertoric content of any atomic sentence containing a descriptive name is identical with that of a corresponding sense-identical description sentence. And since descriptions are analysed in Russell's manner, we have such a content given by theorems like

(18) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (x is uniquely invented the zip & x is filthy rich).

The same will be true of identity statements, since there is no exceptional provision made for their sense. To understand that Julius = Julius is to understand that the actual

²¹¹ This problem has been noticed only very recently, and only in form of a brief remark, namely by in Bermudez (2005a), p. 12.

²¹² As is done in Stalnaker (2001), p. 143.

inventor of the zip = the actual inventor of the zip. And if we give the latter statement a Russellian treatment, we naturally end up with a *contingent* existential statement.²¹³

(ii) But there is a second problem. For a Russellian name to be rigid, it must have a referent. For if it doesn't, it is simply meaningless, and rigidity cannot be a mark of a meaningless sign. Hence, on the *de jure* view of rigidity, ' $\alpha = \alpha$ ' will be necessarily true for any non-empty Russellian name ' α '. Now, descriptive names are also characterised as rigid. But unlike Russellian names, descriptive names can be empty. Evans nowhere states though that an empty descriptive name is not rigid. For good reason: Like their sense, rigidity is a feature any descriptive name possesses, independently of how the world is like, whether or not it supplies the name with a referent (as can be gathered from an axiom like (27)). But of course, we don't want to say that, on the *de jure* view of rigidity, ' $DN = DN$ ' will be necessarily true for any empty descriptive name ' DN '. Hence, we must sever rigidity from necessity. The way we do this is by ceasing to link rigidity directly to the notion of referent. 'Julius' is rigid not in virtue of picking out the same object with respect to all possible worlds, but in virtue of picking out the same object with respect to all possible worlds, *if it* picks out an object at all in our world. The rigidity of 'Julius' is determined in a conditional manner and thus guaranteed even if the name has no referent. What guarantees the rigidity of 'Julius' is thus the same semantic feature which also guarantees its significance even when empty: its sense.

I believe that this is the upshot of Evans's elaborations in "Reference and

²¹³ And not with a necessary statement, as Stalnaker believes (Stalnaker (2004), p. 318). The only existential statements that will not end up being contingent are those containing strongly rigid designators such as number-words. But it would be quite an impoverishment of our theory of descriptive names to conclude that we can only have descriptive names of necessary existents. A plausible way to save the necessity of identity statements like 'Julius = Julius' is to reinstate the referentiality of definite descriptions, a claim which I defend in Chapter 5.

Contingency”, p. 206f., which is a difficult passage. The context there is the discussion of the contingent *a priori*. Evans considers the notion of what makes a sentence true. He considers two options, as seen above: truth_w conditions and truth-in- w conditions. ‘ a is F ’ is true_w iff what ‘ a is F ’ says in our world is true at w , whereas ‘ a is F ’ is true-in- w iff whatever ‘ a is F ’ would be saying if uttered in w were the case. He illustrates this with an example: with respect to some world w in which our Julius is not filthy rich, while somebody else, say Xulius, invented the zip in w and is filthy rich in w , the sentence ‘Julius is filthy rich’ is false_w , but true-in- w .²¹⁴ This follows from the definitions of both notions of truth. However, what Evans goes on to say is noteworthy. For he claims that the assertion of the truth-in- w of ‘Julius is filthy rich’ is ‘not a trivial counterfactual claim about the truth of a sentence identified merely as a sequence of expressions types’. He goes on to say:

‘On the contrary, in the circumstances mentioned, the sentence “Julius is F ” would have been true *as a sentence of English*. [...] The hypothesis that the name “Julius” refer to Xulius would involve a semantical change in English only if the reference-fixing definition (DN1) had established a semantical connection between the name “Julius” and some particular person other than Xulius. But we have seen that this is not the case. Even if someone did invent the zip, (DN1) does not introduce a semantical connection between “Julius” and that person. Neither (DN1), nor the clauses (12) and (20) are existentially committing, and knowledge of them cannot constitute knowledge of a relation between “Julius” and some item; one cannot know of the existence of a relation between two things, not even a semantical relation, without knowing that those things exist. (DN1) instituted a semantical relation

²¹⁴ ‘Julius is filthy rich’ is true-in- w , because if w were the case, then ‘Julius is filthy rich’ would be saying ‘The actual inventor of the zip is filthy rich’, referring to the actual inventor of the zip in w . It seems that the actually-operator thus receives an indexical (shifting) reading in ‘true-in- w ’-contexts, but not in ‘ true_w ’-contexts. We could use an operator like ‘fixedly’ to display this, but I cannot go into this here.

between a name and a description as fixing its reference, and that connection is preserved unchanged under the supposition that Xulius is the inventor of the zip. Exactly the same theory of meaning serves to describe the language which would be spoken had Xulius invented the zip, as describes the language which is actually spoken.’²¹⁵

First an exegetical remark. Evans is talking here about truth-in-*w* conditions of sentences containing descriptive names, not Russellian terms. And he says that these do not concern trivial counterfactual claims. The latter will determine that ‘Julius is *F*’ is true qua sequence of words iff whatever that sequence of words is stipulated to mean in *w* is true in *w*, i.e. which description the name is connected to and thus which semantical relation it entertains in *w*. The sense of the name itself is thus world relative according to this kind of trivial counterfactual truth-conditions and thus non-rigid. By contrast, Evans claims, the name is rigid according to truth-in-*w* conditions (also to truth_{*w*} conditions). So truth-in-*w* of sentences containing descriptive names cannot be given in terms of simple counterfactuals. But one would have thought that this is precisely how truth-in-*w* is defined.²¹⁶ We probably need more clarifying work about the notion of truth-in-*w*, but I shall not pursue the matter here.

In any case, this passage is essential for us, since it confirms what was discussed in Chapter 2, namely that the relation of reference constituting descriptive names is very peculiar and does not involve a connection with an extra-linguistic entity. All that DN-type stipulations really establish are intra-linguistic, sense-determining relations between expressions. But this is just what we would expect from semantic stipulations such as *shorthand* conventions. The upshot of this passage is that what constitutes the

²¹⁵ RC, p. 207 (adapted to my context).

²¹⁶ Cf. Evans’s own explicit definition of truth-in-*w* in terms of a simple counterfactual in RC, p. 188.

rigidity of 'Julius' is not the association with some referent, but the semantical connection with the canonical description. Of course, that association is reference-fixing in Evans's sense, not in Kripke's, namely as fixing the sense, the content of 'Julius'. In the light of this, it may not be entirely true that a descriptive name refers to its bearer 'in exactly the same sense in which a Russellian name refers to its bearer' (VR, p. 31). A Russellian name refers to its bearer in virtue of a direct connection as established via information-based links, at least as used by producers. But no such thing is available for descriptive names. I think this proves that there is, as McCulloch believes, a fundamental dichotomy in Evans's concept of reference. But unlike McCulloch I believe that the notion is cogent.

This section has discussed and argued against the Postulate of Semantic Difference as defended by the modal argument. I think we should drop the Postulate. Descriptive names and their canonical descriptions can be understood as belonging to the same semantic category by choosing rigidified descriptions as the canonical ones. But this move by itself does not yet offer us a means to defend the referential status of descriptive names (First Basic Idea). The rigidification of descriptions could be explained even if they are taken to be quantifiers.²¹⁷ And the same would be true of descriptive names as well. Hence the argument from rigidification makes it possible to treat descriptive names as being in the same semantic boat as their canonical descriptions, while not offering us any means yet to defend the First Intuitive Idea. The only way to defend this idea is by treating definite descriptions as referring expressions. This is what the next chapter will explore. But before let us look at one more issue related to modal matters.

²¹⁷ E.g. if we use the restricted quantifier notation '(the x : actually Fx) (... x ...)'.

4.5 The contingent *a priori*

In this section I sketch Evans's ingenious solution of the puzzle of the contingent a priori and show that it is not only compatible with, but actually made intelligible by the thesis that descriptive names are shorthands for rigidified descriptions.

I have mentioned before the puzzle of the so-called contingent *a priori*. Can there really be sentences whose truth is knowable *a priori* and which are nevertheless contingent?²¹⁸ This is not the place to discuss this question (and its pendant, the necessary *a posteriori*). The literature on this topic has filled countless journal and book pages.²¹⁹ Even the thorough evaluation of Evans's position on this topic presupposes the discussion of various issues from epistemology, metaphysics and (two-dimensionalist) logic. All I want to do here though is to briefly sketch how this issue relates to Evans's idea of descriptive names and whether anything I said so far has a bearing on it.

As pointed out above, a sentence like 'Julius = Julius' is not necessarily true, not even if 'Julius' has a referent. Same for 'Julius invented the zip'.²²⁰ This follows from the kind of content these sentences must express, which is in both cases an existential claim, at least according to Evans (given his Russellian analysis of definite descriptions). Since the identity statement may be seen as more problematic, let us stick with the second statement. The metaphysical status of 'Julius invented the zip' is

²¹⁸ The best known discussion of this is Kripke (1980), lectures I and II.

²¹⁹ A few important publications (apart from Kripke's and Evans's): Plantinga (1974), Schiffer (1977), Stalnaker (1978), Donnellan (1979), Davies/Humberstone (1980), Davies (1981), Dummett (1981a), (1981b), Kaplan (1989), Chalmers (1996), (2006), Salmon (1998), Bealer (2002), Soames (2003), (2005). See also issue 118 of *Philosophical Studies* published in 2004. Evans's article "Reference and Contingency" is partly a direct critical reply to Schiffer (1977) and Donnellan (1979).

²²⁰ Sainsbury makes the same point about similar statements containing referring definite descriptions. See Sainsbury (2005), p. 179.

pretty clear. What about its epistemological status? This is clear too: the sentence's truth can only be known if we find out whether or not there is a unique inventor of the zip (see RC, p. 193). In conclusion sentences of the form '*DN is F*' (where '*F*' is the predicate of the canonical description) are, if true, contingent *a posteriori* truths.²²¹

A candidate for a contingent *a priori* truth must therefore take a different form, namely such that the existence assumption is made part of the statement. Thus we have

(29) If anyone invented the zip, then Julius invented the zip.²²²

This makes sense: the only thing we know *a priori* in this whole 'Julius' affair is that given that there is a unique inventor of the zip and given our knowledge of convention (DN1), then Julius is that inventor. This does not seem to amount to much more than pure semantical knowledge. We know the meaning of all the words, including that of 'Julius', and we know, on the basis of that, that what (29) expresses is that

(30) If anyone invented the zip, then the inventor of the zip invented the zip.

And we certainly know *a priori* the truth of this, even though there is nothing very

²²¹ It may seem that we are hereby contradicting Kripke, since his own examples of contingent *a priori* truths are of this form. But it is reasonable to assume a charitable reading of Kripke in this respect and assume that he presupposes that the designators in his examples are not empty. Also, in Kripke (1979), p. 71, he formulates, under thesis (5), a conditional like (29).

²²² See also RC, p. 193. 'Julius' must be, strictly speaking, represented with narrow scope to indicate that 'Julius' is not a Russellian name. If 'Julius' is Russellian, (29) is not knowable *a priori*, for its truth requires one to know that the name has a referent, which involves knowledge of the latter's existence. This is what Evans's remark that there would be '[...] simply no puzzle unless the use of free logic is accepted' (RC, p. 195) amounts to.

It should be mentioned that according to Evans certain sentences involving descriptive names are not the only candidates for the contingent *a priori*. There are others which do not involve referring expressions at all. See RC, pp. 197, 208ff.

informative involved in such knowledge.²²³ Thus the *a priori* status of (29) is given through the identity of assertoric content with (30). There are however writers who disagree with this. Donnellan is one.²²⁴ He argues that we may know *a priori* that (29) is true, e.g. through inferences, but not what truth is expressed by it. For to know this we need to understand 'Julius', but this we can only understand if we know who Julius is, i.e. have *de re* knowledge about him. Of course, knowledge of a mere linguistic stipulation cannot establish such *a priori de re* knowledge. But since knowing what (29) expresses, if true, is to know something about a certain individual (about the world), we cannot know *a priori* what (29) expresses.²²⁵ But, as Evans rightly objects, this would mean to assume that (29) must express a Russellian proposition and to deny the possibility of descriptive names, i.e. that names like 'Julius' are genuine singular terms. This would be mistaken. As we have seen, to understand a sentence containing a descriptive name is not to grasp some Russellian thought, but really the same thought as expressed by corresponding description sentences (here: (30)), which are not mere optional paraphrases. The referentiality of 'Julius' is given via conditional reference axioms like (12) which specify what must be the case for the name to have a referent. To deny the possibility of such axioms is to fasten one's concept of reference, slightly dogmatically, on the idea of Russellian reference as the only kind of reference.

Thus the apriority of (29) is guaranteed. Its contingency, on the other hand, is given by the fact that the $\Box$ -modalisation of (29), namely (using possible world semantics)

²²³ That is, if we assume that conditionals have truth-conditions. If we don't, e.g. because we take conditionals to be based on the act of supposing, which in turn is distinct from asserting, the whole case for contingent *a priori* truths expressed by sentences like (29) comes apart anyway. I cannot discuss this important issue here. See e.g. Edgington (1991), (1995).

²²⁴ See Donnellan (1979). For a more recent and very detailed criticism of Evans's position see Soames (2005), Chapter 6, especially pp. 111-23, 335ff.

²²⁵ See also Soames (2005), p. 337. For criticism of this position see Jeshion (2001).

(31) $\forall w$ (If anyone invented the zip in w , then Julius invented the zip in w),

is false (while, incidentally, the $\Box$ -modalisation of (30)²²⁶ is not). For (31) is falsified by a world in which our Julius did not invent the zip, but somebody else did, and surely there is at least one such world. Evans calls such contingency ‘superficial contingency’, as opposed to ‘deep contingency’. A statement ‘ p ’ is superficially contingent iff ‘ p ’ is not true with respect to all possible worlds and it is not false with respect to all possible worlds, but it could not be false in the actual world, if true in the actual world, and not true in the actual world, if false in the actual world. In other words: no matter how the actual world turns out, the sentence could not have a different truth-value from the one it actually has, although there are possible worlds accessible from the actual one with respect to which the sentence has a different truth-value. By contrast, a statement is deeply contingent iff if it is false it might have been true in the actual world (w^*) or, if it is true, it might not have been true in the actual world. There is, in short, no *a priori* ‘guarantee that there exists a verifying state of affairs’ (RC, p. 212) in w^* for ‘ p ’. But, as we have just seen, there is such a guarantee for the verification of (29).²²⁷

There are also the corresponding notions of ‘superficial necessity’ and ‘deep necessity’, but I will not go into this.²²⁸ Suffice it to say that (29) is, while superficially contingent, deeply necessary. Evans’s solution of the puzzle is therefore both ingenious and simple. If we evaluate the truth of (29) with respect to its

²²⁶ Namely ‘ $\forall w$ (If anyone invented the zip in w , then the inventor of the zip in w invented the zip in w)’.

²²⁷ To evaluate deep and superficial contingency respectively we must consider the proposition and content of ‘ p ’ respectively. See Dummett (1981b), p. 601.

²²⁸ See RC, pp. 211ff., Davies (1981), Chapter IX, Chalmers (2006), sections 5.3-5.4. For an early definition of these notions in terms of the operators ‘actual’ and ‘fixedly’ see Davies/Humberstone (1980), p. 9.

content,²²⁹ then there is an *a priori* guarantee that it is true, and it is (deeply) necessary. If, however, we evaluate its truth with respect to its proposition, it is (superficially) contingent. In other words: (29) is *a priori* knowable in one respect (a ‘Yes’ for ‘Is “*p*” true?’) and contingent in another (a ‘No’ for ‘Is “ $\Box p$ ” true?’ and ‘Is “ $\Box \neg p$ ” true?’).²³⁰ It is not *a priori* and contingent in one and the same respect. Thus Evans actually accepts a version of the traditional association between *apriority* and necessity, since (29) is *a priori* knowable and deeply necessary. And both the *apriority* and deep necessity of (29) are based on linguistic facts, namely the semantical connection between the name and its canonical description as established by (DN1). This is pretty much the implication of Evans’s argument.

It would be an important task to defend Evans’s solution of Kripke’s puzzle against recent criticism (especially Soames’). However, all I want to show is that his ingenious solution is not in the slightest upset by a denial of the Postulate of Semantic Difference. In fact: it is only through subsuming a descriptive name and its canonical definite description to the same semantical category that we can explain Evans’s solution. This seems to contradict what we said above, namely that (29) and (30) share the same content, but not the same proposition, which shows that ‘Julius’ and ‘the inventor of the zip’, its supposed canonical description, do not share all semantical properties, namely not those relating to behaviour in modal contexts. But to repeat a point made in the previous section: the canonical description of ‘Julius’ is really a rigidified description, not non-rigid ‘the inventor of the zip’. Even to merely understand, not to mention evaluate (29) or (31) we must know that (31) says that

²²⁹ Not to its proposition, as it is claimed in Soames (1989), p. 148, although this might be just a terminological difference.

²³⁰ See also Bostock (1988), p. 367. But are we then not evaluating the truth of two *different* sentences (*p*’ and ‘ $\Box p$ ’? Why then say at all that some *one* sentence is contingent *a priori*.

(32) $\forall w$ (If anyone invented the zip in w , then the inventor of the zip in w^* invented the zip in w).

(32) is thus as false as (31), and not true, like the $\Box$ -modalisation of (30). (32) is therefore not the $\Box$ -modalisation of (30), but of the following sentence (or some similar sentence with a rigid definite description):

(33) If anyone invented the zip, then the inventor of the zip in w^* invented the zip.

This latter sentence has therefore just the same content *and* proposition as (29). And it is contingent *a priori* in the same sense as (29). We can conclude that descriptive names, qua rigid designators, can be interpreted as shorthands for certain semantically congruent descriptions, an interpretation which is in agreement with Davies and Humberstone's working hypothesis concerning descriptive names.²³¹ In fact, it is made clear by Evans himself. For when he considers what property a world w must have in order to make (29) true, in other words when he considers the *proposition*, and thus the *modal* properties associated with (29), he indicates that a world w must be such that if there is a unique inventor of the zip in that world, then our Julius invented the zip in that world. Evans's notation for this property is

λw (If anyone uniquely invented the zip in w , then Julius uniquely invented the zip in w),

which he translates, *nota bene*, into

²³¹ Namely that '[...] a descriptive name with its reference fixed by 'the G ' is nothing other than a conventional abbreviation of (or at least, an expression whose sense is that of) 'the actual G ' (Davies/Humberstone (1980), p. 11).

λw (If anyone uniquely invented the zip in w , then the inventor of the zip in w^* uniquely invented the zip in w).²³²

But this translation, is, of course, not merely optional. Rather, it denotes, like the previous λ -predicate, the ‘truth _{w} -maker’ of the very sentence ‘If there is a unique inventor of the zip, then Julius invented the zip’, indeed, it makes that previous λ -predicate *intelligible*. For in order to understand the first λ -predicate one must know that it means what the second means. Hence, we can conclude that the descriptive name ‘Julius’ is a shorthand for the rigidified description by Evans’s own standards in his solution of the contingent *a priori*. This shorthand reading places descriptive names into the same semantical category as definite descriptions, thus rejecting The Postulate of Semantic Difference and maintaining The Second Basic Idea. But it does not yet guarantee that The First Basic Idea is correct, that descriptive names are referring expressions. For so far their canonical descriptions have been interpreted as quantifier phrases. We must now find ways to undermine this interpretation.

²³² See RC, p. 211. I am drastically simplifying his notation and applying it to the ‘Julius’ case.

Chapter 5: Descriptive Names as Referring Expressions

This chapter offers a defence of the idea that descriptive names are referring expressions (First Basic Idea) by treating the canonical definite descriptions as singular terms. This involves a negative part, in which criticism of some main objections to the idea that descriptions are referring expressions will be advanced, and a positive part, which discusses three theories of descriptions qua referring expressions, Wettstein's, Sainsbury's and Strawson's, and settles for the latter. Finally, some principles of a 'Fregean' free logic needed for Strawson's analysis are sketched.

5.1 Referring descriptions: an overview

Some of the main problems and issues which referentialist theories of descriptions must address are reviewed. This includes their very referentiality, the problem of truth-conditions, aboutness, rigidity and the adequate logical framework.

As has emerged, a quantificational account of definite descriptions poses a serious threat to the First Basic Idea, i.e. that descriptive names are singular terms. There are several ways to reply to this threat. One is to give up this idea and accept that 'descriptive names' are simply shorthands for quantifier phrases. Another is to give up the Second Basic Idea, deny that descriptive names have a descriptive content, and to hold that the canonical description merely fixes the referent, if any, of the name. However, as I have already suggested, these two ideas are the main features of descriptive names. Without them the label 'descriptive names' would be empty. But I

don't think it is empty.

One further reply is to blame the theory with which we attempted to formulate the semantic features of descriptive names, in particular Evans's interpretation of axioms for names as showing the sense of a name by stating a semantic value which is different from the referent (see Chapter 3). As we saw this interpretation led to such problems that we suggested dropping the notion of semantic value as distinct from the referent altogether. But dropping this notion by itself will not automatically ensure that descriptive names are referring expressions. Instead, we have to give a treatment of definite descriptions as referring expressions.

