The Kind Membership Theory of Reference Fixing for Proper Names*

Eduardo García-Ramírez

Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas, UNAM

edu@filosoficas.unam.mx

Abstract

Gareth Evans (1973; 1982) presents what appears to be a successful common ground between descriptivist and direct-reference theories of reference fixing for proper names: the causal source theory of reference. In a recent paper, Imogen Dickie (2011) offers substantial objections to it and concludes by presenting a new alternative account, what she calls "the governance view." In this paper I want to offer yet another alternative version distinct from the governance view. I will show, first, how to deal with Dickie's objections without departing too far from Evan's original proposal, and, second, I will argue that the resulting theory –what I call "the kind-membership theory" is simpler and more successful than Dickie's.

Keywords: causal dependence, derivation, and presupposition.

Resumen

Gareth Evans (1973; 1982) nos ofrece lo que parece ser un punto medio entre el descripcionismo y la teoría de la referencia directa sobre el mecanismo mediante el cual fijamos la referencia de los nombres propios. Ésta es la denominada "teoría de la fuente causal de la referencia". En un artículo reciente Imogen

Dickie (2011) presenta objeciones importantes a la teoría de Evans y concluye presentando una teoría alternativa, la denominada "teoría de la gobernabilidad". En este trabajo quiero ofrecer una propuesta alternativa que evite la tesis de gobernabilidad de Dickie. Para ello mostraré, primero, cómo lidiar con las objeciones de Dickie sin alejarse demasiado de la propuesta original de Evans y, segundo, defenderé que la teoría resultante –la que llamo "teoría de la pertenencia a tipos"– es más simple y exitosa que la propuesta por Dickie.

Palabras clave: dependencia causal, derivación y presuposición.

Introduction

Since Frege (1892), proper names have been at the center of debate in contemporary philosophy of language. Particular interest in names was owed to the strange fact that, even though they seemed to be simple in nature – purely referential terms, as they were thought to be – their use in ordinary language was quite complex, exhibiting failures of substitution and informativity. These failures prompted Frege to propose his famous distinction, at the semantic level, between the reference and sense of a proper name. The discussion continued with Russell (1905) claiming that proper names where not genuinely referential expressions but, rather, hidden quantifiers. After Strawson's (1953) successful attempt to underscore the pragmatics of reference and proper names, Kripke (1981) initiated to another, closely related, debate. According to Kripke, we must distinguish between giving an account of the semantics of proper names and offering a theory of reference fixing for proper names. More specifically, the debate since Kripke has been framed between description theories and direct-reference theories. The former maintain (in some version or another) that speakers use descriptive information to fix the reference of a given name and that to be competent in the use of a proper name is to know the relevant description (or descriptions) that do such fixing. Direct-reference theories, on the contrary, claim that no such descriptive information is necessary, that competent speakers do not need to know any particular descriptive information in order to successfully refer to an object by means of a proper name. The debate between description theorists and direct-reference theorists continues to

date (Jackson, 2010; Soames, 2002), for none have been able to satisfy the demands of their opponent.

The core of the debate goes as follows. On the one hand, description theorists complain that direct-reference theorists either fail to offer a mechanism by means of which speakers manage to fix the referent of a name, or they only offer one such mechanism (e.g., Kripke's historical-causal chain) that patently fails –since causal chain theories cannot explain how names can change their referents through history. On the other hand, direct-reference theorists complain that description theories demand too much in terms of knowledge and cognitive abilities, granting competent speakers with *a priori* knowledge and conceptual abilities they simply lack.

It is in the midst of this debate that Gareth Evans (1973; 1982) presented what he thought to be a successful common ground between description theorists and direct-reference theorists: the causal source theory of reference. This theory is, in fact, a hybrid one. It claims, on the one hand, that the beliefs the speaker has associated under the relevant name are substantially relevant for fixing its referent –such is the descriptivist ingredient– and, on the other hand, the referent to be fixed for the relevant name is whichever object is *causally responsible* for the information available in the speaker's set of beliefs –thereby giving a substantive role to causal chains. The thrust of Evan's causal source theory is this: descriptive information is relevant, but not because the speaker must use it or be conscious of it –the referent of the name need not even *satisfy* the information in question, it may not have most of the properties mentioned –but because their causal origin will determine which object is to be the referent of the name –the referent will be whichever object *actually* caused that information to be in the speakers head, even if the information is misguided.

Even though Evan's hybrid theory appeared to have successfully reached a middle ground, it was not given much attention among theorists of proper names until very recently in an excellent paper owed to Imogen Dickie (2011). Dickie sets an extraordinary goal for herself: to recover Evan's hybrid theory by improving it. She presents an elaborate version of such a theory, offering three substantial objections to it and concluding by offering an interesting new hybrid theory of reference fixing for proper names, what she calls "the governance view." In this paper I want to do something that parallels Dickie's efforts. My main goal will be to offer yet another rendition of Evan's hybrid theory. I

will show, first, how to deal with Dickie's objections without departing too far from Evan's original proposal, and, second, I will argue that the resulting theory –what I call "the kind-membership theory"– is simpler and more successful than Dickie's.

1. The Elaborate Version

As I claimed just above, description theories of reference fixing have a *prima facie* advantage over direct reference theories, they offer an account of how it is that an object ends up being determined to be the referent of a name: i.e., whichever object *satisfies* the relevant description or descriptions. The disadvantage of this group of theories is also clear, they require that speakers *know* or be able to point out which description or descriptions it is that the referent satisfies. For this reason, direct reference theorists have proposed an alternative account, that is, to point out a mechanism for reference fixing that is completely independent of whether or not the speaker is or even *may be* aware of it: i.e., a causal-historical chain of referential uses of a proper name that eventually goes back to the referent.

