

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: IT'S JUST SEMANTICS: WHAT FICTION REVEALS
ABOUT PROPER NAMES

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Sentences like the following entail puzzles for standard systematic theories about language:

- (1) Bertrand Russell smoked a pipe.
- (2) Sherlock Holmes smoked a pipe.

Prima facie, these sentences have the same semantic structure and contain expressions of the same semantic type; the only difference between them is that they contain different proper names. Intuitively, (1) and (2) are true, but they are made true and false, respectively, in different ways. Presumably (1) is true because the individual, Bertrand Russell, has or had the property of being a pipe smoker. In contrast, (2) is true for a reason something like this: the sentence 'Holmes smokes a pipe' or an equivalent thereof, or a sentence entailing this sentence, was inscribed in the Holmes novels by Arthur Conan Doyle (2002). I show that the existence of fictional names, and the truths uttered using them, are not adequately explained by any extant account of fictional discourse. A proper explanation involves giving a semantics for names that can account for both referential and fictional uses of proper names. To this end, I argue that names should not be understood as expressions that immediately refer to objects. Rather, names should be understood as expressions that encode information

about a speaker's act of introducing novel uses for them. Names are not linked to objects, but to what I call "contexts of introduction". I explain how this allows room for an explanation of fictional names, and how it also accommodates Kripkean uses of proper names. One consequence of my account is that one must think differently about analyticity, since truths uttered containing fictional names turn out to be language-dependent truths.

IT'S JUST SEMANTICS: WHAT FICTION REVEALS ABOUT THE CHARACTER
OF PROPER NAMES

By

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my late father, H.W.B. Tiedke. For without his example of tenacity, and determination, this endeavor surely would have failed

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Chapter One: A Puzzle

1. General Overview

I will argue for a different conception of names that allows for an account of the significance of fictional names, for the truth of a sentence like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', and for an explanation of the truth expressed by this sentence. There are several reasons for rejecting standard theories of names -- the idea that a name's sole purpose is for referring to, or for denoting, individuals. One of these reasons is simply that the standard theory treats fictional names as some kind of failed name. But the sheer ubiquity of such names makes this somewhat implausible. Because of the pervasiveness of fictional names, one might be inclined to treat them as on a par with referring names. Supposing one does this, there then needs to be an explanation that gives a consistent common semantic account of both referring and fictional of names. Another reason to reject the standard theory of names is this: names are used in truthful assertions that belie the common theory of what makes such assertions true. Third, the standard theory of names cannot account for the fact that names that are spelled the same way, at least appear to be treated as the same name, not as distinct homophonous names. This is yet another reason for finding a common semantic account of both referring and non-referring names.

Several other issues also become apparent when examining fictional names: they necessarily cannot refer, and they appear to behave differently in modal contexts than other names. Any account of names must also account for these issues as well. I here focus mainly on the puzzle about truth, but I also

mention the others as motivations for a different account of names. And, I specifically address the puzzles about accidental reference and modal profiles.

The first chapter is devoted to understanding the nature of the problem of fictional names. In this first chapter, I explain the terminology I will be using in this chapter and those that follow, and I explain general semantic approaches in overview. I also explain how I approach the problem of fictional names, and how it arises given certain standard semantic approaches, and common assumptions about names. I briefly address general approaches one might take to this problem, and conclude, tentatively, that the best way to solve the problem is one that gives a common semantic explanation for both referential and fictional uses of names, one that relies on a new account of names.

The second chapter offers both negative and positive motivations for the approach I take. On the negative side: I discuss, in detail, the most common ways of solving the puzzle. I offer objections to each approach save for one: solving the problem by giving a different semantic account of names. On the positive side: I discuss certain data about names, which given certain assumptions, motivates an account of names different from the standard accounts.

In the third chapter, I explain this new account of names, but I first explain the dominant account of names, the thesis that they are de jure rigid designators. I then give a detailed account of the view of names I think is right, and consider objections to it. In Chapter Four, I consider other puzzles about fictional names, and show how my account of names solves those as well.

2. Background for the Puzzle: Distinctions and Terminology

There are a few different approaches to semantic theorizing, and many variations within these different approaches. I here explain each approach in broad strokes, and explain which vocabulary I shall use throughout the rest of what follows. I explicate these approaches by asking two questions:

- (1) What has semantic value?
- (2) What is semantic value?

By answering these two questions, one can get a good sense of what kinds of approaches to semantics are available, and their underlying motivations.

The most obvious and intuitive answer to question (1) is a sentence, or the expressions within a sentence, of course. For question (2), given a bit of thought, one might answer that it is concepts or things in the world that count as the semantic values for expressions or sentences. Both things and concepts seem equally plausible as first pass answers at what could constitute semantic value.

I assume that a semantic theory will be about something that is both systematic, and infinite. That is, language is structured and the structural units can be combined to produce an infinite number of composite units. Now, it is questionable whether the language that we speak has such properties. One who thinks it does, and engages in the project of giving a theory that accounts for natural spoken languages is, unsurprisingly, engaged in a descriptive project. What has semantic value, in this case, then, are sentences that occur in a natural language. Some abandon hope of giving a theory of spoken languages that is systematic and infinite and turn to a more normative project – giving such a characterization of formal languages for the purpose of getting at truth in a

systematic way. For these theorists, what has semantic value are sentences in a language whose properties, given certain constraints, are stipulated by us. Still others look for something that is a suitable candidate for being systematic and infinite that can be related to spoken language in certain ways, perhaps a language of thought or even the formal languages just mentioned. These latter two projects give rise to both descriptive and mixed normative approaches to semantic theorizing, with the former representing the descriptive approach, and the latter representing an approach that combines both descriptive and normative elements. Because I am interested in the philosophy of natural language, I will be assuming that the project of interest, in whichever form it takes, is descriptive.

Given this assumption, I now turn to the first issue raised concerning the units of semantic value.

2.1 The Units of Semantic Value

So what, then, has semantic value? I have already mentioned that, on the face of it, what has semantic value is a sentence. So whatever meaning is, whether it is conceptual or external, it attaches to sentences. If one wishes to maintain that sentences are the unit of semantic value, there are two questions to be answered:

- (1) What does one mean by “sentence”?
- (2) Are sentences suitable to serve as the unit of semantic value?

The first question might seem rather strange at first, but there are several candidates for sentences. One might mean by “sentences” those symbols that are externally instantiated by external utterances, either spoken or written. Alternatively, if one is a computationalist about the mind, one might also mean by

“sentence” those things tokened in the brain that carry information. There is also the distinction between a sentence-token and a sentence-type. A sentence-type is an abstract object that can be instantiated in several places at once. For instance, the informative sentence “Purple people eaters like to eat purple people” has the type ‘purple’ instantiated twice; it contains two tokens of the type ‘purple’.

Almost no one thinks that sentence-types are the units of semantic value any longer due to the phenomenon of context-sensitivity. For instance, the sentence-type ‘That is hot’ is too underdetermined to have any definite semantic value, for what does ‘that’ mean independent of any context? When theorists say that a sentence is the basic unit of semantic value, it seems that they must mean a sentence-token. Still, there are questions about whether it is a sentence-token that has semantic value or a sentence-token relativized to a context. One might think that meaning is context-free. So, for instance, one might agree that ‘That is hot’ cannot have any value as a sentence-type, that a context must help assign a value to the sentence-token. But one might argue that the meaning of that sentence-token itself includes no reference to a context: its meaning is absolute and eternal. Let us suppose that, in this particular instance, a speaker is pointing at the pavement, and the date is June 6, 2006. If one thinks that meaning is context-free, one will say that the absolute, unchanging, meaning of the sentence-token ‘That is hot’ means that the pavement is hot on June 6, 2006.

But there are reasons for rejecting such an analysis. Not all context-sensitive expressions seem to have meanings that can be replaced with a description of the external situation in which a speaker is located. ‘I’, for instance, seems to be one such expression (Perry, 1992). On the face of it, one can

replace 'I' with an external description and fail to preserve the meaning of the sentence in which 'I' occurs. A speaker might, for instance, recognize herself, from a first-person perspective, and be able to use sentences in which 'I' occurs to report things about herself. Yet, she may fail to recognize herself under some particular, external, third-person description. This seems to show that it is sentences within a context that are to be interpreted and that the context-sensitivity of the meaning of a sentence is ineliminable. When I use the term sentence or display a sentence, one should always understand it as a sentence-token relativized to a context.

Of course one might also think that what the previous discussion shows is that a sentence, a rather abstract thing, is not the proper unit of semantic value. Rather, a linguistic action on the part of a speaker -- an utterance -- is the proper unit of semantic value. Sentences can have different content depending on what speakers do with them. This shows that meaning is really speaker-dependent, or intention-based. Now is it the product of the act or the act itself that is the unit of semantic value in this case? If what has semantic value is the product of an act, such as an utterance, and that utterance is an instance of a uttering an indicative sentence, then the difference between the meaning of a sentence in a context and the meaning of a literal assertion or utterance, is negligible. Since I am discussing only indicative sentences, I assume that it is the product of the action of a speaker that has meaning, and therefore that difference between a sentence-token relativized to a context, or a literal utterance is negligible. In the proceeding discussion, therefore, I use the language of a sentence-token relativized to a context with the understanding that a literal utterance of an assertion is also a possible candidate for what has semantic value.

2.2 The Nature of Semantic Value

There are two fundamental questions that arise relating to the nature of semantic value:

- (1) To what are the expressions or sentences in a language related?
- (2) Given that the expressions or sentences in a language are related to those things, in what does its content or semantic value consist? That is, are those relations constitutive of the content of a sentence?

Broadly, and *prima facie*, there are two different things to which language is related. One thing to which language is related is the mind of a speaker or speakers, the other is the world or external mind-independent things. Now a sentence might be related to the world in certain ways, but one may not think that the semantic values of sentences are things in the world. Likewise, one might think that sentences are related to mental representations, but think that the semantic value of a sentence is not a mental entity.

One might think of the relation between mind, language, and the world, in a couple of ways. Language might be related to the world and to minds as a medium. That is, one might think that language is a way for one to entertain, or have thoughts about the world. Alternatively, one might think of the world, mind, language relation as one of expression – language expresses the thoughts that a speaker has about the world, thoughts that she is able to have independently of her language.

A different way of putting the point is this: one might think that primarily sentences express the thoughts of the speaker, that language gets its meaning from something in the mind of speaker independently of her relation to the world. Or, one might think that sentences primarily are about the world, that language

gets its meaning from being related to the world in certain ways independently of the thoughts of a speaker. Both ways of thinking about the connection between mind, world, and language are plausible. Indeed, it's hard to see how one of them could be false.

But while both are *prima facie* plausible, both tend to lead to fundamentally different approaches to language. Call these different approaches "internalist" and "externalist", respectively. Internalists, in assigning semantic values, line up sentences with mind-like things -- beliefs, thoughts, concepts, representations. Externalists align them with world-like things -- individuals, properties, states of affairs, events, truth-values, functions for determining truth-values. The two ways of thinking about the relationship between mind, world, and language, tend to go with these different conceptions of semantic value: those who think of semantic value as external tending to favor the language as medium approach, and those who think semantic value is internal tending to favor the language as expression approach.

At this point, the issue is what "content" means. Content, as a first pass, is the informational value of a sentence-type, token, or utterance. If one thinks of content primarily as internal, then content will be something like a complete thought. If one is an externalist, then *prima facie*, content will be a fact of some sort -- perhaps a state of affairs, a fact, a truth-value, a function for determining truth-values.

