

CRITICAL NOTICE

Evans Gareth, *The Varieties of Reference*, edited by John McDowell, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982, pp. xiii, 418, \$19.95 (paper).

1. Introduction

At his death in 1980, Gareth Evans left behind an incomplete draft of a book together with various notes. John McDowell has worked this material up into the present book. We should be grateful to him. The book is laden with interesting ideas, reflecting years of sustained and penetrating thought about singular reference.

Evans has two main theses. The first is inspired by Russell's view that a sentence containing a genuine name is 'nonsense' if the name does not refer. Evans identifies a class of singular terms and mental representations that are 'Russellian'. The 'significance [of a Russellian singular term] depends upon its having a referent'. If it does not have one then an utterance containing it would fail 'to say anything' (p. 12); 'nothing constitutes *understanding* the utterance' (p. 71). An utterance that contains a Russellian singular term is also called Russellian (p. 67). So is a thought that contains a Russellian representation. Such a thought 'would not have been available to be thought and expressed if the object had not existed' (p. 64). The following terms and their associated representations are claimed to be Russellian: pronouns and 'ordinary demonstratives' used 'to refer to items in the shared perceptual environment' (p. 309); 'past-tense demonstratives' used to refer to an object previously encountered (pp. 305-6); 'testimony demonstratives' which rely on the hearer having 'information . . . from the testimony of others' (p. 306); and proper names (p. 310, except a few 'descriptive' ones like 'Jack the Ripper'). On the other hand, various other terms and representations — 'purely descriptive' (p. 140) ones — are said not to be Russellian. I shall call this 'the Russellian Thesis'.

The second thesis is 'Russell's Principle': to think 'about an object, one must *know* which object is in question' (p. 65); 'the subject must have a capacity to distinguish the object of his judgement from all other things: . . . for example [he] can perceive it at the present time; . . . [he] can recognize it if presented with it; . . . [he] knows distinguishing facts about it' (p. 89). Evans thinks that Kripke has been wrongly taken to have shown that this Principle is false (p. 74). As a result many have adopted 'the Photograph Model' according to which it is sufficient for a thought to be about an object that there be an appropriate causal relation between the thought and the object (p. 78). The Model is of course inconsistent with the Principle. The unification of this Model with Kripke's view of names under the title 'The Causal Theory of Reference' leads Evans to some dismissive remarks. Harman (1977) and I (1974) are the offenders cited as examples (p. 79).

Evans agrees with the causal theorist in thinking that an appropriate causal link to an object is *necessary* for singular reference in many cases. Evans' important disagreement with the causal theorist is over the *sufficiency* of the causal link: he thinks it is never sufficient, insisting instead on the 'venerable' (p. 76) Russell's Principle. The causal revolution has swung the pendulum too far away from traditional description theories of reference.

Despite Evans' significant concessions to the revolution, his dominant aim is to re-establish the old order. His book is the first detailed and informed attempt to do this.

Russell's Principle is false. So also is the Russellian Thesis, but underlying it is an important truth. In arguing for these claims against Evans, I shall be in part arguing

for, in part relying on, a version of the Photograph Model set out briefly in the 1974 paper Evans cites, but in much more detail in Devitt 1981a (see also 1981b and 1984a).¹

Evans' book also contains an interesting chapter (ch. 7) on 'self-identification'. This is almost a monograph in itself. It is 'something of a detour from the main line of argument' (p. 137) and I shall not discuss it.

This book is extremely difficult to read. To a degree this is inevitable in such a detailed treatment of a difficult subject. However, to a degree it is not. (1) Evans piles complications on top of details, all in the absence of any outline of the main theory. What the reader needs are a few broad brush-strokes before being immersed in the finer points. (2) Too often the message is deadened because the sentences are long; or because they contain phrases that lessen their assertoric force; or because they contain qualifying clauses. The book is short on bold and simple statements. Doubtless, Evans would have lessened these faults had he completed the book himself.

2. Methodology

A disappointing aspect of Evans' discussion is that he raises no questions about the nature of his task. What precisely are philosophers trying to do in giving a theory of singular reference? The answer depends, clearly enough, on that to the more general one: what precisely are we trying to do in the philosophy of language? These questions should not be set aside. Our answers to them are crucial to the assessment of any theory of reference. How are we to tell whether Evans' theory is correct? What are the tests the theory must pass?

Many have thought that the task in the philosophy of language is the 'analysis' of ordinary semantic terms or concepts. So the final test of a theory is that it capture our ordinary semantic intuitions: it should capture 'what we would say' in various circumstances. I think that this is quite wrong. In saying this I am not saying that analysis is pointless. What analysis might reveal is our implicit folk theory. This theory is an empirical theory which might, like any other, be false. However, it embodies the wisdom of the ages in semantics and so is a suitable starting point for a scientific semantics. The test for a semantic theory, whether folk or scientific, is that it explain the phenomena that prompted all this theorizing: linguistic behaviour. Clearly this explanation must be part of an explanation of behaviour in general, and hence part of an empirical theory of the mind.

Where does Evans stand on all this? It is hard to say because he does not address the matter.² It seems that he does not favour the conceptual analysis view of the task, for he does not accept our semantic intuitions as the ultimate test (e.g. p. 1): a theory could overrule them (e.g. p. 76). Yet there is no evidence that he views the task in the empirical way I do. He does not say what phenomena he is trying to explain. His discussion has the air of an *a priori* investigation.

These remarks about methodology have an important bearing on what follows.

3. The Russellian Thesis and Singular Representations

The Russellian Thesis purports to make a distinction between two types of singular term and representation. I think that Evans' discussion does point to a real distinction, but that his way of drawing it is unsatisfactory.

Consider representations first, and take as our example a thought involving a demonstrative identification. For Evans, such a thought is a paradigm Russellian

¹ I agree with Evans in a number of matters which go undiscussed. One of these is worth a mention. People link a name to an object through a 'pattern of dealings' (p.382): the name is not grounded only at a baptism but *multiply* grounded. Critics of causal theories of names often overlook this; e.g. Evans 1973.