Although the Russellian approach to descriptions (henceforth: *Russellianism*) has overall greater acceptance with the philosophical mainstream, the thesis that descriptions are referring expressions (henceforth: *Referential Thesis*), and don't only have referential uses, does not quite belong to an extinct species. In fact, there are several such accounts, developed in detail not only by eminent philosophers of language, but also by numerous linguists. Of course, I cannot discuss here all these theories. Instead, I shall first give a brief overview of the main issues involved, then refute some main objections to the Referential Thesis and finally discuss some of its most promising defences.

There are numerous theories of singular definite descriptions in the marketplace and there are several legitimate ways to classify them.²³³ I classify them by dividing them into homogenous and heterogeneous theories. The former claim that descriptions belong to one single semantical category; the latter claim that some descriptions

²³³ I will ignore theories of plural definite descriptions and indefinite descriptions.

belong to one semantical category, while others to another category. Types of descriptions are usually distinguished from each other either by their syntactic role, i.e. whether they occur as the grammatical subject or predicate, or by their use (referential, quantificational, predicative). The semantical categories are three in number: singular terms, quantifiers (or quantifier phrases) and (first-level) predicates. These three criteria of differentiation, syntax, semantics and pragmatics already allow for a considerable level of theoretical complexity and freedom of choice. For example, some heterogeneous theories claim that descriptions, as they occur in subject position, are singular terms, whereas when they occur in predicate position are predicates (e.g. early Strawson). Other heterogeneous theories claim that descriptions in subject position are singular terms when used in one way and quantifiers when used in another (Donnellan). Homogeneous theories typically claim that all descriptions, no matter in which position they occur, are either singular terms (von Fintel), or quantifiers (Neale), or predicates (Graff).²³⁴ But even these theories usually admit of different uses of descriptions; hence they offer explanations of how descriptions can belong to a certain semantic category, but have uses customarily associated with expressions from a different semantic category. However, not all (intelligible) combinations of positions receive equal attention. By far the most frequently discussed issue in this area is the problem of reconciling a quantificational account of descriptions with their referential uses. And the most accepted strategy here is to apply Grice's distinction between *what is said* and *what is implicated*, a strategy adopted by Kripke in 1979 and later by many others. Indeed, this strategy is probably the main reason why the quantificational account enjoys so much support at present. Before we come back to this problem, let us first look at some issues concerning referential theories of descriptions.

²³⁴ The selection of names at this stage is rather random. See Ostertag (1998) and Ludlow (2004) for an extensive bibliography.

Referentiality. What semantic feature(s) do definite descriptions possess in virtue of which they are singular terms? Answers to this range from humdrum claims to complex theories.

(i) For instance, it is argued that they are singular terms because they are noun-phrases that can take up the position of the grammatical subject in atomic S-P sentences, and one standard and irreducible function of the grammatical subject in such sentences is to pick out an individual item as the subject matter of discourse (Strawson). Hence, ‘The *F* is *G*’ is atomic on a referential reading and ‘the *F*’ is semantically primitive²³⁵. The logical form of referring definite descriptions is what it appears to be: that of singular terms. It is then often pointed out that although we do have the mere formal possibility of analysing such sentences as non-atomic quantified statements (i.e. to project S-P sentences onto other logical forms), there is a widely accepted practice of using definite descriptions as singular terms, a practice which is constitutive of their referential status (Devitt, Reimer). (More on this in 5.2).

(ii) A further argument narrows down this characterisation: descriptions are not only grammatical subjects, but actually comparable to demonstratives – which for many theorists are singular terms *par excellence*. When ‘the *F*’ is used as a referring expression, it is by and large replaceable with ‘this *F*’ or ‘that *F*’, and this replaceability is again constitutive of the semantic status of these terms (Donnellan, Peacocke, Devitt, Reimer).

(iii) An argument along similar lines treats names as going proxy for individual or clusters of descriptions, and since names are singular terms, so must be their abbreviations (Searle).

(iv) Another treats descriptions not so much as expressions equivalent to

²³⁵ But not syntactically, as it is still decomposable (into ‘the’ and ‘*F*’). ‘The’ functions here as a singular term-forming operator on a predicate.

names, but as a type of names *sui generis*, namely complex names, both simple and complex names sharing very similar features, e.g. the possibility of being empty without being meaningless (Bostock).²³⁶

(v) Finally, there is an approach that does not focus so much on whether we can compare definite descriptions directly, via ‘surface’ grammar, to other types of singular terms, rather whether their representation within a semantic theory places them in the same category as other singular terms (Burge, Sainsbury). Here the main idea is similar to the one expressed by the Reference Criterion (see Chapter 2). This is general enough a specification to not impose too strict requirements on something being a referring expression. All we need to assign are conditions of reference, not necessarily a referent (see 5.3 below).

Truth conditions. What are the truth-conditions of ‘The *F* is *G*’? This has been a major issue ever since Strawson’s initial proposal. There are here two main approaches competing with each other.

(i) According to the first, sentences containing referring descriptions are either true, false or neither-true-nor-false (truth-valueless).²³⁷ This is of course Strawson’s approach, which he connected to a theory of existential presuppositions.²³⁸ This theory has been subsequently developed further by other theorists (e.g. Wilson, Burton-Roberts). The main challenge here is to give a uniform and empirically adequate account of presupposition failure, including for existential statements (see 5.4 below). An additional issue concerns the question whether such presuppositions are pragmatic or semantic in nature (Bach). Equally important is the question of the relation between use and meaning/truth-conditions. Relevance and use theorists (e.g. Sperber/Wilson,

²³⁶ Indeed, Evans himself seems to hold this position with respect to certain descriptions. See *VR*, pp. 322, 380.

²³⁷ Alternatively, they can be assigned a third truth-value.

²³⁸ Strawson (1952). For a recent overview on presupposition see Yang (2005), Chapter 3.

Travis) claim there is a close connection, while Gricean theories deny this. But it is noteworthy that the most recent neo-Gricean theories of implicature have come to acknowledge that truth-conditions are not independent of ‘pragmatic post-processing’ (Levinson, Atlas).

(ii) According to the second approach ‘The F is G ’ is, even on a referential reading of ‘the F ’, either true or false, *tertium non datur*. This effectively proposes to assign Russellian truth-conditions to sentences containing referring descriptions. This may seem surprising, given that Russellian truth-conditions are usually associated with an non-referential account of descriptions, but the proposal has some forceful defences (Bostock, Sainsbury). The main challenge is here to explain why precisely atomic ‘ G (the F)’ is (not just stipulated to be, but really *is*) truth-conditionally equivalent with non-atomic ‘ $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$ ’ (see 5.3 below).

Reference failure. What is the truth-value of ‘The F is G ’ when ‘the F ’ is empty? The main possible answers to this question mirror those concerning truth-conditions: we can say either that such a sentence is false, that it is assigned the third truth-value, or that it is without a truth-value.²³⁹ The trouble is that speakers seem to have different intuitions as to which truth-values to assign to e.g. ‘The king of France is bald’, ‘The king of France is hiding nowhere’, ‘Yesterday I visited the king of France in London’ (see 5.4 below).

(i) According to those favouring Russellian truth-conditions the answer is simple: all three sentences are false (Sainsbury). Ordinary speakers disagreeing with this assessment are presumably to be ascribed some sort of failure of understanding.

(ii) Those favouring non-Russellian truth-conditions have met the challenge by

²³⁹ Indeed, there are even supporters (Scott, Grandy, Lambert, McGinn) of the idea that a sentence containing an empty referential description can be *true*. See for instance *VR*, p. 37, fn. 43, McGinn (2004), Chapter 10.

offering more complex explanations. For instance, they use additional concepts such as topic and focus (Atlas), invoke discursive ‘fall-back strategies’ (Lasersohn, von Fintel) or assume that ‘not true’ does not always mean ‘false’, but can also be explained in terms of ‘truth does not apply’ (von Wright, Rundle).

Contrast with predication and quantification. Even if their referentiality is accepted, definite descriptions cannot be always understood as singular terms. There are uses which are not referential, but either predicative or quantificational.²⁴⁰ This is because such uses exploit the inner structure of descriptions, which is of (or can be brought into) the form ‘the ϕ ’. Examples for a predicative use are ‘He is the owner of a yacht’ or ‘His aim is to become the Prime Minister’ (Rundle), whereas Donnellan’s attributive uses are thought to be of the quantificational type, e.g. ‘The murderer of Smith, whoever that is, must be insane’. Given these uses, the challenge is to give a semantically uniform account of definite descriptions. One has to (i) either resort to some kind of ambiguity thesis (Donnellan, Reimer), or (ii) indeed claim that despite appearances descriptions really belong to the semantic category of singular terms and then explain how these appearances arise (von Fintel).

Aboutness. What are sentences containing referring descriptions about? It is widely assumed that atomic sentences containing Russellian singular terms usually express *de re* thoughts/propositions (‘direct reference’). On one reading this amounts to the claim that if there is no referent, there is no thought expressed, and thus the sentence and consequently the singular term itself is meaningless.²⁴¹ But this does not seem to be the case with referential descriptions, since ‘The greatest Armenian philosopher outsmarted Aristotle’ will be meaningful no matter what (Russell and Strawson agree

²⁴⁰ Indeed, there may be an additional use, the generic one, as in ‘the whale’, ‘the zip’.

²⁴¹ On a stronger reading, the object itself is a constituent of the thought/proposition.

here). Hence, if this meaningfulness is accepted, the notion of *de re* thought cannot be employed in the standard way to explain what such sentences are about.

(i) One solution is to assume a very general and ‘weak’ notion of aboutness in terms of topicality, which applies independently of whether ‘the *F*’ exists or not (Strawson, Atlas).

(ii) A second solution connects aboutness more closely to existence, but not yet to *de re* thoughts. If there is a unique *F*, then ‘The *F* is *G*’ expresses a descriptive thought about the *F*. Otherwise the sentence is not about anything, although still not meaningless (e.g. Sainsbury).

(iii) A further solution is to assimilate descriptions to Russellian terms and assume the same kind of *de re* aboutness. ‘The *F*’ works here like ‘that *F*’. This suggests that when ‘the *F*’ is empty, the corresponding sentence is itself meaningless, although it may still ‘communicate’ something (Devitt, Reimer).

Rigidity. Some claim that rigidity is a necessary condition for a term being a genuine naming device and that descriptions are not rigid designators. The challenge is here to show that at least one of these claims is not correct. The latter is the more accepted strategy. There are several ways of implementing it, i.e. of *de jure*-rigidifying descriptions²⁴²: for instance by using (i) a dthat-operator (Kaplan), (ii) an actually-operator (Davies, Sainsbury), or (iii) a wide-scope notation (Dummett). These strategies have been called into question by several theorists (Neale, Soames), arguing that differences remain between genuine devices of reference such as names and rigidified descriptions. Rigidification continues nevertheless to be considered an important strategy by those defending the possibility of referring descriptions.

²⁴² See Almog (1986), p. 222, fn. 12 for various such alternatives. One stems from none other than Kripke.

Logical framework. In classical logic every singular term is non-empty or otherwise unintelligible (excluded from syntax). Obviously, if we understand definite descriptions as singular terms, we face a problem here, since descriptions can be empty, without being unintelligible. One simple, but contentious solution is to deny the latter claim: descriptions are really just like ordinary singular terms and they cannot be empty. Hence, we can stick to classical logic. Another, more plausible solution, is to change the logical framework. We can have various free logics or other types of alternative logics. This depends partly on how we construe the truth-conditions of 'The F is G '. If we decide for free logic, we have the following alternatives:

(i) Negative free logic: all atomic sentences containing empty singular terms are false (Evans, Bostock, Sainsbury). I have mentioned this kind of logic in 4.1 above.

(ii) Positive free logic (Scott, Lambert, van Fraassen): some atomic sentences containing empty singular terms, e.g. 'Vulcan = Vulcan' or 'Pegasus is a winged horse', are true.

(iii) Neutral free logic (Frege²⁴³, Strawson, Smiley, Lehmann): atomic sentences containing empty singular terms have no truth-value.

Related alternatives are:

(iv) Many-valued logic (Keenan): atomic sentences containing empty singular terms are assigned a third truth-value.

Naturally, there is neither overall agreement as to which of these positions is the most

²⁴³ Frege is sometimes seen as an advocate of neutral free logic, but really his remarks about lack of truth-value concern sentences of natural language, a lack which he took as the best sign for its deficiency, and which he contrasted with the perfection of his concept script, in which every name has a *Bedeutung* (if needed, it is assigned one by definition) and every sentence a truth-value. See Frege (1893), §5, fn. 3. Frege would have probably considered the label 'Fregean free logic' a misnomer.

suitable one to support the thesis of referring descriptions, nor has the thesis itself lacked numerous critics.²⁴⁴ I cannot offer here a full defence of what I consider to be the most promising version of the Referential Thesis, namely a presuppositional account combined with neutral free logic. But I shall attempt to undermine two of the strongest objections to the Referential Thesis (5.2, 5.4 below) and also present three positive versions of it (5.2, 5.3, 5.4 below).

The two strongest objections to the Referential Thesis I have in mind are the following:

(i) There are no referring descriptions, strictly speaking. All we have are referential *uses* of descriptions, but these are not semantically significant. Donnellan's referential/attributive distinction is a *pragmatic* distinction between uses and as such it has no impact on the semantic analysis of descriptions, of the truth-conditions of 'The *F* is *G*'. The Gricean distinction between what is literally said and what is only implicated can be used to show that we can both give a unified, non-ambiguous Russellian analysis of descriptions and explain referential uses of descriptions as kinds of implicatures (see Kripke (1979)). Indeed, as Kent Bach has recently stressed, it is *only* the quantificational character of descriptions which can explain why they can be used to refer (Bach (2004), p. 190).

This objection can be broken down into two components: First, the question of the meaning of definite descriptions is largely independent of varieties of word usage and relates only to their logical form.²⁴⁵ Second, quantifiers can indeed be used in a

²⁴⁴ For some of the most recent critical contributions see the articles by Bach, Nunberg and Salmon in Reimer/Bezuidenhout (eds.) (2004).

²⁴⁵ 'Rather than overly attribute features to specific linguistic items, [following Grice's theory] one can

referential manner. In the next section I shall look at both these components.

(ii) The main theoretical implementation of the Referential Thesis, i.e. Strawson's presuppositional analysis, does not really work. It does not give us a coherent, unified semantical account of all occurrences of descriptions, and where it works presuppositions can be seen as a purely pragmatic, not a semantic phenomenon (Stalnaker). We are not wary about the truth-value of every sentence containing an empty description in subject position, but are inclined to judge certain such sentences as true or false respectively, not as truth-valueless. Thus the truth-value intuitions predicted by Strawson are often not confirmed by native speakers. A unitary semantic account along Russell's lines can explain these intuitions better and leave any anomalies to pragmatics. I will look at this objection in section 5.4 below. But first things first.

proceed on the default assumption that uses of language can be explained in terms of a core of linguistic meaning together with general facts about rational communication' (Bach (1999a)). For a recent collection of 'mainstream' articles discussing the semantics-pragmatics demarcation, see Szábo (2005).

5.2 Undermining Russellianism

I discuss here whether referential descriptions can really be best explained as quantifiers. First, I clarify a confusion about referential uses of quantifiers, second I point out some open issues in Kripke's original proposal, third I show that the implicature-based explanation of referential descriptions is not entirely unproblematic, and fourth I examine a positive proposal about referring descriptions, namely the demonstrative proposal. I conclude that this proposal, although it has its own limitations, is a step forward, since it is based on a correct argument, the argument from standard use.

If Russellianism is correct, then 'The *F* is *G*' always literally expresses a general proposition and in certain, special circumstances, it may implicate a singular proposition. This is because, quite generally, non-referring expressions such as quantifiers can be sometimes employed to convey a singular proposition. Think of Kripke's classic example 'Exactly one person is drinking champagne in that corner, and I hear he is romantically linked with Jane Smith', by which I mean to communicate in a roundabout way that Professor X is drinking champagne in that corner etc. (Kripke (1979), p. 17). Or to take a more recent example by Neale: I could say to my friend Michael 'Everyone taking my class turned up at my party last night', when we both very well know that only one student, Maria, attends my class (Neale (1990), pp. 87ff.). Michael must, in order to understand what I really communicated, make a Gricean inference of the form 'He says that all students came to his party and Maria is his only student. Therefore, he is conveying that Maria came to his party'.²⁴⁶

So I have communicated via implicature a singular proposition – by using the

²⁴⁶ In actual fact the Gricean derivations are, at least according to Neale, much more sophisticated, as we know from Neale's analysis.

quantifier 'everyone' referentially. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there is any need to posit a semantic ambiguity for 'everyone', a referential and an attributive/quantificational one.²⁴⁷ The expression is and stays a quantifier, despite its referential use. Hence, the Russellian argues, we can say the same of referential uses of definite descriptions and treat them as quantifiers.

It should be noted that the Kripke-Neale analysis of descriptions was anticipated in Grice (1969). There he argues for a Russellian treatment of descriptions and explains the distinction between referential and attributive uses of descriptions by means of exactly the same distinction between what is said and what is meant invoked later by Kripke. In fact, Grice even discusses introductions of names by description, allowing for such names to end up either as ordinary names or names 'equivalent' to descriptions (this corresponds roughly to my distinction between descriptively introduced Russellian names and descriptive names; see 2.3 above), while denying that the introducing descriptions are ambiguous because of the existence of these two types of introduction (see Grice (1969), pp. 198-200). But Grice nowhere invokes the notion of implicature in this context. And where he invokes it, namely in his later debate with Strawson over a presuppositional analysis of description sentences, he

²⁴⁷ Some have nevertheless argued that there is ambiguity here, but an unproblematic one, because it is pragmatic, not semantic. There are two possible arguments here: (i) First, we question the basic Gricean assumption that what is said is tantamount to sentence meaning. By contrast, we distinguish three layers of meaning: lexical/literal meaning (sentence meaning), what is said and what is communicated (the latter one containing the implicature element). What is said is underdetermined by lexical meaning and must be pragmatically/contextually enriched. Donnellan's distinction is located at the level of what is said. Since lexical/semantic ambiguity is located at the level of lexical meaning, it follows that the referential-attributive distinction is not a case of lexical ambiguity, hence unproblematic. We don't need to apply Modified Occam's Razor and explain the discussion via the implicature theory. See e.g. Recanati (1993), section 13.1 and especially section 15, which contains a detailed critical discussion of the Gricean-Kripke approach. However, this approach only does away with any need of implicature-based explanations of the referential-attributive distinction; it is still Russellian, since at the level of lexical meaning sentences containing definite descriptions are all to be analysed as Russell suggested. (ii) The second approach is more radical. It questions the sharp distinction between what is literally said and what is implicated. It is not only the latter, but also the former that is strongly dependent on pragmatic principles and features of use. This has been mostly argued for by linguists working from within relevance theory (Sperber/Wilson (1986), Carston (1988)) and revised Griceanism (Atlas (1979), Levinson (2000), Horn (2001)).

applies it in a different way than later-day Russellians. For him ‘The F is G ’ does not have an implicatum, but only an implication, namely ‘ $\exists x (x \text{ is } F) \ \& \ \forall x \ \forall y (Fx \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ \forall x (Fx \rightarrow Gx)$ ’, since ‘The F is G ’ is simply an abbreviation (‘definitional contraction’) of the latter statement. It is only negated description sentences that may have an implicatum. But in this case the implicatum is a detachable and cancellable existential statement, not some singular proposition (see Grice (1981), pp. 272-5).

Bach and Kripke on referential uses of descriptions

Given its prominence and great persuasive force I will first look at some aspects of Kripke’s original argument before discussing the implicature-based theory in more general terms. In particular, there are two claims I will examine. (i) We can use quantifiers to refer to individuals. (ii) There is a parallelism between names and definite descriptions based on Grice’s theory of implicature and the semantic/speaker’s referent distinction such that a semantic interpretation of the referential-attributive distinction is unfounded.

The fact that we can use quantifiers to refer to individuals is taken as unquestionable by both Russellians and referentialists (cf. Bach (2004), p. 201). But what is exactly meant by the phrase ‘using an expression to refer to an individual’? According to one reading, this means that quantifiers are employed as referential devices *instead* of singular terms – without being singular terms. Accordingly to the second reading, quantifiers can occur in sentences which may implicate a singular proposition in particular circumstances.²⁴⁸ The first reading can make sense, if understood in the

²⁴⁸ Both claims are stated and defended, but not clearly distinguished in Bach (2004) as well, especially pp. 198-203 and 216ff. respectively. See also Devitt (2004) for an anti-Russellian who accepts these claims.

light of the second reading. But not by itself, if it is understood as a thesis about syntactic replaceability between quantifiers and singular terms. This thesis is clearly mistaken if we accept the Frege-Russell paradigm of functional analysis.²⁴⁹ For in order to replace a singular term with some other expression the latter needs to be able to occur as a grammatical subject in atomic sentences. But this means that the expression is formally a singular term, not a quantifier. By contrast, if the expression is a quantifier, it cannot really replace a singular term. Take ‘The US president will attack Iran’. If ‘the US president’ were really syntactically replaceable with ‘Bush’, the description would be a singular term. But it is not, since ‘The US president will attack Iran’ means, according to the Russellians ‘ $\exists x$ (x is uniquely US president & x will attack Iran)’, and here, strictly speaking, there is not even a description left over which could be replaced by some other expression. This is, after all, what Russell’s original proposal amounts to; a definite description ‘per se has no meaning, because in any proposition in which it occurs the proposition, fully expressed, does not contain the phrase, which has been broken up’,²⁵⁰ Descriptions only seem to be genuine expressions, but really they are pseudo-expressions. It would only appear as if a description is replaceable by a singular term (or indeed by any kind of expression). But in reality we have a complex quantifier phrase in the actual sentence for which no syntactic replaceability with a name is even possible.