This account (owed to Kripke 1981) delivers a mechanism for reference fixing that does not depend upon speakers' mental states. Briefly put, whatever object gets fixed as referent, it will be that which appears at the end of the causal-historical chain, the nature of which is clearly independent of any individual speaker. Evans 1973 famously presents what appears to be a devastating set of objections against the causal-chain theory of reference fixing for proper names.

There are, as Evans points out, several cases in which the referent of the name is simply not the object at the end (or beginning if you like) of the causal historical chain. These are cases where, at some point in the history of uses of the name, there has been a *reference change*. The most well known example is that of the name 'Madagascar.' Prior to Marco Polo's use of the name, 'Madagascar' referred to a part of continental Africa. Marco Polo picked up the use of the name from Arab sailors who, it seems, competently used the name to refer to a part of continental Africa. Marco Polo, however, started using it to refer to the island east of the continent, at which point a new use of the name 'Madagascar' began to refer to the island and not to a part of continental Africa. If we are to follow the causal-historical chain we will end up finding a part of continental Africa as the referent of the name 'Madagascar.' However,

as we all know, that is not the referent of the name. The causal-historical chain is misleading. The referent is the island, not a part of the continent.

Evans (1973) did not only point out problems for Kripke's theory, but also offered a solution. It seems clear that what makes it the case that Marco Polo refers to the island and not a part of continental Africa when he uses 'Madagascar' is *not* the fact that he is part of a given causal-historical chain of use, but the fact that he has the *intention* of referring to the island. What needs to be done is to include the speaker's beliefs (and other intentions) associated with the name as part of what determines the reference of the name. But it needs to be done in a way that does not demand too much in terms of what the speaker must know about the referent. It must be done in a way that the speaker does not need to know that the referent *satisfies* the information the speaker associates with the name. This is precisely what motivates Evans causal-source theory of reference fixing for proper names that is, in fact, a hybrid theory.

Evans' causal source theory of reference fixing for proper names claims, first, that the set of descriptive information the speaker associates with a name N determines which object o is to be its referent; and, second, that the relation between the set of such information *and* the referent is *not* that of *satisfaction* of the descriptions involved, but rather that of *being the causal source* responsible for the speaker's having associated such information with the name N. Briefly put, the theory goes as follows

> **Reference Fixing:** a speaker S refers to an object o by using a name N if and only if: (i) S associates a set of information I with the name N; and (ii) o is causally responsible (dominant causal source) for S associating I with N.

Clause (i) accounts for the role that speaker intentions play in determining reference. Clause (ii) accounts for the role that causal relations, in particular *acquaintance*, play in the process. The theory works by means of an interplay between descriptivist-friendly intentions and direct-reference-friendly causal relations. The first clause is meant to fix a context for the causal relations to take place (e.g., so that that the causal chain will not take us too far into the past in cases of reference change); the second clause is meant to avoid putting *satisfaction* demands in the relation between speaker, associated information, and referent. To get

this interplay clear one must understand what is meant by "dominant causal source" or "causal responsibility".

For a speaker S to refer to o by means of the name N, o must be the dominant causal source of the set of information I that S associates with N. An object o can be the dominant causal source of I even if o does not satisfy I, if I is true of another object q, or if there are other objects associated with I. All o needs to do to be the dominant causal source of I is to meet the following requirement

> **Causal Dominance:** o is the dominant causal source of S's beliefs that $Fa,… Fn$, if (i) there was an episode e that caused S's belief; (ii) S and o were causally related in that episode; and (iii) e is of the kind that is apt to produce knowledge that $Fa,… Fn$.

In other words, to be the dominant causal source of I in S, o must be causally related to S via the typical channels of causal interaction that produce reliable information and beliefs in humans. For example, o must have been *perceived* by S, or *talked about*, or *read about*, etc.

An important element in this account of causal responsibility (or dominant causal source) is the reliabilist account of the causal relation between speaker and referent. As such, the account is subject to the same problems as the reliabilist theory of knowledge. There are, for example, several cases of non-reliable processes that, still, generate knowledge. Someone may, for example, use fortune cookies to learn about her future, if what the cookie says is correct, then it seems that one has achieved knowledge about the future even though consulting fortune cookies is not a reliable process, i.e., it is not of the kind that is apt to produce knowledge about the future.

Similarly, a speaker S may associate the information set I with the name N to refer to o, even if she came to believe I by means of fortune cookies. Take for example Martha. She loves fortune cookies, one of them told her that she would have a daughter that would be named 'Monica,' and that Monica would be her first child. A year later Martha gives birth to her first child. She's named 'Monica.' Monica is the dominant causal source of the information I that Martha associates with the name 'Monica.' Yet Martha came to believe in I by means of a process that is not reliable, it is not of the kind that is apt to generate knowledge about children.

So Evans was forced to modify his theory by eliminating the reliabilist account of the causal (non-satisfaction-based) relation between speaker and referent. The result is Evans' second version of the causal source theory presented in his famous *The Varieties of Reference* (Evans, 1982). The resulting view substitutes reliabilism for a more flexible notion, that of *familiarity*. Thus, the episode e, or set of episodes $e_1, \ldots e_n$, must be of the kind that is apt to generate familiarity or acquaintance between the speaker and the referent.

> **Familiarity:** o is the dominant causal source of S's beliefs that $Fa, \ldots$
> Fn, if (i) there was an episode e, or set of episodes $e_1, \ldots e_n$, that
> caused S's belief; (ii) S and o were causally related in that
> episode; and (iii) e is of the kind that is apt to produce familiarity
> between S and o.