² It is symptomatic of this failing that the book does not once mention Field's classic paper on truth (1972). Nor, interestingly enough, does it mention McDowell's Davidsonian response to Field which denies that we need a theory of reference at all (1978)!

thought. Suppose Ralph is looking at Lulu and thinks, 'That is a cat'. According to the explication quoted from p. 64 (see also, pp. 45-6, 71-2, 82-3, 136, 170, 173) what makes this thought Russellian is that it could not have existed if Lulu had not; there could then have been no thought with the same 'content'. What does this explication amount to?

In considering this matter I shall make the following assumptions: we think in a language; Ralph's thought is in English; to think is to be related to a sentence token in one's language of thought. Evans himself is not committed to such assumptions, but I think that the differences from them that he briefly indicates (pp. 100-1) would be irrelevant to the discussion. From this perspective Evans' explication of being Russellian amounts to this: a token thought of the same type as Ralph's could not have existed if Lulu had not; no token could have had the same content. Further, if there were no suitable substitute for Lulu, Ralph's token would have had no content at all.³ The crucial questions are: 'What type?'; 'In what sense of "content"?'.

Now clearly Lulu's absence would not make it impossible for Ralph to be related to a sentence token of 'That is a cat' playing exactly the same role in his inner life as the original token did. It could be brought about by Twin-Earth Lulu, Jemima, Superscientist, indigestion, or whatever. Its functional or conceptual role could be identical to that of the original: given any possible peripheral input, the two tokens could play the same role in producing the same (non-intentionally described) behavioural output. Actual and counter-factual Ralph could be in the same 'narrow' psychological state; they could be the same from the perspective of 'methodological solipsism'.⁴ Indeed, the two Ralphs could be in the same physical state. So if thought tokens are classified as being of the same type, and of having the same content, by their narrow properties, the Russellian Thesis is false of Ralph's thought.

Since Evans does not think that the non-existence of an object of thought deprives the thinker of a mental life (pp. 45-46), we might expect that he would accept the above conclusion whilst insisting that the notion of content relevant to the Russellian Thesis is a different one, one involving intentionality or reference. Yet it seems from the one place where he discusses the matter (pp. 200-4), that he does not accept that there *could be* a satisfactory notion of narrow content.⁵

Evans misses the point. His discussion reflects the undoubted fact that, *according to our ordinary view*, thoughts, representations, and (much) behaviour are thoroughly intentional: folk theory is 'wide'. Even if we take it for granted that this theory is true, it does not follow that there could not be a narrow psychology as well. It seems that narrow psychology can do the job of explaining non-intentionally described behaviour.⁶ If so, its notion of content is at least one satisfactory one. Further, we should not take folk theory for granted; it needs to be justified like any other. Why do we need an intentional notion of content at all? What phenomena do truth and reference explain? These are difficult questions, particularly if narrow psychology can fulfil its goals. Evans' casual treatment of these issues raises sharply the methodological worry of the last section.

Set aside any doubts about wide psychology. Evans must intend the Russellian Thesis to be applied to thought tokens that are classified (partly, at least) widely, so that their truth-conditional properties are important. Such a classification depends in some way on reference. Now Lulu's absence clearly affects reference: a token cannot refer to her if she does not exist. So, if two tokens are of the same type, and share content, only if they are coreferential, then Ralph's thought is certainly Russellian. However this version of Evans' explication makes it trivially the case that all singular

³ My thanks to Karen Green for correcting a mistake in my earlier interpretation of Evans' explication.

⁴ See Putnam 1975, pp. 220-2, Field 1978, pp. 44-7, and Fodor 1980, on methodological solipsism and the distinction between narrow and wide psychology.

⁵ See also his 1980 comment on Fodor.

⁶ See Stich 1983 for a persuasive argument to this effect.

representations are Russellian. Even the most descriptive representation we have of an object cannot refer to that object in a world where it does not exist. Similarly, reference failure affects the content of all thought tokens equally. If reference is all that matters to content then all tokens without reference lack content. If content is partly given by conceptual role, then any token without reference can have content.

The only difference Lulu's absence would make to the content of Ralph's thought is that the thought would not be about Lulu. The only difference that the absence of a suitable substitute for Lulu would make is that the thought would not be about anything. Just the same goes for any thought about Lulu, however descriptive. The Russellian Thesis is false.

Though the explication I have been criticizing dominates Evans' discussion of Russellian representations, he says many other things about them. These show that underlying his use of 'Russellian' is a distinction between 'information-based' (p. 121) and 'purely descriptive' (p. 140) singular representations. This distinction strikes me as intuitively appealing (indeed, I have argued for something similar myself). I would put the distinction as follows. There are two ways that a thought can be about an object: one way requires an appropriate causal link between the thought and the object to determine reference; the other requires the thought to contain a description that is true of just that object. In effect, this distinction weds the basic idea of a causal theory of reference to a generalisation of intuitions like those that led Donnellan to his distinction between uses of definite descriptions (1966). I have adapted Donnellan's terminology and called these two kinds of representation 'designational' and 'attributive', respectively.

Though we have drawn the distinction in the terms of wide psychology, it must be found in narrow psychology (just as the distinction between singular and general representations must). The different ways of determining reference are different ways of relating a representation to peripheral inputs; most obviously, a designational representation differs from an attributive one in being directly linked to the sort of input caused, as a matter of fact, by the particular object that would be, in wide psychology, the referent of the representation. So what is internal to the mind determines whether a representation is designational or attributive. What is external to the mind determines whether, and to what, a representation of either sort refers.

This distinction between designational and attributive thoughts, drawable at the narrow level, seems to capture many of the intuitions that led Evans to the Russellian Thesis. It also classifies singular representations into the same two groups as the Thesis. Evans' explication is irrelevant to drawing it. (The problems and implausibilities that this explication brings for Evans' view of content are vivid in the appendix to chapter 5.)

Definite descriptions provide a possible exception to the above claim about classification. I have indicated that Evans' distinction is reminiscent of Donnellan's. Yet I have not listed definite descriptions and their associated representations among Evans' Russellian items. Evans is aware that his distinction could be applied to descriptions and brings out nicely the factors that bear on the issue whether, as a matter of fact, it does apply to them. Yet he remains surprisingly neutral on — even uninterested in — the issue (pp. 320-6). I agree with Evans that the best case for applying the distinction to descriptions comes from a consideration of what he calls 'incomplete' descriptions like 'the man'. There seems to be a conventional use of these that is very similar to the information-invoking use of demonstratives like 'that man'; in both cases, reference depends on an appropriate causal link to an object.⁷ Evans remains unconvinced, partly, it seems, because of his view that causal links are not part of the content of a thought (on which, more in sec. 5 below).

