

GIORGIONE WAS SO-CALLED BECAUSE OF HIS NAME

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Proper names seem simple on the surface. Indeed, anyone unfamiliar with philosophical debates about them might wonder what the fuss could possibly be about. It seems obvious why we need them and what we do with them, and that is to talk about particular persons, places, and things. You don't have to be as smart as Mill to think that proper names are simply tags attached to individuals. But sometimes appearances are deceiving.

I will defend a kind of description theory of names. Yes, I know most philosophers of language take description theories to have been thoroughly discredited and regard Mill, Kaplan, and especially Kripke as essentially right about proper names: names refer directly rather than via any properties they express, and they designate rigidly. Even so, I believe that there is a version of the description theory which, when augmented by certain pragmatic observations, can explain why it *seems* that names are essentially referring terms, and are "directly referential" (Kaplan) and "rigid" (Kripke). Unlike Millian theories and like other description theories, this version is not threatened by Frege's and Russell's puzzles.¹ And it can explain the following:

- how names are capable of being used in various non-referential ways (a fact Millians tend to ignore);
- why proper names are generally *used* to refer, even though they themselves do not;
- the force of Millian intuitions, including the impression of rigidity;
- why the individual named, rather than the property the name expresses, ordinarily enters into the (singular) proposition the speaker is trying to convey.

I will defend what I call the *Nominal Description Theory*. I call it "nominal" not because it isn't really a theory but because it says that when a proper name occurs in a sentence it expresses no substantive property but merely the property of bearing that very name. Although I have defended it before,² NDT has

met with something closer to resounding silence than hushed rapture. I am not discouraged. Here I will reformulate it, making clear what it does say and what it does not, and defend it again. Or at least give it a run for its money.

1. The Nominal Description Theory

MILL: When we refer to persons or things by name, we do not convey “any information about them, except that those are their names.” (1872, 22)

The above quotation is taken entirely out of context. Mill was not taking back his view that proper names do not “connote” any attributes. What he probably meant is something that is also true of common names. He could just as well have said that when we call a horse a ‘horse’, we convey the information that that’s what *it* is called (as we’ll see later, this is one of Kripke’s complaints against views like NDT). Indeed, on the very same page he wrote that a proper name “is but an unmeaning mark which we connect in our minds with the idea of the object, in order that whenever the mark meets our eyes or occurs to our thoughts, we may think of that individual object.” It is not Mill but NDT that says that a proper name (when it occurs in a sentence) expresses a property, the property of bearing that very name.

Proper names do seem to differ fundamentally from definite descriptions.³ They seem not to express properties but merely to refer. As Mill wrote, proper names are “attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on ... any attribute of the object” (1872, 20), or, in Kaplan’s phrase, they “refer directly.” A property expressible by a description may be needed to “fix the reference” (Kripke 1980, 15), but, as Kaplan stresses, “the issue is not whether the information used to determine the referent is descriptive or not. It is rather whether the relevant information, of whatever form, is part of what is said” (1989b, 578). And almost everyone accepts Kripke’s thesis that “intuitively, proper names are rigid designators” (1980, 49).⁴ As he explains, just as ‘Aristotle was fond of dogs’ is true if and only if a certain man, the man we call ‘Aristotle’, was fond of dogs, it would have been true with respect to “a counterfactual situation if and only if the same aforementioned man would have been fond of dogs, had that situation obtained” (1980, 6). If ‘Aristotle’ referred by virtue of an attribute it expresses, then if someone other than this man had that attribute, ‘Aristotle was fond of dogs’ would, contrary to fact, have been true by virtue of “*that other person’s* fondness for dogs” (1980, 7).⁵ That is because, as Kaplan states the Millian or referentialist view, the sentence expresses a singular proposition, a proposition about Aristotle, not a general proposition about whoever possessed a certain attribute.⁶

These intuitive considerations are so powerful that nowadays, despite its source in Frege and Russell, the descriptivist view of proper names seems too implausible to be taken seriously. I too find most forms of descriptivism im-

plausible. Even so, we must also take seriously Mill's exception to his claim that names convey no information about the individuals we use them to refer to "except that those are their names." This is what NDT does. It must do so in a way that reconciles its implication that sentences containing proper names do not express singular propositions with the fact that people ordinarily use such sentences to communicate singular propositions about the bearers of names.⁷

NDT is more like a Russellian description theory than a Fregean one.⁸ It does *not* claim that proper names refer indirectly, via reference-determining senses (Frege claimed this also of definite descriptions). It claims that a proper name is, with certain qualifications, semantically equivalent to a definite description, and follows Russell in denying that definite descriptions are referring expressions.⁹ Specifically, it claims that when a singular proper name 'N' occurs in a sentence as a complete noun phrase, it is semantically equivalent to the nominal description that mentions it, "the bearer of 'N'." For example, when the name 'Aristotle' occurs in the sentence 'Aristotle was fond of dogs', it is semantically equivalent to the description, "the bearer of 'Aristotle'." The property expressed in this description is a *nominal* one, that of bearing 'Aristotle', as opposed to a *substantive* property, such as being the teacher of Alexander.¹⁰ NDT does *not* say that a name *is* a definite description or that, considered in isolation, it is semantically equivalent to one. After all, if I name my dog 'Phaedo', obviously I am not naming my dog "the bearer of 'Phaedo'." Nor do I mean anything like that when I call Phaedo.

In discussing proper names, philosophers tend to focus on their occurrences as complete noun phrases,¹¹ but of course a name can also occur as part of a noun phrase. In that case, obviously, it cannot be semantically equivalent to a definite description. If I conjecture that there are other Phaedos, I am not imagining that there are other individuals that are each *the* bearer of 'Phaedo' but only that there are other bearers of 'Phaedo'. Proper names can be introduced by determiners and be modified, as in 'the former Australian prime minister Gareth Evans' or 'my neighbor David Kaplan', and they can be pluralized, as in 'the Goldmans' (not 'the Goldmen').¹² They are then being used not as complete noun phrases but, as proper *nouns*, like common nouns. Thus I can truly say that I have heard of three Gareth Evanses and four David Kaplans (so far as I know, there is only one Saul Kripke). NDT says that whenever a name occurs as part of a noun phrase, it expresses the property of bearing itself; in such a context 'N' is semantically equivalent to "bearer of 'N'."

I should qualify what I mean here by 'semantically equivalent'. 'N' is semantically equivalent to "bearer of 'N'," but only insofar as the latter is considered as a whole. Compare the word 'novel' with the phrase 'long written fiction'. The word 'novel' expresses the property of being a long written fiction, but although being a novel involves the properties of being long, being written, and being a fiction, only the phrase 'long written fiction' actually expresses those properties, because it contains the words 'long', 'written', 'fiction'.¹³ The word 'novel' obviously does not contain those words. Similarly,

the name ‘N’, unlike the phrase “bearer of ‘N’,” does not express the bearing relation or the property of being ‘N’. It expresses only the relation of bearing ‘N’. And whereas the phrase mentions ‘N’, the name does not mention itself.

It is important to appreciate that NDT makes a *generic* claim about proper names. It provides a schema that can be filled in by any proper name. As such, it applies routinely to familiar and unfamiliar names alike. This suggests that one’s knowledge about particular bearers of particular names does not count as strictly linguistic knowledge. Rather, it is in virtue of one’s general knowledge about the category of proper names that one knows of any particular name that when used in a sentence (whether as a complete noun phrase or part of a larger noun phrase) it expresses the property of bearing that name. Linguistically, all one needs to learn about a particular name is how to spell it and how to pronounce it. Particular knowledge about names is really knowledge about the particulars that they name, e.g., that a certain woman bears the name ‘Yolanda’ and that a certain company bears the name ‘Yahoo’.

The fact that NDT applies to proper names as a class helps explain why endorsing it does not commit one to a similar view about common nouns, e.g., that ‘horse’ means “thing called ‘horse’.” To understand ‘horse’ requires the specific linguistic knowledge that this word expresses the property of being a horse. Knowing the “meaning” of a name (as it occurs in a sentence) consists of recognizing that it is a name and, applying NDT’s equivalence schema to it, that it expresses the property of bearing that name.

One other thing to understand about NDT is that it does *not* say that ordinary uses of names are quotational. To say that it is semantically equivalent (when occurring as a complete noun phrase) to the nominal description that mentions it is not to claim that it mentions itself. A name does not mention itself but expresses the property of bearing itself.

By itself NDT does not say much. But as Mill saw, there is very little for names to say, and little to say about them. Even so, there is much to say about what is involved in their use that helps explain various facts and intuitions about them. NDT can help explain predicative and non-referential uses of names, as well as their referential uses. However, NDT might seem vulnerable to Kripke’s objections to description theories in general and to his circularity argument directed specifically at theories like NDT. Later these objections will be answered.

2. Predicative and Other Non-referential Uses of Names

RUSSELL: “It is a disgrace to the human race that it has chosen to employ the same word ‘is’ for these two entirely different ideas [predication and identity].” (1919, 172)

It may be a disgrace, but it’s a fact. Suppose you read that Donald Duncan invented parking meters and later heard that he invented yo-yos. So you infer (1),

- (1) The inventor of parking meters was the inventor of yo-yos.