Additionally Evans (1982) makes a distinction between *producers*, *consumers*, and *parasites* of a name using practice. A producer is the one that satisfies the conditions above stated. More specifically, a producer of a name-using practice in which N is used to refer to o is a speaker that knows o as N, has beliefs (mental files) labeled under N, and those mental files are about o in virtue of the fact that o is the dominant causal source of those files (even if o does not satisfy the information in those files).

A consumer of a name using practice to use N to refer to o does not know o as N; she must have beliefs about o labeled under N, and those beliefs are appropriately related to o in virtue of being derived from a *producer's* beliefs about o. Finally, a parasitic consumer is a speaker that has no beliefs about o nor does she know o as N but simply has the intention of using N in just the same way that producers or consumers of that practice do.

The resulting account has the following elements:

> **I. Reference Fixing:** a speaker S refers to an object o by using a name
> N if and only if: (i) S associates a set of information I with the
> name N; and (ii) o is causally responsible (dominant causal
> source) for S associating I with N.
>
> **II. Familiarity:** o is the dominant causal source of S's beliefs that
> $Fa, \ldots Fn$, if (i) there was an episode e, or set of episodes $e_1, \ldots e_n$,

that caused *S*'s belief; (ii) *S* and *o* were causally related in that episode; and (iii) *e* is of the kind that is apt to produce familiarity between *S* and *o*.

III. Speakers: speakers will either be producers or consumers of name using practices. *Producers* satisfy the conditions in **I** and **II** directly, by having a special *rapport* or acquaintance with the referent. Consumers satisfy these conditions indirectly, by means of producers, if and only if they *causally derive* the information they associate with the name from the beliefs that producers themselves have. Parasites do not satisfy any of the conditions in **I** or **II**, they simply intend to use the name in the way others do.

This familiarity-based account of the causal relation successfully avoids the problems associated with reliabilism while maintaining the interplay between speaker intentions and causal relations, an interplay that is greatly needed to avoid the problems associated with both –descriptivist and direct-reference– theories of reference-fixing for proper names. Yet, even this more elaborate version seems to be in trouble.

Objections to the causal source view

In a recent paper, Imogen Dickie (2011) has presented counterexamples to Evans´model, in particular against his account of how consumer speakers may come to successfully refer to an object. According to Dickie, the requirement that consumers' beliefs are *causally derived* from those of producers is neither necessary nor sufficient.

Against Evans´claim that this requirement is necessary, Dickie presents the case of 'Geoffrey Chaucer.'

Case 1 Geoffrey Chaucer: Chaucer lived from about 1343 to 1400. He was well known in his lifetime. But in the centuries after his death, for reasons relating to the invention of the printing press and Henry VIII's desire to create an English national literature, Chaucer's name became flooded with invented claims about literary works attributed to him, and fabrications about his life, ancestry, place of birth, and so on. As a result of this flood of invention, there was a period of several hundred years (ending with the purging of the 'apocrypha' in the nineteenth century)

during which even Chaucer experts had mental files about ´Chaucer´ that were derived from these fabrications that followed Chaucer's death. [Dickie, 2011: 53-54]

Dickie's diagnosis is that consumers of the use of 'Chaucer' to refer to Chaucer had, for many centuries, files about Chaucer that were derived not from producer files but "from fabrications made long after Chaucer's death." If this is correct, then the causal source theory predicts that for many centuries those speakers were not referring to Chaucer, they were using 'Chaucer' to refer to something else. Yet, this seems like the wrong prediction. For centuries speakers have been part of a successful name using practice of using 'Chaucer' to refer to Chaucer, even if most of the information they associated to the name 'Chaucer' was derived from fabrications. I will dub this the "derivational objection."

I believe Dickie's diagnosis is partly mistaken. It is true that most of the information that consumer speakers have had for centuries was *directly* derived from fabrications, but this does not imply that they were not *in any sense* derived from producers of the use of 'Chaucer' to refer to Chaucer. Part of what I will do in this paper is to show how to avoid this line of objection by offering a counterfactual notion of *derivation*, one that stresses Evans' original commitment to *causal responsibility* on the side of the referent. In so doing, I will also show that Dickie's own proposal requires some such notion of derivability or it falls pray to her own objection. I shall work through this latter point in section 3. For what remains of this section, I will present Dickie's second objection, which I call the "taxonomic objection." In section 2, I will present Dickie's own theory of reference fixing, the so–called "governance view," to which I will present further objections. Finally, in section 3 I will, first, present two *addenda* to Evans' causal source theory; second, show how they successfully reply to Dickie's derivational and taxonomic objections; and, third, argue that the resulting theory is better than Dickie's governance view.

Dickie's taxonomic objection is presented against the idea that if there is to be successful reference, it is sufficient that most of a consumer's beliefs be *causally derived* from those of the producers´. The objection is illustrated by the case of 'Rio Ferdinand.'

Case 2 Rio Ferdinand: During a conversation about football teams and players, somebody tells me that Rio Ferdinand is based in Leeds and plays in a white strip. This is the first time I have heard the name 'Rio

Ferdinand.' For no good reason, I assume that 'Rio Ferdinand' is a name for a team (rather than a player). I follow news stories about the name 'Rio Ferdinand,' and after a few years I have formed a rather rich file on 'Rio Ferdinand.' I enrich my file by incorporating information that I pick up from various news sources, and I do so in a way that is consistent with my belief that Rio Ferdinand is a football team. So, for example, my file contains beliefs I would express by saying 'Rio Ferdinand is moving to Manchester,' 'Rio Ferdinand scored two goals on Saturday,' 'Some of Rio Ferdinand were in London at noon on Friday and some were in Glasgow,' 'Two thirds of Rio Ferdinand are vegetarian,' 'Rio Ferdinand might merge with Crystal Palace.' [Dickie, 2011: 54-55]

Suppose the example just presented describes my situation as a consumer of the practice of using 'Rio Ferdinand' as a name of an object. In Dickie's example, this sets me apart from producers who, unlike me, take 'Rio Ferdinand' to refer to a football player and not a team. Dickie diagnoses this situation by claiming that most of my beliefs would be derived from the beliefs of producers who use 'Rio Ferdinand' to refer to a football player. If this is so, then the causal source theory predicts that my use of the name will successfully refer to the football player. But this seems to be the wrong prediction. How can I use 'Rio Ferdinand' to refer to a football player if I believe that Rio Ferdinand is a football team? Somehow I made a taxonomic mistake by assuming that producers were talking about the wrong kind of object when using the name 'Rio Ferdinand.'