But one might think that the notion of a fact is too ontologically unspecific, a thought too idiosyncratic, and a truth-value too coarse-grained, and wish to relate sentences to yet a third external thing, a proposition – itself a structured entity, which is primarily related either to the world or worlds (Lewis, 1986), or as

something related to the mental, a reified thought (Frege, 1879). Part of the motivation for introducing propositions is that meaning appears to be something that is independent of both the particulars of the world, and of the mind. For instance, the sentence there are some potatoes in the pantry does not mean that there are 30 potatoes in the pantry if that happens to be what makes it true on a given occasion. Likewise, claiming that one will mean by 'dog', a cat, does not make it the case that 'dog' means 'cat'. So, meanings appear to be pretty objective: independent of a particular speaker's intentions, and independent of the particulars of any situation. Frege apart – who thought of propositions as reified thoughts -- primarily, any theorist who introduces propositions thinks that meaning has some external component that the notion of a proposition can capture. That is, they are externalists about meaning at least to some degree. One might think that even though natural language is tied to mental objects and the world, this further thing, a proposition is the real bearer of content -- content being understood as truth-evaluable content. A proposition is the only thing that could really be true or false.

But one may wish, as an externalist, to abstract away from associating sentences with things themselves. For there may not be enough states of affairs to go around given that language is structured and infinite, and propositions seem ontologically suspect, if not mere convenient confabulations. One might wish instead to associate sentences with the conditions for their truth (Davidson, 1984). This way of thinking of semantic value does not require one to line up sentences with things, or with concepts. Rather, one simply provides axioms which allow one to derive the conditions for a sentence's truth. One provides axioms that, for each sentence of the language, allow one to derive a sentence of

the form 'S is true if and only if p'. An interpretive truth theory of the language, a good one, will derive only those conditional statements that are true, and will rule out all of those that are false. One might think this is the right way to give the content of external sentences of English, or of sentences in the mind in a language of thought (Fodor, 1983).¹

So there are two different ways to be an externalist thus far: line up sentences directly with things, or line them up with the conditions for their truth. The former tends towards lining up sentences with propositions. So I refer to the former as "a propositionalist" theory of language. One might also be a propositionalist and yet think that there is some other aspect to meaning. One might think that lining sentences up with things, or with the parts of propositions, is at least mediated by speakers' perceptions of the objects of meaning, or by the way objects appear or present themselves to speakers. This would appear to allow for a mixed internalist-externalist strategy, but because the end result of such a process is to have sentences lined up with things, it ultimately belongs in the externalist camp. The other externalist theory, the one that Davidson proposed is a truth-conditionalist theory of meaning.

There is a broad and a narrow sense in which a theory can be considered truth-conditional. To be a truth-conditionalist in the broad sense is just to think that the goal of a semantic theory is to produce something truth-evaluable as the content of a sentence whether that means assigning a proposition, or whether that means simply conditionally assigning a truth-value to a sentence. The broad

¹ Fodor is still an externalist for it is the content and not the location of the sentence itself that makes for an externalist or an internalist conception of *meaning* given the way I am explaining it.

sense of being a truth-conditionalist is simply to adopt the truth-conditional constraint as a methodological principle: one's theory must entail all and only the true bi-conditionals of the form 'S is true if and only if p', where S is a sentence of the language under study, and where p is a sentence of the language in one's semantic theory. To be a truth-conditionalist, in the narrow sense, is to take a theory of meaning to be exhausted by to the derivation of all and only the true bi-conditionals of the form just mentioned. When I use the term "standard view", or "standard approach", I mean it in the broad sense of truth-conditional. When I use the term the "content" of a sentence I mean it in the truth-evaluable sense, unless otherwise noted.

There are also different ways of being internalist. One might, for instance, think that sentences are not to be understood as being assigned thoughts -- in the sense of being assigned representational states. Rather, one ought to understand sentences as aligning with speaker's intentions to perform certain speech acts, together with the assertion conditions for a sentence (Grice, 1957). This naturally leads to the idea that meaning is not a matter of assigning a certain content to expressions in the language. Meaning is, instead, a matter of assigning appropriate rules for use, those based on speaker's intentions, to expressions and phrases. It is unclear, however, how this last strategy could allow for a compositional theory of meaning, for what are the basic units of content? And how do they compose to determine the content of a whole sentence? Should sentences even be understood as the unit of complete content? Because I assume language is compositional any subsequent discussion of the use strategy will be brief.

To review: I have discussed two different approaches to meaning. One an externalist strategy, which makes the semantic value of an expression be something world-directed, either in virtue of expressions literally having pieces of the world directly as their semantic values, or mediately having such things as their semantic values. The second externalist strategy makes the semantic value of an expression the role it plays in determining the truth of a sentence. In other words, the two externalist strategies are propositionalist and truth-conditionalist, respectively. The two internalist strategies are these: make the content of an expression depend on relating it to individual representations and complete thoughts or relate it to speaker's intentions and rules for use. The first strategy is compositional, but it is not entirely clear how the second is or could be.

2.3 Assumptions

I will be making several assumptions about what has semantic value and what counts as a semantic value for my purposes at various points. In all chapters I will assume that an uttered sentence as the product of an action, or a sentence-token in a context, is the unit of semantic value. For the most part, I assume that semantic value is truth-theoretic, although at times, I remain neutral on this question, especially in laying out the puzzle. At other times, I consider what the view I expound might look like if one were not a truth-conditionalist, of some sort, about meaning.

3. The Puzzle

The puzzle I will be addressing throughout this discussion concerns the fact that fictional names and referential names appear to contribute differently to the truth-

conditional, or propositional, content of simple predications. Consider these four sentences:

- (1) Bertrand Russell smokes.
- (2) Margaret Thatcher smokes.
- (3) Sherlock Holmes smokes.
- (4) Elizabeth Bennett smokes.

Prima facie, these sentences are semantically alike in every way except that they contain different proper names: each sentence contains a proper name, each one contains the predicate 'smokes', and each one has the name as a subject of that predicate. Intuitively, (1) and (3) are true, while (2) and (4) are false. Equally intuitively, they are made true and false, respectively, in different ways. Presumably, (1) is true because the individual, Bertrand Russell, has the property of being a smoker. Likewise, (2) is false because the individual, Margaret Thatcher, fails to have the property of being a smoker. In contrast, (3) is true for a reason something like this: Conan Doyle stipulated that either 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', or an equivalent thereof, or some sentence entailing this sentence, is true. And (4) is false, at least partly, because of the fact that the previous reason given for the truth of (3) does not hold for (4) with respect to the novel Pride and Prejudice.²

Because the only difference between these four simple predications is that they contain different proper names, it is plausible to conjecture that any

² I say this is only part of the reason for the falsity of (4) because the failure of the novel contain 'Elizabeth Bennett smokes' or a sentence entailing this sentence is not sufficient for the falsity of (4). Other background assumptions must come into play about what facts held of women and their role in society in Austen's time to determine the falsity of 'Elizabeth Bennett smokes'.

semantic differences between the sentences will be explained in virtue of the semantics of proper names and their use in predication. In addition, since 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Bertrand Russell' play the same syntactic role in these sentences, it is reasonable to assume that they play the same semantic role as well. Therefore, they should make the same sort of truth-evaluable contributions to the sentences that embed them. This latter constraint derives from a commitment to the semantic compositionality and systematicity of natural language.

Thus far, I have made three assumptions about (1)-(4). The first assumption is that the proper names in these sentences should all play the same semantic role. The second assumption is that (1) and (3) are true, or are judged true by speakers, but are so for different reasons, and that (2) and (4) are false, but likewise for different reasons.³ The third assumption is that fictional names are empty names. These three assumptions cause a problem when combined with certain other assumptions, those made about semantic theories in general, and those made, in particular, about proper names.

³ I put in the qualifier 'are true, or are judged true' for this reason: for the duration of this paper, I assume that 'Holmes smokes' is true and that this is what needs explaining. However, many may simply reject this claim. In that case, I would instead argue that the puzzle is generated by the fact that the sentence 'Holmes smokes' is judged true by speakers. Even in if this is the proper way to understand the data, there would still be something in need of explanation. I would argue that, in either case, the best explanation is one that gives a different semantics for names. However, since I think the argument goes through either way, albeit with some adjustments, I choose to present the argument in its simplest form. Those who wish to do so may qualify each claim about the truth of 'Holmes smokes' with the analogous claim about speaker's judgments about truth. Of course one would also have to make other qualifications if one wishes to take the argument this way, but not ones that fundamentally alter the thrust of the puzzle.

The three assumptions I made in conjunction with the intuitive truths expressed by (1)-(4), give rise to a problem for both truth-conditional and propositionalist semantic theories, also known as standard semantic theories (Davidson (1981), Lepore and Cappelen (2002), Borg (2001), Stanley (2002), Evans (1982)).⁴ A problem arises for use theorists too, but less so, and the data entails a slightly different problem. Likewise, the intuitive truths expressed by (1)-(4) cause trouble if one thinks that names are, as a matter of their semantic type, simple devices of reference; here called “referentialist theories of names” (Kripke, 1980; Salmon, 1998; Braun, 1993; Evans, 1982). And there is trouble even if one abandons referentialism and adopts a descriptivist position on names.

There is a problem concerning (1)-(4) regardless of one’s general approach to semantic theorizing, be it truth-conditional, propositional, or use-based. Additionally, there is a problem about these sentences regardless of one’s semantic approach to names, be it descriptivist or referentialist. However, the problem is slightly different depending on whether one focuses on general semantic approaches, or on names. In the following discussion, I explain how (1)-(4) poses a problem for general semantic approaches, and for particular approaches to names. Although, as I later argue, the main solution to both problems is to adopt a different account of names, it is worth disentangling the different issues.

Most philosophers of natural language do assume that to do semantics is to do one of two things: figure out how the meaningful parts of a sentence

⁴ I do not automatically take it that semantics, as a matter of definition, has to do with what expressions contribute to the truth-evaluable content of a sentence. However, truth-conditional semantics is a fairly standard approach to meaning, and part of my point here is to show how fictional names pose a problem for it.

compose to express a proposition, or figure out how the parts of sentence contribute to deriving the truth-condition for a sentence. They also assume, for the most part, that proper names are for referring. The most common way of dealing with the problem posed by sentences (1)-(4), then, is to treat the referring or denoting case as the paradigm of appropriate content for a proper name.⁵ That is, sentences like (1)-(4) are true if and only if the referent of the name has the property ascribed to it. This approach requires that we cannot take 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' to be, literally, true at all -- for the referentialist holds that 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' can be true only if 'Sherlock Holmes' refers. It also means that we cannot take 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' to be capable of being used to literally express anything but the truth that Sherlock Holmes, the referent of 'Sherlock Holmes', has the property of being a smoker. For the standard semantic theorist holds that the meaning of a sentence is its truth-evaluable content, and she has taken a position on what kind of truth-evaluable content, in the case of (1)-(4), that must be. A theorist, adopting this approach, must then offer an explanation of how an utterance of a sentence like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' can seem, at least, to convey a truth, given the meaning of the sentence.

3.1 The Puzzle for General Semantic Theories

The standard semantic picture is that the meaning of a sentence in a context consists in relating it to either a proposition -- something structured and

⁵ See Currie (1988), Deutsch (2000), Devitt (1981), Donnellan (1941), Evans (1982), Kripke (1943), Lewis (1948), Parsons (1980), Salmon (1998), Taylor (2000), and many others for this approach.

composed of things related to one another in certain ways -- or to the condition under which the sentence is true. That is, the standard semantic approach is externalist in character. For this reason, I present the puzzle in detail only for theories that are propositionalist or truth-conditional. I do, however, discuss how a puzzle might also arise for a use-theorist as well.

For these reasons, the puzzle can be expressed generally as a problem for standard semantic approaches, and I do so here. In doing so, I sometimes talk about the truth-theoretic content of an expression, to be understood as either how an expression contributes to the conditional assignment of truth to a sentence, or to the proposition expressed by a sentence, which is itself something that is truth-evaluable.

3.1.1 The Puzzle for Standard Semantic Theories

On both standard semantic approaches, propositionalist and truth-conditionalist, what is ultimately produced as an interpretation for an expression is something truth-evaluable, or something that contributes to something truth-evaluable, whether it is the sentence itself that is truth-evaluable or something related to a sentence, the goal of a semantic theory is to produce something of truth-evaluable.