Then someone tries to convince you Donald Duncan invented a perpetual motion machine.¹⁴ You balk at this and utter (2),

(2) Donald Duncan was not the inventor of a perpetual motion machine.

Here you are not rejecting an identity. You are using the definite description not to refer but as a predicate.¹⁵

Now compare a pair of analogous sentences involving proper names. Suppose you knew Marshall Mathers as a boy and later saw Eminem perform, without realizing who he is. A friend might enlighten you by uttering (3),

(3) Eminem is Marshall Mathers.

Presumably the 'is' in (3) is the 'is' of identity. Then your friend tells you that Sean Combs, AKA Puff Daddy and P. Diddy, is now Snoop Doody. You are skeptical, saying,

(4) Sean Combs is not Snoop Doody.

The 'is' in (4) is the 'is' of predication. You are not saying that Sean Combs is distinct from Snoop Doody, for you know perfectly well that there is no Snoop Doody (your friend may have been confused by the fact there is a Snoop Dogg).¹⁶

Referentialists try to survive on a lean diet of examples. So far as I know, they have not reckoned with predicative uses of proper names, perhaps because they think of proper names on the model of individual constants in an interpreted logical system. They agree with Russell that when used as such a proper name serves "merely to indicate what we are speaking about; [the name] is no part of the fact asserted ... : it is merely part of the symbolism by which we express our thought" (1919, 175). Would they dismiss predicative uses as marginal cases? Burge anticipated such an attitude when he described the "appeal to 'special' uses whenever proper names do not play the role of individual constants [as] flimsy and theoretically deficient" (1973/1997, 605).¹⁷ Much preferable is a unified account of names, one that can handle their various uses.¹⁸

Let us look at some further examples in which a proper name is not used to refer. Most will contain proper names occurring as a complete singular noun phrase, but in the first few they occur as part of a larger noun phrase. In each case it appears that the name literally expresses the property of bearing itself, an appearance referentialists may think is easy to explain away.

(5) There are seven David Smiths in the APA.

(6) There are other intelligent David Kaplans besides my neighbor.

(7) Only one state has a Salem that is its capital.

In each case, the proper name, whether or not it is pluralized and regardless of how it is modified, expresses the property of bearing the name in question. This is just as NDT predicts.

A referentialist might protest that these are actually metalinguistic uses. That is not an objection if all it means is that each name expresses the property of bearing itself. The point, presumably, is that these uses are implicitly quotational, that the name is really being mentioned rather than used. But (5)–(7) do not express the absurd propositions that there are seven ‘David Smith’s in the APA, that there are other intelligent ‘David Kaplan’s besides my neighbor, or that only one state has a ‘Salem’ that is its capital, and NDT does not imply that they do. NDT says that a proper name ‘N’ occurring as part of a larger noun phrase expresses the property of bearing ‘N’, but this does not imply that when a name occurs in a sentence it is being mentioned rather than used. To think that it does would confuse being reflexive with being quoted.

A legitimate case of implicit quotation is *metalinguistic negation* (extensively discussed in Horn 1989, 362–444), as illustrated by (8) and (9):

- (8) Victor is not an animal doctor—he’s a veterinarian.
- (9) I was referring not to DonnELLan but to DONNellan.

What is going on in these cases is that the speaker is objecting to one way of putting something and puts it another way. In (8) the speaker is not denying that Victor is an animal doctor but is implicitly claiming that Victor is not aptly described by the words ‘animal doctor’. In (9) the speaker is not denying that he is referring to Donnellan but is implicitly asserting that his name is not pronounced ‘DonnELLan’.

Now perhaps the idea behind the metalinguistic objection is that sentences (5)–(7) are not literally true and are naturally taken as being used nonliterally, to convey (5′)–(7′):

- (5′) There are seven people named ‘David Smith’ in the APA.
- (6′) There are other intelligent people named ‘David Kaplan’ besides my neighbor.
- (7′) Only one state has a city named ‘Salem’ that is its capital.

But these are just slight variations on how NDT would paraphrase (5)–(7). That such paraphrases are available does not show that as sentences (5)–(7) themselves are used, the names are implicitly quoted. The availability of these paraphrases does not refute the claim that in the original sentences the names literally express the property of bearing themselves.

The following pair of examples shows that there is a genuine difference between an ordinary use of a name and an implicitly quotational use:

- (10) Robin Roberts may be a man or a woman—I really don’t know.
- (11) In English, Robin may be a boy or a girl.

In (10) the speaker is using the name to refer to a particular person, whereas with (11) the speaker is presumably talking about the name 'Robin' and means that it is a boy's name as well as a girl's name. So (11) is not being used literally.

Now let us turn to examples in which the proper name occurs as a complete noun phrase.

In 1956 my brother and I heard Elvis Presley singing "Blue Suede Shoes" on the radio. Not noticing the difference between the original version, written and sung by Carl Perkins, and Elvis's cover of it, I said "Carl Perkins will be a big star too." Then I heard the DJ's announcement, and I had to correct myself:

(12) That was Elvis Presley, not Carl Perkins.

I had confused Elvis Presley with somebody else.

Well, a few months earlier I had heard "Heartbreak Hotel" on the radio for the first time. I knew that it would be a smash hit and that its singer would become a star. My brother asked who the singer was and I said, "That was Alvin Parsley." An hour later I heard the song again and learned I was wrong. So I told my brother,

(13) That was Elvis Presley, not Alvin Parsley.

This time I had not confused Elvis Presley with somebody else. In uttering (13) I did not say that Elvis Presley was somebody other than who I had thought he was (namely Alvin Parsley). Yet it seems that this is what referentialism would have to say I said.

In 1964, shortly after becoming world heavyweight champion, Cassius Clay took the name 'Muhammad Ali'. Of this one might say either of the following:

(14) Muhammad Ali used to be Cassius Clay (but is no longer).

(15) After beating Sonny Liston, Cassius Clay became Muhammad Ali.

Unlike 'Muhammad Ali used to be Muhammad Ali (but is no longer)', (14) seems true. However, it does not imply or even suggest that Muhammad Ali used to be a distinct person. Beating Liston was a great accomplishment, but (15) does not imply or even suggest that Cassius Clay became a distinct person as a result. Referentialism seems to predict that it does, and that it is equivalent to 'After beating Sonny Liston, Cassius Clay became Cassius Clay'. Also, it has trouble accounting for the truth of what Ali said when he announced,

(16) I am Muhammad Ali, not Cassius Clay.

Referentialism has to insist that because the words 'be', 'became', and 'am' are followed in these sentences by referring terms, they must be interpreted as expressing identity. NDT, on the other hand, can allow for the more plausible

predicative interpretation. On that interpretation, the sentences describe changes in property, not (impossible) changes of identity.

It is tempting, of course, to deny that sentences like (14) and (15) literally express true propositions and to insist that the propositions they would be used to convey are literally expressed by the sentences like these:

- (14') Muhammad Ali used to be called 'Cassius Clay' (but is no longer).
- (15') After beating Sonny Liston, Cassius Clay came to be called 'Muhammad Ali'.

Indeed, anyone totally convinced of referentialism will have to say something like this. Even so, intuitively there seems to be a relevant difference between (14) and (15) and sentences like (17) and (18):

- (17) Pharmacists used to be apothecaries (but are no longer).
- (18) Years ago quicksilver became mercury.

I have not investigated this scientifically, but although my informal informants judge that (17) and (18) are literally false, they feel no strain in deeming (14) and (15) to be literally true. It seems that utterances of (17) and (18) are likely to be taken nonliterally, as conveying the propositions expressed by (17') and (18'):

- (17') Pharmacists used to be called 'apothecaries' (but are no longer).
- (18') Year ago quicksilver came to be called 'mercury'.

NDT has a ready explanation for the relevant difference between the two pairs of sentences. In both pairs 'be' and 'became' are used predicatively, but while in (14) and (15) the predicated property is that of bearing a certain name, in (17) and (18) a substantive property is predicated. That is why (17) and (18) are literally false: it is not true that pharmacists used to (but no longer) have the property of being apothecaries or that years ago quicksilver came to have the property of being mercury. But (14) and (15) are literally true: Muhammad Ali used to be Cassius Clay, and Cassius Clay really did become Muhammad Ali. Both pairs of sentences have change-in-property readings, but with (14) and (15) the properties in question are nominal, not substantive.

Here are a couple of other examples in which the use of a name might very well seem to be implicitly quotational.

- (19) Orrin Hatch thinks that Michael Jackson is a great basketball player.
- (20) Queen Elizabeth thought that Vivian Dunn was Irene Dunne's sister.

(19) could be true because Hatch has an erroneous belief about the pop star, but it could also be true because Hatch has mixed up Michael Jordan's name

with Michael Jackson's. As for (20), if it is true, that is probably not because the queen mistook the virile Lt. Col. Sir Vivian Dunn for a woman (Dunn was a well-known English conductor and composer).

There are several other uses of names that comport nicely with NDT. If I call someone on the phone who won't recognize my voice, I'll identify myself by saying,

(21) This is Kent Bach.