4. *The Russellian Thesis and Singular Terms*

Consider next the part of the Russellian Thesis that applies to singular terms. Evans'

⁷ I have argued this (1981b) against Kripke (1979).

strategy for showing that some terms are Russellian is to show first that understanding utterances containing those terms requires a particular kind of thought, and second that that thought is Russellian (p. 72). The argument is that the utterances are 'information-invoking' (p. 309) in that they require for understanding an information-based thought; such a thought is Russellian. The terms in question are various uses of pronouns and demonstratives, and ordinary (non-descriptive) proper names (pp. 305-10).

If we replace the talk of Russellian thoughts with talk of designational thoughts, Evans' strategy strikes me as a good one: it does distinguish a group of singular terms. However, this is not to say that those terms are properly called 'Russellian'. That description brings trouble for terms just as it did for representations. In applying it to a term, Evans is saying that, were the term empty, an utterance containing it would fail 'to say anything' and, more importantly, nothing would 'constitute understanding' that utterance. Given his view of Russellian thoughts, he is of course bound to have this view of understanding an utterance: if that understanding requires a Russellian thought and that thought requires a referent, then there can be no understanding if there is no referent. On the other hand, my rejection of Evans' view of thoughts removes this reason for supposing that understanding requires a referent, and hence that some terms differ from others in being Russellian. Are there other reasons? Evans offers a very complex discussion of understanding, but this serves more to undermine the suppositions than support them.

The first point to note is that understanding in the narrow sense—requiring the hearer to have a thought with the appropriate narrow content—is unaffected by reference failure. However, Evans does not take narrow psychology seriously, as we have seen.

Folk psychology is wide and so requires more for understanding than this narrow sense. In the normal situation, where there is a referent, it requires the hearer to have a thought about the right object in the right way. According to Evans, that requirement is appropriate in all information-invoking situations (p. 314), with the result that if there is no referent understanding is impossible. This goes against folk psychology, as Evans seems to grant (pp. 327, 339). People ordinarily allow understanding if the hearer's thought has the right 'focus', even if there is no referent. Why should we go against the folk here? Even where there is reference failure, we seem to have a need for our usual three-way distinction between understanding, misunderstanding, and incomprehension or non-understanding (paradigm: hearing an utterance in a language one does not understand); placing all cases in the last two categories will miss differences that bear on the explanation of behaviour.

Evans doubts that the idea of a right focus for a thought can be explained in the absence of a referent. His reasons (additional to those arising from his view of Russellian thoughts) are weak (pp. 333-7). He supposes that the only candidate explanation would require the hearer's thought to 'involve the same way of identifying, or purporting to identify, an object' (p. 336) as the speaker's thought. (This supposition reflects his attachment to Russell's Principle.) In response, Evans considers cases of successful communication where there *is* a referent. He emphasizes the differences in ways of identifying permitted between the speaker and hearer in those situations. So, successful communication without a referent should allow such differences. Evans does not see how his candidate explanation can allow this.

However, the obvious explanation is surely not his candidate. It is that the hearer's thought has the right focus in virtue of having the same ultimate source. For example, a speaker's demonstrative utterance that purports to refer to a person but is caused by a shadow can be understood by someone who has a thought which is also based on the shadow. So the only difference between the empty and non-empty cases is that in the latter the source also qualifies as the referent. Evans' objection to his candidate explanation does not count against this one.

In cases of the sort we have just been considering, people wrongly believe that a

singular term has a referent. The 'conniving' uses of empty terms is probably more common: the 'apparently intelligible uses of such terms, made in the full knowledge that they have no referent' (p. 342). Evans is rightly impressed with the need to account for these uses. But once again his commitment to the Russellian Thesis leads to implausibilities in his theory of understanding, and elsewhere.

(1) One conniving use of empty terms is in games of 'make-believe'. Drawing on Kendall Walton (1973 and 1978), Evans gives a nice account of this (pp. 353-63). In such a game a lot of things that do not really happen make-believely happen; e.g. it is make-believely the case that the little green man looks sad, and that Mary's use of 'that man' referred to him. However some things are really the case in this situation; e.g. it is really the case that John believes Mary to have make-believely referred to that little green man. Intuitively, it is also really the case that John understands Mary's make-believe assertion involving that make-believe reference; he takes her to be expressing a make-believe thought. But Evans cannot allow this because 'that man' is both Russellian and empty. For him it is a case of make-believe or 'quasi-' understanding (p. 363). This fails to distinguish the case from quite different ones like the following: Alice is pretending to be an Indian and utters some gibberish; Charles *pretends to* understand this as a welcome. John differs from normal not in the sort of understanding he has, but in the content of what he understands; it is a make-believe content.

Quasi-understanding is used by Evans to explain away the appearance of understanding by someone who connives; by someone who rightly believes that the referent does not exist. So, Evans offers some comfort to folk. Quasi-understanding is no help with the earlier-discussed appearance of understanding by someone who wrongly believes that the referent does exist: communication is simply impossible. No comfort for folk there.

(2) A related problem arises with discourse 'about the novel' etc.. It is plausible to see such discourse as governed by an operator: 'it is fictionally the case that . . .'. So though this discourse is about pretence it does not itself involve pretence. Evans rejects this view because the discourse includes Russellian terms. Sentences containing these terms would be unintelligible if used without an operator. And

if a sentence fails to be properly intelligible when used on its own, the same will hold of any more complex sentence in which it is embedded. (p. 364)

This argument clearly fails if I am right in thinking that the sentence is not unintelligible on its own. Evans' alternative to the operator account is that statements about a novel continue the pretence (pp. 363-6). This groups these statements with statements within the novel. It is unclear to me how this proposal could be worked out with any plausibility. And, the problem in (1) arises again: the best we can manage when hearing a statement about a novel is said to be quasi-understanding.