The fundamental intuition underlying standard approaches is that the truth a sentence can be used to literally assert, or the truth expressed in uttering a certain sentence, somehow indicates the meaning of that sentence. This is relatively uncontroversial.⁶ But there are more and less controversial ways of

⁶ Some reject even this, however, for various reasons. Charles Travis, in "Meaning's Role in Truth", for instance, rejects the idea that there is any non-contextual theoretically tractable notion of meaning at all.

thinking about this connection between meaning and truth -- the meaning of a sentence determines the proposition or thought it literally expresses (where propositions or thoughts are understood to be truth-evaluable entities), understanding the meaning of a sentence is determined by understanding the conditions under which it is true, understanding the meaning of a sentence is exhausted by understanding the conditions under which the sentence can be *verified* to be true, understanding the meaning of a sentence is understanding the constraints the sentence imposes on the truths it can be used to assert.⁷

Assuming no overt context-sensitive elements, nor any ambiguities in sentences (1) through (4), all of these conceptions of the relation between meaning and truth entail a puzzle about (1) through (4). If one thinks that the semantic content and the truth-evaluable content of a sentence are the same, or are systematically related, then how sentences with the same semantic structure and types could be true or false in such disparate ways is puzzling; for presumably, the semantic types and their mode of composition will either determine, or be systematically related to, the conditions under which a sentence is true, the proposition it expresses, or the way in which it is verifiable. In other words, sentences that have the same semantic structure, and contain the same semantic types, should express the same kind of proposition, or should both be

⁷ See Donald Davidson (1984), Larsen and Segal (1995), Lewis (1986), or Richard Montague (1974), for examples of truth-conditionalist theories. See Michael Dummett (1993) for a modern verificationist approach to meaning. See Scott Soames (2001), Kaplan (1979), Evans, Katz (1990), and Stephen Schiffer (2003) for versions, both Russellian and Fregean, of propositionalist theories. Many theories are compatible with the idea that at least part of understanding the meaning of a sentence is understanding what constraints it puts on the truths it can be used to assert, i.e., internalist theories, conceptual role semantics; in fact, any theory that maintains some, but not a tight, connection between meaning and truth would be included here.

true under the same kinds of conditions, or should both be verifiable under same kinds of conditions, or should both instantiate the same kinds of systematic relations between their linguistic meanings and the truths they can be used to express. But our intuitions about what makes sentences (1) and (3) true, and what makes (2) and (4) false, are at odds with all of these ideas.

Of course, there is ample room for argument about what our intuitions about the truth-evaluable content of a sentence tell us, as recent controversies about the semantics-pragmatics distinction show (Bach (2002), Recanati (2001) & (1993)). Intuitions about the content of a sentence tell us not only about the semantics of the sentence involved, but also about the pragmatic effects of conversational contexts. That is, the intuition that 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true, may reflect something about the pragmatics of discussing works of fiction, not something deep about the semantics of the uttered sentence. Nevertheless, intuitions about the truth expressed by 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' are at least in need of explanation. Lacking independent evidence that our intuitions in this case reflect only something about pragmatics and not semantics, a different account of the semantics of names could provide a solution. And, if the account is plausible for independent reasons, one might accept it on grounds of greater explanatory value.

So long as 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is intuitively true, and is so for a radically different reason than 'Bertrand Russell smokes' is true, there will be a problem for the standard theorist to address.

The general problem for the standard theorist can be expressed in the following way:

- (1) 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' are both true.
- (2) The reasons for the truth of each sentence are different in kind.
- (3) 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Bertrand Russell' are of the same semantic type.
- (4) Both 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Bertrand Russell' ought to contribute the same thing, or in the same way, to the truth-evaluable content of a sentence.
- (5) Either current semantic theories about such sentences are wrong, or the truth conveyed by uttering 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is not indicative of that sentence's meaning, or the sentences, contrary to appearances, are true for the same reasons.

As I will explain later, the standard theorist most often chooses the first or the third horns of the dilemma. Now I turn to expounding the puzzle for a particular sort of use theorist.

3.1.2 The Puzzle for Other Semantic Theories

Here I want to discuss not a particular approach to semantic theorizing, but rather a position characterized simply by its rejection of understanding semantics purely in terms of truth-evaluable content. Many different sorts of theorists might be inclined to take this position. I'll describe a few. This is meant to be neither exhaustive nor exclusive.

An internalist about meaning, one who thinks that meaning is constituted by something mind-dependent might reject a truth-conditional stance. One who thinks that meanings are to be understood not in terms of truth-theoretic aspects of expressions, but rather in terms of the role a sentence plays in different inferences might also be inclined take such a stance. A speech act theorist might also reject truth-conditional semantics -- one who thinks that meanings should be understood in terms of a speaker's intentions to perform certain actions, which

may or may not be truth-evaluable. A functionalist might also reject truth-conditional semantics in favor of an account of the functions of expressions, or sentences, or certain linguistic acts.

These positions might seem, initially, to avoid some of the problems that the truth-conditionalist and the propositionalist encounter, and this is in some sense true. True in the sense that it allows for a different sort of solution to the puzzle. The standard theorist is limited to a certain sort of reply to the puzzle. Not so for the sort of semanticist who does not subscribe to such positions. However, unless one is prepared to completely reject *any* systematic connection between meaning and truth, taking such a position does not, in and of itself, constitute a solution. The puzzle is still this: how is it that two semantically alike sentences can be used to convey seemingly disparate kinds of truths? Since I am here mainly concerned only with how fictional names pose problems for standard semantic theories, I will not discuss each sort of non-truth-conditional approach here. But as an example of how this might go for such a theorist, I will explain the puzzle for one specific theory, namely, a functionalist semantics.

For functionalist theories of language, the meaning of an expression is determined by its conceptual and/or inferential role, or perhaps even by its social role. Whatever the solution is for a functionalist, it will not consist in *simply* dismissing the phenomenon as merely pragmatic, and then claiming that therefore it has no effect on semantic theorizing; for functionalist accounts are typically giving a semantic theory that takes its cue from the intuition that a sentence's meaning consists in the rules for its use, the way those sentences are used, then, cannot be ignored with respect to theorizing about the semantics of sentences and expressions.

For this reason, the puzzle is in some ways harder for the functionalist than it is for either the propositionalist or truth-conditionalist; for a functionalist approach to semantics seemingly has a less well-defined *semantic* domain, and therefore, as indicated, less options for bracketing certain phenomenon as purely pragmatic. In another sense, the problem for functionalist theories is more tractable; for their theory is not committed to only truth-theoretic properties as determining meaning. Given that it is these very properties at issue with respect to the puzzle, it is natural to think that the functionalist would have less of a problem than a standard theorist. The functionalist might hold that since ‘Holmes’ and ‘Russell’ are of the same semantic type, the fact that they have different truth-conditions or that they express radically different kinds of propositions is just evidence that their semantics is neither truth-conditional nor propositional. Or alternatively, since ‘Holmes’ and ‘Russell’ do seem to play different roles in our conceptual economies, and since the functionalist has no commitments to semantic type independent of rules for use, she might simply say that ‘Holmes’ and ‘Russell’ are not of the same semantic type – they are governed by different rules for use. Of course, this latter option is implausible, on the face of it. Surely, ‘Holmes’ and ‘Russell’ are members of the category proper name, and surely proper names have more in common than their syntactic properties. If this is right, the functionalist must give an account of the functional roles shared by ‘Holmes’ and ‘Russell’, while also accounting for their differing uses.

Stated more precisely the problem for the functionalist is this:

- (1) 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' are both true.
- (2) 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Bertrand Russell' are of the same semantic type.
- (3) 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Bertrand Russell' should be functionally similar or have similar kinds of uses.
- (4) 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Bertrand Russell' do not seem to be functionally similar or have similar uses.
- (5) There is a rule for use that governs the use of 'Russell' and 'Holmes' that allows them both to figure in truthful utterances, or one of the names is being used non-standardly.

So, the functionalist must find a rule that explains the difference between 'Bertrand Russell smokes' and 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', or she must explain how and why using 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' to convey something true is a non-standard use. Presumably, the latter position would take much the same form as the similar truth-conditional and propositionalist approaches to the problem. Although, since it is more difficult for the functionalist to draw the line between semantics and pragmatics, the other horn of the dilemma is more plausible. That is, giving a common semantics for names that explains their differing uses, is easier if one is not tied to giving a truth-conditional account.

3.2 The Puzzle for Particular Theories of Names

The main problem for particular theories of names is that given the two standard options for names (3) does not come out true. Many, if not most, semanticists are referentialists -- that is, they make the assumption that names are simple devices of reference.⁸ My two assumptions -- that both (1) and (3) are true, but for different reasons, and that all names must have the same semantic role -- in

⁸ See Kripke (1980), Salmon (1998), Braun (1993), and Evans (1982), and many others, for instances.

conjunction with referentialism, pose a problem, since sentences (1) and (3), for example, are both true and both contain names, and only one of the two names has a referent.

Fictional names, therefore, are problematic for referentialists: a sentence containing a name is true only if the name refers. But intuitively, what makes 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' true has nothing to do with whether there is, or even whether there could be, a referent for the name. Rather, it has to do with what is contained in a series of short stories, and what actions an author performed. So an account of names according to which the semantic value of a name is exhausted by its having a referent will have a difficult time explaining how proper names get used in the ways that they naturally do. All of this suggests that we must reject the idea that proper names are simple devices of reference. Interestingly, even a classical descriptivist theory falters here, for just as the intuitive truth-condition of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' has nothing to do with there being an individual, Holmes, who smokes, neither does it seem to have anything to do with the existence of a thing that uniquely satisfies a definite description either.

One should reject both that proper names are devices of reference, and that they are for denoting some particular thing. Other facts that speak against names being inherently for referring to, or for denoting things, are these: speakers introduce and use names, that not only have no referent or denotation, they are presumed to have no referent or denotation, with no problem. What's more, fictional names seem to be introduced with the intention that they fail to refer or denote – that is, they seem to be introduced with the stipulation that they can neither refer to, nor denote, any particular individual.

So, why not, then, just simply reject the standard theories of names? The rub is that referentialism, at least, seems right for names that do refer. In fact, as I've said, most theorists assume that this is the right way to think about all names. That is, the intuitive truth-condition for 'Bertrand Russell smokes' reflects the appropriate use for, or the real semantic type of, proper names. And, of course, it follows that if so, 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' could not be literally true; what is true is some other sentence, utterance, or proposition; one that is, pragmatically or otherwise, conveyed by the use of the sentence. As previously discussed, perhaps the utterance itself should be understood as elliptical for some other qualified sentence. The particular problem for standard theories of names, then, is that not only are such accounts unable to explain the differences between the truths expressed by sentences (1) and (3), they cannot even explain the truth of (3) at all. So the puzzle making either referentialist or descriptivist assumptions about names is this:

- (1) 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' seem to express truths.
- (2) A name somehow contributes an individual, or something related to an individual, to the truth-evaluable content of a sentence.
- (3) 'Sherlock Holmes' does not seem to contribute an individual to the truth-evaluable content of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'.
- (4) 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is not really true, or names do not contribute individuals to the truth-evaluable content of a sentence, or 'Sherlock Holmes' does contribute an individual and therefore 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true.

3.3 The General Puzzle

So unlike taking a standard position on semantics, making standard assumptions seems to commit one to a single option for solving the puzzle: denying that a sentence like (3) could be true. In contrast, the problem for the standard

semantic theorist is one of consistency: how to explain the seemingly different truth-evaluable contents expressed by sentences (1)-(4). So an option that is always available to the standard theorist is to show how those seemingly different truth-evaluable contents derive from a common semantic base. She can always reject referentialist or descriptivist assumptions about names, and therefore, she need not automatically reject the truth of (3). I reject referentialism and descriptivism, but I do not reject standard semantics, so the puzzle for me is the consistency puzzle. However, I think the solution to it is to locate the semantic complication in the names, since that is what is most evidently different about the sentences in question. So the solution, for me, is to provide specifically, a common semantic base for names that accommodates the different uses to which they are put.