Or, if we are together and encounter a friend of yours, you might introduce me by uttering (21). In either case, we are using the demonstrative 'this', not my name, to refer to me, and using my name to identify me.

If I tell you that Sebastian Janikowski is getting in trouble again and you haven't heard of him, you'll probably ask me,

(22) Who is Sebastian Janikowski?

You are asking me to identify the person with that name. You are not asking for substantive information about that person. To be sure, there is a different type of situation in which that could happen. For example, after I introduce him to you at a party and he excuses himself, you might ask, "Who is Sebastian Janikowski?", in order to learn more about him. But now you are asking a different sort of question, which I could answer by telling you that he is a fun-loving placekicker.

Finally, here's an example that is made to order for NDT:

(23) If his parents had named him 'Aristocrates', Aristotle would have been Aristocrates instead of Aristotle.

We'll take up this example later (in section 4) when we look at Kripke's modal argument.

In this section, we have surveyed examples of non-referential uses of names. It is not clear how Millians would account for such uses, and it seems that they have to deny that the ostensibly true sentences we considered are literally true. Millians must insist that certain of the names in these sentences are being used elliptically, hence nonliterally, for complex phrases that mention those very names. Now I have not yet indicated how NDT proposes to explain referential uses of names. But before doing that, I want to note some interesting implications of NDT.

3. Names are not Lexical Items

ZIFF: "The word 'word' is sometimes used in an extended way that allows one to speak of any and all proper names as words. ... Proper names generally [are] not words." (1960, 86)

Proper names are not lexical items in a language. Dictionaries are not incomplete for not including them, and your vocabulary is not deficient because of all the proper names you don't know. Being unfamiliar with proper names like 'River Phoenix' (the name of a dearly departed singer/actor) or 'God Shammgod' (the name of former college basketball star) does not betray any linguistic deficiency, and learning 'Dweezil' and 'Moon Unit', the names of the late Frank Zappa's children, does not add to your knowledge of *English*. Knowing the "meaning" of a name does not require knowing all the individual(s) it belongs to or associating the "right" (substantive) description(s) with it. You just have to recognize it as belonging to the category of proper names and know how to apply the NDT schema to it. Whatever the name, when it occurs in a sentence it expresses the property of bearing that name and, when it occurs as a complete noun phrase, is semantically equivalent to the nominal description that mentions it.

Paul Ziff observed that "If I say 'are you familiar with Hsieh Ho's views on art?' I am speaking English: I am not speaking a combination of English and Chinese" (1960, 86). He was not suggesting that 'Hsieh Ho' is an English name. His point, rather, was that proper names do not, strictly speaking, belong to particular languages, and thus are not translatable. Of course they do have pronunciations and spellings characteristic of particular languages, and they have counterparts with pronunciations and spellings characteristic of other languages, but these counterparts are not translations of one another. Consider the name 'John', for example, and its counterparts 'Juan', 'Johann', 'Jean', and 'Ian'. Despite their distinctive pronunciations and spellings, each of them can be used without anomaly (or italics) outside its home language.¹⁹ For example, if you wish to speak in English about your Spanish friend 'Juan', you do not switch to 'John', and in writing you do not use italics.

Not only do proper names not belong to particular languages and are therefore not translatable, but for essentially the same reason distinct names of the same individual are not synonymous, and names that are shared by distinct individuals are not ambiguous.²⁰ Because the property of bearing one name is distinct from the property of bearing another, NDT entails that distinct names cannot be synonymous. It thereby explains why "Dylan bears 'Dylan'," as Katz says, "smacks of redundancy" (1990, 37), whereas "Zimmerman bears 'Dylan'" does not; why, since the "the bearer of 'Hesperus'" and "the bearer of 'Phosphorous'" are not synonymous, neither are 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus';²¹ and why the name 'Venus', being semantically equivalent to "the bearer of 'Venus'," has the same meaning whether it is used to refer to the planet, the goddess, or the tennis player.

Referential theories seem to imply that distinct names of the same individual are synonymous, and substantive description theories imply they can be synonymous, if the same descriptions are associated with them. Both types of theory imply that a name like 'Salem' or 'Sally' is ambiguous in as many ways as it has bearers, hence that being ignorant of all the towns named 'Salem' or all the people named 'Sally' is a deficiency in linguistic knowledge. Indeed,

substantive description theories imply that a name can be even ambiguous with respect to a single bearer, if there are different descriptions people associate with the same name for that individual. NDT implies none of these things.

4. Objections to NDT: Circularity and Rigidity

KRIPKE: “Sloppy, colloquial speech, which often confuses use and mention, may, of course, express the fact that someone might have been called, or not have been called, ‘Aristotle’ by saying that he might have been, or not have been, Aristotle. Occasionally, I have heard such loose usages adduced as counterexamples to the applicability of the present theory to ordinary language.” (1980, 62n)

Kripke’s best-known objection to description theories generally is based on his modal argument: names are rigid designators, definite descriptions are not.²² And he argued that metalinguistic (or nominal) description theories in particular are circular. Let’s address the circularity objection first.

Kripke (1980, 69) mentions a bad argument for a theory like NDT, namely that it explains why it is trifling to be told that Socrates is called ‘Socrates’. Kripke points out that this is no more or less trifling than the fact that horses are called ‘horses’. However, there is a relevant difference: whereas Socrates is called ‘Socrates’ because he has the property of bearing the name ‘Socrates’ (a property he acquired by being so named), horses are called ‘horses’ because they each have the property of being a horse. It is quite another matter that this property is expressed by the word ‘horse’.

Kripke rightly insists that a theory of proper names must avoid using a “notion of reference in a way that is ultimately impossible to eliminate” (1980, 68). He then objects that if “we ask to whom does [a speaker] refer by ‘Socrates’, ... the answer is given as, well, he refers to the man to whom he refers” (1980, 70). In fact, however, bearing a name is not the same property as being referred to by that name. For example, it was one thing for Giorgio Barbarelli to be given the name ‘Giorgione’ (because of his size) and another thing for him to be referred to by that name. It is no more essential to the property of bearing a certain name that one be referred to by that name than it is essential to the property of having a certain Social Security number that one be referred to by that number (ordinarily one is not). Although it is certainly more convenient to refer to people by their names, we *could* refer to them instead by their Social Security numbers. Just imagine a society in which proper names were used only on special occasions or in which people had trouble remembering proper names but were very good at remembering 9-digit numbers. If these were made public, there could then be a practice of referring to people by that number. In that society, a number like ‘213-98-4057’ could occur as the subject of a sentence, the numeric equivalent of NDT would apply to it, and it would be used to refer to the person with that number. Social Security numbers are not in fact so used,

but they could be. Proper names are so used, but they might not have been. In effect, then, the circularity objection equivocates on ‘is called’, which can mean either ‘is named’ or ‘is referred to by’. Since bearing a name and being referred to by that name are distinct properties, NDT is not the “theory of reference” Kripke takes it to be, much less a circular one.²³

Not being a Fregean theory, NDT does not say that the sense of a name determines its reference or even that individual names have senses (in Frege’s sense of ‘sense’). In claiming that a name (when it occurs as a complete noun phrase) is semantically equivalent to a nominal definite description, it is more like a Russellian theory of names.²⁴ Indeed, when combined with a Russellian theory of descriptions, it denies that proper names refer at all. A definite description *denotes* the individual that uniquely satisfies it, but denotation is a semantically inert relation. That is, a sentence containing a definite description expresses the same proposition whether or not the description denotes anything—the description makes the same semantic contribution either way. This is possible only if sentences containing descriptions do not express singular propositions but general propositions instead.²⁵ Accordingly, if proper names are, as NDT claims, semantically equivalent to nominal descriptions and if, like definite descriptions generally, nominal descriptions do not refer, then proper names do not refer either, although expressions of both sorts can of course be used to refer.²⁶ This must be kept in mind in assessing the modal argument.

The modal argument against description theories (of any sort) is that names cannot be synonymous with descriptions because names designate rigidly and descriptions do not (‘designate’ is a neutral term for either referring or denoting). Whereas a name has its designation fixed at the actual world, a description designates via the satisfaction of a condition at a world.²⁷ As applied to NDT, the modal argument is based on the intuition that, for example, (24) is true and (25) is false.

(24) Aristotle might not have been the bearer of ‘Aristotle’.

(25) Aristotle might not have been Aristotle.

The alleged problem with NDT is that it predicts that (25) is true.²⁸

In fact, (25) has a perfectly good reading on which it is true and is semantically equivalent to (24).²⁹ I am not suggesting, of course, that Aristotle might not have been identical to himself.³⁰ Nor am I committing the vulgar mistake of suggesting that (25) has a true reading because it could have expressed a different proposition than the one it does express. This would indeed be to “confuse use and mention,” and Kripke would be right to reject that suggestion. Rather, I am suggesting that (25) has a reading that Kripke does not consider, one involving the ‘is’ of predication rather than identity, on which it *does* express a true proposition.

Obviously, (24) can be taken in either way, and its truth value depends on which way it is taken. If we consider Aristotle and the bearer of ‘Aristotle’ and whether the former might not have been identical with the latter, then given

who Aristotle is and who the bearer of 'Aristotle' is, (24) is false, since the former and the latter are identical and identity is necessary. But if we consider Aristotle and the property of bearing the name 'Aristotle' and whether Aristotle might not have had that property, obviously (24) is true. In this case, it is read predicatively.