(3) Conniving uses are common in opaque contexts. Evans briefly considers the examples, 'The Greeks admired Zeus', and 'The Greeks believed that Zeus was powerful'. Evans admits to being uncertain how to treat these but does make the rather astounding claim that 'they are not to be taken as *literally true*' (p. 366n).⁸

(4) Finally Evans denies that a negative existence statement like 'that woman does not exist' is the negation of a positive existence statement; 'for where "that woman" has no referent, there is no such statement to negate' (p. 351). His alternative view is that the making and understanding of negative existence statements exploit a game of make-believe (pp. 369-72). There seems no reason independent of Evans' view of Russellian terms for believing this. I suggest that the above negative statement is the negation of a positive one and is true if and only if 'that woman' fails to designate.

⁸ I suggest the following way of treating these examples: take the sentences to be opaque; state the truth conditions of opaque sentences in such a way that the examples can be true provided the Greeks are related to the causal network for 'Zeus' irrespective of whether the name refers (1981a, pp. 228-9, 243-4, 264-5).

(This is not 'an analysis' of the statement, of course; it is an explanation of its truth conditions.)

In sum, we have found no reason for denying that there can be understanding—in the fullest sense—in the absence of a referent, and so no reason for thinking that any term is Russellian. Further, the supposition that terms are Russellian has been seen to lead to many implausibilities.

Suppose that we forget about the property of being Russellian in considering singular terms and representations. Then I think that we can see that Evans was onto a distinction of great significance between two quite different ways in which singular terms and representations relate to the world.

5. The Case for Russell's Principle

My deepest disagreement with Evans is over Russell's Principle: 'a subject cannot make a judgement about something unless he knows which object his judgement is about' (p. 89). What is it to have this knowledge? Evans considers and rejects two verificationist answers derived from Dummett (secs. 4.2, 4.5). Despite this (rather bewildering) discussion, I think that Evans' own answer in terms of 'discriminating knowledge' (p. 89) is in the spirit, if not the Oxford letter, of verificationism.

Evans gives three ways a person can satisfy Russell's Principle. The first involves a 'demonstrative identification' of the object: the person is perceiving the object (ch. 6). The second involves a 'recognition-based identification' of the object: the person has perceived the object and could recognize it (ch. 8). The third way, which gets very little discussion, requires the person to know 'distinguishing facts' about the object (pp. 89, 136).

Evans' discussion of demonstrative identification is impressively thorough. It starts from the ordinary notion of perceiving an object. It does not rest there because he rightly finds the notion vague. Demonstrative identification involves, first, an 'information-link' between the person and the object (pp. 143-5). This is a certain sort of causal link which brings it about that the person is in a cognitive state with a particular content governed by a 'controlling conception' of the object. This 'informational state' is more primitive than belief; it is belief-independent (pp. 121-9). An information-link is necessary for the identification, but not sufficient. That identification involves, further, an ability to locate the object in space. Evans thinks that we can see the need for this additional requirement when we consider information-links that run, for example, through a television set and do not provide the person with an ability to locate the object (pp. 145-51). Evans goes on to give an interesting explanation of how, in the standard cases, the information-link does provide the ability to locate (pp. 151-76).

A person who subscribes to the Photograph Model will agree with Evans about the necessity of the information-link, and welcome his discussion of it. Perhaps he should disagree with Evans about its insufficiency. It is not obvious to me that the issue is crucial to the Model (cf. p. 150n). Certainly, the issue is a difficult one to argue, given that the information-link does provide the ability to locate in the standard cases. I shall not make a stand against the Principle here.

It is the Principle's requirement for situations other than those of demonstrative identification that I find clearly objectionable. In those situations, why should we suppose that a person can have a thought about an object only if he can recognize it or describe it uniquely? Why isn't it sufficient that there be an appropriate causal link based on a demonstrative identification, as the Model suggests? I shall first consider Evans' case for the Principle, and then give the case against it.

Evans has surprisingly little to say in defence of the Principle. One defence seems to arise from a view of what the content of a thought could *possibly* be. The standard view, encouraged by description theories of reference, was that the content must be descriptive. Only thus can we explain the differing 'cognitive values' of ' $a=a$ ' and ' $a=b$ '. Causal theories of reference were born out of the rejection of description

theories and led to the view that a thought content need not be descriptive. What else could it be? Many took causal theories to be committed to the view that the content associated, for example, with a name, was simply its designatum.⁹ This would leave the problem of differing cognitive values unsolved. Evans has a related objection to the Model (pp. 81-4, 139). Where there is no difference in the object represented by two mental states, the Model can explain the difference in the content of the states only as being one between the causal relations of each state to the object. He finds it

quite obscure how . . . the sheer difference between the causal relations could generate a difference in *content* between the two mental states, given that it need not in any way impinge on the subject's awareness. (p. 83)

Content must be something of which the subject is aware. It must be, Evans thinks, 'a mode of identification' (p. 83). Where this is not supplied by an associated description, we must seek another; e.g., a recognitional ability. (A curious consequence of this view is that being Russellian cannot be part of the content of a representation: pp. 308-9; but cf. pp. 140-1.)

Evans has overlooked a possibility: the difference in content between the two states is to be explained by a difference in causal relations that are *internal to the mind* and hence do impinge on the subject's awareness. What distinguishes the two states is that they are differently related to input and output; they have different conceptual roles. From the language-of-thought perspective, the states are able to play these different roles because they partly consist in formally different sentence tokens. This conceptual role of a mental state is not something additional to the causal links talked of in the Model. What Evans has overlooked is that the sort of causal link that the Model requires for representation is not all external to the mind. Indeed, it would be absurd to suppose that it was all external. An object can reflect light waves, emit sound waves, etc., in the vicinity of a subject without having any significant effect on the subject; the subject may not be looking or may be inattentive; more extremely, the subject may be a cockroach or a stone. It is clear that for the subject to think about the object as a result of what the object reflects, emits, etc., he must first be appropriately stimulated, and second must process the results of that stimulus appropriately.

In sum, Evans does not show that the Photograph Model cannot provide an adequate theory of content. So its alleged failure to do so provides no justification for requiring a mode of identification and hence no justification for Russell's Principle.