This objection, however, has a rather obvious solution which Dickie herself identifies: to add a taxonomic restriction or, if you prefer, a kind-membership restriction. Dickie suggests that, in order for a consumer to successfully refer, it is not sufficient for her beliefs to be derived from those of producers, it must also be the case that the consumer is not mistaken about the kind of object that the referent in fact happens to be. This would solve the Rio Ferdinand case, but it would take us into another problem, illustrated by the Oracle case.

Case 3 The Oracle: The sayings of the Oracle at Delphi are decided upon by a committee of priestesses who are in the practice among themselves of referring to the corporate decision-making body known as 'The Oracle,' and spread oracular sayings among ordinary people through sentences like 'The Oracle says that *p*.' An ordinary speaker's file contains beliefs that she could express by saying 'The Oracle is to

be consulted at Delphi,' 'The Oracle may not be consulted on Tuesday,' 'The Oracle predicted last years earthquake,' 'The Oracle appreciates cash donations.' It also contains a belief that she could express by saying 'The Oracle is a god.' The fact that the Oracle is actually a committee is a secret that is unknown outside the committee itself. [Dickie, 2011: 56]

Dickie's diagnosis identifies a tension. First, consumer speakers, i.e., those outside of the committee of priestesses, are taken to successfully refer to the relevant object even though they are mistaken about the kind of object the oracle is. They believe it is a god while it is, in fact, a committee of humans. But second, the causal-source theory enriched by Dickie´s kind-membership restriction predicts that consumer speakers are failing in their intent to use the name 'The Oracle' to refer to the Oracle simply because the enriched causal-source theory requires them to not be wrong about the kind of object the referent is. If so, Dickie argues, then the theory makes the wrong prediction, for consumer speakers seem to be successfully referring to the committee even if they don't know that it is a committee instead of a god.

Dickie's diagnosis about this case is, again, partially mistaken. It is true that there is an important failure on the side of the consumers in virtue of the fact that they have false beliefs about the kind-membership of the object they intend to refer to. But she is mistaken to think, *I believe*, that this does not preclude the speakers from using the name 'The Oracle' successfully. I take it that there are two distinct kind-membership requirements – a presuppositional or expected one and an ontological one – that are being conflated here, and that once we separate them it is clear that the resulting causal source theory of reference fixing makes the correct predictions. As I said before, I will develop this argument in section 3. In what follows I will consider Dickie's own governance view in order to see if and how it responds to the derivational and taxonomic objections.

2. The Governance View

Curiously enough, Dickie's *governance* view of reference fixing for proper names is more focused on attending to the taxonomic objection than the derivational one. What the taxonomic objection shows is that an extra element is needed. When it comes to consumer speakers it is not enough if they derive their beliefs about the name from producer speakers who are acquainted with the object. Case 2, Rio Ferdinand,

presents us with some such consumer speaker that, nonetheless, fails to refer to the soccer player because she thinks 'Rio Ferdinand' is the name of a team.

Even though it seems like a natural move, I have already said why Dickie does not think the extra ingredient should be a requirement of kind-membership. So Dickie resorts to something that seems to be like a kind-membership requirement without it actually being so. The extra ingredient is that of behavioral governance. This means that a given use of a name *N* to refer to an object *o* must be *governed* by the *possible behavior* of the object *o*. To understand this we must clarify what is understood by "possible behavior" as well as "governance."

Dickie puts a great deal in developing a notion of a contextually determined possible behavior. Take the case of Rio Ferdinand, the soccer player. There are a lot of things that he can do as an individual as well as a human being. He can walk, run and kick a soccer ball. He can also eat and drink. There are also many things that he cannot do in virtue of being human. He cannot, for example, fly like a bird, run as fast as jaguar, or travel among galaxies. But these are not the only relevant limitations upon his behavioral possibilities. If we are describing his happenings as part of a football match, there are many behavioral paths that are also excluded. We cannot say, for example, "he was running after the ball and all of a sudden started drinking soda" or "all of a sudden he took an airplane."

This contextually determined sense is the relevant one, according to Dickie, for name using practices. For a name using practice, say, that of using 'Rio Ferdinand' to refer to the football player, to observe *governance* is for this practice to be governed by the contextually determined possible behavior of the referent. To describe him as running after the ball is certainly to observe governance, but to describe him as behaving like a soccer team, saying that he is partly in London and partly in Leeds, is *not* to observe governance. So here is the principle of governance:

Governance: a use of *N* refers to *o* only if that use is governed by *o*'s possible behavior.

The view also includes several notions: that of a producer of a proper name using practice, an information channel, and the transmission of a use through a channel, all of which come from Evans' causal source proposal.

Producer: *S* is a producer in the practice of using *N* to refer to *o* if and only if *S* knows *o* as *N*.

Information channel: a chain of speakers S_1 to S_n is an information channel between S_1's uses of N and S_n's uses of N if and only if each speaker in the chain inherits information for the use of N from his or her predecessor who has familiarity with o, and passes information causally derived from this relationship to o, to his or her successor.