Now (25) can also be taken in two ways. It can mean either that Aristotle might not have been Aristotle, i.e., himself, or it can mean that Aristotle might not have had the (nominal) property of being Aristotle.³¹ (25) is false if taken as involving identity, since Aristotle could not have been someone other than himself. But (25) is true if taken predicatively. Consider the following scenario. Suppose Aristotle's parents were debating what to call their newborn son. They were torn between 'Aristotle' (or its classical Greek version) and 'Aristocrates'. One they liked because of its sound, the other because of its portent for his future as a philosopher. Hearing this you might utter (26),

- (26) If his parents had named him 'Aristocrates', Aristotle would have been Aristocrates instead of Aristotle.

It seems to me that (26) has a reading on which it is perfectly true, namely a predicative reading. Obviously, Aristotle couldn't have been (identical to) anyone else, but he could have borne the name 'Aristocrates' instead of 'Aristotle'. Accordingly, (25) is true on its predicative reading: Aristotle might not have been Aristotle.

Now confirmed Millians will deny that (25) has a predicative reading, one on which it is true. No doubt they will have balked at the many examples of predicative uses of names given in section 2 and tried to explain them away. To them I can only say this: the modal argument has no independent force against NDT without the assumption that a proper name like 'Aristotle' is semantically a referring expression. If you insist on viewing proper names on the model of individual constants in logic (logically proper names), nothing I say will convince you otherwise. You will of course deny that when a name occurs as a complete noun phrase, it is of the same semantic type as a definite description, e.g., "the bearer of 'Aristotle'," but it will be incumbent on you to explain away its occurrences as a predicate, either by itself or as part of a noun phrase. From the perspective of NDT, (24) and (25) can both be taken predicatively, and are both true when so taken. To use the modal argument on NDT, you have to show that a sentence like (25) has no predicative reading.

5. The Intuitions of Reference and Rigidity

FODOR: "No doubt, intuitions deserve respect, ... [but] informants, oneself included, can be quite awful at saying what it is that drives their intuitions. ... It is *always* up for grabs what an intuition is an intuition of." (1998, p. 86)

NDT denies that proper names semantically refer and that sentences containing them express singular propositions about their bearers. This conflicts with prevailing Kripkean intuitions. Accordingly, I need to deny that these are “direct intuitions of the truth conditions of particular sentences” (Kripke 1980, 14), and claim that they are, rather, intuitions of the truth conditions of what people ordinarily use these sentences to convey. Indeed, as I have suggested elsewhere (Bach 2002), using various examples not involving contentious issues, our intuitions are often insensitive to this theoretically important difference.³² In my view, there is a deep explanation for their insensitivity, which reflects the fact that for efficient and effective communication people rarely make fully explicit what they are trying to convey and rarely need to. Most sentences short enough to use in everyday conversation do not literally express things we are likely ever to mean, and most things we are likely ever to mean are not expressible by sentences we are likely ever to utter.³³ Moreover, in the course of speaking and listening to one another, we generally do not need to make conscious intuitive judgments about the semantic contents of the sentences we utter or hear. We focus instead on what we are communicating or on what is being communicated to us. We do not need to be able to make accurate judgments about what information is semantic and what is not in order to have real-time access to semantic information. For this reason, seemingly semantic intuitions cannot be assumed to be driven by, or to be reliable about, what we take them to be about.

In questioning the intuitions of reference and rigidity, I will employ the same pragmatic strategy that Kripke (1977) uses to explain away the apparent semantic significance of the referential-attributive distinction regarding definite descriptions. Kripke applies this strategy to argue that the fact that definite descriptions are commonly used referentially does not show that semantically they refer; I argue likewise for proper names. Interestingly, this is the same sort of strategy that two of the most prominent Millians, Salmon (1986) and Soames (1988, 2002), use to explain away the anti-substitution intuition about names in attitude contexts. For they too exploit the fact that people’s intuitions are often insensitive to the distinction between the semantic content of a sentence and what it is used to convey.³⁴ It is ironic that the very distinction these referentialists exploit to save the Millian view can be used to undermine its intuitive basis.

Now why does it often seem to people that a name itself refers? When you use a name to refer, generally the property of bearing the name does not enter into what you are trying to convey. For example, if you say, “Aristotle was the greatest philosopher of antiquity,” presumably you are not suggesting that having the name ‘Aristotle’ had anything to do with being a great philosopher. Rather, you intend the property of bearing that name merely enable your audience to identify who you are talking about. In this respect proper names are like most definite descriptions, which are incomplete and are also generally used referentially.³⁵ And when we use them to refer to specific individuals, the properties they express are incidental to what we are trying to convey.

When you use a description attributively, it is irrelevant if you happen to have some particular individual in mind. What matters is having the property expressed by the description, not being the thing that has that property. Occasionally proper names are used in this way. Suppose you and your friend discover a briefcase containing a large amount of money and quickly put the money in your shopping bag. You close the briefcase, put it down, and notice the name 'Cassius King' on the nameplate. You say to your friend, "Cassius King won't be happy, but at least he'll have his briefcase." Or suppose you walk down a corridor and see the name 'Shanda Lear' on the door of an office. You've never heard of her and know nothing about her (she is actually the daughter of Bill Lear, inventor of the Lear jet), but you say to a passerby, "I was going to my shrink, but maybe Shanda Lear will help me see the light." In both cases, you are not actually referring to the bearer of the name. You are merely using the name attributively. What matters to what you are saying and trying to convey are the properties of bearing the name 'Cassius King' or 'Shanda Lear', not whose names they are. These are exceptional cases, of course, but this only goes to show that ordinarily the property a name expresses does not enter into what we are trying to convey. It is when you use a name (or a description) referentially, you are interested in stating something about a certain individual, and the name (or description) is simply a means for enabling the listener to identify that individual.

To appreciate this, compare how we actually use names with how they might have been used. Suppose we cared about the proper names people had regardless of whose names they were. A employer might want to hire someone because his name was 'Cedric Scampini', a tourist might visit a city because its name was 'Cincinnati', and a diner might be tempted to try a restaurant called 'Colestra'. However frivolous such sentiments might be, people could attach great importance to names and come to regard bearing a certain name as a noteworthy property, regardless of who or what the name belongs to. In such a world, proper names would commonly have attributive uses.

I have been suggesting that we view proper names on the model of definite descriptions. Both are commonly used referentially, but it is the properties they express that enter into the semantic contents of propositions expressed by sentences in which they occur. The intuition of referentiality is responsive to the proposition a speaker ordinarily tries to convey in uttering a sentence containing a name. Now a referentialist might object in the fashion of Kaplan and argue that proper names are more like indexicals, and that it is their referents that enter into propositions expressed by sentences containing them. So, for example, when you use the pronoun 'I', say in uttering the sentence 'I'm a Millian', you refer to the person who is speaking, namely yourself. The property of being the speaker does not enter into the proposition expressed by your sentence in that context. You are saying that you are a Millian, not that the person who is speaking is one. However, the analogy with indexicals does not hold up. At least so far as I can see, indexicals like 'I' and 'you' do not have uses analogous to the predicative and attributive uses of names that I have been

illustrating. So they do not provide a helpful model. The referentialist is left with the problem of explaining how proper names can have these non-referential uses.

The intuition of rigidity has the same source as the intuition of referentiality. According to Kripke, “We have a direct intuition of rigidity, exhibited in our understanding of the truth conditions of particular sentences. In addition, various secondary phenomena, about ‘what we would say’, ... give indirect evidence of rigidity.” (1980, 14). However, he does not show that it is the truth conditions of sentences, rather than of what people try to convey in uttering them, that drive our intuitions. Of course, it is not true that *Aristotle* might not have been Aristotle. Obviously *he* could not have been somebody else. But it does not follow that sentence (25) expresses this (false) singular proposition.

(25) Aristotle might not have been Aristotle.

If one takes this sentence to express that proposition, one takes both occurrences of the name ‘Aristotle’ to refer to a particular Greek philosopher. Then of course the sentence will seem false.

How could the sentence be true? Well, to vary an earlier scenario, suppose that Aristotle’s parents decided to name their first two sons ‘Aristotle’ and ‘Aristocrates’ but hadn’t decided in which order. Then, when their first son was born, they made up their minds and named him ‘Aristocrates’, saving ‘Aristotle’ for their second son, the future student of Plato. They could have made the reverse decision. In this circumstance, sentence (25) is true: Aristotle might not have been Aristotle. On the (predicative) reading on which it is true, it does not mean that Aristotle might have been somebody else but merely that he might not have had the property of bearing ‘Aristotle’.