The main defence that Evans offers for the Principle starts from an assumption that is a version of what I have called 'the propositional assumption' about linguistic competence: for a subject to think that p , 'he must know what it is for it to be the case that p ' (p. 105). He says, optimistically, that 'perhaps no one will deny' this (p. 106), and offers no argument for it. I grant the popularity of the propositional assumption but do deny it (taken literally). I know of nothing in the literature that should be taken seriously as an argument for it. I have argued against it elsewhere.¹⁰ We shall see that without it the case for the Principle looks very thin.

Evans goes on to argue that the rejection of the Principle leaves

no difference in respect of what they can do, between a thinker who knows what it is for some proposition to be true, and one who does not. p. 106

Since, Evans believes, there must be such a difference, the Principle is confirmed (pp. 115-20). If the propositional assumption, with its gratuitous talk of knowledge, is dropped, the argument must run as follows. There has to be a behavioural difference between the person who thinks that p and the person who does not; if the Principle

⁹ E.g., Loar 1976 (cf. Devitt 1980); Schiffer 1979 and Ackerman 1979 (cf. Devitt 1981c); Ackerman 1980 (cf. Devitt 1983).

¹⁰ 1981a, pp. 95-110; 1983, pp. 674-5; 1984b, pp. 206-11.

is rejected there can be no such difference; so, the Principle should not be rejected. Both premises of this argument are unsupported and false.

First, why must there be a behavioural difference between the two people? If the difference between the people's thoughts is significant at the level of narrow psychology, then of course it must make a behavioural difference. The role of narrow psychology is simply to explain behaviour. However if the difference between the people is *only* in the reference of their thoughts, hence only a difference at the level of wide psychology, it will make no behavioural difference (sec. 3 above). For example, there need be no behavioural difference between thinking about Hawke and thinking about his Twin-Earth *doppelgänger*. To assume the contrary is simply to beg the question against the Photograph Model. The methodological worry returns (sec. 2 above).

Second, to assume that the rejection of the Principle leaves no room for a behavioural difference between the two people, is to assume that the behavioural consequences of thinking that *p* must be discriminatory; the consequences must identify the object of thought. Folk psychology already indicates that this assumption is false, for it sees thoughts as explaining behaviour *in general*. We look to cognitive science for a more worked-out explanation. The explanation will not make a thought, behaviouristically, into a simple input-output function. Given many possible inputs, the thought will interact with other possible thoughts to yield many possible outputs. None of that behavioural output need manifest discriminating knowledge. Having the thought makes difference in what a person is disposed to do, but not necessarily in what he is disposed to discriminate.¹¹

In sum, Evans is led astray, first by the assumption that thinking requires knowledge of truth conditions; second, by a lack of attention to the distinction between narrow and wide psychology; and third, in his insistence on discrimination, by the spirit of verificationism.

So far as I can see, Evans has nothing else to say in support of Russell's Principle. He does find support later in some cases where there is an appropriate causal link to an object but no capacity to identify it (p. 133-4). However, the support amounts to no more than the airing of the very intuitions that are in question.

6. The Case Against Russell's Principle: Names

Evans rightly points out that Kripke is often taken to have refuted Russell's Principle (p. 76), yet claims that it is 'fair to say' that he did not do so (p. 74). Evans does not think that Kripke himself claimed to have refuted the Principle in 'Naming and Necessity' (1972) but rather, it seems, that Kripke wrote occasionally in ways that suggested he had refuted it. Kripke's error was to have led others into the sin of rejecting the Principle (pp. 73-9).¹²

Evans' interpretation of Kripke may be right. Strangely enough, Evans cites not one bit of evidence in support of it. I shall not examine it.

Where did we sinners go wrong? Evans emphasizes a Gricean distinction between speaker meaning and conventional meaning (pp. 67-9). He seems to think that our first mistake was to have overlooked the bearing of this on the refutation of the description theory of names. It is possible to hold that the conventional reference of a name is not fixed by the descriptions the speaker associates with it, and yet hold that the speaker's reference—hence what if anything the thought expressed is about—is so determined (pp. 69-71). An argument against the description theory of names may not be one against the description theory of thought. Our second mistake, according to Evans, was to slide too readily from the view that an appropriate causal link to

an object is necessary for an information-based thought to be about the object, to the view that the link is sufficient for that purpose (pp. 76-9).

Perhaps some of us were a little casual with the distinction between the theory of names and the theory of the thoughts underlying them. However, I doubt that overlooking this distinction had anything to do with the popularity of the Photograph Model. Evans' first mistake is to ignore, near enough, the possibility that people adopted the Model because they took the examples of ignorance and error Kripke used against description theories of names to count also against Russell's Principle. For, if Evans had taken this possibility seriously, he would have felt obliged to discuss this wide range of examples in some detail instead of discussing just one example for one page (p. 75). Since, *prima facie*, Kripke's examples do count against the Principle, Evans' attitude here strikes me as perverse (particularly so since he later allows that there is a 'powerful temptation' to argue for a theory that accords with this *prima facie* view: pp. 402-3).

Once it is clear that an appropriate causal link to an object is necessary for an information-based thought, anyone with a scientifically proper interest in theoretical simplicity should confront the question: Is the link sufficient? He should require compelling reasons before concluding that it is not. Evans' second mistake is to urge Russell's Principle not on the basis of any compelling evidence that it is needed (sec. 5 above), but rather, it seems, out of a fondness for the past.

The example Evans discusses is one of ignorance: 'a child is introduced to the name "Socrates" by hearing simply that Socrates was a Greek philosopher' (p. 73). My intuitions are strong that just as the child's uses of 'Socrates' refer to Socrates, so also do the thoughts that these uses express. Yet clearly the child lacks discriminating knowledge of Socrates. Evans points out (p. 75) that for any of the child's thoughts to be about Socrates it must be possible for the child to entertain indefinitely many thoughts about him ('The Generality Constraint', pp. 100-5), including for example the thought that he was fat. I see no problem in the child having such thoughts: he can wonder what Socrates ate and drank, how he lived and died, etc.. If we think of the child gaining more knowledge about Socrates, but not enough to discriminate him, the case becomes even more convincing, for the child's position will then be like that of each of us with many names.