Nevertheless, some Russellians do seem to suggest such a replaceability. One is Kent Bach.²⁵¹ When we use a description-cum-quantifier referentially, he claims, we use *it*

²⁴⁹ Things would be different if we accepted the proposals of critics of this tradition (i.e. defenders of term logic) who treat even quantifiers as referring expressions. See Sommers (1982), Englebretsen (1996), Horn (2001) pp. 463ff., Ben-Yami (2004) on this.

²⁵⁰ Russell (1905), p. 51. See also Ramachandran (1995), p. 68 on a related interpretation of Kripke’s strong Russell language.

²⁵¹ See Bach (2004), pp. 200ff. The mistake is done by other Russellians as well, although it is not always very explicit. Cf. for instance McCulloch (1989), p. 237, also Recanati (1993), p. 292, who claims that ‘a referential term [can occur] instead of a description’. Indeed, the mistake seems to also be

to refer to an individual. He writes:

‘In using a description referentially, you are using it in lieu of a sign for the object. You are not making a general statement about whatever satisfies the description but a singular statement about some unnamed, undemonstrated, and otherwise unsalient individual. You are thinking of a certain individual by means of the mental counterpart of a singular term but there is no suitable linguistic singular term for you to use. In using “the *F*” (in “the *F* is *G*”) you are implicitly indicating that this individual is the *F* and that it is this individual that you are stating to be *G*. [...]. So the content of the description is inessential to what you are stating (though not to what you are *saying*)’ (Bach (2004), pp. 200, 203).

There is a some unclarity here as to what statement is made. Statements are usually those things that are uttered, and according to implicature-based Russellianism this must be a general statement. But for Bach what is stated is a singular statement, which is also implicitly indicated. Be this as it may, what really matters is that in cases of referential uses of descriptions we think of an object by means of ‘a mental counterpart of a singular term’ (I am not sure what this is), because there is no suitable singular term. Hence, in order to communicate our thought, we use the description ‘*in lieu of a sign for the object*’ (my italics) and make a singular statement. What is this statement? It must have the form ‘... is *G*’, where what fits the argument place is a singular term. Which singular term? That we cannot say, since all we have is a ‘mental counterpart of a singular term’. Still, of *which* singular term? Again, there is no answer to this.²⁵² All we have in this case is ‘the *F*’ that we use in lieu of the singular term. This replacement operation yields the statement ‘The *F* is *G*’. Since all

made by Grice, who claims that a name ‘[...] may be said to be equivalent to a definite description [...]’, while he treats descriptions in a Russellian manner at the same time (Grice (1969), p. 200).

²⁵² If the answer is ‘Of the singular term referring to *a*’, then we have our singular term after all: ‘*a*’.

we have done from a syntactical point of view is to place ‘the F ’ into the argument place of the one-place atomic function-name ‘... is G ’, ‘the F ’ must be a singular term. Is it not quite plausibly the singular term we are looking for? If we say yes, we would have a straightforward explanation for what expresses the aforementioned singular statement. But from Bach’s point of view the answer must be of course ‘No’. For ‘the F ’ is a quantifier in his opinion and thus entirely distinct from a singular term.

Note, first, that this was not Russell’s actual view. As said, ‘the F ’ is a pseudo-expression for him, to be analysed *away*, not to be analysed as some other kind of expression, not even a quantifier phrase. Anyway, let us assume ‘the F ’ corresponds to a quantifier phrase. In this case ‘The F is G ’ makes a *general* statement, analysed, for instance, as ‘ $\forall x Fx (Gx)$ ’, not a singular statement, analysed as ‘ $G (\forall x Fx)$ ’. We see immediately that these two statements have entirely different syntactic forms, namely the former ‘ $Q \phi(x)$ ’, and the latter ‘ $\phi(\alpha)$ ’, with ‘ $\forall x Fx$ ’ playing radically different roles. ‘The F ’ cannot play the role of ‘ Q ’ and ‘ α ’ as the same expression or symbol. If ‘the F ’ is a quantifier, then placing it in lieu of a sign for the object leads to ungrammaticality. The only way how the quantifier ‘the F ’ can be fused with (not: inserted into) ‘... is G ’ to yield a meaningful sentence is to reinterpret the predicate ‘... is G ’ as an open sentence ‘ x is G ’ and then attach the variable-binding version of the description. But this is a categorically different operation from inserting a sign in lieu of a singular term into some argument position. In conclusion, a quantifier just cannot be used in lieu of a singular term. This kind of explanation of referential uses of descriptions, if the sentences containing them are really understood as having a quantificational structure, fails.

It seems to me that Kripke himself does not make this mistake in his original

article.²⁵³ In his intermediate and strong Russell languages descriptions-cum-quantifiers and singular terms are not interchangeable.²⁵⁴ And where descriptions are replaceable with singular terms, namely in the weak Russell language, descriptions *are* singular terms – unanalysable ‘primitive designators’, as he calls them. For there Kripke assigns a *semantic* referent to ‘the *F*’, thus effectively treating ‘the *F*’ as a genuine singular term.²⁵⁵ This language is Russellian only insofar description sentences have the same truth-conditions as Russellian expansions. As mentioned in 5.1, there are referential theories of descriptions assigning just this kind of truth-conditions to description sentences (see Sainsbury’s theory as discussed in the next section). This last point, taken by itself, proves clearly that Kripke, unlike it is sometimes believed, has not refuted the thesis that descriptions can be treated as singular terms. They can, given that he himself treats them in this way in his weak Russell language (and he nowhere says that the idea of such a language is incoherent). This fits with the explicit and modest goal of his paper, which is only to show that Donnellan’s referential-attributive distinction by itself is not a knock-down argument against Russellianism and a decisive argument in favour of an ambiguity theory (see Kripke (1979), pp. 6, 22).

Kripke on the referential-attributive distinction

²⁵³ Maybe apart from a passage like Kripke (1979), p. 12, where he describes the phrase ‘the man who proved the incompleteness of arithmetic’ as a referential definite description, a device to refer to ‘Gödel’.

²⁵⁴ See Kripke (1979), pp. 16f. The weak Russell language is one in which ‘The *F* is *G*’ is treated as a genuine (not pseudo-)subject-predicate sentence, but one whose truth-conditions are stipulated to be the same as that of the Russellian expansion ‘ $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$ ’. The intermediate Russell language is one in which ‘The *F* is *G*’ is an abbreviation of the Russellian expansion, i.e. means the same as ‘ $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$ ’. The strong Russell language is finally one in which definite descriptions are simply excluded from the language, ‘The *F* is *G*’ being really not grammatical. It should be noted that from Russell’s point of view the difference between the strong and the intermediate Russell language is negligible. In the *Principia* the latter amounts to additional abbreviation/elimination rules for ‘ $\iota x Fx$ ’ and the scope operator.

²⁵⁵ Kripke (1979), p. 16. This is entirely consistent with his treatment of definite descriptions in *Naming and Necessity* (Kripke (1980), p. 25, fn. 3). See also fn. 172 above.

But how does Kripke explain referential uses of descriptions understood as quantifiers? He does it in the more subtle sense of showing that quantifiers can occur in sentences which, given the right background, may implicate a singular proposition. Such uses surely exist and Kripke's ingenious proposal has been considered very persuasive. Nevertheless, there has been also criticism of it.²⁵⁶ I will discuss the implicature-based theory in short. But first, I will point out a problem with Kripke's original argument which I believe has not been noticed (or at least not stressed enough) before. It concerns his rejection of the ambiguity interpretation of the referential-attributive distinction based on a certain parallelism between names and definite descriptions. This parallelism has two aspects: Grice's theory of implicature and the semantic/speaker's referent distinction.

What does this latter distinction amount to? It is initially defined with respect to *designators*, i.e. singular terms (Kripke (1979), pp. 14f.). The semantic referent of a designator '*d*' is whatever is conventionally determined as such. The speaker's referent of '*d*', on the other hand, will be the entity *a* which the speaker takes to be the semantic referent of '*d*' on a particular occasion on which I intend to say something about *a*. The first thing to notice is that Kripke speaks here clearly of singular terms, given the way he portrays the semantic form of the relevant utterance (' $\phi(d)$ '). Hence, the model of semantic/speaker's referent cannot be directly applied to quantifier expressions. Second, speaker's referent is defined in terms of semantic referent.

Kripke then distinguishes between simple and complex uses of a designator. The simple case is that in which the speaker intends to refer to whatever is the semantic

²⁵⁶ See for instance Benveniste/Erwin (1975), Devitt (1981a). On Kripke's methodological considerations see especially Reimer (1998), Ramachandran (1995), (1996), Ramachandran/Rosenthal (2000), Szabo (2000), p. 54, fn. 21.

referent. Here speaker's referent and semantic referent are by definition identical, as are the corresponding intentions. In the complex case, by contrast, there are two distinct intentions which may coincide: a specific intention to refer to *a* (which is demonstratively accessible), and a general intention to refer to whatever is the referent of '*d*'. But they may not coincide, in which case we have cases of *misapplication*. Let us call the distinction between simple and complex case, with the underlying distinction between semantic referent and speaker's referent *Kripke's apparatus*. Now an application for Kripke's apparatus would be a case in which I point to Smith, mistake him for Jones and say 'Jones is raking the leaves'. This a complex case, because I have the specific intention to refer to the man in front of me (Smith), whom I take to be the semantic referent of 'Jones', but also the general intention to refer to whoever is the semantic referent of 'Jones'. Clearly, speaker's referent and semantic referent do not coincide.

Here is my first caveat: so far there is no compelling reason to involve *Grice's* implicature theory at this stage, as Kripke believes and as many have come to believe after Kripke, e.g. Neale.²⁵⁷ When I mistake Smith for Jones by pointing at Smith and saying 'Jones is raking the leaves', I do not *implicate* any kind of statement, especially not 'Smith is raking the leaves' (I may not even know that this is Smith). I mean to say something about the man I erroneously take to be Jones. Misapplications of expressions, be these singular or other terms, do not automatically generate implicatures.²⁵⁸ When I say 'The ventilator of this car is broken' unaware that I am pointing at a carburettor, I have not implicated the statement 'The carburettor of this

²⁵⁷ Kripke does not use Grice's technical notion of implicature, but his brief references to Grice make it clear that this is what he has in mind. Kripke (1979), p. 13-15.

²⁵⁸ Why should successful complex cases then not carry implicatures as well? The mere fact that in such cases semantic referent and speaker's referent coincide does not mean that we don't have two intentions here as well. Thus 'Jones is raking the leaves' said while pointing at Jones that would mean that I say and implicate one and the same thing. But does Grice's notion of implicature really allow that I can implicate that '*p*' by saying '*p*'?

car is broken'. I may not even know what 'carburettor' means. Implicatures are results of intentionally transparent speech acts. The speaker must *intend* to make a certain implicature. But I did not intend to say something implicit about Smith by intentionally attributing him the wrong name, since I formed no such intention (if I had, the mistake would not have arisen). There is a categorial difference between erroneous and deliberately twisted talk. The Gricean analysis does *not* apply to misapplications or, more generally, to the complex uses of names Kripke has in mind. It *does* apply to the very peculiar complex uses of descriptions, as we will see. This is the first important asymmetry between names and descriptions in the context of Kripke's argument that I wish to note.

Kripke claims that his apparatus can be used to explain the referential-attributive distinction concerning descriptions. Attributive uses, he says, are in general simple cases, while referential uses are complex cases (Kripke (1979), p. 15). The sentence 'Exactly one person is drinking champagne in that corner' said in appropriate circumstances is a case in point. Now in the case of names the possibility of a complex use does not show by itself that it is that use which establishes the singular term status of the name. For names have simple uses as well. Hence, the availability of the distinction between simple and complex uses is not semantically relevant for names and does not establish some ambiguity. But then why should the same availability be relevant in the case of descriptions? It is not, Kripke claims (Kripke (1979), pp. 15, 18). We cannot contrast referential with attributive uses of descriptions to prove some semantic ambiguity.

Now, if this parallel between names and descriptions is really tenable, then Kripke's argument does not, by itself, refute the claim that descriptions are singular terms. On

the contrary. His argument so far relies on his apparatus, whose foundation is the distinction between semantic and speaker's referent, notions which, as we have seen, apply to *singular terms*. If Kripke's argument ended here, he could draw the parallel between names and descriptions only by ascribing semantic referents and speaker's referents to definite descriptions as well. But this would acknowledge their singular term status, indeed entirely independent of the fact that they have referential uses. Like names, descriptions would turn out to be singular terms even when used attributively!²⁵⁹ The argument could be seen as having correctly established that descriptions are not ambiguous, because they are, like names, singular terms on both uses.

Of course, Kripke's argument does not stop here. But he must create some hiatus between names and descriptions when applying his apparatus. In fact, what he does is to drastically modify his apparatus when he applies it to descriptions-cum-quantifiers: he drops the notion of semantic referent (without explicitly saying so) and modifies the notion of speaker's referent so that it applies to cases in which quantifiers are involved.²⁶⁰ These are two substantial changes. Understandably, he has to drop semantic referent, since descriptions are semantically quantifiers in the non-weak Russellian languages and for this reason they cannot have semantic referents. But this has consequences for the notion of speaker's referent as well. So far this notion was

²⁵⁹ An analysis of both 'referential' and 'attributive' uses of *referring* descriptions has been recently offered in Sainsbury (2004), pp. 371, 379f.

²⁶⁰ Only the second is acknowledged by him explicitly, namely in Kripke (1979), pp. 15, 17. He speaks there of the 'extension of the notion of speaker's referent' to include also cases 'where existential quantification rather than designation is involved'. The notion of semantic referent does not occur in the discussion of the intermediate and strong Russell languages in Kripke (1979), p. 17. However, *ibid.*, p. 18 ('*anyway*') he says that the distinction between the two types of referent applies to all languages, i.e. including the non-weak Russellian ones. And in a footnote he explicitly says of a description that it has semantic reference (*ibid.*, p. 25, fn. 27). This is incoherent and related to Bach's position I discussed above. I choose a more charitable reading and ignore these passages.

Dr Stephen Williams pointed out to me that we could maybe ascribe a semantic referent to 'the *F*' qua quantifier in the following way: The semantic referent of 'the *F*' is whatever satisfies ' $(Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y))$ '. But I fail to see why this would not simply amount to an axiom such as (17), an axiom which specifies reference conditions for 'the *F*' (as proposed by Burge or Sainsbury). See next section.

defined in terms of semantic referent (see above). And it was a feature of a *designator*: In the Jones-Smith case speaker's referent is ascribed to a designator '*d*', because the speaker says ' $\phi(d)$ ' (note the notation) and believes *a* to be the semantic referent of '*d*'. Now that we are dealing with a quantifier, speaker's referent cannot be ascribed in this way anymore. In uttering 'Exactly one person is drinking champagne in that corner' the speaker does not utter a ' $\phi(d)$ '-type of sentence and she does not believe that Professor X is the *semantic* referent of 'exactly one person'. For this would mean that referential uses of quantifiers are all based on semantic category mistakes. In fact, they are based on statements carrying implicatures, as correctly pointed out by Kripke. The speaker has a certain referent in mind, Professor X, and communicates by implicature a singular statement about him by deliberately uttering a quantified principal sentence. So we have a speaker's referent, but it is not ascribed to the quantifier, i.e. an unsaturated, non-referring expression, but either quite literally to the *speaker* herself or to the principal *sentence*. Indeed, in the one passage in which he assigns speaker's referent to an expression in a non-weak Russell language, Kripke himself assigns that speaker's referent to the *sentence* containing a description, not to the definite description itself.²⁶¹

This then is my second caveat: in order to fit referential uses of quantifiers into his apparatus, Kripke must modify this apparatus. But this modification is substantial enough to threaten the very parallelism between names and descriptions needed for his argument. Simple and complex uses of names versus those of descriptions are very different. Simple and complex uses of names are always uses of singular terms, because this distinction is stated in terms of a singular term's having semantic referent and speaker's referent. Simple (attributive) and complex (referential) uses of

²⁶¹ See Kripke (1979), p. 17: '[...] since the speaker's referent of " $\psi(\iota x \phi x)$ " is then the thing he has in mind [...]'.

descriptions-cum-quantifiers, on the other hand, cannot be explained in the same way. The notion of semantic referent does not apply at all here and that of speaker's referent only to sentences. Kripke uses *one* apparatus to show that the distinction between simple and complex uses of names is semantically irrelevant. If he had used the *same* explanatory apparatus for descriptions, we could have agreed that this apparatus could be employed to prove the semantic irrelevance of the distinction between simple and complex uses of descriptions, because it is this apparatus that shows, in the case of names, that referential uses of names are semantically not significant. But the apparatus he employs for descriptions is (must be) very different from the one he employs for names, and the achievements obtained through the latter cannot be extended to the former, if those achievements are gained precisely through those features of the apparatus for names which lack in the apparatus for descriptions. Simply put: The fact that simple uses of names are just as much uses of singular terms as are complex uses of names, does show that complex uses of names is not what constitutes their singular term status precisely because *both* uses are uses of singular terms. But it does not show anything about the complex (referential) use of descriptions, since their simple uses are, unlike those of names, by definition not uses of singular terms as well. Hence, there is no symmetry between the two cases and we cannot prove the semantical irrelevance of referential uses of descriptions by proving it for names.²⁶²

In conclusion, given the two dissimilarities between the analyses of uses of names and descriptions, i.e., (i), the lack of implicature in the Jones-Smith cases versus the presence of implicature in Kripke's examples of referential uses of descriptions and, (ii), the differing explanatory apparatuses for names and descriptions, Kripke's

²⁶² See also Devitt (1981a), pp. 512-6, for related remarks about the asymmetry of the two cases.

argument against the semantical relevance of referential uses of descriptions as based on an alleged parallelism between uses of names and descriptions-cum-quantifiers strikes me as questionable. Nevertheless, his argument from an implicature-based explanation of referential uses of quantifiers, without any need for a parallelism with names, is not dismissed by this yet. Let us look at it next.

General problems with an implicature-based account

A close look at the Kripke-Neale examples reveals that they are illustrations of rather peculiar cases. If all I wanted to say was that Maria came to my party, I could have said so. But I don't. I choose to literally say something other than what I should (thus violating some conversational maxim).²⁶³ In doing so I often not only communicate something other than what I literally say, but also get a certain illocutionary point across (irony etc.). Hence, the hearer must, in order to understand what is really communicated, make a complex Gricean inference involving the utterance, the implicatum and the illocutionary point based on knowledge of the peculiar circumstances of discourse. The Kripke-Neale examples are thus really examples of *particularised* implicature, '[...] cases in which an implicature is carried by saying that *p* on a particular occasion in virtue of special features of the context'²⁶⁴.

But it is not clear that we can extrapolate from these cases to referential uses of definite descriptions, which are a more general phenomenon. Russellians have to prove that theirs is the correct representation of ordinary discourse, not just of exceptional cases. It is not enough to prove that Gricean derivations are coherent and

²⁶³ Witness Grice's classical example of the letter of recommendation for Mr X in Grice (1975), p. 33.

²⁶⁴ Grice (1975), p. 37. We could also speak of speaker implicature (versus sentence implicature), to use Davis' terminology. See Davis (1998), p. 5f.

intelligible, i.e. that we, the theorists, can put them on paper, but that such derivations really are made by speakers, that speakers really have the intentions in question.²⁶⁵ Only then could the notion ‘implicature’ find its justification.

It is questionable that we can really ascribe these Gricean intentions to ordinary speakers using referential descriptions.

(i) First, it just does not seem to be true that in all or at least the majority of these uses we have a peculiar illocutionary point in choosing to literally express a quantified statement and implicate a singular one. Ordinary speakers, when using ‘the *F*’ referentially, do not usually talk in a roundabout way about a particular object *a*, i.e. by choosing to couch the statement that *a* is *G* by actually making a complex existential statement of the form ‘ $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$ ’. This is of course an empirical claim I am making, but it is a plausible one. If a theory of meaning is an empirical theory, then we should devise experiments checking what are the real intentions of real speakers. It is at least unlikely that they will provide us with data confirming that they choose such existential statements as a rhetorical detour on a regular basis.²⁶⁶

(ii) Second, if Russellianism is correct, there always must be an intention to implicate, rather than say ‘*a* is *F*’ when we use referential descriptions. But with many such uses there is simply no singular statement ‘*a* is *G*’ available (the alleged implicatum of the quantified statement ‘The *F* is *G*’, with ‘*a*’ being a non-descriptive singular term). Think of descriptions used to refer to entities we cannot point at or have no name for (because they have no name or because their name was

²⁶⁵ See also Recanati (1993), p. 245, where it is pointed out that it is not the *theorist* who ought to be in the position of figuring out the implicatures, but the *participants in the talk-exchange themselves*. And as with all ascriptions of intentions, if the subject says in all honesty ‘But this is not what I intended’, then the Russellian must be committed to treat this as genuine input to his theory.

²⁶⁶ See also fn. 281 below.

forgotten).²⁶⁷ An implicatum is something which can be expressed in principle by the speaker themselves, but since there is no term '*a*' available in these cases, there is simply no conceivable implicatum as the object of speaker's intention available, and thus the explanatory model based on the difference between assertion and implicature fails. But it seems implausible that only the (contingent) availability of an implicatum should allow us to use a description referentially.