6. Shared Names and the Proprietary Pretense

KRIPKE: “Some have thought that the simple fact that two people can have the same name refutes the rigidity thesis, ... [but this] is irrelevant to the question of rigidity.” (1980, 8)

Any theory of proper names has to reckon with the fact that names often have more than one bearer. Millian theories (and also substantive description theories) imply that a name like ‘Salem’ or ‘Sally’ is ambiguous in as many ways as it has bearers. NDT does not imply this. However, shared names seem to pose a different problem for NDT, for there is no such town as *the* bearer of ‘Salem’ and no such woman as the bearer of ‘Sally’. In this section we will take up the problems that shared names pose for Millianism and for NDT. These problems have led some Millians, and even one nominal descriptivist (see below), to individuate names in such a way that the towns in Oregon and in Massachusetts named ‘Salem’ don’t really have the same name—they do not have one name that is ambiguous but two names that are homonymous. And some

descriptivists have been led to liken names to indexicals or demonstratives. NDT sticks to its guns and treats shared names on the model of incomplete definite descriptions: the fact that a name is ordinarily used to refer to one or another of its bearers does not mean that it is ambiguous, a set of homonyms, or indexical.

One general point to keep in mind is that regardless of which theory is correct, there is nothing in the sound (or spelling) of a name with many bearers that singles out which one it is being used to refer to. Claiming ambiguity, homonymy, or indexicality does not address the question of how you know, when you hear a name, what it is being used to refer to. Indeed, it seems that on the homonymy thesis if you heard someone say, "Salem is near a big city," you would have to identify which town is being referred to in order to identify which name you heard (attaching subscripts to 'Salem' can help the logician but not the ordinary language user).

Shared names pose a problem for Millianism, but not because they somehow threaten the thesis of rigidity. Kripke is clearly right about that. However, they force the thesis to be relativized to uses of names. As he writes, "That more than one proposition may be expressed by ['Aristotle was fond of dogs'] is irrelevant: the question is whether each such proposition is evaluated as I describe, or is it not. The view applies to each such proposition taken separately" (1980, 10). However, Kripke is forced to regard the sentence as having "various readings," one for each bearer of the name in question. He is unsure whether to treat a name like 'Aristotle' as ambiguous, in the way that words like 'light' and 'fire' are ambiguous, and he suggests as an alternative, at least "for theoretical purposes": "uses of phonetically the same sounds to name distinct objects count as distinct names" (1980, 8). He recognizes that "this terminology does not agree with the most common usage."³⁶ He is right about that too, for as Katz points out, Kripke's way of individuating names entails that 'namesake' is an empty term, that it is redundant for a son named after his father to put 'Jr.' after his name, and that if Brenda Starr married Kenneth Starr, she would change her last name by taking his (2001, 148–153). No wonder Katz complains that, "whereas classical descriptivists proliferate senses for referentially equivocal names, Kripke proliferates names themselves" (2001, 150).

The tactic of individuating names by their bearers only accentuates the problem with relativizing the rigidity thesis to uses of names. It doesn't falsify it but threatens to trivialize it. Of course it is irrelevant whether a particular name *does* designate individuals *besides* the one being referred to—the question is whether the name *could* designate a different individual *instead* (in that use). However, it is trifling to be told that a name is rigid because it couldn't have had a different bearer on the grounds that if it did, "it" would have been a different name. It is just as trifling to be told that a name is rigid on a use because if it referred to a different individual, that would count as a different use. But presumably that is not Kripke's point.

Clearly Kripke views proper names on the model of individual constants in logic, where the ambiguity or homonymy problem does not arise. Individual constants are proprietary (unshared) by stipulation. In the practice of logic the

conventions of notation and interpretation ensure that no individual constant is assigned to more than one individual and, with the help of numerical subscripts, that there are always enough individual constants to go around. Their rigidity is ordinarily just a consequence of the fact that the assignment of individuals to individual constants precedes the interpretation of a modal sentence and the evaluation of any sentence relative to a counterfactual situation.

Now the relevant difference between ordinary proper names and individual constants is *not* that proper names are often shared and that individual constants are proprietary. Their difference is ultimately syntactic: whereas individual constants are inherently complete noun phrases (or at least the formal equivalent), proper names are not. As we have seen, although proper names generally do occur as complete noun phrases, that is not what they are inherently, since they can be introduced by determiners and quantifiers and be modified and pluralized. The interpretation assigned to an individual constant enters directly into the propositions expressed by closed formulas in which it occurs. The individual it is assigned to is *ipso facto* its referent, and it has that referent on all of its occurrences (under that interpretation). With a proper name, on the other hand, the fact that it is bestowed on an individual does not make it refer to that individual whenever it occurs in a sentence. It can occur as a predicate or as part of a noun phrase without their interpretation depending on its referring to that (or any) individual.

The fact that names often have many bearers may seem to pose a problem for NDT, since there is no such place as *the* bearer of ‘Salem’ and no such person as *the* bearer of ‘David Kaplan’. So one could agree with NDT that in a sentence a name expresses the property of bearing it but resist its specific claim that when a name occurs as a complete noun phrase, it is semantically equivalent to the *definite* description that mentions it. One possible alternative is that a proper name ‘N’ is equivalent to the nominal *indefinite* description, “a bearer of ‘N’.” This certainly allows for multiplicity of bearers, but it is too weak. It falsely predicts that a sentence like ‘John is tall’ could be used to make merely the existential assertion that at least one bearer of ‘John’ is tall. The use of proper names is never as nonspecific as that.

More plausible is the suggestion, put forward by Burge (1973/1997), noted by Kripke (1980, 10n), and defended later in different forms by Recanati (1993, ch. 8) and by Pelczar and Rainsbury (1998), that a proper name is a kind of indexical or demonstrative, with fixed meaning and variable reference. Burge suggests that when a singular proper name occurs in a unmodified form, it contains a “demonstrative element” in its “semantic structure” (1973/1997, 599). His idea, in effect, is that a name ‘N’ is equivalent to the nominal *demonstrative* description, “that bearer of ‘N’,” although he makes clear that it does not *abbreviate* this description but merely expresses the same property. As Burge says, “the name itself enters into the conditions under which it is applicable” (598). However, his only reason for preferring a demonstrative over a definite determiner is that a sentence such as ‘Jim is 6 feet tall’ and ‘That book is green’ are alike in being “incompletely interpreted—they lack truth value,” presu-

ably because they do not express complete propositions. However, the mere fact that demonstrative phrases are used to refer to individuals satisfying their matrix, just as names are used to refer to their bearers, does not show that names, when they occur as complete noun phrases, are more like demonstrative phrases than definite descriptions. Burge does not attempt to show they are used like demonstrative phrases, and it seems that they are not. Whereas we might use 'that chair' to single out one chair from another, we would never use 'Jim Jones' to single out one Jim Jones from another. If one Jim Jones were salient, we would use 'that Jim Jones'. The sentence 'Jim is 6 feet tall' is more aptly compared with '*The* book is green', which contains an incomplete definite description rather than a demonstrative description.³⁷ From a Russellian point of view this sentence is not "incompletely interpreted"—it has a complete propositional content. Of course, this proposition is not what a speaker would convey in uttering the sentence, but that is where the distinction between sentence meaning and speaker's meaning comes in.

There is a more specific difficulty with Recanati's version of the indexical-demonstrative view. He writes, "the meaning of a proper name NN refers the hearer to a relation which holds in context between the name and its referent, namely the name-bearer relation"³⁸ (1993, 140–1). The trouble is that the name-bearer relation is not context-sensitive at all—a name bears this relation to all of its bearers, not just to the one the speaker is using it to refer to in the context. What is context-sensitive is the speaker-referent relation, but this is not the relation invoked by Recanati's rule.³⁹ The mere fact that proper names are used to refer to contextually identifiable individuals does not mean that they are semantically like indexicals and demonstratives. However, it does raise the question of how, if a proper name is equivalent to a *definite* description, it can be used to refer to any one of the possibly many individuals that it belongs to.

John Justice (2001) solves this problem by proposing a version of NDT, on which "truly proper" names cannot have more than one bearer.⁴⁰ He employs the same schema, "the bearer of 'N'," but there is no worry about too many Ns: for him proper names are inherently proprietary. So, for example, although different David Kaplans share what Kaplan (1990) calls a "generic" name, each David Kaplan has his own proprietary name 'David Kaplan', all with the same spelling and the same pronunciation. On this way of individuating names, it is guaranteed that there is such a person as *the* bearer of 'David Kaplan'. Justice claims that on his proprietary version of NDT, not only does sense determine reference but, even though it is a description theory, that it can explain why proper names are rigid designators. His reason is that the reference-determining senses of names are "word-reflexive": unlike other sorts of expressions, the condition that determines what a name designates depends on the name itself, not on some condition independent of the expression. Justice thinks that only the individual that was given the name and made its bearer at the name's origin can be its referent, hence that only this individual could be the referent at any circumstance of evaluation (in which it exists). As we saw earlier, however, this trivializes the rigidity thesis.⁴¹

There is little to recommend Justice's method of individuating proper names, and not just for Katz's reasons mentioned earlier (in connection with Kripke's homonymy suggestion). Justice thinks it solves the problem of determining reference, confident that "despite their identity of form, [homonymous] names will seldom be confused with each other. In directories, they will be two names" (2001, 358).⁴² Somehow, if you heard the sentence 'Socrates wore a beard', you would be able to divine just from its sound which 'Socrates' occurs in it so as to tell whether it is the name of Plato's teacher or the Brazilian soccer player (or someone else). 'Jim Jones' would present an even bigger challenge. Despite his claim that each name is custom-made to signify its exclusive bearer, Justice makes no provision for how people are supposed to tell one like-sounding name from another. But if they can't do that, evidently they don't know who, or what, they're talking about.