Transmission: an information channel transmits a use of N from S_1 to S_n if and only if S_1 is a producer in the practice and S_n is a consumer.

On this view, a proper name using practice is established by the producer's rapport (familiarity, acquaintance) with the referent and is transmitted by the information channels and/or networks of channels that transmit governance. Briefly put, the governance view claims the following:

S's use of N successfully refers to o if and only if:

(i) S is a producer in a practice of using N to refer to o; or

(ii) S is a consumer in a practice and S's N files are connected to a producer's N files by means of an information channel that transmits governance; or

(iii) S is a parasitic consumer in the practice of using N to refer to o.

As should be clear, the *governance view* is pretty much the same as the *causal source* view. The central, perhaps substantial, difference between both accounts is the way they understand the relation between producers and referents, the same relation that is meant to be transmitted through the history of the name-using practice by means of proper information channels.

According to the causal source view, the relevant relation between a producer speaker and the referent is that of *acquaintance*. The speaker must be familiar and have a special rapport with the referent for the speaker to initiate, produce, and transmit a name using practice.

According to the governance view, the relevant relation between a producer and the referent is that of *governance*. The speaker's use of N to refer to o must be constrained by the possible behavior of the referent in context. The speaker will fail to refer to the object competently if she uses the name to describe the referent as doing things that are contextually or ontologically impossible. There must be some such contextual and

behavioral constraints for the speaker to initiate, produce, and transmit a name-using practice.

All this is meant to account for the taxonomic objection, but what about the derivational one? How is it, recalling case 1, that consumer speakers manage to successfully refer to Geoffrey Chaucer even though most of the information they have about Chaucer derives from posthumous fabrications? Dickie's reply is simple. Consumer speakers successfully referred to Chaucer because the name using practice they were part of was capable of transmitting governance. In other words, even though most of the information consumer speakers associated with the name 'Geoffrey Chaucer' was false, their use of the name was still constrained by the possible behavior of Chaucer, since it was all about literary works that Chaucer did not write but could have written.

This, of course, is not enough to explain how consumers continued to refer to Chaucer. As Dickie reluctantly admits in her account of the information channels that are meant to transmit governance, the information must still somehow be *derived* from the object that is meant to be the referent. In her own words, an information channel is a "chain of speakers (…) such that each speaker inherits information expressed using [the name] from his or her predecessor, and passes information **causally derived** from this information to his or her successor." [Dickie, 2011: 59]

So the governance view deals with the derivational objection by means of behavioral governance and an underdeveloped notion of *causal derivation*. It seems to me that this latter notion is the one doing the explanatory work and, most importantly, that such notion is not substantially distinct from Evans.'

Objections to the governance view

Against the taxonomic solution

It is strange to see that the alternative, governance, view of reference fixing is very similar to Evans' own view. It is even stranger to see that the governance view seems to achieve results that are quite similar to those reached amending Evans' view with a kind-membership requirement which Dickie claims will not work. Governance identifies constraints on the possible behavior of objects. Is restricting the use of a proper name, so that it corresponds with the possible behavior of its object, really that

different from restricting the use of the name to the relevant kind of object? Aren't all possible behaviors of an object constrained by its kind-membership?

There's reason to think that what does the explanatory work against the taxonomic objection is not the presence or absence of governance in the use of the relevant names, but something quite different: whether or not the name using practice permits consumers to be misguided about the kind-membership of the referent.

Recall the relevant cases. Case 2 is about 'Rio Ferdinand,' a name that is normally used to refer to Rio Ferdinand, an English football player who plays as center-back for Manchester United. Speaker *S* comes to learn that such a name using practice exists, yet she mistakenly believes that Rio Ferdinand is a football team. The diagnosis: *S* fails to refer with her use of 'Rio Ferdinand.'

Case 3, on the other hand, is about 'The Oracle,' a name that most consumer speakers normally use to refer to a goddess that makes predictions. As a matter of fact, there is no goddess and the oracle is made up of a committee of priestesses, all of whom conceal this truth. It is part of the name using practice that consumers be mistaken about the kind-membership of the Oracle. People are expected to believe it is a goddess, not a committee. The diagnosis: consumer speakers refer successfully to the oracle.

Dickie's explanation of both cases is cast in terms of governance. In case 2, *S* fails to refer because her use of 'Rio Ferdinand' fails to be constrained by the possible behavior of Rio Ferdinand, the soccer player. *S* thinks, for example, that Rio Ferdinand can be partly in London and partly in Leeds. In case 3, consumer speakers succeed in referring because their use of 'The Oracle' (by luck) happens to be constrained by the possible behavior of the committee constituting the oracle, since it is clear that the behavior of a committee is also possible for a goddess.

But what happens if we modify the cases?, without affecting governance, for each name using practice, we might merely change the assumption according to which consumer speakers are expected to be correct or misguided about the kind-membership of the referent. If the intuitive judgment changes, then it will be clear that *governance* is simply not doing the explanatory work. Consider then the following modifications of the relevant cases.