(iii) Third, in many circumstances we don't have to look at the particular situation or have special knowledge about what the speaker knows to realise that he is communicating a singular statement by saying 'The *F* is *G*'. For the speaker may be relying on the fact that saying 'The *F* is *G*' is *by default* understood as saying (not: implicating) something about a particular entity that is (uniquely) *F*. Examples may be 'The dog of my neighbour has rabies', 'The bank we used long time ago has gone bankrupt last year', 'The world's superpower has a trade deficit' (newspaper headline), 'I don't know the name of the father of St Thomas Aquinas' etc.²⁶⁸

The Russellian could reply that the fact that the speaker does not have the intention relevant for the corresponding implicature does not count against an implicature-based explanation, since the implicature is not constituted through the intentions with which the individual speech-act is carried out. But in this case the implicature is either of the *general* conversational, or, worse, of the conventional type. The least Russellians must grant here in order to cope with the regularity of referential uses is that referential uses

²⁶⁷ Bach (2004), pp. 198f. points this out as well, but he believes that some kind of direct informational connection must exist between the speaker and the referent for the speaker to be able to use a description referentially, since referential uses presuppose both logically and psychologically the ability to have object-dependent thoughts of that entity. I don't share this view. The connection in question can be very spurious indeed.

²⁶⁸ In particular, the understanding of these sentences does not depend on the grasping of the peculiar speaker intention involved in particularised implicature. As shown by Saul (2002), pp. 232-4, nothing will be implicated in Grice's famous example of particularised implicature, if the letter of recommendation happens to be received by an employer who is merely looking for somebody who is unfailingly polite, always neatly dressed and punctual.

of descriptions are, unlike the Neale-Kripke examples, cases of generalised conversational implicature, as described by Grice: 'the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the absence of special circumstances) carry such-and-such an implicature or type of implicature' (Grice (1975), p. 37). Indeed, this is conceded by a leading Russellian, Kent Bach (cf. Bach (2004), p. 225f.).

But the trouble with this is manifold. (i) First, we could not use the Kripke-Neale type of examples to explain referential uses anymore, since these are clearly cases of particularised implicature. Generalised implicature is not a form of particularised implicature. But these types of examples are the most convincing ones in favour of the thesis that we can use quantified statements to communicate a singular statement. (ii) Second, it is doubtful that generalised implicature can actually explain referential descriptions. Grice's example for a generalised implicature is 'He is seeing a woman tonight', where what is implicated is that the woman is not his mother or sister. The point is that the falsity of the general implicatum does not make the principal statement necessarily false. But it is doubtful that we can apply this to descriptions. Take 'The American president is declaring war on Iran'. How could, if the general implicatum were false here (on the Russellian account: the singular proposition 'Bush is declaring war on Iran'), the principal statement still be true? Given that I use knowingly 'Bush' in lieu of 'the American president', knowing that Bush is the American president, I don't seem to be able to utter a principal statement which is true despite the falsity of the implicatum. In other words I can't make the kind of suggestive talk that I can make with 'He is seeing a woman tonight', and which is so typical of generalised implicature. (iii) Generalised implicature means that there is a general rule guiding the relation between the principal sentence and the implicatum. But would this rule not say in our case that for referential 'the *F*' 'The *F* is *G*' always

communicates something else than what it says? But such a rule would not have much to do with implicature, rather it would resemble rules guiding sayings, idioms, etc., i.e. semantic rules. (iv) Lastly, as Grice himself acknowledged, it is not always clear whether an implicature is conversational or actually conventional (Grice (1975), pp. 25, 37, 39).

Given these difficulties, should we not say that referential description sentences actually carry *conventional* implicatures?²⁶⁹ Of course, if they are conventional, then we are entering the domain of semantics, since conventional implicatures are determined by and determinable from literal meaning alone. Unfortunately, this too is problematic. We would have to say that all utterances of quantificational 'The *F* is *G*' conventionally implicate the singular statement '*a* is *G*'. That is surely not right. For many referential description sentences there is just no general procedure to semantically derive the corresponding conventionally implicated singular statement (where would the particular singular term '*a*' come from?).²⁷⁰ Also, to claim that a certain type of quantificational statement always implicates a singular statement seems like an *ad hoc* move and an abuse of the notion of implicature. Why should the utterance of some quantificational sentence always implicate some statement of a very different type? And why don't the other quantifiers also trigger similar implicatures?²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Conventional implicatures are opposed to generalised implicatures in so far as the latter are one type of conversational, i.e. non-conventional implicatures. See on all this Grice (1975), pp. 24-6, 37ff. On a face to face comparison between these two types of implicature see Horn (2001), p. 145.

²⁷⁰ As a matter of fact, non-Russellian terms such as our descriptive names seem to be the only case in point! But first, '*DN* is *G*' is not implicated by 'The *F* is *G*', but really says the same as the latter, with nothing being implicated. And second, on the quantificational view of descriptions I discussed in the last chapter, and which is shared by the Russellians, we are forced to say that '*DN* is *G*' really expresses a general thought. Hence, even if '*DN* is *G*' were the implicatum of 'The *F* is *G*', it would be implicating a general statement, not a particular one, which goes against what Russellians would want to say.

²⁷¹ Not to mention that the notion of conventional implicature has been rejected as a 'myth' by a prominent Russellian like Bach (Bach (1999)).

The argument from standard use and the demonstrative proposal

A plausible alternative is to drop the entire implicature-based analysis with its presumption of a radical discrepancy between the semantic forms of the asserted statement and the implicatum, and instead acknowledge that there are indeed conventions stipulating the literal meaning of referential descriptions. This has indeed been proposed by several theorists in recent and not so recent years.²⁷² Witness for instance Michael Devitt who contends that all the Kripke-Neale examples show is that we *can* indeed, given special stage setting, use quantifiers to convey a singular proposition. But this is not the case with uses of referential descriptions, which are not exceptional. Rather,

‘when a person has a thought with a particular *F* object in mind, there is a regularity of her using ‘the *F*’ to express that thought. [...] This regularity is strong evidence that there is a convention of using ‘the *F*’ to express a thought about a particular *F*, that this is a standard use. This convention is semantic, as semantic as the one for an attributive use’ (Devitt (2004), p. 283).

And Mark Sainsbury writes:

‘An expression standardly and conventionally used on occasion with referential intentions is properly counted as a referring expression (as used on that occasion). The connecting principle is that semantic theory should reflect how the expressions it treats are used. An expression standardly and conventionally used with referential intentions is used with the intention of achieving reference. Semantic theory needs to reflect this fact’ (Sainsbury

²⁷² For instance Peacocke (1975), Wettstein (1981), (1983), Recanati (1993), Ramachandran (1996), Reimer (1997), (1998), Devitt (1997), (2004). For general limitations of Grice’s theory of implicature see Travis (1991), Glock (1996), Davis (1998).

(2005), p. 182).

The basic orientation is here to pay tribute to use, i.e. to acknowledge that use can and does have semantical consequences. The Neale-Kripke cases do not disprove this general point. On the contrary, they rely on the fact that there is a *usual* understanding of quantifiers, a conventional non-referential way of understanding and employing them, and that their referential use must be exceptional. Were this use regular instead, our language would sooner or later be enlarged by an additional semantic rule.²⁷³ Imagine the referential use of 'everyone' would be used with ever increasing frequency, while the quantificational use would decrease rapidly to the point of eventually becoming extinct. At some point during this process it would become untenable to claim that the meaning of 'everyone' would nevertheless still be the archaic, quantificational one, whereas the referential one would still be only pragmatically derived. Rather, somewhere along the way a certain convention would have become obsolete and be replaced by a new one, with 'everyone' having now a *different* meaning. This is undoubtedly a common phenomenon in any language.²⁷⁴ Of course, it is sometimes difficult to say *when* precisely a certain use solidifies into a new convention, but this does not disprove *that* use is meaning-constitutive. That meaning is ultimately constituted by normative linguistic practice, by the rules and conventions we adopt and follow, is therefore something even a Russellian must accept.

²⁷³ This seems to be hinted at in the concluding sentence in Kripke (1979), p. 22.

²⁷⁴ Witness the phenomenon of dead metaphors, e.g. an expression *A* which used to have the literal meaning *B* and the metaphorical meaning *C*, but now literally means *C*, not *B* anymore. An example would be 'daisy', which used to mean 'day's eye'. Note that using Grice's method of eliminating unwanted senses, one could come to deny that there are any such things as dead metaphors. For we could always argue that 'really' *A* still means *B* and that *C* is all the time merely implicated, despite a long-established use of *A* to mean *C*. Hence *A* is not a dead metaphor and there are no such things. As Devitt puts it: 'Gricean fundamentalism run amok!' Reimer and Devitt use this analogy to illustrate the argument from standard use. See Reimer (1998), pp. 96ff., Devitt (2004), pp. 284-6. For a reply see Bach (2004).

Nevertheless, this does not settle the issue yet. Anti-Russellians now claim not only that a semantical convention for referential descriptions is not only coherent and possible, but also that we actually do have such a convention in our language and that it is empirically better entrenched than the complex Gricean derivations.²⁷⁵ There are various proposals for what this convention might be. Probably the most popular proposal at the moment is to assimilate referential descriptions to *indexicals*, more precisely to complex demonstratives (Wettstein, Devitt, Ramachandran, Reimer). Thus ‘the *F*’ functions like ‘that *F*’. This is meant to hold for all referential descriptions, although it is particularly obvious for incomplete descriptions such as ‘the cat’. This theory exploits, among other things, the fact that there is a gap between the literal meaning of a quantified statement and the singular statement it supposedly implicates, whereas there is no such gap between the meaning of a sentence containing an incomplete description and a corresponding demonstrative sentence (which is a singular statement). Take ‘The table is broken’. We have no qualms about understanding this as saying that the particular table pointed at is broken, but this is surely not what ‘There is exactly one table in this room and it is broken’ could be taken to communicate in anything but a roundabout way. This suggests that ‘The table is broken’ does not really have the literal meaning of a quantified statement, but rather that of a demonstrative one.²⁷⁶ But if that is so, we don’t need an implicature-based

²⁷⁵ Reimer (1998), p. 94. Russellians do not usually argue the referential thesis is incoherent, but false. Hence, it *could* be true. This is exploited by anti-Russellians insofar as they then ask what conditions are needed to make the thesis true. And then they claim that our language is precisely one which satisfies these conditions. There are, however, stronger versions of Russellianism, e.g. Bach (2004), since Bach claims that it is only the quantificational account which explains the referential use. But it is doubtful that even his is a *reductio ad absurdum* argument concerning the concept of referring definite descriptions.

²⁷⁶ This is following Ramachandran (1996), pp. 8f. Could this intuitive gap not be translated into truth-conditional significance? Tentatively put: If ‘*q*’ is a pragmatic implicatum of ‘*p*’, then if ‘*p*’ is true, ‘*q*’ is not necessarily true (pragmatic implicature). But if ‘*q*’ is semantically derived from ‘*p*’, then if ‘*p*’ is true, then necessarily ‘*q*’ is true (conventional meaning). Now if ‘The *F* is *G*’ is true, ‘ $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$ ’ does not necessarily have to be true (on the demonstrative reading), whereas ‘That *F* is *G*’ has to be true. Hence, the description sentence does not have the literal meaning of the Russellian

analysis, given that ‘The F is G ’ does not assert ‘ $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$ ’. For in this case no explanatory gap arises between some general statement asserted and some singular statement ‘conveyed’, a gap which the notion of implicature is supposed to bridge.

Accordingly, one can adopt the semantical convention regulating ‘that F ’ (and related expressions) also for ‘the F ’ and that is the convention of a genuine referring expression.²⁷⁷ Demonstrative reference is here understood in a Kaplanian way. The convention is then

‘The F is G ’ literally expresses a singular proposition only if the intended referent is the contextually unique F .²⁷⁸

The intended referent is the object the thinker has a singular thought about, where what such thoughts are about is described in terms of a direct, perceptual link with the object in question.²⁷⁹ This means that ‘ F ’ plays a semantic role in that nothing is determined as the referent of ‘the F ’ if the intended referent is not F .²⁸⁰ The referent of ‘the F ’ must be the intended referent *and* F . A consequence of this is that the cases of misdescription discussed by Kripke receive a very different treatment. For if that

expansion.

It should be mentioned that I am throwing here some of the most prominent anti-Russellians into the same boat, although they do disagree over various minor and major issues.

²⁷⁷ Not, however, if one believes that even ‘that cat’ is actually semantically a quantifier which can be merely *used* to refer to an entity (cf. King (1999), King (2001), Bach (2004), Nunberg (2004)). I find this position wholly implausible.

²⁷⁸ See Reimer (1998), p. 93f., Devitt (2004), pp. 290-2.

²⁷⁹ Such aboutness can be stated either in terms of a mere causal link, as with Devitt (2004), p. 290, or in terms of an informational link which must endow the subject with certain recognitional capacities, e.g. as constrained by Russell’s Principle proposed by Evans (VR, p. 89). Devitt criticises Evans’s strong requirement in Devitt (1985). Evans, on the other hand, advanced a critique of mere causal theories in VR, section 3.4, and Evans (1985a).

²⁸⁰ This too is a matter of dispute. Some claim that the noun-phrase plays only a pragmatic role in narrowing down, picking out the referent, e.g. Larson/Segal (1995). The semantic relevance thesis, on the other hand, is defended by e.g. Kaplan (1979), Kaplan (1989), Braun (1994), Borg (2000).

condition is not satisfied, then not only does 'The man over there drinking champagne is happy tonight' not literally express a singular proposition, but neither does 'Smith's murderer is insane' (where the intended referent is not the murderer; some other man is the murderer).

In any case, assuming a semantical convention such as the above allows an explanation of the understanding of referential descriptions in terms of an exercise of linguistic knowledge, which is non-inferential and 'direct'.²⁸¹ The great advantage of this account would be then that it avoids any artificiality in our theoretical understanding of referential descriptions. We do not need to postulate complex Gricean derivations in order to explain speaker's behaviour. It seems that we thus reach not only a more coherent, but also more simple theory.

A rejoinder to the demonstrative account

I think the indexical account is, although promising, not entirely satisfactory, namely for the following reasons:

- (i) It does not explain our intuition that the sentence 'Smith's murderer is insane' can be literally true (false) even though the description misfires, as when Smith's actual murderer is not identical with the intended referent, although Smith's

²⁸¹ See Reimer (1998), 98, Devitt (2004), p. 285. I am aware that the notions 'immediate' 'direct' etc. are rather relative and will not be deemed as possessing great persuasive force. For is linguistic understanding not to a large extent inferential? Be this as it may, these notions have, even in a relative sense, their theoretical advantages, since they contribute to a theory which I take to be in greater accordance with what speakers really take themselves to intend and mean when they talk. It is only among theorists considered plausible that by 'The *F* is *G*' we ordinarily and literally say that $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$. No non-specialist really *hears* here the existential statement. 'The *F* is *G*' is usually an informative answer to 'Who is *G*?' or 'What is the *F*?', but not to 'Is there a unique *F* and is he *G*?' (where the answer could be simply 'yes', 'no', 'yes and no'). In actual fact, it is the Russellian theorist who resorts to a Gricean derivation of sorts in order to claim to 'hear' that 'The *F* is *G*' literally says ' $\exists x (Fx \ \& \ \forall y (Fy \rightarrow x = y) \ \& \ Gx)$ '. His derivation answers to the needs of theory, not to 'intuitions'. (What this shows is that 'literal meaning' is a technical term, and therefore not to be taken literally.)

actual murderer is (is not) insane.²⁸² It also does not explain why in the case of radical misfiring, i.e. when there is nobody satisfying 'Smith's murderer' and there is even no intended referent, something intelligible has been said, although maybe nothing true or false.

(ii) The notion of intended referent as based on demonstrative identification is too restricted. It presupposes that there is always a non-descriptive, demonstrative route to the referent. But this is too narrow an account of referring descriptions. Often it is the description itself that specifies the intended referent. In 'The last king of France was executed in 1793' or in 'The King of France might have headed a national revival, like the King of Poland',²⁸³ the description, even when used referentially, does not have and does not have to have a demonstrative substitute, and the speaker need not be able to replace the description with a 'more' genuine singular term (an indexical, a name, a pronoun) referring to Louis XVI for the description to fulfil and to be understood as fulfilling its referential role.²⁸⁴ Surely, with the passing of time and generations, or with increasing personal distance, demonstrative access to a certain person gradually turns into a faint idea, but descriptions, insofar as they are embedded within a reliable framework of reference and identification, are not gradually (suddenly?) transformed into quantifiers, with the corresponding sentences gradually (suddenly?) changing their logical form. Whether or not a description is the equivalent of some indexical or can be assimilated to one seems to be too much a function of the epistemic state of the individual speaker, while what we need is a more

²⁸² See Ramachandran/Rosental (2000), pp. 2f. for this. Reimer admits that such sentences, although failing to say anything, may 'communicate' singular propositions (Reimer (1998), p. 93, fn. 8). But what does 'communicate' mean here, if not 'implicate'? However, it seems that a sentence can only implicate something, if it also says something, since conversational implicature must be determinable from what is said plus circumstances. But on the Kaplanian picture (which Reimer accepts) a sentence that fails to express a proposition fails to say anything, is meaningless. Hence nothing can be implicated by such a sentence. The trouble arises probably because of mixing direct reference theory with Grice's analysis. (One can think of meaningless sentences managing to convey something, i.e. metaphorical ones. But it is not clear that this fits Grice's notion of implicature and anyway 'The house in front of me has five stories' said in the desert is not of this kind.)

²⁸³ To quote a random sentence in a history book, namely Thompson (1944), p. 38.

²⁸⁴ A related point is made in McCulloch (1989), p. 238.

general semantic theory which accounts for the fact that we also use descriptions to refer to entities we are neither perceptually, causally or otherwise acquainted with. To this end, we may need to distinguish between demonstrative uses of referring descriptions and purely descriptive ones ('attributive'-referential ones, as it were), but in that case the convention offered above is not exhaustive.²⁸⁵

(iii) Lastly, this account in effect eliminates referring descriptions by means of indexicals, since it must maintain that a referring description is just a rhetorical detour, being really substitutable with some indexical or indexicalised expression (e.g. 'that F ', ['the x : x is that F '], '[the x : $x = \text{that} \ \& \ Fx$]' or 'the F which is ϕ ')²⁸⁶ both in the semantic theory and in the actual application of the description. This is not only an incorrect assimilation of different categories of expressions.²⁸⁷ It would be, unfortunately, also fatal for our theory of *descriptive names*. For, ironically, this account would place referring descriptions into the category of *Russellian terms*. Given the crucial role descriptions play for the semantics of descriptive names, we would be forced to say either that we can coin descriptive names only for entities with which we are acquainted (for only for these are we able to formulate referring descriptions-cum-demonstratives), hence terms like 'Julius', whose canonical descriptions do not presuppose acquaintance with the referent, would fall out of the scheme, or we would have to say that even descriptions like 'the inventor of the zip' or 'the author of *Duino Elegies*' etc. contain hidden indexicals, hence 'Julius' is a Russellian name after all.²⁸⁸ The trouble with both these accounts is that the semantic

²⁸⁵ Sainsbury (2004) offers a more exhaustive account. See next section.

²⁸⁶ See Devitt (2004), p. 292. The third is Lepore/Ludwig's version (2000). It looks to me suspiciously similar to a demonstratively restricted *quantifier*, especially given that they analyse 'That F is G ' as '[the x : $x = \text{that} \ \& \ Fx$] (x is G)'. Should it not rather be ' $G(\text{the } x: x = \text{that} \ \& \ Fx)$ '? Finally, the fourth is taken from Grice (1981), pp. 276f., where ' ϕ ' is what Grice calls 'a sort of quasi-demonstrative', although his framework is a Russellian analysis.

²⁸⁷ See the linguistic data provided in King (2001), pp. 67-78, 133-139.

²⁸⁸ A third option: referential descriptions are tantamount to indexicals, but descriptive names are introduced only by quantificational descriptions. The problem with this account is that it leads us straight back to the problems of the previous chapter.

role of descriptive names would be reduced to that of some indexical expression. If we are to stay faithful to Evans's overall account of reference (as I tried), this would mean that, given his understanding of demonstratives descriptive names would have to be construed as Russellian terms. Respective axioms for 'Julius' qua descriptive-name-cum-indexical would fail to express anything in case there is no inventor of the zip, since the description would have to be substituted with its empty indexical counterpart and thus inherit its semantic value, namely none. Hence, the name would be deprived of its most distinguishable feature – its referent-independence. But it seems that names introduced by description that are semantically equivalent to some indexical are not only not clear examples of descriptive names, they are actually the most problematic cases for the theory of descriptive names. For consider a description 'the *F*' which is tantamount to 'that *F*'. We could replace the description by the indexical both in the D-type stipulation and respective axioms. Thus 'Let us call the man in front of me "Immanuel"' becomes "Let us call that man in front of me "Immanuel'". Same with the reference axiom: ' $\forall x$ ('Immanuel' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x$ is that man in front of me)'. If the Second Basic Idea (descriptive sense) is supposed to remain intact, then 'Immanuel' must receive its sense from the description-cum-indexical 'that man in front of me'.²⁸⁹ But this would be the sense of a (complex) indexical. It is not easy to see how 'Immanuel' could both have the sense of that indexical, e.g. be a shorthand for one, *and* be a name, not to mention a descriptive one.