Obviously NDT does not explain how we recognize which of its bearers a shared name is used to refer to. However, it does not purport to explain this. It merely claims that a proper name, when it occurs as a complete noun phrase, is semantically equivalent to the possibly incomplete nominal definite description that mentions it. NDT is not threatened by the fact that names often have many bearers. Quite the contrary, it can assimilate ordinary referential uses of proper names to referential uses of incomplete singular definite descriptions. We can use such a description to refer to one individual even though its matrix describes many (notice that the determiner 'the' indicates totality, not uniqueness—what indicates uniqueness is that the definite description is singular). We use shared names to refer in much the same way as we use incomplete definite descriptions to refer.

Generally, when we know of individuals by name, we have other ways of identifying them than by their name. We know their distinguishing characteristics, such as their looks, their accomplishments, or their social role. We exploit this fact when we use names that have more than one bearer. In the context of a conversation we in effect pretend that it has only one bearer, namely the individual being talked about. This is a perfectly ordinary phenomenon and no different in kind from various other simplifying pretenses we implicitly make in everyday conversation. For example, we often pretend that the immediate environment and situation is all that is relevant to statements we make. We utter sentences like 'It's not raining now', 'I guess nobody's home', and 'I haven't eaten' as if they expressed much more restricted propositions than the much more far-reaching propositions they literally express. Similarly, we use incomplete definite descriptions, like 'the book' and 'the table', as if there is no other book and no other table than the ones we're talking about. So if, in order to tell someone where to find a certain book, I say "The book is on the table," for the immediate purpose of the conversation the book and the table in question are the only ones that matter. And just as we pretend in everyday conversation that these descriptions are satisfied uniquely, so we pretend that shared proper names are proprietary. If we use the name 'George' to refer to one of our friends, it is as if the name belongs to that individual exclusively. Accord-

ingly, we evaluate an utterance containing an incomplete definite description or a shared name as true or false depending on how things are with respect to the individual in question—other individuals that possess the relevant property or the relevant name simply don't count, at least for the purposes of conversation.⁴³ This does not apply in the household of George Foreman, who named his five sons 'George'. The proprietary pretense does not prevail everywhere.

7. Summing Up

BARWISE and PERRY: "If a 'Proper Name' is a name that refers to its bearer all by itself, then we don't think there are many Proper Names, as opposed to proper uses of names." (1983, 166)

Proper names do not refer by themselves. That does not prevent us from using them to talk about particular persons, places, or things and ascribe properties to them. In so doing, we are able to accommodate the fact that an individual can change over time, that our conception of it can change over time, that we can be mistaken in our conception of it, and that different people's conceptions of the same individual can differ. All this is possible if, as Mill realized, using a name to refer to an object is not a matter of representing it as having certain properties but merely of indicating what we are speaking about. In so doing, we are not thinking of it "under a description," as merely the unique thing of a certain sort. Rather, we are thinking of *it*, of that object in particular. We can do this not just with individuals we are currently perceiving or have previously perceived but even with ones we have learned of and know of only by name. Having a name for something helps us maintain a mental record of it, a record which can be called up and consulted, and added to or corrected in light of new information. Indeed, an individual can come to mind just by virtue of its name occurring to us—think 'Afghanistan' and you think of Afghanistan. And the name of something is generally the linguistic device best suited for calling it to others' minds, at least if it has a name and they know of it by name (otherwise an introduction is required). Calling things to mind seems to be what names are for, in both thought and communication.

Despite their roles in thought and in communication, we should not conclude that proper names have the *linguistic* function of referring to their bearers, of contributing their bearers to propositions expressed by sentences in which they occur.⁴⁴ There are numerous problems that arise from supposing this, including the classic quartet of problems discovered by Frege and Russell, which Millians have to jump through hoops to deal with. The problem for Millianism I have stressed here is to explain predicative and other non-referential uses of proper names.

Now the Millian does not have to deny that when you use a proper name to refer to the individual it belongs to, you convey that this individual bears that name, since it hardly follows that a name expresses the property of bearing

itself or that this property enters into propositions expressed by sentences in which the name occurs. In order to make a case for NDT, I gave various examples of how names can be used in non-referring ways, especially as predicates. Referentialists who do not ignore these uses altogether tend to dismiss them as peripheral or elliptical or nonliteral. This is understandable, given the traditional rendering of proper names as individual constants and the influence of Kripke's anti-descriptivist arguments, but it is not plausible. It smacks of special pleading.

The Nominal Description Theory comports with the various uses of names and avoids the problems with other forms of descriptivism. It is simply the thesis that a name 'N', when it occurs in a sentence, expresses the property of bearing that very name; and, when the name occurs as a complete phrase, that it is semantically equivalent (not syntactically or pragmatically equivalent) to the corresponding nominal definite description, "the bearer of 'N'." To explain the use of a name with many bearers to refer to a particular one of its bearers, NDT must be combined with a pragmatic account that parallels the explanation of referential uses of incomplete definite descriptions. This account exploits the distinction between the semantic content of a sentence and what people ordinarily convey in uttering it. The fact that sentences containing proper names are ordinarily used to communicate singular propositions accounts for the Millian intuition that what matters is the referent itself, rather than the property of bearing the name or any other property associated with the name. Although names are just given, descriptions have to be satisfied, but it doesn't take anything more to satisfy a nominal description than to be given the name it mentions.

Notes

1. These are the problems of how to explain: (a) how identity statements involving names can be informative, (b) substitution failure in attitude contexts, (c) the meaningfulness of sentences containing names without bearers (so-called empty names), hence (d) how some negative existential statements involving proper names can be true. I will not be taking up any of these puzzles here, but I think it is fair to say that Millians have jumped through hoops trying to solve them.
2. in Bach 1981 and 1987/1994, chs. 7 and 8. In a series of papers Jerry Katz (e.g., 1990, 1994, 2001) has proposed a somewhat similar theory, to be touched on in note 40 below.
3. As will be evident throughout, I accept Russell's contention that definite descriptions are not referring phrases. Kripke (1977) argued that Donnellan's distinction between referential and attributive uses of descriptions does not threaten Russell's theory, and I have argued likewise (Bach 1997/1994, chs. 5 and 6). For a thoroughgoing defense of Russell, see Neale 1990.
4. Although Kripke argues against description theories, he appeals to intuition to support the rigidity thesis: "We have a direct intuition of rigidity, exhibited in our understanding of the truth conditions of particular sentences. In addition, various secondary phenomena, about 'what we would say', ... give indirect evidence of rigidity." (1980, 14). In section 2 we will look some secondary phenomena that give counterevidence.

5. An expression can be rigid without being directly referential. As Kripke points out, some definite descriptions, like 'the smallest prime', are rigid "de facto" (1980, 21n). The rigidity of such descriptions is explained by the fact that which number is the smallest prime is a matter of necessity. Kaplan points out further that "rigid designation without direct reference" can be achieved with a "rigidifying operator" like 'actual'" (1989b, 577). In contrast, as Kaplan explains, proper names are rigid *because* they refer directly. He does not deny that something mediates the relation between a linguistic expression and an individual. Reference must be fixed somehow, but a "directly referential term goes directly to its referent, directly in the sense that it does not first pass through the proposition" (1989b, 569).
6. What I describe as the *Millian* or *referentialist* view (I use these terms interchangeably) is the claim that the (semantic) contribution that a proper name makes to propositions expressed by sentences in which it occurs is the individual it names. Kaplan recognizes that there may be descriptive information (identifying properties) associated with a name, but stresses that it is not included in semantic content. As for Kripke, Soames (2002) points out that he does not explicitly state a view on the semantic contents of names. Soames investigates the extent to which the above view on the semantic content of names is compatible with the possibility of what Evans (1982) called "descriptive" names, like 'Vulcan', and what Katz calls "improper" names, like 'Ivan the Terrible', so-called because they express substantive properties (2001, 156). I will not take up special sorts of names, such as nicknames, animals' names, geographical names, institutional names, brand names, 'frozen' definite descriptions, or fictional names, which all raise special questions of their own but, I believe, no special problems for NDT.
7. I am using the term 'proposition', here and throughout, with no commitment as to the nature of propositions or even as to their ineliminability. Accordingly, phrases like 'express a proposition', 'enter into a proposition', and 'singular/general proposition' should be understood in as theoretically neutral a way as possible.
8. Kripke speaks of the "view of Frege and Russell" (1980, 27), "the Frege-Russell view" (53) or "the theory of Frege and Russell" (60) as if both held the same view, and he seems to equate a name's having a sense with its being synonymous with a description (58–59). In a footnote Kripke (27n) acknowledges that Russell denies that names have senses, but he takes this to be a claim about logically proper names. He interprets Russell as holding, insofar as he claims that *ordinary* names abbreviate descriptions, that they do have senses. But Russell denies that descriptions have senses either.
9. Whereas for Frege both names and descriptions refer indirectly, for Russell reference is either direct or not reference at all—definite descriptions are quantificational phrases and merely denote. So they are not even indirectly *referential*, and the phrase 'directly referential' is redundant. Also, from a Russellian point of view, it is misleading for Kripke (1977) to contrast "semantic *reference*" (by a description) with "speaker's reference" (in using a description), as he does in arguing that Donnellan's referential-attributive distinction does not threaten Russell's theory of descriptions,.
10. Strictly speaking, it is the *matrix* of a definite description, such as 'teacher of Alexander' or "bearer of 'Aristotle'," that expresses the property in question. An entire description, like any quantificational phrase, may be construed as expressing a property of that property. So when I speak of a description expressing a property, that is a loose way of saying that its matrix expresses that property. I should add that if

you don't like my talk of properties and expressing properties, read 'expresses the property of being F' as 'is true of Fs' and, in particular, 'expresses the property of bearing 'N'' as 'is true of N(s)'.