Case 4 Rio Ferdinand-expanded: During a conversation about football teams and players, somebody tells me that Rio Ferdinand is based in Leeds and plays in a white strip. It turns out that there is a Rio Ferdinand fan club that finds him so immensely capable that they like to pretend that Rio Ferdinand is a football team unto himself rather than *just* a player. In fact, every time they find someone who is not knowledgeable about Rio Ferdinand, they simply let them think Rio Ferdinand is a team, without ever clarifying the truth. During a conversation about football teams and players, somebody tells me that Rio Ferdinand is based in Leeds and plays in a white uniform. This is the first time I have heard the name 'Rio Ferdinand.' For no very good reason, I assume that 'Rio Ferdinand' is a name for a team rather than a player. I follow news stories expressed using 'Rio Ferdinand,' and after a few years I have quite a rich 'Rio Ferdinand' file formed by incorporating what I pick up from various news sources in a way that is consistent with my belief that Rio Ferdinand is a football team. So, for example, my file contains the beliefs I would express by saying 'Rio Ferdinand is moving to Manchester,' 'Rio Ferdinand scored two goals on Saturday,' 'Some of Rio Ferdinand were in London at noon on Friday and some were in Glasgow,' 'Two thirds of Rio Ferdinand are vegetarian,' 'Rio Ferdinand might merge with Crystal Palace.'

Is it really clear that, as a result, I am using 'Rio Ferdinand' incompetently? Am I really failing to refer by using that name? My beliefs about Rio Ferdinand certainly are not constrained by the player's possible behavior. But if the truth came out, wouldn't I learn that I was, after all, just talking about a soccer player? It seems to me that this is what a competent speaker´s intuitions would tell us. What matters is not whether there is behavioral governance but whether the speaker's assumptions about the kind-membership of the referent are the expected ones. If the practice is such that speakers are expected to be mistaken about kind-membership (e.g., the case of 'Santa Claus') then it will be acceptable for speakers to use the name without being constrained by the possible behavior of the actual referent. If the practice is such that speakers are expected to be right about the kind-membership (e.g, the normal case 2 of 'Rio Ferdinand') then it will be unacceptable if speakers use the name without being constrained by the possible behavior (and other kind-membership features) of the actual referent.

Consider now what happens if we modify the Oracle example in the opposite direction, to include the presupposition that consumers should not be misguided about the kind-membership of the referent.

Case 5 The Oracle-expanded: The sayings of the Oracle, a financial consulting company based in New York City, are decided upon by a committee of priestesses who, among themselves, are in the practice of referring to their corporate decision-making body as 'The Oracle'. The committee spreads oracular sayings among ordinary people using sentences like 'The Oracle says that p'. The Oracle just recently went into business and it is began to notice that ordinary people are misguided about what they committee is: they think the Oracle is a goddess and not a committee. A typical ordinary speaker's file contains beliefs that she would express by saying 'The Oracle is to be consulted in New York City', 'The Oracle may not be consulted on Tuesday', 'The Oracle predicted last year's financial crisis', 'The Oracle appreciates cash donations'. It also contains the belief that she would express by saying 'The Oracle is a god'. The fact that the Oracle is actually a committee is not a secret, rather, it is expected to be known outside the committee itself.

Are consumers in the use of 'the Oracle' successfully referring even though their use properly observes governance? The Oracle is a corporate body and consumers think it is a goddess. No incompatibility in behavioral governance has taken place since whatever is possible for a committee of financial priestesses is certainly possible for a goddess. It seems, however, that consumer speakers are failing, that they are not competently using the name 'the Oracle' to refer to the corporate body.

Both extended cases 4 and 5 suggest that what guides our judgments of competence is not the criterion of *governance*, but, rather, what I will call the "expected kind-membership" criterion. According to this criterion the kind-membership of the referent is a relevant piece of information that helps speakers not only fix but also transmit the reference of a name using practice.

There are two ways in which kind-membership may matter. The first substantial way requires speakers to be correct about the kind-membership of the referent. This is an ontological requirement that seems very demanding, insofar as it says that there is only successful reference when there is knowledge about the nature (i.e., the kind)

of the referent. The second, less demanding, way of casting the kind-membership requirement is presuppositional in the sense that it merely requires speakers to make the right presupposition about the object's kind-membership. Thus, speakers need not know the nature of an object *o* in order to refer to it, but rather it is enough for them to presuppose that the object is the kind of object they have come to expect it to be. The expected kind is simply the kind-membership class to which competent users of *N* will assume the referent *o* to be a member, and they expect other users to make the same assumption. What the expected kind is will depend on the specific name using practice. Some practices are such that speakers are expected to be knowledgeable of the actual kind-membership of the referent (e.g., ordinary uses of names of people, cities, etc.). Other practices are such that speakers are expected to pretend that the referent is of a kind that is different from the kind it actually is (e.g., fictional uses of language and social myths). I will say more about the presuppositional character of the kind-membership requirement in section 3.

Against the derivational solution

We saw that in order to face the derivational solution concerning case 1 'Geoffrey Chaucer,' Dickie had to appeal to a second requirement beyond *governance*: i.e., *causal derivation*. According to the account, consumer speakers were able to refer to Chaucer by means of 'Geoffrey Chaucer,' even though most of the information they associated with 'Geoffrey Chaucer' was directly derived from posthumous fabrications, in virtue of the fact that all that information was still *causally derived* from Chaucer.

This second requirement is central, namely, that the information be causally derived from the information of predecessors and, eventually, from the information of producers. There are many ways of observing governance, but not all of them lead to the referent. Suppose that the fabrications associated with the name 'Geoffrey Chaucer' lead to a change in reference, such that Henry VIII decides to impose a new name practice according to which his beloved cousin is to be considered the author of Chaucer's work. Then the fabrications would have been causally derived from Henry's cousin, and the name using practice would take 'Geoffrey Chaucer' to refer to the king's cousin, not Chaucer. All of this would take place without violating the governance requirement, for

none of the possible behaviors associated with the king's cousin would be outside of the set of possible behaviors for Chaucer. Furthermore, in this modified case involving reference change, the information most speakers associate with the name 'Geoffrey Chaucer' is causally derivable from Geoffrey Chaucer just as it is in Dickie's case where no reference change occurs.