However, because most philosophers of language assume both the standard picture of semantics, and a referentialist picture of names, the way the puzzle most often gets addressed is this: standardly, a subject-predicate sentence with a name in the subject position is true if and only if the individual referred to by the name satisfies the predicate. However, a sentence containing a fictional name does not seem to be true if and only if the individual referred to by the name satisfies the predicate. It seems to be true if and only if an author wrote that sentence or one that implies that sentence in a novel. That these are radically different is an understatement. The puzzle is not simply one about names. It is one that concerns reconciling the prima facie truth expressed by sentence with the systematicity required in a semantic theory. Whether one begins with certain general assumptions about semantic theorizing, or only with certain assumptions about names, there is a puzzle that needs solving.

Unfortunately, for the most part, the puzzle has been expounded as one that begins with assumptions about names, particularly Millian assumptions. This has given the impression that the problem of fictional discourse is one that is limited to those who assume a Millian theory of names. While I do think that the solution to the puzzle lies in giving a different semantics for names, it is offered as a solution to a general puzzle about how to give a consistent semantics, rather than a puzzle about names per se.

4. Ways of Dealing with the Puzzle

There are multitude ways one might approach the tension between these three things: intuitions about truths expressed by (1) and (3), theses about the relation between truth and meaning, and accounts of proper names. I here list six avenues one might take, given a standard semantics:⁹

(I) Deny that ‘Holmes’ and ‘Russell’ are of the same semantic type.¹⁰

(II) Deny that ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is true in a way different from the standard way in which ‘Bertrand Russell smokes’ is presumed to be true. That is, claim that ‘Holmes’ does refer to something that instantiates the property of being a smoker.

(III) Claim that what explains the differing truths expressed by (1) and (3) is that ‘is’ or ‘pipe smoker’ are ambiguous, or perhaps context-sensitive.¹¹

⁹ The problems that I will state with each approach are by no means conclusive, nor even in some cases defended. The main issue at this point is simply to lay out the conceptual space of possibilities. I return in later chapters to criticizing in detail specific accounts that rely on one or the other of these approaches to the puzzle.

¹⁰ See Bertrand Russell (1910), and Ruth Barcan Marcus (1986) for the idea that a name can be a genuine name only if it has a referent; see Currie (1988) or Barcan-Marcus for examples of taking a Russellian position to its logical conclusion – since ‘Holmes’ cannot have a referent and ‘Russell’ clearly does, only one can be a genuine name, if either are.

(IV) Propose that some utterances with the phonetic form H-O-L-M-E-S^S-M-O-K-E-S are not really utterances of the sentence 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'. They are utterances of a different sentence that is true, some of whose parts go unpronounced.

(V) Claim that there is a truth pragmatically communicated. That is, speakers and hearers rely on tacit non-linguistic knowledge to communicate and garner truths from assertions of sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'.

(VI) Argue that a different semantics for names will explain the phenomenon.

The first option, although it has been held, is implausible on the face of it. The second option requires ontological commitments that I am not prepared to allow. The third option seems *prima facie* unmotivated, at least by this puzzle, as the most obvious difference between 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' is that they contain different names, and therefore the natural assumption is that there is something going on with the different names that explains the puzzle. However, I discuss this option in more detail in the next chapter. This leaves options (IV), (V), and (VI).

Versions of (IV), and (V), are the most common approaches to the problem. These approaches deny that 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', given its literal meaning, could be true. The intuition that a speaker can express something true by uttering 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' then needs explaining. On approach (IV), speakers can and do use the phonetic form H-O-L-M-E-S^S-M-O-K-E-S to express a certain truth. But, although the sounds uttered are those associated

¹¹ See vanInwagen (1977) for an example of someone who thinks that 'is' is ambiguous as between having a property and ascribing one. See Ludlow (2007) for one who thinks that making predicates context-sensitive is the right way to treat the problem.

with the phonetic form H-O-L-M-E-S[^]S-M-O-K-E-S, the sentence actually uttered is not ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’, it is a different sentence with a correspondingly different truth-condition, one that is satisfied. While it’s true that, on this view, the connection between the sentence used and the truth communicated is transparent – the content of the truth communicated is identical to the content of *the sentence* used – the idea that speakers literally utter a sentence with parts that go unpronounced needs defense; for this would not be a typical case of syntactic ellipsis.

One obvious option is to instead take approach (V). While speakers actually utter a false sentence, they communicate a truth about a fiction by doing so in virtue of extra-linguistic factors. That is, in some cases, the sentence uttered gets pragmatically associated with a logical form different from the logical form that represents the structure of the meaning of the sentence uttered. But one cannot simply assert that some magical pragmatic phenomenon allows for the communication of a truth by using a false sentence; one must explain this occurrence in relation to other pragmatic phenomenon, and explain how the particular truth that is claimed to be communicated gets pragmatically associated with the sentence it does. Notice that part of this project also requires describing the truth communicated itself; for it is to this that the sentence in question is related. So, there needs to be an analysis of the truth communicated, one that fits with our intuitions about what is true and false about a story or work of fiction.

Approaches that fit into either category (VI) or (V) are the accounts due to David Lewis (1978) and Gareth Evans (1982). Lewis argues that while ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is literally false, some qualified version of the sentence is true. It is this qualified version of the sentence that speakers and hearers ought to be

represented as judging true, not the actual sentence uttered.¹² Other philosophers, regardless of whether they agree in detail with Lewis's overall picture of semantics, have followed him in denying the truth of the actual sentence uttered. Gareth Evans (1982), for instance, offers an account of the phenomenon of fictional discourse that accepts Lewis's characterization of the problem and how it should be solved. On these views, a speaker's intuition that a sentence like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true, and that it is not true in the way 'Bertrand Russell smokes' is true, reflects pragmatic effects, or shows that a speaker is engaging in some sort of syntactic or semantic ellipsis, or some other speech act unique to fictional discourse. In short, such intuitions do not reflect something about the semantics of the expressions contained in uttered sentence itself.

As before, the most pressing question for such analyses is what sort of account to offer of how the truth that gets communicated between speakers is related to the sentence used to communicate it. Lewis's account is ambiguous between a semantic and a pragmatic interpretation of the relation. That is, it is unclear on Lewis's view whether the qualified sentence is actually uttered, but some of its constituents go unpronounced, or whether somehow, by some non-meaning constituting conventional or pragmatic mechanism, the uttering of a

¹² A natural accompanying assumption here is that speakers do not have intuitions about the truth of sentences, only of utterances. So while speakers may judge that an utterance of 'Holmes smokes' is true, they are not thereby judging that the sentence is true; for this sentence is false. But then the question arises: why do they use this sentence to convey the truth they do manage to convey? Part of Lewis's answer would presumably be that they use this sentence because, in another possible world, this sentence is true. But if one thinks that fictional names necessarily do not refer, then one cannot rely on this answer. On this point, I agree with Kripke.

sentence like ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ gets associated with a non-standard truth-condition in certain contexts.¹³ Others, like Evans, clearly take it as a pragmatic effect.¹⁴ I discuss these theories in more detail in the next chapter. For this reason, I move on to discuss the last option, the option I will defend.

The semantics of names must constrain what we can do with them including, presumably, what sorts of truths we can convey using them. If this is right, one might think (VI) is the right approach. One might prosecute this intuition in one of two ways. One could maintain a truth-conditionalist stance, and claim that there is a common semantics for the sentence in question, and assert that the common semantics does determine that the two sentences are true under different sorts of conditions. However, one might also prosecute this intuition without a commitment to truth-conditional semantics. That is, one might think that a common semantics explains the differing uses of the sentences in question, but reject the idea that any truth-conditional content will constitute the meaning of the sentences in question.

In maintaining a standard semantic theory, the most obvious thing to do is claim that there is a contextual element to names, which explains the seeming variances among them. In other words, names would have a semantics much closer to indexicals and demonstratives than originally thought. This is exactly

¹³ I am skeptical of appeals to pragmatics that do not rely on speaker’s actual intuitions about the meaning of what’s said.

¹⁴ Evans has the problem of why speakers use the sentence they do even more than Lewis, for Evans cannot say that the sentence used is true in some other world. In fact, the sentence used does not even have a complete meaning for Evans. So, the question remains: why this sentence? My answer is that speakers use this sentence because it has a meaning that is appropriate for expressing the truth that speakers intuit that it does.

the sort of account I will offer in the third chapter. However, if a contextual, yet truth-conditional, theory of names is to be successful, three things must be true: the contextual parameter must be objective, it must be a function with a fixed character that determines truth-conditions, and there must be evidence that it is part of the sentence or utterance, even if unarticulated. But it is not clear that all of these criteria can be met if speakers can, by asserting sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes', communicate the truths that I claim they can. I attempt to do so by incorporating a context-sensitive element into names, and by adopting a special predication rule demanded by the semantic values of the names in question.

If one thinks, as I do, that the standard way of solving the puzzle is not sufficient to account for the serious discourse speakers engage in using fictional names, then there is a significant challenge to standard theories of the semantics of names. I take it that when a speaker utters 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' she utters an unqualified truth about the actual world, not something that is false about the world but true within a pretence, or within a story. In evaluating accounts of fictional discourse there are at least three issues that arise: whether the intuitive truth of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' ought to be taken at face value; the relationship between the sentence uttered and the putative truth conveyed; the correctness of the particular account of the truth conveyed. In taking 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' as true at face value, it becomes easier to deal with the second two issues. The now almost dogmatic assumption that *semantically* names must be devices of reference should be rejected. There is no reason why the move of pushing certain problematic phenomenon to the side of pragmatics

is not equally available to the anti-referentialist as the referentialist.¹⁵ Of course, there is a problem here, namely, accounting for the standard intuition about the way in which 'Bertrand Russell smokes' is true. Surely Kripke uncovered some data about the uses of proper names. Such data must be explained somehow. Fortunately, as I will argue, one can explain Kripkean data without being a referentialist.

It is clear that once one has settled on a particular semantics for sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', options for solving the puzzle get narrower. What one can't do, if one settles on referentialism and a standard semantics, is solve the puzzle by offering a different semantics for the sentences in question. So, the intuitive truth conveyed by 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' cannot be the result of a literal or unqualified evaluation given only the meaning of that sentence. As discussed, in contrast to this approach, one might instead take the intuitive truth of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' at face value. However, while this does not rule out a standard semantic approach, it is a harder position to maintain given a standard semantics. Regardless, for now, I will assume a standard general semantic theory. The question now is this: what constitutes the common semantics of the expressions involved that makes them apt for asserting such disparate truths?

¹⁵ Of course there are other things to consider when deciding whether something ought to be relegated to pragmatics or not. For instance, does a certain semantic interpretation of an expression make explaining certain readings of sentences easier or more difficult? Is there an equally good semantic alternative that lacks the problems that the current alternative has? All such things must be considered before one can, with any confidence, say that referentialist readings of names are merely pragmatic. However, it is interesting to note that the referentialist reading fails some of the previous tests itself. So, the referentialist might very well be on a par with the non-referentialist.

As indicated, I think the best explanation for why speakers utter the sentences 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' as if they are true is that they are true. But one might wonder why anyone would want to take the position I will take. As it turns out, there are several reasons for doing so. Current accounts of the truth expressed using 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' have flaws. The ubiquitous use of empty names by adults and children suggests that while referentialism shows something about the use of names, it should not define the semantics for proper names. Last, if one can have an account that is systematic, accommodates all of the data without being ad hoc, and has all of the advantages of other accounts, then that account is to be preferred over others. A semantics for proper names that explained how they could systematically allow for the expression of different kinds of truths by using them would do this. I claim to have an account of the semantics of proper names that does do this.