In this section I attempted to raise some doubts about some well-known arguments in favour of Russellianism. In addition, I have considered one positive argument in favour of this thesis, namely the argument from standard use, although I have argued

²⁸⁹ And would the axiom be meaningful if there is no man in front of me when we introduce the name?

that the indexical theory (Wettstein) it is applied to is too narrow, especially for our purposes. All we need is a semantic convention which is general enough to encompass all varieties of referring descriptions. We have come across such a general proposal in 3.5, when we considered an axiom for referring descriptions in purely general terms. I will look now again at such an axiom.

5.3 Russellian truth-conditions?

This section reviews Sainsbury's account of referring descriptions based on conditions of reference. Its advantage, dispensing with an entity-based notion of semantic value, is highlighted. Some of its problems are also discussed, including the assimilation of reference to satisfaction and the ascription of Russellian truth-conditions.

I have mentioned in section 3.5 Sainsbury's proposal to treat names by means of reference conditions.²⁹⁰ Although it was viewed critically there, I wish to stress that if we manage to avoid Sainsbury's assimilation of reference to satisfaction, this proposal is still very promising, since it can be applied to definite descriptions and descriptive names as well. An additional advantage is that it stays in some respects fairly close to Evans's meaning theory, including its roots in Davidson and McDowell, and in its ascription of Russellian truth-conditions to sentences containing descriptive terms.

But there are also essential differences between Sainsbury and Evans. One is, as we will see below, that Sainsbury avoids an entity-based notion of semantic value, which caused us so much trouble in Chapter 3. Equally crucial, Sainsbury's denies that there are two distinct categories of names in natural language, namely Russellian and descriptive names (see Sainsbury (2005), section 3.3). Rather, there is only one natural category of names: names which are both non-Russellian and non-descriptive. Whether or not a name has a referent is not part of a semantic theory, hence axioms for Russellian names drop out. Axioms for names only formulate reference conditions, not name-object relations that actually obtain. These brings these axioms close to

²⁹⁰ Sainsbury (2002a), (2004), (2005), (2006). This proposal has its roots in Burge (1974). See also Dummett (1981b), p. 136, Williams (2005).

clauses for descriptive names such as (12), but not close enough, since for Sainsbury reference conditions are *non-descriptive* (Sainsbury (2005), pp. 42, 95). This does pose a threat to the Second Basic Idea and I shall come back to this.

We have seen already in section 3.5 how this general proposal works. It assumes axioms of the form ' $\forall x$ (" α " refers to x iff $x = \alpha$)', where ' $= \alpha$ ' is to be understood as a standalone predicate which in turn has satisfaction conditions. We could also write ' $\forall x$ (" α " refers to x iff x satisfies " $= \alpha$ ")', thus showing the reliance of axioms for names on special predicates. For Sainsbury this means that reference is hereby assimilated to satisfaction (Sainsbury (2002), p. 206). I will come back to this problematic claim. Nevertheless, most features of names accepted by the mainstream, e.g. their rigidity, remain in place with this account.

Within this background theory it is easy to add referential axioms for *definite descriptions*. Sainsbury gives actually two different kinds of such axioms, one for 'referential', the other for 'attributive' uses of referring descriptions (Sainsbury focuses on the latter). The former will capture those uses of referring descriptions which the supporters of the demonstrative proposal have in mind, while the latter does justice to uses of referring descriptions where the speaker intends to refer to the F , whether or not the F is demonstratively accessible. I will not go into details here, but it should be mentioned that with these two kinds of axioms we will be able to represent in the theory the distinction I drew in section 2.3 between descriptively introduced Russellian names and descriptive names.

In any case, an individual 'attributive' referring description is then captured by an axiom very similar to the one mentioned last:

(34) $\forall x$ ('the F ' refers to x iff x uniquely satisfies ' F ').²⁹¹

Or, if we prefer a general axiom for all definite descriptions, we would have

(17) $\forall \phi \forall x$ ('the' $\cap \phi$ refers to $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely satisfies ϕ),

which, as we have seen, is an axiom Evans himself considers for descriptions, and which he does not dismiss on formal (but only on simplicity) grounds (see also Sainsbury (2004), p. 371). Note that the fact that we can break down descriptions into non-referring expressions does not pose a handicap for Sainsbury. As they occur in natural language, descriptions do not form atomic, but simple sentences, sentences whose structure is given not by concatenations of singular terms with atomic predicates, but by the more liberal subject-predicate schema, which, for various reasons, must be assumed as more basic in natural language.²⁹² Within this framework descriptions are represented as subject terms with the above reference conditions.

Note that a T-sentence for a description sentence 'The F is G ' derivable from the axiom above and further relevant axioms specifies *Russellian truth-conditions* for the sentence (e.g. the sentence is false, if there is no unique F). A T-clause for such a S-P sentence looks, according to Sainsbury, like this: 'The F is G ' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ ('the' $\cap F$ refers to x & x satisfies ' G ').²⁹³ Surely, if the reference condition can be framed in

²⁹¹ See Sainsbury (2005), p. 176.

²⁹² See Sainsbury (2004), p. 373. Needless to say, this represents a substantial departure from traditional logic.

²⁹³ Sainsbury (2004), p. 374, Sainsbury (2005), pp. 46, 176. For another theorist who treats descriptions as referring expressions and assigns Russellian truth-conditions to description sentences, see Bostock

terms of satisfaction, then the right-hand side will only be true if there is an object which uniquely satisfies '*F*' and it also satisfies '*G*'. We have therefore: 'The *F* is *G*' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (*x* uniquely satisfies '*F*' & *x* satisfies '*G*'). If '*F*' fails to be satisfied uniquely by any object, then the right-hand side is false, and, given the equivalence, so is the left-hand side, which leads in Sainsbury's view straight to the falsehood (not just the lack of truth) of 'The *F* is *G*'. Since 'the *F*' is treated here as a referring expression, we are thus committed to negative free logic: no referring expression carries *de jure* existential commitment, since it can turn out to be empty, and if it is empty, then all simple sentences in which it occurs are false (see also 4.1 above).

Ultimately, in Sainsbury's view, we should not conflate the view that description sentences possess Russellian truth-conditions with the view that such sentences must receive a quantifier analysis (cf. Kripke's weak Russellian language). On the contrary, Sainsbury believes that we can even specify homophonic truth-conditions for sentences containing referring descriptions. We don't have to go into the details of this derivation (see Sainsbury (2004), pp. 371ff., (2005), section 5.2.2). Allowing descriptions to occur in the meta-language and adding further principles we have the following succession of T-clauses:

'The *F* is *G*' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ ('the *F*' refers to *x* & *x* satisfies '*G*')

'The *F* is *G*' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (*x* uniquely satisfies '*F*' & *x* satisfies '*G*')

('The *F* is *G*' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (*x* satisfies '= the *F*' & *x* satisfies '*G*')

(1997), pp. 375ff. Incidentally, Bostock considers descriptions to be complex names and to be, like names, scopeless. On this view there would be no need to ascribe scope to descriptive names either. I cannot discuss this here.

‘The F is G ’ is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x (x = \text{the satisfier of ‘}F\text{’} \ \& \ x \text{ satisfies ‘}G\text{’})$

(‘The F is G ’ is true $\leftrightarrow$ The satisfier of ‘ F ’ is G)

‘The F is G ’ is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x (x = \text{the } F \ \& \ x \text{ satisfies ‘}G\text{’})$

‘The F is G ’ is true $\leftrightarrow$ The F is G .

The last T-sentence is homophonic, but note that it is given via the detour of a proof. Also, given the second element of the derivation formulating satisfaction conditions for ‘the F ’, the former specifies Russellian truth-conditions on Sainsbury’s view (and the description has narrow scope). Note that we can also have homophonic reference theorems following the strategy, i.e. we could derive

(35) $\forall x (\text{‘the } F\text{’ refers to } x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the } F)$.²⁹⁴

I don’t want to give the impression that Sainsbury’s only arguments are about how to implement referential descriptions into a formal framework. He has additional, extra-theoretic arguments. Here is a particularly convincing passage, drawing on an argument similar to the one from standard use considered in 5.2, with the difference that referring descriptions are here not limited to demonstrative uses:

‘Definite descriptions seem similar to names: they are often or typically used to pick things out, and as focal points for the storage of information. There are domestic examples (‘the baby’), etiquette examples (‘The Chair will correct me if I am wrong, but . . .’), near-demonstrative examples (‘Now watch: the lioness will let the male feed first’; ‘Please pass

²⁹⁴ This is implicit in Sainsbury (2004), pp. 371, 374.

the screwdriver'), and cases in which a definite description appears to be flanking an expression for identity ('The first man in space was Gagarin'). In these cases, speakers would typically be as willing to use, rather than a definite description, an uncontroversial referring expression like a name or a demonstrative: they may be held back by etiquette ('the Chair'), or by ignorance of a suitable name or there simply not being one ('the lioness'). A definite description is a standard way of introducing a name, and although more complex accounts are possible, the simplest explanation is that the definite description refers to the referent of the name. A definite description can seem more natural than a demonstrative for a familiar object ('the baby': saying 'that baby' might suggest the baby in question was other than one's own; one imagines the participants to have been watching the referent of 'the lioness' for a while). Definite descriptions can answer 'Who?' questions just as names can, and like names they can appear on lists of objects'.²⁹⁵

In any case, if this proposal goes through, we may have a straightforward way of solving the problems encountered in Chapter 4. Thus, like Evans, we could stay within Davidsonian truth theory, accept negative free logic and scopes for descriptive names. Nevertheless, we could now formulate axioms for descriptive names which use definite descriptions as referring expressions, the sense of 'Julius' now being determined by another referring expression, not by a non-referring expression (a predicate or a quantified phrase). Thus the semantic role of 'Julius' will fall under the same semantic category as that of its canonical description. Seen from *this* angle there will be little temptation to treat descriptive names as non-referring expressions. This is even more so, given that Sainsbury rejects, like me, the notion of semantic value as something distinct from that of the referent. Let us look at this issue one more time.

²⁹⁵ Sainsbury (2005), p. 175. See also *ibid.*, section 5.2.3 for interesting arguments concerning the intentions involved in the use of referring descriptions.

Once again: eliminating semantic value

Sainsbury finds the notion of semantic value dubious, because it arises as part of a strategy to regard meanings as entities and thus to demand that some kind of entity is always assigned to an expression as its semantic value in order to guarantee its meaningfulness. This leads to the necessity of assigning an entity as semantic value even to an empty singular term. (Remember that Evans assigns an entity to empty ‘Julius’ – the empty set.) Let us call this the *relational approach*. Sainsbury contrasts this with his approach in which we only assign conditions to expressions, e.g. truth-conditions to sentences and reference conditions to singular terms. Let us call this the *conditional approach*. Sainsbury believes that we need to accept the conditional approach, which is part and parcel of Davidson’s truth theory, but reject the relational approach. He writes:

‘[...] many contemporary views which, influenced by model theory, seek to describe the meanings of words in terms of “semantic values”. Model theory was never originally designed to specify linguistic meaning (as opposed to formal logical relations), and the attempt to put it to work in semantics makes referring expressions which do not refer seem problematic. One may try to model such expressions by assigning them a “null entity” or a member of the “outer domain”, an assignment designed to mark the fact that the expression has no referent. If there is only one such value, there is no way to mark the semantic difference between “Vulcan” and “Zeus”. Having different null entities for different expressions brings into prominence the misconceived basis of the enterprise: one cannot sensibly represent failure of reference in terms of successful reference to some special kind of entity. [...] Roughly speaking, in model theory meanings are entities, whereas in truth theory they are conditions’ (Sainsbury (2005), p. 53).

A critic might wonder whether this really offers an alternative to Evans's account. After all, Evans endorses a Davidsonian theory as well, and he does not assign null entities or outer domain objects to empty singular terms either. The trouble is that Sainsbury does not mention all entity-based approaches there are. In particular, he does not mention the possibility of assigning sets as semantic values to referring expressions, which is Evans's preferred option for descriptive names (see 4.2 above). And this assignment is precisely one which can be seen as conditional. In fact, even in the case of sentences the assignment of truth-conditions does not exclude the assignment of entities qua semantic values – it only means that it is a *conditional* assignment of entities qua semantic values, not a relational one. It is true that a T-theorem does not fix the truth-value of a sentence, but only conditions for its truth. But the sentence's truth, or rather truth-value, *is* its semantic value and as such an entity for a Fregean like Evans. T-theorems do not exclude an entity-based reading of their role. They specify conditions on the assignment of an entity, the truth-value, as the semantic value of *S*.

Is this not the same with referring expressions? According to Sainsbury we should regard all axioms for referring expressions analogous to axioms of conditions of truth, namely as axioms of conditions of reference. Hence, from Evans's point of view we could view at least the axioms for descriptive names as assigning them entities qua semantic values, although again only *conditionally*. This is exactly what axiom (15) above does: it stipulates what semantic value is to be assigned to 'Julius' given the satisfaction of a certain condition. We don't assign a specific entity qua referent directly (relationally) to the name, as in "'Julius' refers to Julius', rather a condition for the assignment of an entity. So far, there seems to be no substantial difference between Evans and Sainsbury. *Both* accounts consist of conditional assignments of

entities, in other words they both are conditional and entity-based.

The crucial difference comes out when we consider *which* entities we assign conditionally and how exactly we do this. Sainsbury's account implies that if the reference condition is met, then the inventor of the zip is assigned as *the referent* of 'Julius', otherwise *nothing* (not: the empty set) is assigned as the referent of 'Julius'. Evans's account implies that if the condition is met, then the singleton of the inventor of the zip (the referent) is assigned as *the semantic value* of 'Julius', otherwise the empty set is assigned as the semantic value of 'Julius'. We see that the notion of semantic value is not mentioned in Sainsbury's account, whereas it is pivotal for Evans's. Sainsbury's official account is therefore entity-based only in a weaker sense: if the reference condition fails, no entity whatsoever is assigned to 'Julius' (see Sainsbury (2004), p. 371, fn. 1). Evans's account is entity-based in a stronger sense: 'Julius' is always guaranteed to be assigned an entity qua semantic value, namely a set.²⁹⁶ And it was this relational account which brought us into trouble in Chapter 3.

By contrast, Sainsbury does not face such trouble, at least not from the point of view of the theory itself. In his view we don't necessarily assign an entity to the name. The only thing we do assign, or rather associate with the name, is a condition. If this condition happens to be satisfied, then the name has an entity assigned to it (the referent, not the singleton of the referent). But if the condition fails to be satisfied, then no entity, nothing is assigned to the name. Note that this result is nothing that is suggested by substantial differences in the formalism (notwithstanding Sainsbury's endorsement of subject-predicate analysis). The referential axioms for descriptive

²⁹⁶ As we have already seen (3.2), this is just an aspect of interpretational semantics, which for Evans is ultimately unavoidable, since it is needed to show whether a certain Davidsonian truth theory is really interpretive. Sainsbury could probably answer that this is not the only criterion available for filtering out an interpretive truth theory.

names and definite descriptions Evans considers are very similar²⁹⁷ to Sainsbury's – they all formulate a reference condition. The difference is given by the overall philosophical interpretation of these axioms, by the fact that Evans superimposes onto the theory to which these axioms belong the requirement that some entity, at least qua semantic value, must be assigned to any referring expression to guarantee its meaningfulness. (This is why Evans's axioms actually need to be reformulated in such a way that they operate explicitly with the notion of semantic value, a move which led into difficulties.) But these axioms could also be read in a different way, more in line with their literal meaning, namely as saying that if the reference condition is satisfied, then 'the *F*' refers to some object, otherwise it does not refer. And there is no need to specify here that in this latter case the name still needs a semantic value assigned to it, since the axiom stays meaningful independently of that.

Sainsbury's account has the advantage that it does not actually assign a semantic value, but only a condition. This explains the name's referent-independent intelligibility very well. The name stays intelligible even if empty, since we can explain in an intelligible manner what would have to be the case for the name to have a referent.

In conclusion, Sainsbury departs from Evans in a crucial respect: he drops the notion of semantic value (a move I also suggested in 3.5). This makes him less prone to the charge that he is assimilating descriptive names to non-referring expressions, since there is no need to postulate semantic values for them which turn out to be categorially just those which we assign to incomplete expressions such as predicates and quantifiers (namely sets). This is why, if Sainsbury's account goes through, we

²⁹⁷ Evans's axiom (14) (VR, p. 53) is actually identical with Sainsbury's axiom (2) (Sainsbury (2004), p. 371).

may be able to solve the perplexities encountered in Chapter 3 and 4.

Clauses for descriptive names would be on this account of the following form:

(36) $\forall x$ ('*DN*' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the } F$).

And a clause for 'Julius' on this account would read

(37) $\forall x$ ('Julius' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the inventor of the zip}$).

To test the problematic case of reference failure: in that case ' $x = \text{the inventor of the zip}$ ' is false of every object, if there is no inventor of the zip, and that means in turn that 'Julius' does not refer to any object. We don't have any entity assigned to the name in that case, no referent, but no semantic value either (which is not even mentioned here). A set theoretic version of this axiom is thus not formulated, and the problem of sets qua semantic values does not bother us anymore.

Problems with Sainsbury's account

Some questions remain with this account as well. I mention three here: (i) non-descriptive sense, (ii) assimilation of reference to predication, (iii) Russellian truth-conditions.

(i) Sainsbury takes names in natural language to be neither Russellian nor descriptive.

Although such names have a sense, it is not descriptive. (I shall not discuss what this

sense might consist in).²⁹⁸ If this is meant as an exclusive claim about all names, it is a threat to the Second Basic Idea and thus to the notion of descriptive names. However, Sainsbury's claim can also be understood as an empirical claim about *most* names in natural language.²⁹⁹ This would be quite likely a true claim. And Sainsbury is also right to point out that in practice even terms introduced as descriptive names can have their semantical connection to the canonical description loosened, especially once new information becomes available about the name's purported bearer. Nevertheless, the possibility of artificially introducing pure descriptive names remains, and for these, as long as they stay one-criterion names, the Second Basic Idea remains valid: The sense of a descriptive name is that of a definite description. Put in Fregean terms: the sense of 'Julius' is: the actual inventor of the zip. Clauses for descriptive names will still specify descriptive sense, no matter whether clauses for other names do this or not.

There remains related problem. Contrary to Frege's and Evans's respective definitions of sense, sense can now not be described as the mode of presentation of the referent or semantic value respectively. It cannot be the referent, since there might be none. It cannot be the semantic value, since we got rid off this notion. As the mode of presentation of what else can sense then be described? Maybe the mode of presentation of the assignment of conditions for something being the referent (reference conditions)? I am not sure about this.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ See Sainsbury (2002), essays VII and XX, and Buckner (2003) for a brief discussion.

²⁹⁹ Sainsbury (2005a), p. 9 seems to go in this direction.

³⁰⁰ Not having a last answer on this question might not be that dramatic, if we assume, with Peter Ludlow, that truth-theories, by themselves, cannot actually display senses at all. The reason for this is, according to him, the fact that 'because one is using (e.g.) English on the right hand side of a T-sentence, then what is stated on the right hand side can be no more nor less than what is stated by that English expression. The question then becomes whether one states something different when one says "Cicero is bald" vs. when one says "Tully is bald". The answer to this question is entwined with our intuitions about "what is said." And these intuitions are in both scientific and ordinary discourse indiscriminate enough to make both sentences express exactly the same thing. Thus 'the problems stems from the fact that natural language is used to state the truth-conditions, and thus that the T-theory can "display" no more than what is said by the natural language expression used to give the truth-conditions.' (Ludlow (1993), [10], [13]. This is a critical point about the truth theory, not about the

(ii) As to the assimilation of reference to satisfaction, I have already criticised this in section 3.5 above.³⁰¹ If reference conditions just *are* satisfaction conditions, then any term that has satisfaction conditions, including definite descriptions (and for Sainsbury names!) is not much more than a predicate. We don't have to accept Evans's own very narrow characterisation of referring expressions as expressions the semantic role of which can be expressed using no other semantical relation than that of reference.³⁰² But Sainsbury's other extreme is not helpful either. Indeed, this would threaten Sainsbury's own rejection of an entity-based notion of semantic value. For if referring expressions are predicates, we could, even if rejecting model-theory, follow Frege's proposal and understand the semantic value (*Bedeutung*) of a predicate as a concept, itself a kind of entity. Thus even Sainsbury's conditional account of reference would end up being both strongly relational and non-referential, if we allow for reference to be assimilated to satisfaction.

But reference conditions are not satisfaction conditions. They may *include* satisfaction conditions. In a clause of the form ' $\forall x$ (" α " refers to x iff x satisfies C)' the reference relation is in no way assimilated to the satisfaction condition. Given the meaning of ' $\dots$ refers to $\dots$ ' (an explicit definition of which it is difficult to give), the syntax of ' α ' will be that of a singular term, whether or not we have satisfaction on the right hand side. Descriptions are, like other referring expressions, semantically irreducible to predicates (of special predicates in the case of names)³⁰³.

claim that expressions don't have senses.

³⁰¹ For further criticism see Buckner (2003). Buckner denies that there can be satisfaction conditions for referring expressions. Although I agree with this as far as names are concerned, it is difficult to see how reference conditions for descriptive terms will not include satisfaction conditions.

³⁰² See footnote 10 above.

³⁰³ We thus get rid off the problems relating to predicates such as ' $= \alpha$ '. See fns. 123, 128 above.