In the end, Dickie still needs one of the central elements in Evans' account: that if o is to be the referent of N, it better be the case that o is the dominant causal source of the information that speakers associate with N. But then it seems strange that some derivational objection applies to Evans' account that does not also apply to Dickie's.

Recall the objection: Dickie's diagnosis is that consumers who use the name 'Chaucer' to refer to Chaucer had, for many centuries, files about Chaucer that were not derived from producer files but "from fabrications made long after Chaucer's death." I believe Dickie's diagnosis is partly mistaken. It is true that most of the information that consumer speakers had for centuries was directly derived from fabrications, but this does not imply that they were not in any sense derived from producers of the name 'Chaucer.' In particular, it does not imply, as Dickie claims, that the information was not causally derived (however indirectly) from Geoffrey Chaucer himself.

If most of the information is derived from fabrications that Chaucer himself did not enforce –they took place "long after his death," says Dickie– then it must be that they are not reliably associated with Chaucer himself. In other words, it must be that the information channels that are used to transmit such information are not likely to generate knowledge about Chaucer. But that only goes to show that the channels are not always reliable, which is something Evans (1982) was already happy to give up. The important question here is whether these fabrications are such that they sever the causal link between speaker uses of 'Chaucer' and Chaucer himself. This is precisely what matters to the causal source theory of Evans. It is true that most of the information is not causally derived from Chaucer in a reliable way that may generate knowledge about Chaucer. It is false, however, that most of the information is not causally derived from Chaucer, full stop.

It is possible to show that Chaucer is the source from which all those fabrications are causally derived. As a matter of fact, there is some such derivation, namely, whichever trace of evidence historians followed in order to discover, first, that most information was a fabrication and,

second, that there are multiple links between the fabrications, Henry VIII's interest in a national English literature, and Chaucer himself. So Dickie is mistaken to think that because most of the information that consumer speakers associated with 'Geoffrey Chaucer' was derived from posthumous fabrications, it follows that most of the information was not causally derivable from Chaucer himself.

What is required to properly explain how both theories –Dickie's and Evans'– resolve the derivational objection is a criterion, namely, a way to find out whether or not a given set of information is causally derivable from the relevant object. I will offer one such criterion, as well as an alternative theory of reference fixing, in section 3.

3. The kind-membership theory

Any account of the reference fixing of proper names must explain how reference gets *fixed* and *transmitted* among competent speakers while avoiding the derivational and taxonomic objections.

Derivational Objection: speakers may inherit and further transmit the use of N to refer to o even if most of the information associated to N is directly *derived* from fabrications.

Taxonomic Objection: speakers may inherit and further transmit the use of N to refer to o even if they are mistaken about the kind-membership of o, but not if they are wrong about the kind-membership of o that their predecessors presuppose.

To account for the derivational objection a satisfactory theory needs the following claims.

Causal Derivation: speakers may use N to refer to o only if the information I (or most of it) associated with N causally derives from o.

Causal Dependence: the information I associated with N causally derives from o only if the *fact that a speaker believes I* causally depends on o.

These two claims turn causal derivation into causal dependence. Thanks to Lewis (1973 and 1986) we know that causal dependence is better explained in terms of counterfactual dependence. So we get a counterfactual criterion for causal derivation.

Counterfactual Derivation: the fact that a speaker S associates I with N is causally derived from o only if it depends counterfactually on o. In other words, if o had not existed, S would not have associated I with N.

This criterion helps us sort out the case of 'Geoffrey Chaucer.' For centuries most of the information consumer speakers associated with 'Geoffrey Chaucer' was derived from fabrications that were created "long after Chaucer's death." Yet, they still managed to successfully refer to Chaucer in their use of the name. This is so because those fabrications were causally derivable from Chaucer himself. The fact that those consumer speakers associated those fabrications with the name 'Geoffrey Chaucer' counterfactually depended on Chaucer having existed and having written the works he actually authored. In other words, had Chaucer not existed, those consumer speakers would not have associated those fabrications with the name 'Geoffrey Chaucer.'

As for the second objection, all that is needed is a presuppositional requirement of kind-membership.

Kind-membership: a consumer speaker *S* may inherit a use of *N* to refer to *o* only if *S* presupposes that the referent of *N* is a member of the expected kind *K*, and predecessors of *S presuppose* that the referent of *N* is a member of the class *K*.

Just as the counterfactual dependence solves the 'Geoffrey Chaucer' case, the kind-membership requirement solves the remaining cases. But before showing how this is the case, let me elaborate more on the presuppositional character of the requirement. I follow Stalnaker (1999) and accept the following two theses about presuppositions. First, presuppositions are propositional attitudes, that is to say, they are representational mental states that take propositions as their content. As such, they are similar to a belief but they are better understood as assumptions. A speaker may assume *that p* not only without being conscious of such an assumption, but also even if she explicitly believes something that contradicts such an assumption. Second, presuppositions are meant to be *pragmatic*, they are assumptions that are implicit in the use of certain expressions of a given language, but are not part of the semantic content of such expressions. This is a natural consequence of the fact that the requirement is meant to be about a name using *practice.* So, for example, the assumption that 'Rio Ferdinand' refers to a football player is not part of the meaning of 'Rio Ferdinand,' but operates as an implicit assumption for every competent use of 'Rio Ferdinand.'

Now, what exactly is the kind-membership presupposition that I propose to include as a requirement for the competent transmission of a name using practice? First of all, it is not a belief, but an implicit assumption. Second, it certainly does not have as its content a proposition

about the referent of the name, since that would presuppose that speakers already know how to use the name, thereby precluding any speaker from entering the name using practice. The kind-membership presupposition is more likely to have as its content a proposition *about the name* and the associated kind-membership. I already gave one example above (e.g., *'Rio Ferdinand' refers to a football player*,) while assumptions for the other cases might follow: *that 'The Oracle' refers to a goddess; that 'Geoffrey Chaucer' refers to an author*, etc. These are very specific presuppositions, but they can also be more general, for example, speakers of a given name-using practice may use a name by simple presupposing that it refers to *a human being*, to *an animal*, or to whatever other kind that may be relevant for the practice.