What I will argue is that what is important about names is not that they have a referent, rather, what is important are facts about the way they are introduced. This suggests that the semantics of proper names has to do with acts of introducing, not with referents at all, at least not inherently. In the third chapter, I develop this idea in more detail. However, even this idea does not, all by itself, explain how an utterance of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true. In the third chapter, I argue that the reason 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true is because the context of introduction for the name 'Holmes' is one where the name was intentionally associated only with some properties, one of which was being a pipe-smoker. This is not a truth that requires ontological commitment to Holmes; it is a truth that is a language-dependent truth, and it therefore shares similarities with analytic or purely stipulative truths.

Chapter Two: Solutions to The Puzzle

1. Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I explain in detail the different approaches one can take to the puzzle. Approaches to the puzzle belong in two broad categories: indirect and direct approaches. Indirect approaches, those that deny that ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is true, include make-believe and story-operator views. Direct approaches, those that claim that the sentence itself is true, themselves divide into two categories: semantic and ontic. The semantic direct approach makes the truth of ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ depend on giving a semantic account of the sentence, different from the common one, which allows for it to be true. The ontic direct approach argues that ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is true because ‘Holmes’ refers. I offer objections to each of them, excepting a certain kind of semantic direct approach. I conclude by giving both positive and negative motivations for taking the semantic direct approach that I take in the following chapter.

2. Solutions to the Puzzle

As I said, most solutions to the puzzle argue that the sentence ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is literally false, but that an utterance of ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’, suitably interpreted, is true. Two well-known approaches develop this line of argument. The first argues that an utterance of ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is true relative to a game of pretence (Evans, 1982; Walton, rep. 2006). The second argues that an utterance of ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is true if properly qualified by an operator like ‘In the story...’ (Lewis, 1978). I shall argue that the former is not constrained in the right ways to be a good account of what is true about a

story, and that it cannot explain some truths at all. Story operator theories are problematic because they do not recognize, nor can they explain, the different uses of fictional names -- uses that occur in the actual world, and uses that occur from within the world of the story. However, some theorists, although not many, approach the problem by claiming that sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' are true simpliciter. This is the direct approach I mentioned earlier.

2.1 Indirect Approaches

As indicated, indirect approaches do not accept giving any account that makes the sentence 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' true. Rather, there is either some other sentence that is being communicated between speakers somehow, or there is some speech act in which speakers are engaged that conveys some other truth that does not constitute the meaning of the sentence being used. The former aligns with story-operator views, since they claim that truth in fiction ought to be explained by a special sentential operator. The latter tend to align with pretence views, since to engage in a game of pretence could be understood as engaging in a certain kind of speech act. However, there are fairly complicated issues involved in giving a pretence account explanation of truth in fiction.

2.1.1 Pretence Views

Pretences theorists analyze serious utterances of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' as avowals of the appropriateness of make-believing that the sentence 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true. Novels are props that authorize certain games of pretence. Sentences in the novel are thought of as prescriptions to imagine. And, we can convey true information about such games through the very act of pretence because, just by doing so, we convey the information that it is

appropriate to pretend in such a manner. In other words, we convey the truth that, with respect to some novel, a pretended utterance of 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' is authorized – that to make such an utterance is to speak truly in a particular game of make-believe (Walton, rep. 2006).

Details about the pretence theory need to be specified. If the truth being uttered is a truth about a game of make-believe, what is the logical form of the truth that is being uttered? Gareth Evans treats the term 'make-believe' as an operator on sentences. So, for Evans, 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' is make-believedly true. According to Evans, something is make-believedly true because of actual facts about games of make-believe, not merely because someone expressly imagined or stipulated that it is to be so. Not anything can truly be said to be make-believedly the case, only those things that conform to certain conventions can appropriately be said to be make-believedly true. So, what generates make-believe truths? Three basic principles operate in games of make-believe, which serve to stipulate an infinite set of make-believe truths.

The first, basic, principle determines a set of make-believe truths that serve as the foundation for a game of make-believe. For instance, in a game of mud-pie, such make-believe truths might include: a glob of mud that is shaped into a pie shape is make-believedly a pie, small pebbles are make-believe raisins, and a particular flat rock is make-believedly a hot oven. These are the basic stipulations that constitute a game of mud-pie. There are also basic principles that allow for the game to be dynamic -- that allow for things to happen in the game. Evans delineates two principles that allow for games of make-believe to be dynamic, one of which he calls "the incorporation principle", the other of which he calls "the recursive principle".

The incorporation principle stipulates that whatever actual truths are not contradicted by the basic principles are incorporated into the game. The recursive principle says that if one were to suppose that the make-believe were actually true, this would entail another statement's truth, then the consequent of that counterfactual is also make-believable. These two principles allow for there to be further truths generated within the game that are not specified by the basic principle. For instance, the fact that leaving a pie in the oven too long results in its being burnt is incorporated into a game of mud-pie. Combining this with the recursive principle generates the make-believe truth that a pie is burnt if it is make-believable left in the hot oven for too long.

Evans thinks that to pretend is to engage in counterfactual reasoning. What we do in pretending is treat certain statements as if they were true. So, in reading a novel, we pretend that the information we get from the novel is veridical information, and we reason about what's true in the novel by engaging in counterfactual reasoning. Of course, in a game of mud pie, there are things to make stipulations about. But in a novel there are not typically such things. So there is question when it comes to fiction, about how the basic "truths" get stipulated, and what they are. According to Evans, the stipulation that generates the basic make-believe truths in fiction is that things are as they seem, e.g. we pretend that the information we receive from a novel is presenting things as they are. This basic stipulation generates many make-believe truths all at once.

With the basic make-believe truths in place, one can then make serious assertions in the actual world about these games. For Evans, the only true assertions there are to make about Holmes, are assertions about games of make-believe, and about the make-believe truths within those games. However,

engaging in a game of make-believe, and therefore making the ensuing make-believe assertions does not entail that we are making assertions about the game itself. This is true even though it is by make-believedly making a particular assertion that we *can* make an assertion about what is make-believedly the case. For Evans, what makes a make-believe assertion within a pretence a case of real assertion about a game of pretence is a speaker's intention to do so. Specifically, the speaker must have the intention that her make-believe assertion is up for assessment as correct or incorrect. In making serious statements about a game of pretence, we use the pretended assertions to demonstrate what is true about the game. For Evans, the illocutionary act performed when a speaker makes an assertion about a game of make-believe is not merely to engage in the game of pretence, but to engage in it with the specific intention of communicating true information about the game.

2.1.1.1 Objections to Pretence Theories

An obvious question for the pretence view is how a novel authorizes certain games of pretence, or what sorts of games of pretence are authorized. Evans (1982) offers the principle that a novel authorizes those games of pretence where what's true in them is whatever would be true if the novel were veridical -- we are to treat a novel as if it were an accurate historical recounting of actual events. To clarify, the claim is that what is true in a game of pretence is what would be true if a work of fiction were true. At first glance, this seems like a reasonable hypothesis. But all sorts of facts are consistent with a novel being veridical, facts that readers do not make-believe to be true. For instance, the fact that there are dust mites is, in fact, true. Are we to take all of the things that would be true, if a

novel were true, as generating sets of make-believe truths in a game of pretence, even if that game is never played? Are there make-believe truths that never get make-believed? Presumably, if Evans is right that there are sentential make-believe operators then the answer is “yes”. But, this seems a bit strange given that games of make-believe are plausibly constituted by actions on the parts of speakers.

A related issue is this: what can be truly conveyed about a story is supposed to be that which can be pretended about it. But individual readers fill in a story in their own particular ways. Yet, readers would not claim that engaging in such pretences could be used to convey truths about the story, even though they make-believe that they are true in their particular games of pretence. For instance, a reader might imagine a certain character as having certain traits that are left unspecified in the novel, but are consistent with the novel. But no reader would ever assert this as a truth about the novel, even if it might true of an instance of game of make-believe in which she engages. So in addition to their being truths consistent with the story, which never get make-believed, there are also acts of make-believe consistent with the story, which do not plausibly generate truths about the story.

So there are two issues: first, a game of pretence intuitively allows for pretending that certain things are true that one would not wish to say form part of the set of truths about a novel. Second, games of pretence do not plausibly include everything that is consistent with a story’s truth. In response to the first point, the pretence theorist would likely point out that her proposal isn’t that what is true in a game of make-believe, and therefore true about a story, is that which *could* be true if the novel were veridical, only that which *would* be true. The

pretence theory does not predict that anything a reader *can* imagine consistent with a story counts as true of the story. It predicts only that those things a reader must imagine in her game of make-believe are true of a story.

But my point isn't that all kinds of things being true are consistent with what's in a novel, and that therefore the pretence theorist's proposal must be wrong. Rather, I am pointing out that there is a mismatch between what one *intuitively* takes as the nature of a game of pretence and what one takes to be true of a story. One is not plausibly analyzed in terms of the other. No one, of course, is going to deny that fiction and pretence are somehow related. But that the games of pretence we play with works of fiction are what determine what is true about a story is a much stronger claim. To put it another way: the pretence theorist claims that what it is *appropriate* to pretend using a novel as a prop is what counts as true of a story. But what is inappropriate, qua a game of pretence, about an individual filling in the details of a story in her own idiosyncratic way (subject to certain consistency constraints)? Nothing at all. For instance, if a fictional character pulls up in a horse-drawn carriage, and it is not specified how many horses there are, the reader might pretend that there are two or three. In fact, one might think that to pretend something like this is *the most* appropriate thing to do. But if a reader does pretend that there are three, then by the pretence theorist's lights, can she vocally engage in that pretence and convey information about a representation? Well, she can about her own representations, but certainly not about the novel itself. To engage in such a pretence vocally would not convey something true about a novel, even though it is appropriate to so pretend. So, intuitively, what it is appropriate to pretend comes apart from what is true about a novel.

The pretence theorist might at this point complain that I have overlooked her ability to appeal to generalities to fill out what *would* be true, and therefore, what would be appropriate for a reader to pretend. She need neither reject nor accept specific details in a particular game of pretence as appropriate or inappropriate. That is, in the case of the horse-drawn carriage, what it is appropriate to pretend is that there is some number or other of horses that draw the carriage. Pretending that there are three horses is a way of pretending that there is some number or other of horses that draw the carriage. Still, there being three horses, and there being some number of horses, are different facts. One still wants to know whether the appropriate act of pretence is one that can only be general or whether engaging in a more specific act is also appropriate.

Perhaps the pretence theorist at this point would wish to distinguish between what ought to be pretended, what is a permissible pretence, and what ought not to be pretended. In this case, what ought to be pretended is that there is some number of horses that draw the carriage. It is permissible to pretend that there is some specific number, and one ought not to pretend that there are lizards pulling the carriage. One cannot, by engaging in a permissible pretence, convey true information about a work of fiction. This would avoid the problem.

But now it begins to seem that it is not what it is appropriate to pretend that is doing the work to account for truth about a story, but rather some other principle – whatever underlying principle it is that prescribes limiting what counts as true in a story only to what is common to all games of make-believe. Games of make-believe themselves are still idiosyncratic and individualistic to a degree to which truth about a story is seemingly not. If one engages in a game of pretence, it seems that it is perfectly appropriate that one fills in certain details in

certain *specific* ways. But if one is to properly engage in discourse about what's true about a story, this is not the case. Indeed, one would be thought to be rather strange if in a serious conversation about Holmes, one engaged in speculation about the color of one of the threads in Holmes's socks. But this would not be an odd thing to do when engaged in a game of pretence when reading the novel itself. Prima facie, there is a difference between what goes on in games of pretence and what goes on in reporting on a story. Enough prima facie differences that I think the likelihood that one can be analysed in terms of the other is low.