(iii) Many theorists will find the assignment of Russellian truth-conditions to description sentences (even when the descriptions are understood as singular terms) preferable over other alternatives, especially ones allowing for truth-value gaps. For it is difficult to design a logic accounting for the latter. But what is Sainsbury's justification for this assignment? There are two places to look for his justification: (a) One is where he justifies the adoption of negative and the rejection of 'Fregean' free logic; (b) the other is where he says that an axiom such as (34), together with appropriate principles, will yield Russellian truth-conditions.³⁰⁴

(a) 'Fregean' free logic is rejected for several reasons. One reason (a defeasible one, as Sainsbury himself says) is because we can construct an operator 'Neg' ('it is not true that') such that 'Neg (a is F)', where ' a ' is empty will come out as true, not as truth-valueless, thus disproving that all (non-intensional) contexts containing empty singular terms must be without truth-value. But 'Fregean' free logic does not have to be that strict. The thesis about truth-valuelessness concerns primarily atomic predication. How one is supposed to deal with other contexts must be figured out in detail, especially if we are introducing special operators. And 'Neg' is certainly not an ordinary one. It does not actually just mean 'it is not true that' and it does not combine with the ordinary ' $\neg$ ' in the usual way. For if it did, 'Neg ($\neg(a$ is $F)$)' would come out as truth-valueless, whereas really it comes out as true as well. 'Neg' really means 'it is untrue', thus actually belonging precisely to the kind of operators 'Fregean' free logicians allow for (see 5.5 below). Sainsbury also points out that in our actual practice of both discovering and proving truths we sometimes rely on hypotheses at the beginning of an investigation which at its end must be rejected. The most natural thing is to say these hypotheses are false and their negations true, which again is not

³⁰⁴ See Sainsbury (2005) section 2.3 and p. 176 respectively.

possible for a Fregean, since he must consider both as without truth-value. But this is not so. The main role of these hypotheses is preserved if they are reformulated as existential statements ('There is a greatest prime number and it is either even or odd', 'There is a planet causing the perturbations in the perihelion of Mercury and it is at least a 1000 miles in diameter')³⁰⁵ and even a 'Fregean' free logic must make room for false existence affirmations and true existence denials (at least the one I sympathise with; see section 5.5 below). How exactly this must be done, is to be figured out, but existential statements are not an insurmountable problem, judging by the number of detailed frameworks available in the marketplace. In any case, Sainsbury does not give a knock-down argument against the possibility of non-negative free logics. His main point seems rather to be a pragmatic one, based on considerations of simplicity and fruitfulness: negative free logic 'is best suited for natural language semantics' and 'it is to be judged in the end by its fruits' (Sainsbury (2005), pp. 66, 69).

(b) But what does it then mean to say that an axiom like

(34) $\forall x$ ('the F ' refers to x iff x uniquely satisfies ' F ').

yields Russellian truth-conditions? If there is nothing that uniquely satisfies ' F ', then nothing is assigned to 'the F ', since we do 'not assign values to empty referring expressions' (Sainsbury (2004), 371, fn. 1). But it may seem puzzling how Sainsbury can have it both ways: assign no truth-conditionally relevant values, but still avoid truth-value gaps. If truth-functionality is assumed, how can a sentence have a value, if one of its parts does not? Why is 'Julius = Julius' clearly false, as is 'Julius is rich',

³⁰⁵ If their role does not consist in making existential claims, i.e. they are not refuted because something is proven to not exist, then they don't pose any problem for the Fregean.

for empty 'Julius'? The theorem

'The F is G ' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x (x \text{ uniquely satisfies '}'F\text{' } \& x \text{ satisfies '}'G\text{'})$

is, by itself, also compatible with an assignment of non-Russellian truth-conditions. If there is no unique F , then the right hand side is false, but so is the left hand side, since it is still false that 'The F is G ' is true (if S is untrue, it is false that it is true). I see only two possible answers for the Russellian: (a) we *stipulate* that 'The F is G ' must come out as true or false; (b) we take the right-hand side to specify ('show') the sense or thought expressed by the description sentence. (a) is problematic, since our goal is to give an adequate account of natural language, not some other, idealised language. But I do understand the appeal of simplicity such a stipulation offers. (b) brings us back to greater difficulties, since Russell's analysis of descriptions proves now to be not only relevant to truth-conditions, but also very much to the sense/content of description sentences. The homophony established above would thus prove to be pretty illusory, a mere abbreviational detour from an interpretation of description sentences as expressing quantified statements. But would this differ so much from Russell's own theory? He too does not assign any semantic value ('denotation') to descriptions, indeed this the entire point of his theory, but still allows in his surface syntax for a singular term notation of descriptions, provided the truth-conditions *and* the content of description sentences are underwritten by his analysis. In this case there would be no need for a (negative) free logic for referring descriptions, for there would be no such expressions (see section 4.1 above).

This is certainly not the last word on Sainsbury's account, for which I have a lot of sympathy and which I find very illuminating. The least one ought to take over from

his account is the idea that the most a semantic theory can do is to specify reference conditions for singular terms. But I do think that we will fare better if we reject Sainsbury's extra-theoretical assimilation of reference to satisfaction³⁰⁶ and the ascription of Russellian truth-conditions.³⁰⁷ These changes would not affect much of the formalism in his account.³⁰⁸

However, we have now a new problem, if we follow Frege's understanding of reference failure in natural language: *truth-value gaps*. 'Julius is filthy rich' would not be false on this reading, if the name fails to refer. Worse, how are we to read a clause like (37) in the case of reference failure? It does not seem to be true in that case, for it contains an empty referring description. Before coming back to this issue in 5.5 below, I will first discuss the general framework of a Fregean-Strawsonian semantics and some general problems with it.

³⁰⁶ Another solution is to take definite descriptions as primitive and have infinitely many reference axioms for them, with no satisfaction conditions occurring in them at all. This is less promising.

³⁰⁷ See Szabo (2000), (2005) for a very different argument against assigning Russellian truth-conditions to description sentences.

³⁰⁸ If we only rid ourselves off 'Fregean' predicates like ' $= \alpha$ ', as Dr Stephen Williams suggested to me in conversation. See section 3.5 above.

5.4 A presuppositionalist account of referring descriptions

In this section I discuss a presuppositionalist account of definite descriptions and some of its well-known problems. I first discuss Strawson's own solution to some of these problems, then review two major objections, one from the phenomenon of metalinguistic negation, the other from recalcitrant truth-value intuitions, and end up with defending a broadly Strawsonian account of referring descriptions.

The demonstrative-based and the Sainsburian accounts are not the only ones available for referring descriptions. An older and more influential one is of course Peter Strawson's.³⁰⁹ In general it has been met with opposition. Here is a rough summary of Strawson's theory:

(i) Definite descriptions are, in one of their main uses, singular terms. Such a use is typically exemplified by sentences of the form 'The F is G ', but not only by these. (Let us refer to such description sentences as P).

(ii) P neither expresses nor entails an existential claim about the F . P does not say that there is a unique F . Rather, such an existential claim, Q , is presupposed by P .³¹⁰

(iii) P presupposes Q iff the truth of Q is a necessary condition for the truth or falsity

³⁰⁹ See Strawson (1950), (1952), (1954), (1971).

³¹⁰ Hence, not implicated. Of course, this has been challenged by Grice himself, among others. But see for instance Burton-Roberts (1999) for a recent Strawsonian reply. He writes: '[...] an analysis in terms of conversational implicature just seems misguided. While not themselves 'said', it is typical of conversational implicatures to be generally closer to the communicative point of an utterance than what is actually 'said'. But exactly the opposite is true of presuppositions. That there is a French king could hardly be further removed from the communicative point of (the usual P-preserving understanding of) an utterance of *The king of France is not bald*' (Burton-Roberts (1999), pp. 357f.).

of P .³¹¹ If Q is true, then P has a truth-value, but if Q is false, P does not have a truth-value. Description sentences manifest truth-value gaps in cases of reference failure.

(iv) P is meaningful independently of whether it has or does not have a truth-value, i.e. whether Q is true. Meaning is a property of sentences and utterances, truth only of utterances. A declarative sentence is meaningful if it *could* be used to say something true or false, but not only if it says something true or false.

There are further implications of Strawson's theory, but I shall leave them out here.

There are several problems with this account. The most important relate to the notions of presupposition and truth-value gap. One challenge is to formulate a formal logic for a language with truth-value gaps (if such a logic is at all possible, which Strawson denied). Another major problem relates to apparent counterexamples to the presuppositional analysis. I shall look at the second problem in this section.

Problems for truth-value gaps and Strawson's solutions

If the theory is correct, 'The wife of Benedict XVI is bald' has no truth-value, given that there is no such woman. The same holds for the negation of the sentence, which on Strawson's monogist reading of negation is always descriptive negation (as opposed to other varieties of negation, such as metalinguistic negation).³¹² Both sentences presuppose that there is such a woman, and since this presupposition is false, the sentences lack a truth-value. But consider the following sentences:

³¹¹ Strawson (1952), p. 175. Further definitions in terms of semantic entailment or necessitation were proposed in Smiley (1960) and van Fraassen (1968).

³¹² I am following here Horn's terminology; see Horn (2001), e.g. p. 425.

(i) The wife of Benedict XVI just made me the Vice-Chancellor.

(ii) Yesterday I visited the wife of Benedict XVI.

(iii) What bald female celebrities are there? The wife of Benedict XVI is bald.

(iv) The wife of Benedict XVI is not bald – (for) there isn't any such woman!

Concerning (i), anybody who will realise how obvious a lie my statement is, will be perfectly entitled to exclaim 'That's false!', thus assigning a truth-value to my statement, although the description in subject position is empty.

(ii), again, seems clearly false, hence it has a truth-value, although the description is empty. In addition, if we bring the sentence into the passive form, the sentence now lacks a truth-value ('The wife of Benedict XVI was visited by me yesterday'). This is implausible, given the usual truth-value preserving character of active-passive transformations.

As to (iii), we have a question an answer to which will be, if relevant, either right or wrong. One possible wrong, indeed false, answer is 'The wife of Tony Blair is bald'. But another possible, but also wrong answer is 'The wife of Benedict XVI is bald' (Strawson (1964), p. 91f.). Why not see both cases as instances of the same kind of falsity? There is as much a wife of Tony Blair belonging to the class of bald celebrities as there is a wife of Benedict XVI belonging to the same class – namely none.

In context (iv) the first sentence is true, not neither true nor false, and the justification is given by the subsequent sentence. Hence, the sentence has a truth-value and the existential presupposition is cancelled, which is a good reason to think it is

actually a conversational implicature.³¹³

These contexts are, as far as I can see, some of the best known troublemakers for the presuppositional analysis. Strawson is not unaware of them, especially the first three ones, which he himself brought onto the table.³¹⁴ Neither are his defenders, who have offered promising arguments and sophisticated theoretical frameworks to cope with these contexts.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, many theorists have come to think that none or not all of these contexts can be accommodated by Strawson's theory. The accepted view, at least among the philosophical community, is to dismiss presupposition as a semantic notion and explain it instead as a pragmatic phenomenon described in terms of how sentences are used, what commitments individual speakers make when they utter them etc.³¹⁶ But I think this view is questionable.

Of course, at this stage I cannot engage in a full examination of the issue. All I can do here is to at least offer some arguments in favour of the plausibility of the presuppositional analysis, thus suggesting that it is still a serious theoretical option. So let us now see how a Strawsonian can accommodate the aforementioned contexts.

A plausible answer to the problem posed by (i) was given by Strawson himself and I only mention it briefly. It may be perfectly natural to describe (i) as false, but it may also be misleading. 'That's false!' has here an illocutionary aspect, as it is meant as an

³¹³ This argument was initially advanced by Grice (see Grice (1981), pp. 270f.).

³¹⁴ See especially Strawson (1954) and (1964).

³¹⁵ E.g. Smiley (1960), van Fraassen (1968), Kempson (1975), Fodor (1979), Martin (1979), Dahl (1981), Burton-Roberts (1987), Ramachandran (1993), von Stechow (2004), Atlas (2004).

³¹⁶ See e.g. Stalnaker (1974), (1978), Karttunen (1974). The question is though: is all presupposition really pragmatic or is there also pragmatic presupposition, in addition to semantic presupposition, as Stalnaker himself had argued in his earliest paper on this topic (see Stalnaker (1970), p. 38)? I favour the latter view, since what we are dealing here with is a conceptual distinction (see Strawson (1954), p. 216ff., Moltmann (2005)). At least in linguistics semantic presupposition does not seem to be treated as a non-notion. See van der Sandt (1988) or Burton-Roberts (1989) for rigorous treatments of this notion.

accusation of lying, as not telling the truth. This is particularly obvious if we see the rejection as focusing on the fact that *I* am obviously not the Vice-Chancellor – whether or not the Pope has a wife (I will come back to this aspect later). But equally, even if I were the Vice-Chancellor, I would not be telling the truth with that utterance, and this is what ‘That’s false!’ would highlight. So the statement is false in this sense, but not in the sense in which we would infer from ‘It is false that *a* is *F*’ ‘*a* is not *F*’, the latter two sentences carrying an existence presupposition.³¹⁷

Strawson has also pointed out an answer to (ii): the topic or focus of the sentence is not what the supposed wife of Benedict XVI did or is like, rather what I did. The sentence is then to be analysed as consisting of the subject term ‘I’ and the predicate ‘visited the wife of Benedict XVI’ (Strawson (1964), pp. 89ff.). The definite description turns out to be unproblematic in this case, since it is part of the complex predicate. We have come across similar complex predicates containing referring expressions in section 3.5. They do presuppose the intelligibility of the embedded referring expression, but since this is guaranteed by Strawson’s theory in the case of descriptions, we have a clear sense in which I can fail to satisfy the predicate, which makes the sentence false. This seems to violate the preservation of truth-values by active-passive transformations, since the passive form of (ii) should be without truth-value. But note that such transformations only preserve the truth-value if the subject or topic is preserved. For if the latter is not preserved, we contrast different sentences. Thus, a topic-preserving active-passive transformation also preserves the truth-value (or lack thereof). For instance, we can take (ii) to be an answer to the question ‘Was the wife of Benedict XVI really meeting with the Vice-Chancellor?’, to which an appropriate answer could be ‘([No,] Yesterday I visited the wife of Benedict XVI’ and

³¹⁷ Cf. Strawson (1954), pp. 225-7. I am combining here Strawson’s arguments (A1) and (A2).

‘[No,] Yesterday the wife of Benedict XVI was visited by me’, both sentences thus being false, since in each the first person pronoun is forming the subject term and the description is constituting the complex predicate. But taken as an answer to ‘Whom did you see yesterday?’, the sentences receive a different focus and thus analysis: ‘Yesterday I visited the wife of Benedict XVI’, but also ‘Yesterday the wife of Benedict XVI was visited by me’. Here the description forms the subject terms and both sentences fail to have a truth-value. Active-passive transformation does preserve a sentence’s truth-value or lack thereof, *if* we have settled the analysis of the sentence prior to that. And that analysis is rarely to be achieved by looking at individual sentences ripped out of potential contexts of use.³¹⁸

This relates to the problem with (iii) as well, which was pointed out by Strawson himself in the same context (Strawson (1964), pp. 91f.). In (iii) the topic is not an individual, but a certain class. This can be seen best from Strawson’s own recipe for figuring out whether a sentence has a truth-value gap by determining its topic (see Strawson (1964), p. 94). We determine the topic by means of an interrogative pronoun plus the appropriate phrase. Here we can describe the second sentence in (iii) as asserting *which* individual belongs to the set of bald female celebrities (as opposed to what the wife of Benedict XVI does/is like), i.e. we take the sentence to be an answer to the question ‘Which individual...?’, rather than ‘What does the wife...?’. Since the empty definite description does not survive in this which-clause, we don’t have a case of a truth-value gap. The declarative sentence in (iii) is judged as false. Seen from a different point of view: The sentence asserts that an individual with certain properties, the supposed wife of Benedict XVI, is a member of the set in question. But since there

³¹⁸ This is why it is maybe indeed correct to claim, as several theorists (e.g. Carlson, Levinson, Atlas) have proposed more recently, that truth-conditional content cannot be seen as detached from pragmatic ‘enrichment’.

is no such individual, it is false that such an individual belongs to that set.

Note that Strawson's solution to these cases brings a certain liberation from his earlier view, as expressed in "On Referring". There he maintained that any description sentence carries an existential presupposition (although there is some qualification even there, since he omits special uses of such sentences, e.g. in fictional contexts), while later he admitted that descriptions carry the presupposition only in certain contexts, while in others a Russellian or some other kind of analysis may be more pertinent.³¹⁹ And a hard core of cases, of primary uses of referential descriptions underwritten by 'a strong tendency' in our language surely does exist to which his modified theory of presupposition applies, but it would be a mistake to canonise this tendency into rigid rules, as he himself did in his earlier work (Strawson (1954), p. 228ff.). We can give 'the standard and customary logic of these [expressions]' (Strawson (1954), p. 229), but not *the* logic.

The trouble with this position is that while it may stay faithful to the immediate complexity of natural language, it is hardly a position from which we could set off to formulate a rigorous semantic theory of this language.³²⁰ A theory of descriptive names such as Evans's, whose most basic principles I have not questioned here, would seem illusory from this point of view.

Metalinguistic negation

³¹⁹ Few theorists have noticed this change of attitude in Strawson. See Horn (2001), pp. 131f.

³²⁰ Note that Strawson would not see this as a refutation, but merely as a reformulation of his own conclusion, namely that 'ordinary language has no exact logic' (Strawson (1950), p. 27). However, this does not imply that ordinary language has no logic at all, only that it cannot be formalised without normative regimentation.

Small wonder then that even among Strawson's defenders few have accepted his general attitude.³²¹ And even if we accept the way he defends his initial theory against (ii) and (iii), namely by restricting descriptions to carry a presupposition only in sentences in which they figure as the topic, we still have to deal with (iv), which poses a problem even for this restricted range of sentences, indeed even for standard description sentences like 'The wife of Benedict XVI is bald'. Laurence Horn, for instance, has argued that even if we manage to cope with the previous counterexamples, context (iv) is a decisive case against Strawson's analysis. For this analysis is monoguit: it allows for only one kind of negation, namely internal (or descriptive) negation. But if in the following context (to be read as one unit of discourse)

(38)

(a) The wife of Benedict XVI is bald.

(b) The wife of Benedict XVI is not bald.

(c) There isn't any such woman!,

(b) contains an internal negation, then given (b)'s truth, the definite description should trigger an existential presupposition. But that clashes with (c), and we would have, paradoxically, a straightforward contradiction. Given that this is of course not the case, we must conclude that the definite description does not carry a presupposition, or rather that its presupposition is cancelled. And by what if not the 'not'? Hence, we have here a different kind of negation, an 'external' one. There are at least two ways to model this negation. (i) One is Russell's wide scope negation. Here 'not' in 'not bald' only appears to be internal, but really it functions as an external operator on the

³²¹ Notable exceptions are e.g. Jay Atlas (in many of his writings), Rescher (1969), insisting on a very generous principle of tolerance of countless many logics for our language, and Ramachandran (1995).

entire sentence (even though it may be difficult to ‘hear’ the external reading). This elegantly solves the problem and it is the favoured view of many contemporary theorists, dismissing the notion of semantic presupposition altogether and reinstalling the existential statement as a part of the principal sentence. But this comes at the high price of artificiality. Moreover, it is clear that Russell’s theory implies a semantic distinction between two kinds of negation, with ordinary ‘not’ being lexically ambiguous³²². Departing from certain influential linguistic studies³²³, Horn argues against such a view primarily on the ground of the exceptional difficulty of proving such ambiguity in natural language (not in its formalised version!). This difficulty arises through the fact that it just does not seem to be the case that ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is not bald’ is really semantically ambiguous. Thus it does not seem that the periphrastic construction ‘It is not the case that the wife of Benedict XVI is bald’ really disambiguates the previous sentence.³²⁴ In addition, no natural language seems to possess negation signs corresponding to this distinction, even though many languages do have two or even more varieties of negation (Horn (2001), p. 366). (ii) Horn’s conclusion is therefore a radically different one: we need to admit for a further kind of negation, namely metalinguistic (or marked) negation, for which there *is* empirical support (even though, again, no known language has an explicit sign for it). Horn defines metalinguistic negation as ‘a device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatsoever, including the conventional or conversational implicata it potentially induces, its morphology, its style or register, or its phonetic realization.’³²⁵ Note that according to this the fuller context of (iv) must include a previous utterance of ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is bald’ (which is not a requirement for the application

³²² Horn actually distinguishes between two kinds of semantic ambiguity: lexical and scopal ambiguity (see Horn (2001), p. 364).

³²³ See Atlas (1975), Kempson (1975), Gazdar (1979), Horn (2001), section 6.1.

³²⁴ Cf. Horn (2001), p. 365f. See also Atlas (2005), p. 131.

³²⁵ Horn (2001), p. 363. This definition is slightly too general, since, as others have noticed, descriptive negation would then just be a special case of metalinguistic negation!

of ‘ $\neg$ ’ in standard logic). Such a negation is, contrary to descriptive negation, *non-truth-functional*; it does not invert the truth-value of the sentence it attaches to or the atomic sentence whose predicate it attaches to. This is explained by its very nature: while what falls under the scope of ‘ $\neg$ ’ is what is said by a sentence (its proposition), metalinguistic negation rejects the sentence itself (or its utterance) and amounts to ‘I object to *P*’, ‘I reject *P*’.³²⁶ As Carston summarises it: ‘The material falling in the scope of the “not” is mentioned (metarepresented, quoted, echoic) rather than used ’ (Carston (1994), p. 4). Take the following example:

(39)

(a) Joey ate three geese for lunch.