Cases of error are also important. Evans mentions these (p. 74), but does not discuss an example. Consider one: a person who would say, 'Einstein invented the atomic bomb' if asked who Einstein was. I would say that his thought is about Einstein even though he does not have discriminating knowledge of Einstein. Again a small enrichment of his beliefs makes the case more convincing and more typical. And again I see no problem with the Generality Constraint.

The case of Jonah is particularly convincing. We can suppose that there was a time when the whole (non-trivial) story associated with 'Jonah' by everyone did not apply to anyone. Yet, given this story was causally grounded in a historical figure, it would be plausible to say that people believed a false theory of *Jonah*. A scholar could speculate that *Jonah* was a certain ordinary man that the scholar had traced, that superstitious stories arose *about Jonah* in such and such circumstances, etc.. Perhaps at the end of his investigations the scholar will have a theory that gives him discriminating knowledge of Jonah. However, this was not a moment at which he changed from thinking of nothing (or what?) to thinking of Jonah; he was thinking of Jonah all the time.

This discussion indicates how Kripkean examples might be taken to count against Russell's Principle. It does not settle that they do, of course: that would require more detail, including a consideration of reference borrowing. However, it demonstrates the gross inadequacy of Evans' cursory treatment.

At the end of Evans' later discussion of his own theory of names, he considers briefly an example, not unlike some of Kripke's, but which he thinks favours the Principle over the Model.

¹¹ For more along these lines, see Devitt 1984b, pp. 211-18.

¹² Evans claims that Kripke could be seen not as 'challenging Russell's Principle' but 'as proposing acceptance of a specially exiguous way of conforming to it' (p. 74n). A principle that can be conformed to in this way is consistent with the Model and is not in question here.

Suppose someone is maliciously introduced into the practice of using the name 'Harold Macmillan' by being told 'Harold Macmillan is a bachelor, was leader of the Conservative Party, plays the organ, took Britain into the Common Market, has a yacht'. (p. 402)

Evans claims that the person's thought would be about Heath. The case is too underdescribed to be a test: we need the causal explanation of the introducer's actions, for that is what settles the matter according to the Model.¹³ If the introducer's intention is to get the person to call Heath 'Harold Macmillan', Evans' claim is right, but also perfectly in accord with the Model: the Model obviously does not prevent the application of a previously used name to a new bearer. On the other hand, if the introducer's intention is to induce false beliefs about Macmillan, then we have the basis for another good counter-example to the Principle: supply some details about the background to that intention – including, say, the fact that the introducer has never heard of Heath – and it is going to seem very plausible that the person's thoughts would be about Macmillan.

Evans remarks that intuitions, like mine above, should not *settle* the fate of the Principle; we need a theory of thought (p. 76). True, but this raises the methodological questions on which Evans is silent (sec. 2 above). What is the status of the intuitions? What counts as evidence for the theory? I think that the intuitions reflect folk theory. This is an empirical theory that might be false. However, in the absence of any powerful considerations from a demonstrably better theory, we should stick with it. If my intuitions are right about the above examples, Evans needs to produce evidence favouring his theory against the folk. This he does not do. Indeed, nowhere in the book does Evans consider what the evidence for his theory might be.

Considering the evidence is undoubtedly difficult. It requires an answer to the question: What do we need a theory of reference for? My own, somewhat tentative, view (1984b, ch. 6) is that we need to ascribe truth conditions to thoughts and their expression to explain our practice of learning from and teaching others; that is why we need wide psychology (sec. 2 above). We need reference to explain truth, and hence need a theory of reference. So the theory of reference is part of an explanation of a special sort of behaviour: learning and teaching. If this is so, then it counts against the Principle and in favour of the Model. That *x* is causally responsible (in part) for a certain belief is clearly relevant to our learning about *x* from that belief. It is hard to see why that learning should depend on the believer also having discriminating knowledge of *x*: where he is largely ignorant of *x*, we can learn the little he does know; even where he is wrong, we can often learn about *x* from his errors.

Perhaps my view of why we need a theory of reference is mistaken. Nevertheless, the main points against Evans stand. He has not shown that our folk-theoretic intuitions about a mass of Kripkean examples do not count against the Principle. He has provided no reason for setting them aside if they do.

Consider next Evans' theory of names (ch. 11). His theory of the *conventional* meaning of a (non-descriptive) name is similar to a causal theory like Kripke's (pp. 376-96).¹⁴ It distinguishes between 'producers' and 'consumers'. Producers 'have been introduced to the [proper-name-using] practice via their acquaintance with *x*' (p. 376). Consumers, on the other hand, have not; they are dependent on producers for their information about *x*. Whereas producers can recognize *x* as the bearer of the name, consumers may have only false information about *x*; yet their uses of the name still refer to *x* because they participate in the practice. What do *speakers mean*

¹³ It is common for critics of the causal theory of reference to make this mistake of not supplying the very information about an alleged counter-example that the theory thinks relevant; e.g. the example of 'Louis', Evans 1973, p. 192.

¹⁴ One difference arises from Evans' concern with cases of mistake and confusion (see also pp. 296-8, 316-20). I have urged the advantages of *partial reference* in handling these cases (1974, sec. 10; 1981a, sec. 5.4), but I seem to have convinced noone.

by a name? Because of Russell's Principle, Evans thinks that any competent speaker – any speaker who understands the name – must have discriminating knowledge of the object (pp. 398-404). That knowledge is what the speaker means by the name and is part of any thought he expresses using the name. It varies from speaker to speaker. Kripke has shown that many who use a name to refer lack discriminating knowledge of the object. Evans claims that such speakers lack competence:

many of those who are in a position to *use* a name to refer . . . cannot themselves properly *understand* utterances involving the name (including their own). p. 400

And, of course, such people are not in the position to have thoughts of the object in virtue of using the name.

I have already argued that this view of thought and speaker meaning is implausible and insufficiently supported by Evans. Consider now the consequences of combining it with his theory of the conventional meaning of a name. It is extraordinary enough that we should not understand many of the names we use successfully. It is even more so that nobody using a name ever means what he says by it: even when the speaker does understand the name, that part of the content of his thought is not to be identified with the conventional meaning of the name. If this detachment of regular speaker meaning from conventional meaning were real it would be unique. It would also be puzzling how such a conventional meaning could be created. Devotion to the Principle seems the only motivation for accepting these anomalies.