Speaking of unspecified facts about a story, yet another problem for pretence theorists is that they cannot account for serious assertions to the effect that certain features about stories are unspecified. For instance, the assertion that there is no fact of the matter about how many times Holmes smoked his pipe. This is so because for pretence theorists, when it comes to accurately reporting on the content of a story, there are only our games of make-believe and our assertions about those games. So, the pretence theorist cannot even make sense of the conversation where we assert the indeterminacy of the number of times Holmes smoked his pipe. For, if in reasoning within a game of make-believe, speakers reason as if the information they are receiving is veridical, there is no sense in which they can convey that it is appropriate in the game of make-believe to assert that there is no fact of the matter about how many times a day Holmes smoked his pipe; for this statement would seemingly convey false information about the game of make-believe in which they are engaged -- that it is appropriate to pretend that there is no answer to this question, which of course, it is not. How then does the pretence theorist account for the fact that in

some context or other, it is appropriate to assert that there is no fact of the matter about how many times Holmes smoked his pipe, if one can convey truths about fiction only by engaging in the pretence itself with the appropriate intention? On the face of it, she cannot.

One more reason for thinking that the pretence account is flawed is this: a pretence theorist cannot offer a plausible account of what justifies the claim that ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’. The answer, for the pretence theorist, is that it is appropriate to pretend that Sherlock Holmes smokes. Now while it is true that it is appropriate to pretend that Sherlock Holmes smokes, this is not what justifies the claim that Sherlock Holmes smokes. What should, and I think would, be cited as a justification for the claim that Sherlock Holmes smokes is what an author wrote in a novel – what subsequent games of pretence this licenses is besides the point.¹⁶ Or rather, the justification for certain claims about fiction relies on something other than what it is appropriate to pretend. For instance, imagine that two people are discussing whether the Spider-man of the movies is the real Spider-man. Now, there is no question that it is appropriate to pretend that the Spider-man in the movies is the real Spider-man. There is also no question that the script-writer intends that we do imagine this to be so. Now, simply relying on a pretence account, the answer of whether the Spider-man in the movies is the real Spider-man has to be “Yes”.

But it seems that we can sensibly ask this question, and that the answer could be “No”. That is, we might decide that the movie-maker made too many mistakes for the Spider-man of the movies to be a story about the real Spider-

¹⁶ To explain it in terms of our own games of make-believe seems to put the cart before the horse, so to speak.

man of the comics. This suggests that there is more to justifying a claim about Spider-man or Sherlock Holmes than citing facts about games of make-believe, what it is appropriate to pretend, or even what the author proscribes that a reader imagine. In short, even though I think it is surely plausible to describe some of our practices concerning fiction as games of pretence, I do not think that games of pretence can shoulder the burden of explaining what truth gets conveyed when one speaker utters the sentence, in all seriousness, 'Holmes smokes'.

2.1.2 Story-operator Views

Story operator theories needn't be plausible both as theories of a mental activity in which readers engage, and as theories of truth about fiction, in the way that a pretence theory must be. They are, therefore, more flexible in accommodating the data. However, like pretence theories, story operator theories also rely on analyzing truth about fiction in terms of what would be true if the novel were veridical, that is, in terms of counterfactuals. So, if problems with pretence theory derive from its reliance on this principle, they will equally apply to story operator theories as well.

The best known story operator theory is due to David Lewis. Lewis claims that the truth expressed by an utterance of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', is one that embeds the sentence uttered, only qualified by an operator that ranges over other possible worlds. Lewis assumes a unified theory of the semantics of names, and of the relation between meaning and truth.¹⁷ So, both 'Sherlock

¹⁷ Notice however that while Lewis does treat sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Russell smokes' as uniform in that they have the same truth-evaluable content, he does not treat them as uniform in the sense of giving a uniform treatment of their intuitive truth-evaluable content. The truth-evaluable content of an utterance of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is not its literal content, but

Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' have, or literally express, the same truth-evaluable content. Very briefly, Lewis analyses truth about fiction in this way: first, one must take utterances of sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' to be tacitly qualified by the operator 'in the story'. So the sentence up for analysis for truth is not 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', but rather 'In the story, Sherlock Holmes smokes'. Such sentences are true if and only if, in the closest worlds in which the relevant story is told as known fact, the sentence in question is true in all of those worlds. This proposal doesn't face the same sorts of objections as the pretence theory, for it needn't account for the idiosyncratic and individualistic nature of games of pretence. Those things that are true about a story are all and only those things that are true in all of the worlds in which the story is told as known fact.

So the answer to the puzzle of how two semantically alike sentences could be used to express two truths with different logical forms is that they literally do not do so, not as a matter of the semantic content of the sentences themselves. Speakers use these sentences to express truths that the sentences themselves do not express. A speaker's judgement that 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true is not indicative of the actual truth-evaluable content that such a sentence expresses. Rather, such utterances indicate the truth-evaluable content <In the story, Sherlock Holmes smokes>. So, the true sentence is one that is qualified with an operator that functions to shift the context of evaluation to worlds other than our own; at those worlds, the sentence is evaluated as it would

something else, something qualified by a story operator. I do give a uniform treatment in this sense – I treat both 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes', as literally true, and they are so in virtue of a common semantics for names.

be at our own world. Both 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'Bertrand Russell smokes' have the same truth-conditional content, and given Lewis's analysis of the meaning of such sentences, one of them is false. If one did want to say something true, then one should qualify one's sentences; presumably, Lewisian language users assume that what is meant to be said in a serious discussion about a work of fiction is this qualified sentence with its differing truth-conditional content. Of course, Lewis realises that simply prefixing a sentence about fiction with a story operator to account for its truth is not very illuminating in and of itself. One requires an explanation of the semantics of such an operator, and Lewis relies on his possible worlds semantics to explain the semantic value of these story operators.

For Lewis, a story operator involves quantification over possible worlds. Properly qualified sentences about fiction, uttered in our world, are true because of what happens in other possible worlds. The sentence 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is false at our world, but if we shift the worlds at which the sentence is evaluated, it will be true at some of those worlds. Those worlds are the worlds where the story is *told* as known fact. 'According to the story, p ' is analyzed as 'In all worlds where the story is told as known fact, p '. So, for Lewis, something is a truth about fiction only if it is a relatively necessary truth. That is, it is true relative to *all* of those worlds that the operator quantifies over – those worlds where the story is told as known fact. For instance, take 'In the story, Sherlock Holmes smokes'. This sentence is true if and only if in all worlds where the Holmes stories are told as known fact, Sherlock Holmes smokes. A story operator does not simply reflect what could be true in the actual world. Rather, it reflects what

would have been true had someone been telling a true, rather than a fictional story.

2.1.2.1 Objections to Story-Operator Views

One question to ask about Lewis's account is this: what is it for a story to be told as known fact? For Lewis, to evaluate whether 'In the story, Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true, one must "locate" those worlds in which the story is told as known fact, and "see" if Holmes smokes in those worlds. That is, a story is told as known fact if it is true, known to be true, and is told. But there are other questions that arise now. First, what makes a telling of some story in a world, a telling of the same story as our story here at this world? Second, is this view consistent with a plausible view of names in general, or of fictional names specifically?

There are at least two factors that are relevant for individuating stories: qualitative similarity of tokens to one another, and the origins of the story.¹⁸ One might require only that a token of a story meet a requirement of qualitative similarity in intrinsic properties, but this would allow for tokens of stories that only accidentally resemble the Holmes stories to count as the same story – two stories that are completely causally independent of one another but exactly resemble one another would not intuitively be copies of the same story (unless one thinks of a story as a kind of platonic universal that exists completely

¹⁸ Before one can say what is required for a telling of a story in another world to count as a telling of the Holmes stories, one should really first distinguish the act of telling from the product of the telling, which will have different, although perhaps somewhat similar, identity conditions. For my purposes here however I assume that what is important is identifying the same story without getting into such details.

independently of its author). So to require mere qualitative similarity is too weak to guarantee the identity of a story across possible worlds. Presumably, there ought to be some requirement that links a story to its author. To ensure that it is this very story that is being identified in other worlds, one can link the story to Doyle. So only worlds in which counterparts of Doyle tell a qualitatively identical story count as worlds in which the Holmes stories are told as known fact. It is plausible that stories are, in part, individuated by their creators. To identify the Holmes stories, then, one must imagine a world where Doyle's counterpart writes the story, but writes it about real people; or, we imagine a world where Doyle's counterpart makes up a story, but unlike in this world, that story happens to accurately depict facts about that world. The scenario is purportedly one where Doyle wrote the very same work, but where he had been describing actual events.

Now the question is: if Doyle had written a text that qualitatively resembles the Holmes stories, but instead he wrote those words about the world, does this really count as an instance of having written *the* Holmes stories? It is true that had Doyle been referring to someone when he wrote the words that he did in fact write, and had he accurately described that person, he would have been writing about someone and would have produced a text that was true. But if this is to count as an instance of writing the Holmes stories, then it would seem that 'Holmes' has to be the sort of expression that could have turned out to refer -- that Doyle, in introducing the name, introduced a name with some referential potential. But this is precisely the thing that it is implausible to say about a fictional name. A *fictional* name is the sort of name that is not introduced with

referential intent, indeed it is introduced with the intention that it fail to refer. It is a rigid non-designator. If so, then it seems that Lewis's view must be wrong.

Another way of putting the worry is this: Lewis's truth-condition for the sentence 'In the Holmes stories, Sherlock Holmes smokes' is this: 'In the Holmes stories' is true if and only if in all close worlds where the Holmes stories are told as known fact, Sherlock Holmes smokes. Now how are we to understand the occurrence of 'Holmes' on the right-hand side and its relation to its occurrence on the left-side? If the truth-condition is a meaning-specifying truth-condition, which of course it would be, then it seems that 'Holmes' must be the sort of expression that refers to a set of beings in other possible worlds. Now of course Lewis's counterpart theory requires him to be committed to this view about any name, but if one can swallow modal realism, this view could be made to fit, more or less, with Kripkean intuitions about names (sans Kripkean metaphysical views about modality) in referential cases; for in those cases, the set of counterparts to which that name refers can be specified in terms of their relation to something in the actual world. But what makes all of the Holmes-like beings, *Holmes-counterparts*? That is, what are these Holmes-like beings counterparts of in the actual world, or how are these counterparts related to the actual world? Well the only obvious answer is that only those Holmes-like beings that are properly related to Doyle's counterparts count as Holmes-counterparts. But Doyle didn't introduce 'Holmes' as an expression that is to refer to beings in other possible worlds. Doyle didn't introduce 'Holmes' as a referring term at all. While it might be true that there are counterparts of Doyle that do introduce *some* name as a referring expression, this should not be understood as a use of our name

'Holmes'.¹⁹ If this is right, then Lewis's analysis cannot be an analysis of the truth condition for a literal assertion of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'. But it may still serve as an analysis of what the structure and content of a reader's imaginings when engaged with a work of fiction.

It is a mistake, I am claiming, to assume that because one may have an account of what is in-a-story-true, that one can simply rely on this to explain what is true about a story. For instance, it would be in-a-story-true that Holmes has some particular number of hairs on his head, we know not how many -- the number of hairs on Holmes's head is epistemically indeterminate. But this would not be true about a story. What would true about a story is that there is no determinate fact of the matter about how many hairs Holmes had on his head -- it is metaphysically indeterminate how many hairs Holmes had on his head. The difference arises from the perspective one is taking on the fiction. One can take the perspective of "being inside the fiction" and reason about what is true as if the fiction were true, as if one were one of the characters in the novel, and one can make qualified assertions about that perspective by using some kind of fiction operator. But one can also take the perspective of "being outside the fiction" and reason about what is true about the fiction qua fiction. The inside perspective is

¹⁹ It should be noted that Doyle does introduce the term as one for which one can engage in a pretence that it refers; for presumably, in Watson's mouth, 'Holmes' refers to Holmes; 'Holmes' has a referential context of introduction for Watson. But this does not mean that our non-pretend use of 'Holmes' to make assertions ought to be understood as referring to objects in other possible worlds, or that those objects are the relevant truth-makers for assertions using 'Holmes'. I am not rejecting the usefulness of either a pretence theory or a story operator analysis for understanding the cognitive processes involved in reading and understanding a work of fiction, nor am I even rejecting Lewis's account as an account of how a story operator would work, I am rejecting only that these analyses can explain the truth of our seeming face-value assertions about works of fiction.

likely captured by either a story operator or a pretence account. The outside perspective, I have suggested, is not.