(b) Joey did not eat three geeses for lunch.

(c) He ate three geese.³²⁷

Clearly, the ‘not’ here does not signify that the first sentence is false and the second true, rather that the first sentence is inappropriate and that *it* needs to be rejected, not its truth-value. Since this negation is not truth-functional, it cannot be assimilated to Russellian wide scope negation (as opposed to narrow scope negation) and thus be seen as proving the semantic ambiguity of negation. Rather, negation is ‘pragmatically’ ambiguous. We use it to do two different things with it: stating that what was said is false or rejecting some property of what was uttered. Metalinguistic use is thus a kind of use of ‘not’ that apparently contradicts what Strawson’s theory predicts: that the description in (38) should carry a presupposition and be truth-

³²⁶ Horn (2001), p. 377. But even this criterion can be loosened. To cite an example by Abbott, which is reminiscent of a famous gesture Pierro Sraffa once made in objection to Wittgenstein’s definition of logical form: A piano student plays a Beethoven passage in a certain manner *X*. The teacher says ‘No, it’s not [plays passage in manner *X*], it’s [plays passage in manner *Y*]’ (see Horn (2001), p. 563, fn.14.).

³²⁷ Another example: ‘I am not happy – I am ecstatic!’. Or a morally not so innocent example: ‘They weren’t people, Sir, they were the enemy’ (Lt. William Calley about the My Lai massacre in Vietnam).

valueless.

But is this really such a threat to Strawson? Not necessarily.

(i) First of all, it should be mentioned that, for all its plausibility, Horn's metalinguistic negation is certainly not undisputed. The basic unclarity here relates to his claims that negation is not semantically ambiguous *and* that meta-linguistic negation is not reducible to truth-functional negation. But accepting the latter means that we *do* have *two* kinds of negation, not just two uses of the same kind of negation: truth-functional descriptive negation and non-truth-functional meta-linguistic negation. This is problematic by Horn's own standards – he can't have it both ways.³²⁸ So far there is little agreement on what Horn means by 'pragmatic ambiguity', or as he calls the 'built-in duality of use'.

(ii) Second, if (39) is a typical example for metalinguistic negation and as such extendable to description sentences, then accepting it is no immediate evidence against truth-value gaps. For consider (39b): is it true? No (either on the grounds that it is not grammatical or that what the speaker is trying to say by 'Joey ate three geese for lunch' is true). Is it false? Again no, since what would then be the point of uttering it? We are not rejecting (39a) by uttering a false statement, (39b). So it looks as if we cannot say whether it is true or false. But this is not a disadvantage, rather precisely the point of (39b): not to make a true or false statement, but to reject a previous one on other grounds. 'Not' signifies here that we are making a move at a different, the metalinguistic level, which we arrive at via 'double processing', based on the

³²⁸ See on this van der Sandt (1991) and Carston (1994), who deny that negation is ambiguous in any way. Carston mentions another problematic (semantic?) ambiguity, which 'lies with the nature of the material falling in the scope of the negation, whether it is a proposition or an utterance' (ibid., p. 4). See on this issue also Burton-Roberts (1989a), Foolen (1991).

realisation that we cannot take the sentence at face-value, as a sentence with standard truth-conditions.³²⁹ And this is compatible with a ‘gapist’ treatment of the description sentence (38b). If we understand metalinguistic negation as a special linguistic move very different from that of asserting the falsehood of the principal sentence (38a), then metalinguistic negation does not refute truth-value gaps. All ‘not’ does in such contexts is to indicate that we need to read the embedding sentence ((38a), (39a)) in a different way, a way which is determined only within *the entire context* and it is within this context that the sentence must receive its analysis.³³⁰ Therefore, the presuppositional account is not really affected by the possibility of contexts like (38), indeed even *if* we allow for a ‘non-gapist’ reading of (38b) in the context of (38). A sentence like (38b), *standing by itself*, receives a different, the presuppositional, analysis, than when it is embedded within (38).

(iii) But now comes my third, and most important, point: If ‘not’ is a metalinguistic marker only in *such*, i.e. specific contexts, which are not comparable to standard description sentences, what makes these contexts so special? Well, what makes them so special is the *justification* of the metalinguistic rejection. And these justifications, I claim, must rely ultimately on ordinary, descriptive negation! This is not directly obvious from (39), even with the right intonation on ‘geese’, but it can be made obvious. For (39), as it stands, is fully transparent only to somebody who understands or realises that ‘gooses’ is *not* the plural form of ‘goose’. Hence a fully transparent way to put it is to say: ‘Gooses’ is *not* the plural of ‘goose’. This is the actual justification and here we do have ‘not’ occurring again. But although it negates

³²⁹ ‘[...] the descriptive use of negation is primary; the non-logical metalinguistic understanding is typically available only on a “second pass”, when the descriptive reading self-destructs’ (Horn (2001), p. 444). It self-destructs in (38) because on the descriptive reading the description triggers a presupposition, which is then in contradiction with the next sentence, (38c). Double-processing is entirely compatible with the presuppositionalist account. See also Burton-Roberts (1999), p. 349f. on this.

³³⁰ After all, this is why we have double-processing. Remember that metalinguistic ‘not’ does not possess its own sign or synonyms. How else could its function be determined, if not from the wider context?

a predicate that applies to expressions, there is nothing special about this ‘not’, nothing that is not reducible to the ordinary ‘not’. It *is* the ordinary ‘not’. This does not make Horn’s metalinguistic negation superfluous, as the latter does have its good pragmatic and rhetoric purposes. But it makes it eliminable. For instead of correcting the mistaken statement by uttering (39b) together with (39c), we could simply say: ‘The plural of “goose” is *not* “gooses”’. Since what falls under the scope of this ‘not’ is still a mentioned expression, we can call this negation meta-linguistic as well. But the crux is that this ‘not’ must be described as *descriptive* meta-linguistic negation. Justifications of metalinguistic negation, at least in these contexts, are based on genuine falsities.

What follows from this for our analysis of descriptions? It simply follows that, *pace* Horn, Strawson can handle contexts like (38). We have only one kind of negation, semantically speaking, but it can be put to various uses. We can, if we want, call *this* ‘pragmatic ambiguity’. In a standard context, e.g. ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is not bald’, the description will carry an existence presupposition and ‘not’ has its ordinary reading. After all, if context (38) consisted only of the first two sentences, there would be no grounds whatsoever to judge this as a special kind or use of negation. ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is not bald’ would be simply a descriptive negation of ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is bald’, thus denying baldness of some woman, not denying the existence of some woman (the presupposition). By contrast, in our actual context (38), the sense of ‘not’ in (38b) is determined by the extended context, i.e. the justification, (38c). And the justification is a straight denial of the presupposition, which constitutes the special use of ‘not’ in (38b) as presupposition-cancelling. That there must be a systematic connection³³¹ between (38b) and (38c) can be seen from the fact that if

³³¹ In Atlas (2005), p. 137 this systematic connection is described as ‘context-relative entailment’,

these two sentences were simply independent sentences, we could generate a plain contradiction from them on the presuppositionalist (but even the Russellian) reading. But we can't, since the 'not' in (38b) is used in a different way as it would be without (38c).³³² Nevertheless, this still does not mean that the special use of 'not' here is in any way irreducible, *sui generis* metalinguistic. The case is actually more transparent with description sentences, since unlike in (39c) we have in (38c) a 'not' that does not even apply to an expression, but a negation that is a denial of existence.³³³ ³³⁴ And as with context (39), the sentence containing the metalinguistic negation can be scrapped, by directly proceeding to (38c) or to a metalinguistic, but descriptive version, e.g. "The wife of Benedict XVI" does not have a referent', both cases containing instances of ordinary, descriptive negation and serving as rejections of (38a) just as much as the replaced context.³³⁵ ³³⁶

which is neither implicature nor presupposition in Atlas' view. But the entailment cannot be entirely context-relative, since the whole process of presupposition-triggering and presupposition-cancellation is generated from the context plus the stable semantic features of the definite description and 'not', as I show.

³³² In a sense, the use of 'not' in (38b) is therefore *cataphoric* (cataphora are forward-looking anaphora). This remark is related to Horn's remarks about double-processing and the non-truth-functionality of metalinguistic 'not'. The truth of '(38b) & (38c)' cannot be computed from the truth of the component sentences. Rather, (38b) must be taken together with (38c) to be assigned a truth-value at all.

All this is in accordance with a detailed theory developed in van der Sandt/Maier (2003), a paper I discovered after writing the above remarks. This paper uses discourse representation theory (DRT) and is reaching more general conclusions, but some of the basic convictions are the same. See *ibid.*, especially sections 2.4, 3.4.

³³³ And nobody would claim that we have in 'The *F* is not *G*' and in 'There is no *F*' different negations.

³³⁴ Do we need then at all to claim that we are dealing with metalinguistic negation in cases of presupposition cancellation like (38)? We could gloss the justification using a metalinguistic negation sign, but this is not needed. Unlike (39a) there is nothing grammatically wrong with (38b) qua sentence even if the description is empty. If metalinguistic negation is meant to reject grammatical malformation (and this is what Horn's paradigm examples suggest), then we should feel more squeamish about treating existential presupposition cancellation in the same way.

³³⁵ This applies to names as well. Frege was right to point out that the negation of 'Kepler died in misery' is simply 'Kepler did not die in misery', not 'Kepler did not die in misery or the name 'Kepler' does not have a referent' (Frege (1892a), p. 154). To make the latter, metalinguistic negation, we need a different context, e.g. 'Kepler died in misery. – No, Kepler did not die in misery, for 'Kepler' has no referent.'

³³⁶ All this is not to say that there may be no *sui generis* metalinguistic negation at all. If Wittgenstein's analysis of sentences like 'Something cannot be red and green all over' is correct, then this negation is not reducible to descriptive (bipolar) negation. Nor are in general statements of category mistakes. In fact, Horn himself counts such statements as instances of metalinguistic negation. See Horn (2001), pp. 489, 509f.

The conclusion is that Strawson can handle metalinguistic negation perfectly well. Indeed, if Burton-Roberts is correct, only the presuppositionalist account can.³³⁷ But I don't want to go that far, since all I want to argue for here is the plausibility of the Strawsonian account in the face of important recent criticism.

Truth-value intuitions and footholds for rejection

One general problem critics have with Strawson's account is the fact that we seem to be able to generate quite a variety of contexts which, when presented to native speakers, do not trigger truth assessments predicted by that account. The contexts (i)-(iv) are a case in point. And there may be more, as we have no systematic criterion telling us otherwise. One reaction is, as seen, Strawson's pragmatism of giving explanations from case to case and not forcing a general, unified account. But there are Strawsonians discontented with this position. What they try instead is to explain both the conforming and the deviant truth-value intuitions of speakers within a general framework.

One such promising recent attempt, which I want to mention here, is Kai von Fintel's. It is partly based on an earlier paper by Paul Lasnik.³³⁸ His claim is that 'there is no neat correlation between truth-value gap judgements and presence/absence of presuppositions' (von Fintel (2004), pp. 322f.). According to him, sentences of the type (i)-(iii) all carry existential presuppositions, i.e. even those which are intuitively judged as false.³³⁹ Presupposition cancellation is only apparent here (and is sometimes

³³⁷ Burton-Roberts (1989a). He has partly modified his opinion, e.g. in Burton-Roberts (1993), while still defending a broadly Strawsonian notion of presupposition. See also Burton-Roberts (1999), where he defends his account against an attack in Carston (1998).

³³⁸ Lasnik (1993), von Fintel (2004).

³³⁹ Von Fintel thus rejects Strawson's pragmatic modifications of the latter's initial account, in particular the explanation based on the notion of topic/focus discussed above. See also Atlas (2004),

called ‘non-catastrophic presupposition-failure’). These sentences do in fact all carry Strawsonian presuppositions and are therefore neither true nor false. How come that we are inclined to judge certain truth-valueless statements as having a truth-value? Hence, von Fintel sets out to explain the discrepancy between intuitive and genuine truth-value judgements. Here is how Lasersohn summarises the basic idea:

‘[A]n affirmative statement which might otherwise be judged of indeterminate truth-value (because it contains a term which fails to refer) can instead be judged false, provided the context makes it possible to determine that the statement could not possibly be true regardless of whether the term has reference or not’ (Lasersohn (1993), p. 115).

In other words: imagine that the description is not empty. If even in that case the sentence is false, there is an intuitive inclination to judge the sentence as false in any case. Take the sentence ‘The wife of Benedict XVI just made me the Vice-Chancellor’ discussed above: the sentence is rejected as false, because, independently of whether the Pope has a wife, I am obviously not the Vice-Chancellor. We have a ‘fallback strategy’ to determine the sentence as false independently of the description’s reference. This strategy works well with other evident cases, e.g. ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is sitting in this chair’, said while pointing at an empty chair. But what about ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is on a state visit to Australia this week’? As von Fintel describes it, we are inclined to judge this sentence as false as well, but not on the grounds indicated by Lasersohn, since if we assumed that the Pope had a

who, although defending the truth-value gap analysis, is also critical of that aspect of Strawson’s theory, although in a weaker sense (he accepts the topicality of descriptions at least as a necessary, if not sufficient condition for the description’s triggering a presupposition). Most recently, both von Fintel’s and Atlas’ accounts have been further expanded by Stephen Yablo. See Yablo (2004) and, as a critical reply to both Yablo and von Fintel’s rejection of the topic/focus analysis, Bezuidenhout (2005). It is not clear, however, whether von Fintel’s theory applies to cases like (iv), since he does not discuss them.

wife, she might well be visiting Australia this week, and we would not claim the falsity of the sentence outright, rather could wonder whether it is true or false. But in actual fact we do consider it false, and the reason is simply our belief that Benedict XVI has no wife (von Fintel (2004), p. 330). Therefore, von Fintel modifies Lasersohn's account in the following way: a truth-valueless sentence is intuitively judged as false if there is a contextually salient entity whose properties are in principle enough to reject the sentence, if there is, in other words, an 'independent foothold for rejection' (von Fintel (2004), p. 331). We can test this with the following truth-valueless sentences:

(i) 'The wife of Benedict XVI is bald.'

(ii) 'The wife of Benedict XVI is sitting in this chair.'

(iii) 'The wife of Benedict XVI is on a state visit to Australia this week.'

We feel unsure about (i), and rightly so, because here there is no further entity mentioned whose properties could be taken as a foothold for rejecting the sentence. But such a foothold is mentioned in both (ii) and (iii): the (empty) chair and the nation of Australia (disaffected by the Vatican's neglect to send at least its First Lady). Hence, we can explain why speakers might be inclined to judge certain statements as false, which nevertheless does not affect the ascription of truth-value gaps and presupposition to such statements.

Although it is going in the right direction, I have some doubts about von Fintel's analysis. First, it seems that (iii) would be immediately judged as false only by

somebody who knows very well that Australia has not received any state visit this week (or is visited only by Kofi Annan). In this case (iii) is like (ii) in there being obvious evidence as a ground for ‘falsification’. In every other case, (iii) is more like (i), thus triggering more often than not the same kind of unease with respect to its truth-value. Second, as von Fintel himself admits, we have here the notion of a ‘contextually salient entity’, and it is not clear whether this is a very sharp criterion, and, more importantly, whether it is a *semantic* criterion.³⁴⁰ Third, the issue about truth-value gaps does not come best into focus by concentrating on how to deal with the varying assignments of the predicate ‘false’ to sentences like (i)-(iii). Rather, we need to bring out the categorical difference between the fact that while ‘The Queen of England is bald’ is to be judged as *false*, because the Queen of England is *not-bald* (predicate term negation rather than descriptive negation), rather has hair, ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is bald’ is not false *because* the wife of Benedict XVI is not-bald. There is *no true statement* of the form ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is not-*F*’.³⁴¹ In fact, neither ‘bald’ nor ‘not-bald’ apply to this fictitious lady. What we have here is a fundamental, conceptual distinction, and it makes sense to mark it terminologically, namely by legislating that ‘*a* is *F*’ is false if and only if ‘*a* is not-*F*’ is true, which applies quite generally to all referring expressions.³⁴² By contrast, if neither ‘*a* is *F*’ nor ‘*a* is not-*F*’ is true, we should simply state the obvious: both sentences are *not true*, ‘true’ and ‘false’ do not apply to them etc.³⁴³ This conceptual difference between falsehood and non-truth lies at the origin of Strawson’s theory of truth-value gaps and presuppositions, and it is hard to see how it, independently of the details of Strawson’s analysis, could ever be explained away, whether by means of pragmatic

³⁴⁰ Also, a Platonist like Frege or Russell could always claim that concepts are entities, and surely the concept of baldness is salient in some sense here.

³⁴¹ We need to exclude existence here as a first-level predicate. But this is viable option.

³⁴² See von Wright (1959), (1973a), (1973b), also Horn (2001), pp. 132ff.

³⁴³ See also Rundle (1979), pp. 53ff, 401. Rundle, however, uses this distinction to argue that Strawson’s notion of presupposition is not really needed in this context. This is an interesting, but little known suggestion.

presuppositions or anything else. Rather, what can be explained, in the light of this distinction, is the tendency of speakers sometimes to judge both 'The Queen of England is bald' and 'The wife of Benedict XVI is bald' as false. This is due to the partial carelessness with which 'false' and 'not true' are employed in ordinary speech (for good pragmatic reasons). While 'false' always implies 'not true', and 'neither true nor false' implies 'not true', 'not true' does not imply 'false', but there is a general tendency to overlook this. This tendency is particularly strong when we have a 'fall-back strategy', a 'foothold for rejection'. In this case some related sentence ('Nobody is sitting in this chair') is known to be true, but it is a sentence whose truth is incompatible with the purported truth of the initial sentence ('The wife of Benedict XVI is sitting in this chair'). The initial sentence is therefore judged as false, where all that strictly follows is that it is not true.

Here is how I want to summarise my own tentative account of the truth-value behaviour of sentences containing referring descriptions:

1. Genuine falsehood: A description sentence is false if

(i) either the description is in subject/topic position, is not empty (i.e. the presupposition is true), and some contrary statement (containing predicate term negation, 'not-*G*') is true,

(ii) or the description is part of the predicate, which is false of the subject.

2. Non-truth: A description sentence is neither true nor false only if the description is empty, i.e. the presupposition is false. There is no alternative true contrary statement.

3. 'Falsehood' that is actually non-truth: A description sentence that is actually neither

true nor false may be *judged* as false, because there is a tendency to go from the licensed ' P is neither true nor false $\rightarrow P$ is not true' to the illicit ' P is not true $\rightarrow P$ is false', a tendency considerably enforced by the availability of footholds for rejection.

This account differs from von Fintel's (i) in accepting Strawson's argument based on topicality, (ii) in avoiding speaking of contextually salient entities, and (iii) in giving a more general explanation of the truth-value intuitions contradicting Strawson's theory.

I have shown in this section that there can be at least plausible defences of the presuppositionalist account of referential definite descriptions, some of these defences being endorsed by prominent contemporary theorists of language. Nevertheless, it should not go unmentioned that there are further important problems with this account. One of the most serious is the so-called Projection Problem, relating to how we can determine the presuppositions of molecular sentences as composed out of the presuppositions of their parts.³⁴⁴ A related challenge is to give an adequate logic of the semantics and pragmatics of our language. I cannot discuss the first issue here, but I shall at least briefly mention the second.

³⁴⁴ See for instance Karttunen (1973), (1974), Karttunen/Peters (1979) on this.

5.5 ‘Fregean’ free logic and meaning axioms again

I show how the presuppositionalist account can be treated formally by means of neutral free logic and outline some principles of a theory of meaning for a language containing descriptive names which gives justice to both Basic Ideas.

The Projection Problem mentioned at the end of the previous section poses a serious challenge to a presuppositional account of singular terms. I will not attempt to solve, or even discuss it here. However, there is one related problem which is of direct concern for us: the assignment of truth-values to sentences carrying existential presuppositions. Since it is the presupposition of ‘*a*’ that determines the truth-value behaviour of ‘*a* is *F*’, and since the truth-value behaviour of complex sentences must depend on that of their components, can we ever hope to evaluate whether theorems such as

(36) $\forall x$ (‘DN’ refers to *x* $\leftrightarrow$ *x* = the *F*)

are appropriate to capture the semantic role of descriptive terms in our language without first solving the Projection Problem? The answer is probably no. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to evaluate such axioms. The reason for this is that independent of how we solve the Projection Problem, we have a core idea of the truth-value behaviour of a range of relatively unproblematic sentences. And for such sentences powerful logical frameworks have been developed. It is true that for such frameworks to claim universality of application, idealised assumptions about linguistic facts must be made. But this is true of any logical framework. Moreover, it is not clear whether the various difficulties posed by the Projection Problem are not at

least in part due to truth-value intuitions, intuitions which, as von Fintel has pointed out (see previous section), should not be automatically taken as representing semantical facts. In that case normative decisions establishing genuine truth-value assignments diverging from those intuitive ones are called for anyway.