Drop the Principle and a simpler and more appealing view suggests itself. Both conventional and speaker meaning are explained in terms of the underlying causal network. The network involves both the name and its bearer. So the names itself is part of the content of the thought that the speaker expresses using the name. In all normal situations, speaker meaning and conventional meaning coincide; only in unusual situations, particularly ones of confusion and mistake, do the meanings diverge. Thus the Gricean distinction applies to names in much the same way as it applies to the rest of language.

7. The Case Against Russell's Principle: Past-Tense Demonstratives

We have considered thoughts involving demonstrative identification (sec. 5 above), and thoughts that prompt the use of names (sec. 6 above). We shall now consider thoughts about previously perceived objects, thoughts that prompt the use of past-tense demonstratives.

For these thoughts to be about an object, Russell's Principle requires that the subject either know distinguishing facts about, or be able to recognize, the object. Evans' preliminary account of the recognitional capacity is that it is

a capacity to pick out an object *as* the object of his thought upon being presented with it, as a consequence of having been presented with it in the past . . . it is essential . . . that there be one, and only one, object which he is disposed to pick out in this way. p. 271

Evans acknowledges 'two obvious difficulties':

The first arises because it is doubtful that someone who has the capacity to recognize his cat, or even his mother, has the capacity to distinguish that object (on being presented with it) from all other things. p. 271

The second difficulty arises because individuals may change beyond recognition. p. 272

A dramatic example of change occurs when an object ceases to exist.

Evans' response to the first difficulty is ingenious. We distinguish an object from others 'not only on the basis of the object's *appearance*, but also on the basis of its *location*' (p. 278). Evans has a nice example (p. 279-80). A subject sees one sheep in a group cough. He does not keep his eye on it but for some time afterwards he

may be able to distinguish it from all others *in its restricted spatio-temporal setting*. For he has a theory about how sheep move, knows how long it is since the sighting, and knows about his own movements. This greatly restricts the area in which he has to pick out the sheep by its appearance. Similarly, I have the capacity to distinguish an object on Earth from its Twin-Earth *doppelganger*. In these examples the relevant area is identified egocentrically, depending on the subject's knowledge of his own movements. In other cases, identification is non-egocentric; thus the subject can identify his radio *within his home*, whatever his own movements. What if there should be a 'look-alike' in the relevant area? His recognitional capacity must be supplemented by a descriptive element like 'which I met' or 'the one who plays chess' (pp. 282-3; later, in an appendix, he wonders whether this fall-back position is the general rule: pp. 229-300).

The case of the steel balls seems to be a counter-example to the Principle. This is the only apparent counter-example that Evans takes seriously. He discusses it in several places. The case concerns 'two indistinguishable steel balls suspended from the same point and rotating about it' (p. 90). The subject has perceived each ball at some time but, freakishly, has come to have thoughts he would express using 'that shiny ball' which are derived only from one. He does not have discriminating knowledge of that ball and yet our intuitions are that his thoughts are about that ball.

Evans' argument against taking this as a counter-example (pp. 115-9) needs no further discussion. It is based on the same assumptions, and hence is open to the same objections, as what I have earlier called (sec. 5) his 'main argument' for the Principle. Indeed the main argument is largely abstracted from this argument.

Evans attempts to explain away our intuitions about the steel balls (pp. 129-32). We are misled into the view that the subject is thinking about that ball because we can see that he has *the purpose* of referring to it; we overlook that he has not succeeded in that purpose. However, we have no need to explain anything away in the absence of good reasons for supposing we *have* been misled. (Similar remarks apply to Evans' similar attempt to explain away the implausibilities of his view of understanding a name: pp. 401-4.)

Setting aside our intuitions in the case of the steel balls may seem a small price to pay for the Principle, because the case is fantastical. However, there are thousands of counter-examples to the Principle that are mundane. To generate these we look for cases of ignorance and error (inspired by Kripke's efforts with names). Consider examples arising out of the following situation. A person is at a large party. On her way to get a drink, she overhears a provocative remark. She returns to the party after a delay and finds she cannot pick the man responsible from five others. Yet she still thinks that that man is a sexist. Or consider examples involving the many movable mass-produced artifacts of my life: pens, shirts, tooth-brushes, knives, radios, cars, etc.. I cannot distinguish the pen I was using yesterday from several others in the house; they are always being moved. Yet I still think that that pen was too runny. These are cases of ignorance. There are also cases of error. Set up the situation right and you can depend on our identifying the wrong objects. This makes no difference to what the woman and I were thinking about. Suppose Evans moves to the fall-back position: recognitional capacity supplemented by a description. The same problems will remain. Here are some of error. The woman picks out the wrong man because she thought the sexist was wearing a black shirt (it was actually blue); or because she thought he was drinking a martini (it was actually water). My description, 'the pen I was using yesterday' is false of the pen in question (I actually used it the day before).

It is a consequence of the Photograph Model that one sort of description will avoid these problems: a description that identifies the appropriate causal link to the object. Evans comes close to such descriptions with 'which I met' and 'which I observed' (p. 283). However, a description that identifies the causal link makes any recognitional capacity redundant. Further, should the subject have the capacity to produce such

a description, it is not that capacity which determines the object of thought, but the causal link that the description identifies.

In sum, despite the ingenuity of Evans' response to the first difficulty, he has not removed it. Russell's Principle once again leads to many counter-intuitive results.

Evans' response to the second difficulty is striking. He allows that the subject has the knowledge required by the Principle if he has the capacity to recognize the object *as it was* 'and is debarred from manifesting it only by the change in, or disappearance of, the relevant object' (p. 273).