2.2 Direct Accounts

In contrast to the previous approach, the direct approach offers a direct answer to the question of how ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ can express a truth: it is true. In holding this view, it is the first truth-evaluable thing in sight, the sentence uttered, that’s true. But if this is the approach that is correct, then the simple view -- the view that ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is true if and only the thing referred to by ‘Holmes’ has the property of being a smoker -- of what constitutes the truth expressed by a sentence like ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ must be wrong. Or alternatively, the simple view is right, the sentence is true, and therefore, ‘Holmes’ must refer. The former is the direct semantic approach, the latter the ontic direct approach.

2.2.1 Semantic Direct Accounts

If the sentence relative to the context in which it is uttered is true, and the simple view is false, then it could be true only if the semantic analysis is more complicated than meets the eye. One option argues that ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is a truth of definition (Martin and Scotch, 1974); one should understand the writing of a work of fiction, in part, as an act that results in a stipulative definition for ‘Holmes’. Of course the problem is that this account is in direct conflict with current orthodoxy about the role of proper names in the language (as simple devices of reference). And any account of names, whether it is a referentialist account or not, must be able to account for the referentialist data. Another account argues that sentences like ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ are

ambiguous as between two interpretations: 'Holmes (the referent) smokes' and 'A Holmes-description is a smoking-description' (Elgin, 1983). I think the latter is likely implausible as a hypothesis about ambiguities present in natural language. But there are other ambiguity hypotheses that are more plausible, one of them posits that predicates as a whole are ambiguous, the other posits that 'is' is ambiguous between two types of predication. Yet a third view relies on the recent idea that predicates have indices (Stanley, 2002); it argues that 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' can be true because the standards for satisfying the predicate 'smokes' vary in response to the context of discussing a work of fiction (Ludlow, 2007). The problem with this view is that it does not avoid certain problems concerning proper names or ontological issues. One might also locate the complication in the combination of a name like 'Holmes' with a predicate like 'smokes'. That is, 'Holmes' when combined with 'smokes' has a different kind of interpretation than when a name like 'Russell' combines with the same predicate. This would commit to one to believing that not only do the rules for combining expressions in a language themselves have semantic significance, that significance can vary depending on the meanings of the expressions being combined; there are interaction effects between the lexical items of a language and the semantic rules for combining such lexical items of that language. While this might be true, it is a fairly non-conservative hypothesis, and therefore it is a hypothesis one turns to only after other more conservative alternatives are exhausted.²⁰

²⁰ I realize that simplicity, and considerations of conservativeness, are themselves decidable only relative to a background theory, but combination rules are *prima facie* less visible parts of a sentence than the expressions that

Even though I think they are all flawed in some way, I share sympathies with each of these approaches. Indeed, I take my work as an extension and development of the first approach by providing a semantics for names that is plausible and consistent with such an account. I also at points rely on an ambiguity hypothesis about predication, but it is an ambiguity demanded by the semantics of the name, this is unlike other ambiguity hypotheses offered in the literature. I claim that each of the approaches, apart from the one I take, must, in addition to complicating the semantics, complicate ontology, or also requires complicating the semantics of names. Either way, one ends up taking the sort of approach I recommend – complicating the semantics of names and predication to the degree required by the semantic account of names. My view complicates only the semantics, and one kind of complication is better than two. I turn now to discussing two of the approaches in more detail and offering criticisms of each: the ambiguity hypothesis and the predicate context-sensitivity hypothesis.

2.2.1.1 Objections to Semantic Direct Accounts

The position that locates the semantic complication in the predicate argues that it is the meaning of the predicate that explains the different interpretations of sentences like ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ and ‘Bertrand Russell smokes’. Of course the question that immediately comes to mind is what sort of complication this might be. Is it that the predicate is ambiguous, or is the predicate context-sensitive?

compose one. The less visible parts of a sentence are more likely to be a theoretical reification of merely cognitive processes, so better to assign the complexity, if there is to be any, to something that can at least clearly be a possible point of cognitive off-loading.

One might understand predicates as ambiguous, say, the predicate 'is red', if one thinks that there is such a thing as being really red, and being fictionally red. Of course, this way of putting it is not illuminating in and of itself, but presumably, any theorist who held this position would offer an explanation of what it is to be really red and what it is to be fictionally red. But suppose, now, that one distinguishes between other ways of being red as well, for instance, being red under a certain light, or being painted red, or reflecting red from the red part of the spectrum, or being scarlet-red, or tomato-red. It begins to look as if being red is a rather ambiguous expression indeed, and the ambiguity present seems very unlike other sorts of ambiguity, the sort one sees with words like 'bank' and 'branch'.²¹ The latter sort of ambiguity appears to require distinct entries in one's vocabulary. But 'red', if it is ambiguous in the way discussed, is ambiguous to a rather large degree, so many ways ambiguous as to be implausible that there be separate entries for each distinct ambiguity.

There is a second, less implausible, ambiguity hypothesis. This one locates the ambiguity in the verb 'is'. That is, not only is 'is' ambiguous as between identity and predication, but the 'is' of predication is itself ambiguous. It is ambiguous between having a property in the way that actual objects in the world have them, and having a property in the way fictional characters have them (vanwagen, 1977). Of course such a view, put this way, requires there to be fictional characters. One can imagine believing either that they are abstract objects, or non-existent objects, in which case there is some explanation required about how such things have properties like being a smoker, and for which the

²¹ See Charles Travis (1996) for discussion of this kind of problem.

ambiguity hypothesis is an answer.²² But this option, then, is not a pure semantic direct account, rather it is an ontic direct account. It therefore introduces two kinds of complication: ontic and semantic. This is to be avoided if possible. However, as I will discuss later when I present my own account, there is a sense in which one can rely on such a hypothesis once one gives the right semantic account of names.

The second possibility is to offer a context-sensitivity hypothesis about predicates; the interpretation of a predicate is sensitive to features of the context of utterance. One way to think about a predicate being context-sensitive is to think of each predicate as having indices that can be saturated in certain ways. If, for instance, one is giving an analysis of the predicate 'is blue' one might include an indice for shade, another for brightness, another for how the object instantiates that color blue.²³ The meaning of a predicate is open-ended in a way that allows for a certain filling in of detail depending on the context in which the predicate is used. But open-ended in what and in how many ways is a question that needs answering. Although, since I too rely on a context-sensitive mechanism, it is a question I must answer as well.

²² Of course one can also imagine, as Lewis does, that such things are *possibilia*, objects that while not in the actual world, exist in the same way as we do, and can therefore have properties just as we do. 'Is' would then be ambiguous as between talking about the actual world and talking about possible worlds, but this makes an explanation of the subjunctive aspects of natural language rather more complicated than it is already. What does it mean to use 'could' or 'might' given that 'is' already encodes that information?

²³ See Jason Stanley (2002) for discussion of the idea that predicates have indices.

But let us look now at how the context-sensitivity of a predicate might help in the case at issue, because there are problems in making the context-sensitivity of a predicate explain how and why a sentence like, 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' might be true.²⁴ Is there, for instance, a fiction indice? And if so, what sort of indice is it? It would have to be some sort of indice that makes a predicate apply fictionally. How it does so depends very much on how one understands what a context of fictional discourse is, what indices are, what a context in general is, and in what ways elements of a context can saturate indices. If one thinks that a context of fictional discourse is one where participants are engaged in a game of make-believe, that indices allow only one way of being filled in, and a context is only something that assigns values to variables, then the proposal of how 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true might be this: 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true if and only if Sherlock Holmes smokes *make-believable*, or perhaps, 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true if and only if Sherlock Holmes smokes *in the fiction*.²⁵ The real-world variants might be something like this 'Sherlock Holmes smokes *in the real world*'. The problems with such accounts are three-fold: they are semantic, metaphysical, and epistemic. They are semantic because one must give a semantic account explaining the make-believe or in the fiction operator, they are metaphysical

²⁴ See Peter Ludlow (2006) for someone who argues that the complication ought to be located in the predicate. Although he focuses on fictional predicates, predicates that have no application in the real world, like, for instance, 'is a flux capacitor', or 'is a vampire slayer'. He argues that such predicates apply only in a limited context, but can apply in a wider context as well, if say, fictional money takes on value in the real world. Although, at points, he also seems to indicate that it is not the fictional predicates themselves that are context-sensitive, but rather the truth predicate – a very different sort of account. I here focus only on the idea that predicates like 'is blue' are context-sensitive.

²⁵ Such an analysis could not be left so sketchy and general. I leave them this way here because I have a more general complaint about this approach, one that does not depend on the details of such proposals.

because one must explain to what and how such predicates apply, and they are epistemic because one must explain how and what speakers know about such indices, and how that knowledge manifests itself. Of course this is fine if one's goal is simply to preserve semantic innocence – that the sentence uttered is what is literally true or false.²⁶ Such proposals are face-value approaches. The sentences uttered are literally true in the contexts in which they are uttered, assuming they are uttered correctly and assertively.

But I think one of the problems with such an account, the metaphysical problem, serves as motivation for a different sort of approach. The metaphysical problem can be posed thusly: if a predicate is such that it has an indice for whether or not it applies make-believedly, the question arises, applies to what make-believedly? If a name is a device of reference that is empty, then a predicate, even if it is specified to apply in only a limited fictional context – in a game of make-believe or otherwise “in the fiction” -- one can rightly raise the question, applies to what? Why not then focus on what it means to be a fictional sort of name and locate the complexity there? Best, then, to first address the issue of there being nothing corresponding to a fictional name.²⁷

2.2.2 Ontic Direct Accounts

Direct ontic accounts are, by far, much less common and much less developed than indirect accounts. For that reason, the introduction of such accounts will be

²⁶ This is my gloss on what writers mean by semantic innocence in this domain, for surely it cannot mean maintaining simplicity in semantic accounts of types of expressions in the language once one considers how many indices there may need to be.

²⁷ What to say about fictional predicates is another issue, but at least if one can have fictional names be meaningful then at least predicates, fictional or otherwise, can be meaningfully concatenated with them.

rather brief. There are two basic options in the literature for the referent of 'Holmes': one makes the referent of 'Holmes' a non-existent object, the other makes it an actual abstract object, yet another could make Holmes a possible, a non-actual concrete individual. The basic problem with these accounts is that they all require implausible ontological commitments and violate the principle that one should preserve the intuition that Holmes does not exist. They also tend to rely on other views already criticized.

2.2.2.1 Objections to Ontic Direct Accounts

The most common ontic direct approach is Meinongian -- there is such a thing as Holmes, he just doesn't exist, and the predicate 'smokes' applies to him. I don't know how to refute such a view, but it is so implausible that I do not spend time developing criticisms against it. I assume the problems with this approach are well-known. However, I will discuss related views. One is the view that Holmes actually exists, but he exists as an abstract object, and it is the existence of this abstract object that grounds the truth of assertions of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' (vanInwagen, 1977). I say "grounds the truth" because while this view posits a referent for 'Holmes', an abstract object is not the sort of thing that typically does things like smoke. So this view, on its own, won't explain the truth of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'. There are only three ways for this sort of view to work: revert to Meinongianism, rely on a pretence or story operator theory, or rely on a semantic direct approach.

In many ways, the Meinongian view is the simpler of the three; for on the Meinongian view, Holmes is the sort of thing that can smoke, the only difference between the fact that Sherlock Holmes smokes and, say, the fact that Russell

smokes, is that Holmes doesn't exist and Russell does; they are not different sorts of things, they just differ in the status of their respective existences. Alternatively, one might maintain that the referent of 'Holmes' is an abstract object and claim instead that it is part of a pretence that we make-believe, of an abstract object, that it smokes. Or, concerning that abstract object, it is only in a story that it smokes. As mentioned, one might also entertain various ambiguity hypotheses about 'having properties' (vanLwagen, 1977) that allow for it to be truly said of an abstract object that it smokes. That is, one might maintain a mixed view, one that is both a semantic and ontic direct approach.