11. Burge (1973), Cohen (1980), and Katz (2001) are three notable exceptions.
12. In most languages a singular proper noun is ordinarily not introduced by the definite article, but according to Segal (2001, 550), this is not true of Basque and modern Greek, and only sometimes true of Italian. However, in English the definite article is used with certain sorts of singular proper names, such as names of rivers ('the Ganges'), oceans ('the Atlantic'), and deserts ('the Sahara'). Perhaps these forms are elliptical for the name-containing definite descriptions, 'the Ganges River', 'the Atlantic Ocean', and 'the Sahara Desert'. That would help explain why, for example, 'the Mississippi' refers to the river, not the state. Curiously, in southern but not in northern California 'the' is included in references to highways ('the 101'). Also, a definite article is used when a name is modified, as in 'the philosopher David Kaplan', 'the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*', and 'the London in Canada'.
13. Here I am exploiting the distinction between simply expressing a complex property and expressing a complex of properties. Versions of this distinction are crucial to both King's (1995, 1998) and Richard's (1993, 2000) accounts of propositional structure and their solutions to the paradox of analysis.
14. Incidentally, Donald Duncan, though famous for the Duncan Yo-Yo, actually did not invent yo-yos. They had been around for centuries. He got the idea, the rights, and the Tagalog name from Philippine immigrant Pedro Flores in 1929. However, he did invent the critically important slip strong, which allows the yo-yo to spin freely at the end of the string (this is the basis for 99% of all yo-yo tricks). Also, it is not true that Duncan originally conceived of parking meters as pay toilets for dogs. In fact, he did not invent them either. Carlton McGee did, in 1932, but Duncan successfully marketed them.
15. Relying on various data, including sentences like (2), Delia Graff (2001) has forcefully argued that definite descriptions *are* predicates, not quantificational phrases, even when they occur in what appears to be grammatical subject position. The relevant point here that *semantically* they are not referring expressions.
16. Some predicative uses of names do not predicate the property of bearing the name, as illustrated by likely utterances of (i) and (ii):

- (i) Arnold Schwarzenegger is no Bigfoot.
- (ii) Secretariat was no Pegasus.

Such utterances are perfectly true, but not merely in the sense that Schwarzenegger does not bear the name 'Bigfoot' and Secretariat did not bear the name 'Pegasus'. It might seem that this is because these are fictional names, arguably with substantive descriptive contents. However, likely utterances of (iii) and (iv) are also perfectly true,

- (iii) Francis Bacon was no Shakespeare.
- (iv) Dan Quayle is no John Kennedy.

and not merely because Bacon did not bear the name 'Shakespeare' and Quayle did not bear the name 'John Kennedy'.

17. Perhaps this is how he would reply to his critic Boër (1975), who contends that these are cases of "conventional ellipsis." Boër argues that Burge did not show that predicative uses cannot be accounted for in terms of referential uses. The discus-

- sion to follow suggests, in effect, that Boër's claim of conventional ellipsis is gratuitous.
18. Burge himself argues that proper names *are* predicates, even when they occur as grammatical subjects. His view is similar to mine in some ways, and I will briefly take it up in section 6.
 19. A possible objection against NDT is that if 'John' were semantically equivalent to "the bearer of 'John'," it could not be used in non-English sentences, because the nominal descriptive frame 'the bearer of ___' would require translation. However, since proper names do not belong to particular languages, they can go directly into the nominal descriptive frame for any given language. So, for example, when it occurs as a complete noun phrase in an English sentence, 'Juan' is semantically equivalent to "the bearer of 'Juan.'" All the objection shows, I think, that it is not quite accurate to say, as Russell did, that proper names *abbreviate* descriptions, since 'Juan' "abbreviates" different descriptions when it occurs in sentences of different languages.
 20. Katz (1990, 48–9 and 61) makes similar points within the framework of his metalinguistic theory.
 21. From a Millian point of view, it is not clear how to characterize what one knows when one knows that a certain name refers to a certain individual. For if one's knowledge of the name 'Hesperus' consists in knowing that it names Hesperus, that is the same as knowing that it names Phosphorus. But this is precisely what one knows about the name 'Phosphorus'.
 22. He also objected to them on the basis of what is commonly known as the argument from ignorance and error. I think it is obvious that this argument clearly refutes substantive description theories. Equally obvious, however, it does not apply to NDT. For whereas someone could competently use the name 'Barry Bonds' to refer to Barry Bonds without knowing, for any allegedly synonymous description, that Barry Bonds has the property expressed by that description (e.g., 'the player who holds the MLB record for most home runs in a season'), one could not competently use the name 'Barry Bonds' to refer to him and fail to know that it is his.
 23. For further discussion of Kripke's circularity objection, see Bach 1987/1994, 159–61, Katz 1990, 37–45, and Recanati 1993, 158–61.
 24. In fact, Russell himself, although generally credited with proposing a substantive description theory, according to which the "ordinary" proper names of natural language are not "logically proper" names, occasionally hinted at a nominal theory (1918, 243, and 1919, 174).
 25. The type of general proposition in question might be called a 'uniqueness' proposition. Russell analyzed propositions of this sort into a complex logical form, expressible in the notation of modern first-order logic as (TD):

$$(TD) (\exists x)((\forall y)(Fy \equiv y=x) \ \& \ Gx)$$

The object that is the F does not appear in this proposition. So, for example, 'The queen of England is bald' does not express a proposition about Elizabeth II. It means what it means whether or not she is queen of England and, indeed, whether or not England has a queen. As a quantificational phrase, 'the queen of England' does not *refer* to Elizabeth II but, as Russell would say, merely *denotes* her, because she does not enter into the proposition. This phrase can of course be *used* to refer to her.

It is commonly and justly complained that this form (TD), although it captures the truth conditions of description sentences, distorts syntax beyond recognition.

However, as Stephen Neale has pointed out, such syntactic complexity is inessential to Russell's theory of descriptions, in particular to his view that definite descriptions are 'incomplete symbols'. What makes them incomplete is not that they 'disappear upon logical analysis', making grammatical form misleading as to logical form, but that they introduce quantificational structure rather than individuals into the propositions expressed by sentences in which they occur.

Moreover, the repugnant complexity of (TD) is an artifact of the expressive limitations of first-order logic. The usual symbolizations of English sentences with 'every' or 'some' as ' $(\forall x)(Fx \supset Gx)$ ' and ' $(\exists x)(Fx \ \& \ Gx)$ ' also make a hash of English syntax and are also artifacts of first-order notation. Moreover, that notation suffers from severe expressive limitations. As Barwise and Cooper (1981) showed, quantificational phrases in general, containing quantifiers like 'most', 'many', and 'several', are not amenable to first-order treatment. Neale (1990, 41–43), following Barwise and Cooper, urges using restricted quantification notation, for it provides a uniform schema for representing sentences containing quantificational phrases of any sort, including definite descriptions, without breaking them up or introducing material that is not present syntactically. As simplified by Graff (2001, 29), the general schema is ' $[Q: F]_x (Gx)$ ', as exemplified by '[the: queen of England]_x (x is bald)'.