The methodological worries (sec. 2 above) that should have been occasioned already by Evans' response to the first difficulty become acute with this new response. What is the point of these requirements that go to make up the Principle? Evans' discussion of recognition has a verificationist ring to it. What is there about the phenomena we seek to explain that would justify any such verificationist constraint on thinking about an object? I have already indicated (sec. 5) that Evans wants to distinguish his position from verificationism. The implausibility of that doctrine gives a good motive for doing so, but what is there apart from verificationism that *could* support the Principle? Evans' response to the second difficulty is an example of his departure from strict verificationism. What justifies this departure that would not also justify the abandonment of all the verificationist elements of Evans' thought? Why continue to insist on discrimination, identification, recognition, etc.? What is there about the phenomenoma that makes it appropriate in our theory of thought to require that a subject who cannot now recognize the object of thought should once have been able to? Suppose that the woman at the party was so struck by the provocative remark that she remembers the incident for years. What theoretical significance is there for her current thought whether she could have recognized the man on the morning after? Suppose she could have. What significance is there in whether she could have still identified him now if he had not become bald and fat with the passage of years? Evans does not consider such questions.

Suppose I am right in thinking that we need a theory of reference for thoughts as part of our explanation of learning and teaching (sec. 6 above). Then the recognition requirement is irrelevant. Information about the man responsible for the woman's thought can be gained from that thought however poor the woman's recognitional capacities. Similarly, my son can learn about a pen from my thought even though, as a result of his removing the pen from my desk, I cannot identify it.

This concludes my case against Russell's Principle.

8. Manifestation

Finally, consider a puzzling constraint that Evans places on *saying* or *referring to* something:

A speaker who is to say something by uttering a sentence containing a referring expression must make it *manifest* which object it is that he intends to be speaking about—which object an audience must think of in understanding his remark. (p. 311)

Now in a trivial sense the speaker manifests his intention to say something about *x* simply by using a term with that intention. We might suppose that any further behaviour he manifests could provide *evidence* of his intention but is not necessary for his saying something or referring. The point Evans is making is far from clear, but it seems that he does not think of (non-trivial) manifestation as being of only evidential significance: without it, nothing is said (pp. 311-20).

Note that we cannot require for a successful saying that the audience *does* understand: misunderstanding must be possible. The requirement must be that the speaker makes understanding *likely* or *easy*. So, presumably, the behaviour manifested must be of the sort that would *normally* lead to understanding in the circumstances.

This (vague) requirement on successful saying departs from folk semantics in a

theoretically unrewarding way. We need the theoretical tools to capture the distinction we ordinarily make between 'what is said' and 'what is understood'. When the latter matches the former, there is understanding; when it does not, there is misunderstanding or incomprehension. In these ordinary terms we can distinguish the following cases: of understanding what is said because the speaker manifested the sort of behaviour that would normally lead to understanding; of understanding despite the fact that he did not manifest such behaviour; of misunderstanding or incomprehension despite the fact that he did manifest such behaviour; of misunderstanding or incomprehension because he did not manifest such behaviour. We can see, then, that folk theory treats the matter of manifestation as separate from that of saying. There seems to be no good reason for a change that makes manifestation constitutive of saying.

Evans makes the nice point that 'communication is essentially a mode of the transmission of knowledge' (p. 310). As a result, he claims that understanding requires the hearer to 'know' that his interpretation is right. I balk at this talk of knowledge-that, preferring to say that understanding requires interpretation by a reliable process, but basically I agree. So where there is understanding, the speaker must have enabled the hearer to gain this 'knowledge'. Evans seems to think that these remarks about *understanding* justify the manifestation constraint on *saying*, yet clearly they do not.

Manifestation crops up again in Evans' discussion of names. His point is obviously a constitutive one:

If a speaker is to refer to something by using a name, then it is necessary that he manifest *which* name-using practice he intends to be, and to be taken to be, participating in. p. 384

What is required for this manifestation? It seems that the speaker must produce (or be able to?) the usual information, or misinformation, about the referent (pp. 384-7). Now there is no doubt that such behaviour is *evidence* of what practice the speaker is participating in, but why should we count it as anything more?¹⁵ Evans gives no convincing reason. Further, how is the requirement to be worked out? How extensive must the speaker's information/misinformation be, and why *that* extensive? How usual does he have to be? Surely he can refer even if he shows a bit of originality in his theory of the referent.

I wonder whether Evans' talk of manifestation reflects vestigial behaviourism.

9. Conclusions

Russell's Principle is an unwanted legacy of our verificationist past. Evans has nothing convincing to say for the Principle. Against it are examples drawn from Kripke's discussion of names. Against it are many examples associated with past-tense demonstratives. Against it, finally, is a theory I have tentatively urged of why we need reference.

¹⁵ Note that if we wed a Gricean distinction to the folk theoretic one above we can get four different 'meanings' of a name token: one involving the speaker's referent; one, the speaker's conventional referent; one, the hearer's referent; and one, the hearer's conventional referent. Thus, suppose *x* and *y* are both named '*a*'. *S* observes *u*, mistakes him for *x* and, as a result, says '*a* is *F*'. *A* hears this whilst observing *v* whom he mistakes for *y*. As a result he takes *S* to be referring to *v*. In these circumstances, the referent of the remark according to the convention *S* is participating in is *x*; that according to the convention *A* is participating in is *y*. Some would say that the speaker's referent was *u* and the hearer's *v*. I prefer to say that *S* partially referred (see previous note) to both *x* and *u*, and that *A* understood him as partially referring to both *y* and *v*. The point against Evans is that, for such cases of confusion, we need an apparatus that does not give understanding 'priority' over saying. Evans denies us such an apparatus.

The considerations that led to the rejection of the Principle, and the adoption of the Model, encourage the view that there are two sorts of singular term and representation: an item of the first sort depends for its reference on an appropriate causal link; an item of the second sort depends for its reference on an identifying description. Evans is clearly on the track of this distinction. However, he is mistaken in thinking that what distinguishes the first sort is that its items can have content only if they have reference. This obscures the distinction and has implausible consequences for the theory of singular terms.

Evans' requirement that successful reference requires manifestation is mistaken.

Evans was a brilliant philosopher and this often shows in his book. Despite this, the book is a disappointment. Its deepest failing is that it shows little sign of reflection upon the nature of its task. Such reflection should, I claim, not only lead one away from the main theses of the book, but also away from the implicit *a priorism* with which they are discussed.¹⁶

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¹⁶ I am indebted to John McDowell for lengthy comments that have led to some changes (though not nearly as many as he would have liked). Thanks also to Gregory Currie.

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