What is now the core idea of a logic that accounts for the truth-value behaviour within a presuppositionalist account of singular terms? It is one captured by the following principle: no input – no output (*NINO* semantics, as Lehmann calls it). This principle stipulates that for a certain range of sentences if a term does not have a value (or if a function takes as a value an argument for which it has not been defined), then neither has the embedding sentence. This principle has been observed in developments of systems of free logic very different from the negative logic we have encountered in Evans and Sainsbury. A logic following the *NINO* principle is called neutral; a sentence such as ‘The wife of Benedict XVI is bald’ is not assigned any of the two truth-values, indeed it is not assigned any value. For Evans ‘dire consequences’ (VR, p. 32) would follow from such a principle, which forces him to assign sets as semantic values to descriptive names, as we have seen. Now, if this principle were to lead to a failure to assign a truth-value (namely the True) to the above axiom, we would encounter dire consequences indeed, since the descriptive term would simply not really be assigned any role in the language, or at least the theory would fail to capture that role. But I think it can be shown that such dire consequences do not have to follow.

One important system of neutral free logic was sketched by Timothy Smiley in 1960. The more technical development of this system, including a Strawsonian notion of presupposition for sentences of a regimented language, a distinction between two

kinds of validity and a completeness proof, was proposed by Scott Lehmann in 1994.³⁴⁵ There are a few differences between the two systems, but only one is of concern to us here: the truth-value behaviour of quantified statements.³⁴⁶ Smiley applies the *NINO* principle even to the existential quantifier: ‘ $\exists xA$ ’ receives no truth-value if ‘ A ’ has no truth-value for at least one value of ‘ x ’ and is false for any other value of ‘ x ’.³⁴⁷ This may not be found convincing. ‘ $\exists x (x \text{ is a better philosopher than Aristotle})$ ’ will be simply treated as false if and only if there is no such person, i.e. even in case the language contains at least one empty name failing to provide a value for ‘ A ’ when substituted for ‘ x ’ (e.g. ‘Grandmaster DJ Baristotle’, a name I just made up). In Lehmann’s system we do not have such a problem. Even if ‘ A ’ is truth-valueless for all values of ‘ x ’, ‘ $\exists xA$ ’ is treated as *false*. This fact is crucial for our problem, since it allows us to assign a truth-value to clause (36). To evaluate this the universal quantifier must be rephrased first:³⁴⁸

$\neg\exists x (\neg('DN' \text{ refers to } x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the } F)).$

Following the *NINO* principle, every atomic open sentence will be neither true (T) nor false (F) just in case any substitution of the variable results in a sentence with no

³⁴⁵ See Smiley (1960), Lehmann (1994), also Lehmann (2001), (2002). For other systems of ‘Fregean’ free logic see Lehmann (1994), pp. 328 and 336.

³⁴⁶ Two differences which do not concern us here: Unlike Smiley’s, Lehmann’s system treats ‘exists’ not as a first-order, but as a second-order predicate, and it allows for empty domains (Lehmann (1994), p. 313, 325).

³⁴⁷ Smiley (1960), p. 126f., does not formulate this part of the quantifier rule explicitly, but it can be thus extracted. However, it is not clear how this rule can be brought in accordance with the fact that Smiley introduces ‘exists’ as a predicate that yields a truth-value for any argument. Thus ‘ a exists’ is true if ‘ a ’ has a value, and false if it doesn’t (‘ a ’ has a secondary occurrence, as Smiley puts it; see *ibid.*, p. 128ff.). On the other hand, by his definition ‘ $\exists x (x=a)$ ’ does not have a truth-value, if ‘ a ’ is empty. But is ‘ $\exists x (x=a)$ ’ not usually understood as the logical paraphrase of ‘ a exists’? Lehmann (1994), p. 327, assumes precisely this, with both statements possessing the same truth-value course.

³⁴⁸ I am skipping here certain complications for Lehmann’s system, due to the fact that by his definition of the universal quantifier ‘ $\neg\exists v\neg A$ ’ can come out as true in cases in which intuitively it should be at least untrue (e.g. ‘ $\forall x (x = \text{the } F)$ ’ for empty ‘the F ’). Lehmann contemplates therefore a second universal quantifier. But whether this will suffice to render our clause true without further modification of logical constants is another question. For instance, we may have to redefine ‘ $\leftrightarrow$ ’, especially if we want to formulate true T-theorems. Thanks to Dr Stephen Williams for pointing this out to me.

truth-value. We can denote this with 'N' (for 'no value' or 'value-neutral'). Hence, ' $x = \text{the } F$ ' comes out as N for any value of x for empty 'the F '. Therefore the inner brackets will come out as N for any value of x . Same for the inner negation. Thus the formula inside the brackets comes out as N under any circumstance for empty 'the F '. But now, by the existential quantifier rule Lehmann formulates (if range of ' v ' is not empty and ' F ' is always truth-valueless, then ' $\exists vA$ ' is false) (Lehmann (1994), p. 328) ' $\exists x (...)$ ' is false and its negation the True. The clause thus comes out as true for empty 'the F '. The same for non-empty 'the F ' (which I will skip here). This is all we needed to prove in order to show that there can be a neutral free logic for our truth theory of meaning. This means not only that the axiom for 'Julius'

(37) $\forall x$ ('Julius' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the inventor of the zip}$)

will be true for a language in which (DN1) has been performed, but, equally important, that we will be able to derive Strawsonian, not Russellian truth-conditions by a T-theorem just like our old one, (14):

(40) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ the inventor of the zip is filthy rich.

'The inventor of the zip is filthy rich' has now Strawsonian truth-conditions and the existence claim is not part of what it expresses, but only presupposed. Hence, the description sentence will not express a general, quantified statement. But then – neither will 'Julius is filthy rich', given that (40) displays the sense of 'Julius is filthy rich'. We solve hereby two problems: 'Julius' is guaranteed to be a referring expression, since it is, in effect, a shorthand for another, more complex (rigid)

referring expression,³⁴⁹ and sentences containing it do not, paradoxically, express general thoughts. They express no thoughts (no truth or falsehood), if there is no unique inventor of the zip. They express singular/*de re* thoughts just in case there is a unique inventor of the zip, since for the truth of 'Julius is filthy rich' something must be the case concerning a certain individual (partial tc-salience). But we don't need to be acquainted with the referent to understand the sentence, indeed, we will understand the sentence even if there is no referent (lack of e-salience).³⁵⁰ Hence, descriptive names are not Russellian terms. Their meaningfulness is given by conditions of understanding which are the same for both Evans and Strawson concerning descriptive reference: to understand 'Julius is filthy rich' is to know what would have to be the case for 'Julius' to have a referent etc.³⁵¹ The dissociation of meaning from actual reference is a well-known consequence of Strawson's theory and this is compatible with the idea of non-Russellian reference.

Naturally, I am not attempting here to present any detailed system of 'Fregean' free logic, but only to sketch a few of its principles. Even so, many more things should be said, if space allowed for it, e.g. about derivation of T-theorems, about identity and existential statements, about elimination and introduction rules for quantifiers or the scope indicator. It may well turn out that some or many of Evans's ideas concerning these things could be taken over, perhaps with some modifications. But this is the matter of a future project.

³⁴⁹ Stalnaker (2001), pp. 153ff. considers precisely this option. Hardly anybody else does.

³⁵⁰ 'tc-salience' and 'e-salience' are Davies' terms. See Davies/Humberstone (1980), pp. 7f., Davies (1981), pp. 95f.

³⁵¹ See section 2.2 above and Strawson (1950), pp. 12f.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: The Usefulness of Descriptive Names

The main lines of the theory of descriptive names I developed in this dissertation can be summarised in the following way:

Descriptive names are introduced by DN-type stipulations establishing a purely semantical relation between a name '*DN*' and a descriptive phrase 'the *F*' (and any others phrases with the same sense), such that '*DN*' is a shorthand for, but not necessarily a strict abbreviation of 'the *F*'.

Concerning referentiality: Descriptive names are referring expressions (First Basic Idea) for at least the following reasons: (i) They are shorthand for (at least in many cases rigid) referring definite descriptions, and are (at least in many cases) rigid designators. (ii) We use them standardly with referential intentions, namely the intention to refer to the *F*. (iii) Sentences containing them express weak *de re* thoughts just in case the descriptive name has a referent, for in that case the truth of '*DN* is *G*' turns on how things are with the *F* (tc-salience).³⁵² Otherwise such sentences don't express a thought. (iv) We can specify reference conditions for them in a theory of meaning.

Concerning sense and truth-conditions: (i) As shorthands, descriptive names have the same sense as their canonical descriptions (Second Basic Idea). (ii) The sense of '*DN*'

³⁵² This also helps us to save the necessity of identity statements like '*Julius* = *Julius*', if '*Julius*' is non-empty, for the identity statement is now not construed anymore as expressing a general thought. See sections 2.4, 4.4.

is G ' is: the F is G . (iii) Sentences containing descriptive names have a referent-independent sense: they are meaningful whether or not the names have a referent. (iv) If ' DN ' is empty, then ' DN is G ' is false on a Sainsburian account of truth-conditions, which will require a negative free logic, and it is without a truth-value on a Strawsonian account of truth-conditions, which will require a 'Fregean' free logic.

Descriptive names contrast in several respects with Russellian names. They can be empty and still have a sense. They don't express strong *de re*, referent-dependent thoughts. Their understanding does not require some privileged cognitive access to the referent. And their rigidity does not entail the necessary truth of identity statements of the form ' $DN = DN$ '.

This thesis has provided a defence of the two Basic Ideas. There are, of course, many other issues and indeed open questions which could not all be treated here. To mention a few:

A broader semantical theory for descriptive names including contexts not discussed here, e.g. temporal and hyperintensional ones, but also existential statements.

A detailed development of the logic needed for descriptive names.

A comparison and contrast with other kinds of non-Russellian terms, e.g. E-type pronouns.

A look at the kinds of definite description permissible in a DN-type stipulation, e.g. whether it is a complete or incomplete description, a description with some or no

indexical element.

An analysis of later stages of the use of a descriptive name, especially when new information becomes available about the name and the name is in a 'hybrid' state, being only a 'partially descriptive name' (to use a phrase coined by Scott Soames).

An account of the intentions involved in the use of descriptive names. (Can we intend to use 'Julius' to refer to the inventor of the zip, if we know there is no such person?)

A look at the types of discourse within which a descriptive name is introduced, e.g. hypothetical ('Vulcan'), abstract ('i' introduced by 'the square root of -1 '), fictional discourse.

An embedding of the theory of for singular definite descriptions proposed here within a more general theory of (definite, indefinite, plural etc.) descriptions.

A detailed account of the contingent *a priori* and the necessary *a posteriori* in the light of recent debates.

Independently of these possible research projects, any theorist interested in descriptive names will face one major question: What is this all good for? Is there anything useful about descriptive names? After all, as many have remarked, including Evans, there are no or hardly any descriptive names in natural language. It is true that names are often introduced into a language by DN-type stipulations, but almost all of them lose their

descriptive contents very soon. Is there really any need for a theory for a category of expressions of minuscule importance in daily linguistic interaction? Of course, one answer is that all we care about as philosophers are possibilities. And surely it is possible to introduce and artificially maintain descriptive names. The study of such artificial expressions can still be put to good theoretical use, as for instance concerning the puzzle of the contingent *a priori*.

However, nowadays philosophers of language are not only, or only marginally, interested in artificial languages. They want to study our real languages. 'It is the actual practice of using the name "a", not some ideal substitute, that interests us' (VR, p. 40). So in what sense are descriptive names useful for us in this respect?

They are useful insofar as they may be seen not so much as rare expressions in natural language, but rather as one of several ideal models by means of which we give a theoretical account of our language. The apparent scarcity of descriptive names may prompt us to clarify our very understanding of what a theory of meaning does. For we could ask: how come they are so rare? After all, names do often enough get introduced by a definite description with 'no link-up with antecedently existing identificatory knowledge' (RC, p. 202, fn. 28), but they rarely survive as descriptive names. This could be explained if we said the following: a theory of meaning does not provide us with a full account of the history of a language, rather with a snapshot of it, of the expressions and their meanings as understood by a speaker or community at a certain point in time. And if the theory produces an axiom such as (37) for some expression ' α ', then that expression is, by *the standards of the theory*, a descriptive name. However, after the theoretical snapshot is taken, the language evolves and the name may lose its entire descriptive content. If we were to take a theoretical snapshot

again, we would now have a *different* (namely Russellian) axiom for ‘ α ’. But it would be implausible to say that ‘ α ’ is not the same expression anymore because at the first snapshot it was a descriptive name, at the second snapshot a Russellian name, and nothing can be more different than a descriptive name and a Russellian name.³⁵³ The identity of a name is not really determined by such issues as what kind of axiom (conditional? Russellian?) captures its semantic role. It is determined by something more mundane: its spelling. I have the same forename as the actor Edward Norton. The same is even more true of ‘Julius’ or ‘Neptune’ from the point of view of the transition from the early one-criterion stage to a later stage.³⁵⁴ As Recanati puts it: There are no ‘[...] two distinct homonymous names ‘Neptune’ (or ‘Julius’), one belonging to the category of descriptive names and the second to the category of ordinary names. It seems to me – as it does to common sense – that there is only one name [...]’³⁵⁵. In fact, Evans himself betrays such a common sense understanding of the identity of a name, since he speaks of ‘[...] the initial period during which the name is unquestionably a “one-criterion name”’ and of later stages in which ‘[...] the name became associated with other predicates as a result of discoveries [...]’, meaning of course one and the same name during these stages (RC, p. 181).

Seen from this angle, descriptive names are, given their scarcity in natural language, not so much a separate semantic category, but an *aspect of use* of one and the same name.³⁵⁶ Different employments of the theory at different times provide us with

³⁵³ Reimer (2004) seems to be committed to such a position.

³⁵⁴ And on to the latest stage, what Evans calls ‘the late phase of a practice of a name’. See VR, 391ff.

³⁵⁵ Recanati (1993), p. 1993. Recanati’s other views concerning descriptive names are more questionable. See Bertolet (2001).

³⁵⁶ This interpretation is reinforced by what Evans calls in an early paper ‘deferential uses of names’. He discusses there cases in which we hear about some man Louis for the first time and then start using the name with the intention to refer to whatever the speaker refers to by ‘Louis’. This is an intention to refer to whatever satisfies a certain definite description. In fact, Evans mentions Kripke’s ‘Jack the Ripper’ as another example of a deferential *use* of a name in the very same context. Cf. Evans (1985a), pp. 6f., 21f.

different snapshots, with different aspects of use of one and the same name, namely first a descriptive and later a Russellian use, uses which are promoted to the rank of full-blown and distinct semantic categories only within the idealised model of the theory.³⁵⁷ This then is a second way to make good use of the theory of descriptive names: it provides us with one abstract model, among several possible, which we project onto our language and thus divide it up, classify it, and bring order to the phenomena – in one among several possible ways.³⁵⁸

There are also two more immediate lessons concerning the analysis of descriptive names. One is the notion of semantic value, which, if understood as distinct from the notion of referent, leads to serious problems. In philosophy the mere possibility of introducing a certain formal notation, here from model theory, does not necessarily mean that a problem is solved. We should remind ourselves of Kripke's wise words: 'It should not be supposed that [...] that formalism can grind out philosophical results in a manner beyond the capacity of ordinary philosophical reasoning. There is no mathematical substitute for philosophy' (Kripke (1976), p. 416). Evans was a serious philosopher and he did not usually fall prey to this tendency. His understanding of semantic values as sets is a slip, but a significant one in our context.

Another way of making use of descriptive names is what Chapter 5 is concerned with: the proposal to treat definite descriptions as referring expressions. Note that this

³⁵⁷ As Sainsbury points out, it is not clear that there really are many, if any Russellian names either in our language. See Sainsbury (2005), section 3.3., Sainsbury (2005a), p. 8.

³⁵⁸ Evans did himself acknowledge that axioms for Russellian and descriptive names provide us with two '[...] simplified models of the functioning of referring expressions [...] fashioned for immediate application to a formal language of restricted scope [...]' (VR, p. 39). And even though these models are initially conceived for the languages of mathematics, it does not mean that we cannot *apply* them to natural language (see VR, p. 41). These passages are important, because they highlight the distinction between a model and what it is applied to, a distinction which is important for understanding both the possibilities and limitations of a formal semantic theory. A similar point is made in Strawson (1974), p. 58. See Stekeler-Weithofer (1986) for a highly elaborate discussion of this issue.

proposal did not emerge as part of an independent project, but rather out of the necessity to defend The First Basic Idea – the referentiality of descriptive names –, while not giving up The Second Basic Idea, both of which are necessary for the possibility of descriptive names. And I argued that both Basic Ideas are fully defensible. Thus this subplot amounted to showing that if we allow for the possibility, be it even artificial, of descriptive names, then we must treat definite descriptions as referring expressions as well, because a non-referential treatment of descriptions could not explain the obvious possibility of descriptive names. The subplot thus comes with an ironical twist: Given how scarce descriptive names are, and given how much debated the referential status of definite descriptions is, it is not a minor achievement that the existence of a marginal category of expressions may help to bring down such a behemoth as Russellianism. Like the Martians in *War of the Worlds*, Russellians might fall prey to a hardly perceptible but mighty challenge.

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Chapter 8: List of Axioms and Formulas

(Listed by page number and number of the clause.)

- 33 (1) Julius was an Englishman.
- 34 (2) The inventor of the zip was an Englishman.
- 62 (3) The semantic value of 'Naomi' = Naomi.
- 62 (4) The referent of 'Naomi' = Naomi (or: 'Naomi' uniquely refers to Naomi).
- 62 (5) The semantic value of 'Naomi' $\in$ {Naomi}.
- 62 (6) 'Naomi is Hungarian' is true $\leftrightarrow$ Naomi is Hungarian.
- 63 (7) The semantic value of 'Julius' = Julius.
- 63 (8) The referent of 'Julius' = Julius.
- 63 (9) The semantic value of 'Julius' = the inventor of the zip.
- 65 (10) $\exists x$ (x uniquely invented the zip & the semantic value of 'Julius' = x).
- 66 (11) $\forall x$ (the semantic value of 'Julius' = $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely invented the zip).
- 66 (12) $\forall x$ (the referent of 'Julius' = $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely invented the zip).
- 66 (13) $\forall x$ (the referent of 'DN' = $x \leftrightarrow x$ is uniquely F).
- 67 (14) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ the inventor of the zip is filthy rich.
- 69 (15) The semantic value of 'Julius' = $\{x \mid x \text{ uniquely invented the zip}\}$.
- 78 (16) The semantic value of 'uniquely invented the zip' = $\{x \mid x \text{ uniquely satisfies 'inventor of the zip'}\}$.
- 86 (17) $\forall \phi \forall x$ ('the' $\wedge \phi$ refers to $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely satisfies ϕ).
- 92 (18) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (x is uniquely invented the zip & x is filthy rich).
- 93 (19) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ Julius is filthy rich.
- 97 (20) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ [Julius] Julius is filthy rich.
- 98 (21) $[DN] (+++ \dots DN \dots +++) =_{\text{def}} \exists x$ (x is uniquely ϕ & $(+++ \dots x \dots +++)$).
- 98 (22) $+++ [DN] (\dots DN \dots) +++ =_{\text{def}} +++ \exists x$ (x is uniquely ϕ & $\dots x \dots$) $+++$.
- 99 (23) $[\neg \phi] (+++ \dots \neg \phi \dots +++) =_{\text{def}} \exists x$ (x is uniquely ϕ & $(+++ \dots x \dots +++)$).
- 99 (24) $+++ [\neg \phi] (\dots \neg \phi \dots) +++ =_{\text{def}} +++ \exists x$ (x is uniquely ϕ & $(\dots x \dots)$) $+++$.
- 108 (25) $\forall w \forall \phi \forall x$ ('the' $\wedge \phi$ refers to _{w} $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely satisfies _{w} ϕ).
- 108 (26) $\forall w$ ('The inventor of the zip is filthy rich' is true _{w} $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (x uniquely satisfies _{w} 'inventor of the zip' & x satisfies _{w} 'filthy rich')).
- 109 (27) $\forall w \forall x$ ('Julius' refers _{w} to $x \leftrightarrow x$ uniquely invented the zip in w^*).
- 109 (28) $\forall w$ ('Julius is filthy rich' is true _{w} $\leftrightarrow \exists x$ (x uniquely invented the zip in w^* & x satisfies _{w} 'filthy rich')).
- 138 (29) If anyone invented the zip, then Julius invented the zip.
- 138 (30) If anyone invented the zip, then the inventor of the zip invented the zip.
- 140 (31) $\forall w$ (If anyone invented the zip in w , then Julius invented the zip in w).
- 142 (32) $\forall w$ (If anyone invented the zip in w , then the inventor of the zip in w^* invented the zip in w).
- 142 (33) If anyone invented the zip, then the inventor of the zip in w^* invented the zip.
- 184 (34) $\forall x$ ('the F ' refers to x iff x uniquely satisfies 'F').
- 186 (35) $\forall x$ ('the F ' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the } F$).
- 192 (36) $\forall x$ ('DN' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the } F$).
- 192 (37) $\forall x$ ('Julius' refers to $x \leftrightarrow x = \text{the inventor of the zip}$).
- 206 (38) (a) The wife of Benedict XVI is bald. (b) The wife of Benedict XVI is not bald. (c) There isn't any such woman!
- 208 (39) (a) Joey ate three geese for lunch. (b) Joey did not eat three geese for lunch. (c) He ate three geese.
- 222 (40) 'Julius is filthy rich' is true $\leftrightarrow$ the inventor of the zip is filthy rich.