26. Since description theories say that semantically names do not refer but merely denote, there is no point in objecting to a description theory on the grounds that any description (substantive or nominal) associated with a name serves merely to "fix the reference." Suppose the "referent" of a proper name is initially determined not by an ostensive baptism but by the stipulation that it is to belong to whatever satisfies a certain description. Then indeed people who later use that name do not need to associate certain properties with the name, any more than they have to be privy to a baptism, in order to use it to refer to that individual. But from NDT's standpoint, both baptismal naming and descriptonal stipulative naming are ways in which individuals can acquire names, not ways in which references of names are fixed. Of course, once an individual acquires a name, the name can be used to refer to that individual. The historical chains of reference that Kripke speaks of are perfectly real, but what these do is to connect acts of references made by speakers back to the individual initially named.
27. This is true even of those descriptions that are rigid *de facto*, such as 'the square of 3', though of course their designation is the same at every world.
28. It is worth repeating the point made earlier that NDT does not quite claim that proper names are *synonymous* with nominal definite descriptions. It claims only that when they occur as complete noun phrases, they are semantically equivalent to nominal descriptions considered as a whole. That is, a name expresses the property of bearing that name but does not express the bearer relation or the property of being that name.
29. I will not adopt the common descriptivist response to the modal argument that descriptivism does not imply that (25) has a reading on which it is true. The idea behind this response is that the descriptions with which proper names are synonymous are rigid (perhaps by containing the word 'actual') or, alternatively, that they always take wide scope. Soames (2002, ch. 2) has forcefully countered this response. Although he does not specifically discuss theories like NDT, I will not attempt to revive this sort of response here.
30. Kripke notes the difference between these three theses: "(i) that identical objects are necessarily identical, (ii) that true identity statements between rigid designators

- are necessary ; (iii) that identity statements between what we call 'names' in actual language are necessary" (1990, 4). And, as he points out, thesis (iii) follows from (ii) only if ordinary names are rigid. However, he does not consider the possibility that a sentence like (25) has a reading on which it is not an identity statement at all.
31. I am aware that some metaphysicians believe that each individual has the proprietary property of being that individual—you have yours, I have mine, and Aristotle the philosopher had his—and use the phrase 'being Aristotle' to designate one such property. However, even I believed in such properties, I would not suppose that the phrase 'being Aristotle' univocally picks one out.
 32. This distinction, whose theoretical importance I have argued for previously (Bach 2001), corresponds to Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts. Unfortunately, the verb 'say' is often used for both locutionary acts and for illocutionary acts of stating or asserting. The truth conditions of sentences determine what people *say* in uttering them, but often not what they use them to assert or otherwise convey.
 33. I develop this picture in Bach forthcoming. It is set against the background of a neo-Gricean framework presented in previous work (Bach and Harnish 1979 and Bach 1994, 1995, 1997, 2001, and 2002). Also, see Levinson 2000 for a comprehensive discussion of regularities in speaker meaning that go beyond linguistic meaning. His numerous examples illustrate the error of supposing that the semantic content of an indicative sentence is what it is mostly likely to be used to assert. Most utterances involve what I call "conversational implicature," in which what the speaker means is not made fully explicit.
 34. For example, if it is true that Hammurabi believed that Hesperus is visible only in the evening, then it is true that he believed that Phosphorus is visible only in the evening. We may prefer to *say* the former, because what we say is sensitive to a pragmatic "requirement that the reporter be maximally faithful to the words of the agent unless there is reason to deviate" (Soames 1988, 123). However, the anti-substitution intuition, insofar as it pertains to what the belief sentence itself says, betrays an implicit confusion between what the sentence says and what uttering it conveys, namely that the subject believes the proposition expressed by the 'that'-clause by taking that proposition in a way that is pragmatically associated with its wording. From a Millian point of view, any difference between two co-referring proper names cannot be semantic.
 35. An incomplete definite description is one whose matrix is satisfied by more than one individual. Most definite descriptions we use are incomplete. Usually we use 'the book' and 'the car', for example, to refer to a certain contextually identifiable book or car.
 36. Kaplan (1989b, 574–75, and 1990) has also proposed this way of individuating names, and lately Justice (2001) has adopted it in the course of defending a version of NDT to be discussed below.
 37. Incomplete definite descriptions are not semantically equivalent to demonstrative descriptions. See Bach 1987/1994, 103–8, 124–6, as well as Neale 1990, 93–102.
 38. Recanati's case for the indexical theory requires the claim that these name-assigning conventions "are part of the context rather than part of the language" (1993, 138). That is why he agrees with Katz and me that knowing the bearer(s) of a name is not a matter of *linguistic* competence and that the conventions linking names to their bearers are not *linguistic* conventions. It is also why he rejects the homonymy theory. On the other hand, Kaplan, who accepts the homonymy theory and maintains that

“proper names are not indexicals” (because of “the collapse of character, content, and referent”), suggests that context is “more naturally regarded as determining what word was used than as fixing the content of a single context-sensitive word” (1989a, 562).

39. It seems to me that Pelczar and Rainsbury’s (1998) account in terms of “dubbings in force” is subject to the same objection. Dubbings do not go in and out of force in different contexts. What varies is which bearer of the name the speaker intends to refer to.
40. Katz solves this problem by proposing a theory similar to NDT, the “pure metalinguistic theory,” and by exploiting the type-token distinction. PMT says that proper names have non-Fregean senses (these do not determine reference), as given by complex nominal descriptions of the form, “the thing which is a bearer of ‘N’.” This schema is more elaborate than NDT’s, but Katz opts for it, with its relative clause containing an indefinite description, to accommodate “the linguistic fact that a name is not limited to a single bearer” (1994, 17). (He has a further reason, namely, that “the internal structure ... makes it possible to associate different temporal indices with the entire sense of a name and also with the bearer relation part” (1994, 20). But NDT allows for the distinction between “The bearer of ‘N’ at t was F” and “The bearer of ‘N’ was F at t,” and can handle cases like ‘John Wayne was not famous when he was Marion Morrison’.) Now it seems that “the thing which is a bearer of ‘Jim Jones’,” PMT’s rendering of the name ‘Jim Jones’, is just a cumbersome paraphrase of “the bearer of ‘Jim Jones’.” However, this elaborate “sense structure” is supposed to do justice to the “division of labor” involved in the use of names: “the objects in the domain of the language are first filtered by the bearer condition, then by contextual knowledge of the name-bearer correlations, and finally by descriptive information introduced to make the referent contextually definite” (Katz 1994, 21).

If this division of labor were linguistically marked, then by parity of reasoning an ordinary (substantive) incomplete definite description like ‘the bottle’ would be marked similarly: its semantic structure would take the form, ‘the thing which is a bottle’. Yet there is no syntactic motivation for supposing that. Worse, this supposition does not really help explain how ‘the bottle’ can be used to refer to a specific bottle. If one utters “The bottle is empty,” using the description ‘the bottle’ to refer to a certain bottle, say the bottle one is examining, one does not make fully explicit what one means. But it wouldn’t help to say, “The thing which is a bottle is empty.” With either utterance, one means something regarding the contextually relevant bottle, but its being contextually relevant is not part of what one *says*. Adding the relative clause with its indefinite description does not help explain the specificity of the reference (at one point Katz (1990, 39) even includes the sense of ‘contextually definite’ in the sense structure of a name, as if this could help explain how a name can be used to refer to its contextually relevant bearer). Similarly, the use of a proper name with many bearers does not make explicit which of its bearers one is referring to, and Katz’s schema with its relative clause and indefinite description does not pick up the slack.

Katz goes further and attributes additional sense structure to particular tokens of a name, in order to explain the token’s reference to a particular bearer of the name type. Each token of a name with many bearers has a sense in its own right, according to Katz, and “the sense of literal tokens derives from the sense of their type” (1994, 23). But he does not explain how. He needs to say how the sense of

the type gets enriched into the sense of the token, so that its additional properties can effectively constrain the reference. Nor does he explain what these properties could be. For if sense properties (and relations) are, as Katz holds, characteristics like ambiguity, synonymy, redundancy, and antonymy, they could belong only to expression types, not tokens. But the main problem is that Katz is trying to get token reference to do the job of speaker's reference.

41. In fairness to Justice, I should mention that his preferred view may be that names are individuated by their origins, i.e., in acts of naming, not by things named. "Different names have different origins," he says (2001, 359). However, this does not help his case, for it falsifies his claim of rigidity. If origin rather than bearer is what matters, then it would be possible for one particular name to have been given to a different individual than the one it was actually given to. Suppose that a couple is expecting a pair of identical twin boys and decide in advance to name them, in order of birth, 'Art' and 'Bart'. If origin (or naming ceremony) is what matters, then if the babies were born in the opposite order, Art and Bart would have been given the name that the other actually got. Then, on Justice's conception of rigidity, the names would not be rigid.
42. Justice relies on how we count names in directories to justify his way of individuating them. However, he overlooks the fact that sometimes people have more than one listing. This suggests that what we count are occurrences of names, not names themselves.
43. In my view this is not a matter of indexical domain restriction. As I have argued (in Bach 2000) there is no good reason to suppose that the matrix of a description or any other quantificational phrase contains a variable of domain restriction. Also, when a definite description is used referentially, the speaker does not have to have in mind some restriction on the condition expressed by the matrix in order to use the description to refer to a certain particular individual.
44. It is important not to confuse descriptivism about proper names in language with descriptivism about them in thought. In their different ways, Frege and Russell held versions of both (see Bach 1996 for a comparison of Frege's two-tiered and Russell's single-tiered semantic and epistemological theories and of their views on presentation and on acquaintance). However, a descriptivist about proper names need not be a descriptivist about singular thought. In my view, if a thought is truly singular, its object is not thought of as that which satisfies a certain description. The object is determined relationally, not satisfactorily. It is the individual that stands in one of a certain class of relations (involving perception, memory, or communication) to the token of the thought in question, but the object is not represented *as* the thing which stands in that relation. In this way, singular thoughts are essentially indexical (see Bach 1987/1994, ch. 1). The relevant point here is that the thoughts one tries to convey in using sentences containing a proper name (say of the form 'N is F') are singular thoughts regarding the object in question (that it is F), whereas the sentence when one uses expresses a general, descriptive proposition (that the bearer of 'N' is F).

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