Thus, according to this view, the difference between the producer and the consumer of the name using practice is stark. The former is acquainted with the referent while the latter is not. Yet, both must share the kind-membership assumptions associated with the name for them to be part of the same name using practice.

Now let me show how this criterion helps explain all cases 2 – 5. It explains why in case 2, *S* fails to refer to Rio Ferdinand but also why in case 4 she succeeds. In both cases the speaker presupposes that the referent of 'Rio Ferdinand' belongs to the kind FOOTBALL TEAM and not to the kind FOOTBALL PLAYER. The difference between both cases turns upon the observance of the criterion that above I called the kind-membership presupposition. In case 2, the speaker does not presuppose that *o* is of the expected kind, since her predecessors presuppose that *o* is a member of the kind FOOTBALL PLAYER. In case 4, the speaker does presuppose that *o* is of the expected kind, since her predecessors like to pretend (and so presuppose) that *o* is a member of the kind FOOTBALL TEAM.

As I suggested, we can also explain what goes on in cases 3 and 5. In case 3, speakers succeed in referring to the Oracle whereas in case 5 they fail. In both cases, however, speakers presuppose that the referent of 'The Oracle' is of the kind GODDESS and not of the kind CORPORATE BODY. The difference between both cases, again, turns upon the observance of the criterion of the *kind-membership* criterion. In case 3, speakers succeed because they do presuppose that the referent of 'The Oracle' is of the expected kind, since their predecessors like to pretend (and so presuppose) that it is a member of the kind GODDESS. In case 5, speakers fail because they do not presuppose that the referent of 'The Oracle' is of

the expected kind, since their predecessors assume that it is a member of the kind CORPORATE BODY.

With these two amendments, a counterfactually enriched theory of *causal derivation* and a presuppositionally grounded account of *kind-membership*, we can recover a version of Evans' causal source theory and make it work. To be fair to Evans, causal derivation is not quite like an extra element, completely foreign to Evans' account. It is, more accurately, a clearer and more precise way to put the notions of causal dominance and causal source to work on behalf of the theory. The second amendment, the presuppositional (but not ontological) understanding of a *kind-membership* requirement, does in fact constitute a substantial addendum to the account.

The resulting kind-membership theory of reference fixing, which surpasses both Evans' and Dickie's proposals, goes as follows:

Reference Fixing: a speaker S refers to an object o by using a name N if and only if: (i) S associates a set of information I with the name N; (ii) the information I is *causally derived* from o; and (iii) S presupposes that the referent of N is a member of the expected kind K.

Speakers: speakers will either be producers or consumers of name using practices. *Producers* satisfy the conditions in (i)-(iii) directly, by having a special *rapport* or acquaintance with the referent. Consumers satisfy these conditions indirectly, by means of producers, if and only if they *causally derive* the information they associate with the name from the beliefs and assumptions that producers themselves have. Parasites do not satisfy any of the conditions (i)-(ii), they simply intend to use the name in the way others do.

Rapport: producer speakers of the practice of using N to refer to o have a special rapport with o only if: (i) there was an episode e, or set of episodes $e_1, \ldots e_n$, that caused S's beliefs; (ii) S and o were causally related in that episode; and (iii) e is of the kind that is apt to produce familiarity between S and o.

These conditions can, of course, be developed further. In particular the relation of familiarity *via* rapport that a producer speaker must satisfy can be given much more detail. It seems appropriate to follow Dickie, for example, and claim that, in virtue of their rapport with o,

producers of the practice of using *N* to refer to *o* must be "able to identify *o* demonstratively (and identify it as *N*), re-identify *o* after breaks in observation (and re-identify it as *N* encountered again), and use *N* to communicate about *o* among themselves." [Dickie, 2010:71]

The resulting theory is what I call the "kind-membership" theory of reference fixing for proper names. Unlike Evans' causal source theory, the counterfactually enriched and presuppositionally grounded kind-membership theory can successfully avoid the derivational and taxonomic objections presented by Dickie (2011). Unlike Dickie's governance view, the kind-membership theory can successfully explain the extended versions of the derivational and taxonomic objections. In this sense, the kind-membership theory has greater explanatory power than both alternative accounts.

As for parsimony, the kind-membership theory makes use of the same distinctions and requirements as the alternative ones. They all require some or other notion of causal derivation –the kind-membership theory actually provides a counterfactually enriched one– as well as the distinctions between producer, consumer, and parasite speakers.

It does have an extra element with respect to the causal source view: the kind-membership requirement. But this element comes at a low cost since it is meant to be presuppositional and not ontological. As such, the kind-membership requirement does not place heavy cognitive demands upon the consumer speaker. It merely asks that the consumer's presuppositions (particularly those about the kind-membership associated with the name) be in tune with the presuppositions of the speakers from whom she inherits the use of the name.

Unlike the governance view, the kind-membership view does not make any assumptions with respect to the possible behavior of the referent and it does not demand that the uses of the name be constrained by any such notions. Asides from the theoretical problems mentioned in section 2, the governance constraint appears to place an unduly heavy cognitive burden on the speaker: if they fail (minimally) to be attuned to, if not have explicit knowledge about, the possible behavior of the referent, then they will simply fail.

I think these features make the kind-membership theory of reference fixing for names an interesting alternative, as it presents substantial

explanatory power but at a lower ontological cost. That makes it a theory worth defending.

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