So even those who think that 'Holmes' refers or denotes will sometimes rely on story operator or a pretence account to explain the truth of certain utterances containing 'Holmes', though for different reasons than those who think that fictional names do not refer to anything. Typically, the theorist denying that 'Holmes' refers to anything, thinks that sentences like, 'Holmes is a detective', can't be true at face value because, after all, there is no Holmes. Such sentences can be true only if prefixed by an operator of some kind. As we've seen, at least one kind of theorist who thinks that 'Holmes' does refer to something, thinks that utterances of sentences like 'Holmes is a detective' can't be true at face value either, but not because there isn't anything that is Holmes; rather, she denies that such a statement can be true at face value because whatever Holmes is, he is not the sort of thing that can be a concrete detective. Therefore, it can only be true in the story, or make-believedly the case, that he is a concrete detective. This sort of view then is not even a direct ontic view.

The last view I consider under this heading is the view that posits a Holmes a possibilium. But this sort of view would require some sort of operator, for

presumably, we do not talk about possibilia directly with sentences like ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’. Rather, we might talk about such things via a story-operator or a game of pretence. So this view ends up relying on views already criticized also.

However, despite the flaws with these views there is a way to have a direct semantic account that is not a mixed view -- that does not require both complications in the semantics and complications in the ontology. One could provide an account of names that allows for them to be used in truthful assertions of different sorts without any ontological commitments. One can do this, so long as one is willing to give up on a direct reference view of names. It also requires some complication in one’s predication rules, but it is a complication that is demanded by the semantic value of a name. But before I provide such an account in the next chapter, I wish to first discuss what sort of positive motivations there might be for such a semantic direct account.

2.3 Motivations for a Semantic Direct Account

Ideally, what is needed is an account of fiction that allows for assertions of ‘Sherlock Holmes is a detective’ to be taken as true unqualifiedly, and yet at the same time, allows us to avoid ontological commitments to Sherlock Holmes -- a seemingly hopeless project given certain well-grounded theoretical commitments. Nevertheless, on the face of it, natural language does appear to accommodate truth without ontological commitment. The pretence and story operator theories do not account for this fact – they try to explain it away. Such approaches leave the connection between what is true, and the sentence uttered, a mystery. More importantly, they also do not offer an answer to a more fundamental question, “Why, if names are for referring, or even for denoting single objects, do speakers

accept, without any hesitation, the use of names in fiction?”²⁸ Ontic direct accounts also do not explain the fact that language seems to allow for truth without ontological commitments, for obvious reasons. Other accounts, direct semantic accounts, are on the right track, but end up with ontological issues the same as those of the ontic direct theorist. What is needed is an explanation that gives a straightforward account of this phenomenon.

Instead of explaining away the intuition that ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is true, one might simply try to accommodate the phenomenon as a product of the semantics of the sentence. In my case, it is a product of the semantics of proper names which allows such sentences to be true. One might, that is, take the sentence as true at face value – its truth reflects something about the meaning of the sentence. After all, there are already, in natural language, all sorts of sentences whose presumable truth strains the plausibility of their predicted truth-conditions. For instance, ‘The sky is blue’, ‘The rainbow is pretty’, ‘Murder is wrong’, ‘Two is even’, etc.²⁹ Of course, one might argue that, in these cases, there is more pressure on the standard semantic theories due to the plausibility of the claim that such sentences are *really* true, compared to sentences like ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’. But one must ask what the motivation is for saying that ‘The sky is blue’ is *really* true, but ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ is not. For if

²⁸ There are reconstructions one can give of what such answers might be on behalf of these views, but despite these, there are other issues. See my (2007a) for detailed criticism of the standard story-operator and make-believe operator views.

²⁹ The strength of the analogy to ‘Holmes smokes’ varies with the different sentences offered here. I do think there is a very close analogy with both ‘The sky is blue’ and ‘The rainbow is pretty’, so the following discussion centers on ‘The sky is blue’.

'The sky is blue' is true, it's surely not true because there is a sky, and *it* is blue. The explanation for the color of the sky is quite complicated. The reason for the sky's blueness is that molecules that compose the Earth's atmosphere (something with vague boundaries) scatter only short light waves, and because the red color cones in our eyes are also activated at the same time, we see the sky as blue (as opposed to violet).

Well, why not give a similar complicated kind of story for the truth of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'? Like 'The sky is blue', if 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true, it is not true because some thing has some property, in this case, Holmes having the property of being a smoker. No, the explanation would involve some complicated story about the actions of authors and what is contained in novels. So the explanations for the truth of both 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'The sky is blue' are complicated. There seems to be no reason, then, for rejecting the intuition that 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true, unless one is prepared to point out some relevant difference between 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' and 'The sky is blue', or one is prepared to give up on the truth of 'The sky is blue'.

So, if one does give a semantic analysis that has sentences like 'The sky is blue' coming out true, and this requires rejecting standard semantic analyses in favor of some more complicated story, then why not do the same for sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'? If a plausible, albeit complicated, explanation can be given for the truth of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', why isn't this just as acceptable as the one given for 'The sky is blue'?

So, one way of giving such a semantic direct account is to plausibly reject the idea that assertions of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' represent a non-standard use of names, and claim that such uses are as central to theorizing about the

semantics of names as other uses. The datum just simply seems to be that names can be used in all sorts of ways: to keep track of “imaginary friends”, to track things in the world, to track “characters” in a work of fiction, to track things with which speakers are acquainted only descriptively, to track acts of failed reference. Names are not essentially for referring to existent things in the world; fictional names do not even purport to refer. Indeed, it is intended by those that create fiction that they fail to refer, although it is likely that such names are intended to be *taken as* referring during the act of reading, telling, or hearing a story. But that is a matter different from how they are to be taken outside of such a context.

Now, neither a Russellian, nor a Millian, nor a certain sort of Fregean account of names helps in solving this puzzle. A Russellian analysis would have names equivalent in meaning to definite descriptions, and this cannot account for the fact that some names, those that have a referent, do appear to have the properties Kripke attributed them. And surely it is obvious that without some fairly impressive acrobatic feats, the Millian premise -- that a name’s meaning is equivalent to its bearer -- cannot be used to explain the function of fictional names.

But what of the Fregean idea that, in addition to a name’s having a bearer, they also have a sense? Can the Fregean idea be used to explain *both* fictional and Kripkean uses of names? It depends, of course, on what one means by a name’s having a Fregean sense. If one thinks of the Fregean sense of a name as simply a mode of presentation of the referent, then a Fregean approach will not help (Evans, 1982). That is, if sense is asymmetrically dependent on reference, then the Fregean strategy is ruled out, and surely sense and reference must be

related somehow. Suppose one instead makes reference asymmetrically dependent on sense? This would allow for a name to have a sense -- to be significant -- despite its lack of a referent.³⁰ Having reference be asymmetrically dependent on sense is a more traditional notion in the first place. On this way of thinking of senses, they can simply be things that function to determine referents. But in fact this situation is no better than the one with which the discussion began. For if the job of a name's sense is to determine a referent, why would anyone intentionally introduce one that doesn't, and plausibly couldn't, refer? Of course, the obvious reply is that a speaker introduces such names so that others can pretend that the name has a referent, and use it as a prop in a game of make-believe. But if the job of a sense is to determine a referent, then an appropriate or legitimate sense is only one that determines a referent, or at least could do so. But there is no referent corresponding to a fictional name, and if Kripke is right about fictional names being rigid non-designators, there couldn't be. So, how then could there be such a sense?

But one might take a sense to be something different from a function that determines a referent. One might instead take a sense to be something that determines an appropriate use for an expression. This would not require a name to have a referent at all. Somehow, the different uses of a name must be explained, and it seems that the only way to do so is to find some common character amongst the different uses that can explain them.

One might stop, at this point, to wonder why there is any problem at all, given that the problem depends on assuming that 'Russell' and 'Holmes' ought to

³⁰ Of course whether it would allow for fictional names to be used to assert truths is another issue that would need addressing.

be treated as members of the same semantic type. But this is a plausible assumption, if one believes in distinct semantic types at all.³¹ Suppose a speaker has a male friend named 'Sherlock Holmes', suppose Sherlock Holmes smokes, and suppose the speaker utters the sentence, 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' to convey this to someone. Contrast this with what the speaker would mean if she were conveying information, not about her friend Sherlock Holmes, but about the novels written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. So the sentence 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' gets uttered in two different contexts, and conveys very different information each time. One might wish to argue that the name, as used in each context, ought to be understood not as different uses of the same name, but rather as two uses of two different names, they would be *homophonous but distinct*, and therefore one might be of one semantic type, the other of a different semantic type. I agree with the idea that they need to be distinguished, but not as distinct names: they should be distinguished on the basis of being different uses of the same name. That is, they ought to be distinguished as being the same name with a common character, which explains their differing uses.

Why should one favor one approach over the other? The obvious, and simple, answer is that names can be used in ways that show that instances of them ought to be treated as instances of the same name. For instance, speakers can sensibly utter sentences like 'There are five Alberts in my class'. How could one do this if there was not some common name 'Albert', instances of which can be counted? So I assume that, for instance, the name 'Aristotle' as a name for

³¹ One might be very conservative about this for reasons having to do with the constraints imposed on the evolutionary development of homo sapiens. See Pietroski's forthcoming 'Semantics Without Truth-values'. There, and elsewhere, Pietroski argues for a very spare semantics.

the philosopher and for the shipping magnate are different uses of the same name. Now in this case there is seemingly no problem, since both are referring uses. But what does one say about Holmes-the-friend and Holmes-of-the-Conan-Doyle-stories? Offering a common semantic explanation of these uses is much more difficult if one is committed to explaining them via a common character for the single name 'Holmes' of which the previous two are instances. Indeed, it is not even clear that treating them as distinct names but homophonous *names* gets one out of trouble in the first place. For if they are both names, and if names are to be given some common semantic explanation, what is the explanation for the seemingly different uses of the two distinct proper names, Holmes-the-friend, and Holmes-of-the-Conan-Doyle-stories? So there are many reasons for favoring a semantic direct account of the truth of 'Sherlock Holmes' smokes, and many reasons for favoring such an approach that complicates the semantics for names. I now turn to explicating what I argue is the common character for a name like 'Holmes'.

Chapter Three: Names as Context-Sensitive, Yet Rigid Expressions

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the thesis of rigid designation, and set out a theory that accommodates the idea that names are rigid expressions, but yet allows for fictional names to have significance. The view I expound interprets names as context-sensitive expressions. More precisely, names are structured expressions that are associated, in a context of use, with a particular context of introduction, or dubbing, which then determines their semantic values. Some of these contexts of introduction will involve the dubbing of an individual with a name. A context of introduction of this kind would be referential, but there are other kinds as well. After explaining the view of names I think is right, I also consider some objections to the view I espouse and offer replies to those objections.

Before proceeding, it is worth stating my initial assumptions. First, following much recent work in philosophy of language and linguistics, I am assuming that names have covert structure. Second, as far as I am concerned, fictional names are essentially non-referring: they do not refer to anything, nor could they. Third, fictional entities, such as Sherlock Holmes, fail to exist, either as possible concrete individuals, non-existent concrete individuals, or actual abstract individuals. Fourth, names are not Millian: the meaning of a name is not its bearer. Neither is descriptivism about names true: a name's meaning is not equivalent to some definite description, or set thereof, which uniquely determines its referent. Fifth, names that do have a referent have that referent rigidly: the semantic value of a name is constant across modal contexts. Finally, I think

names can have a meaning independent of having any sort of referent. I make other assumptions as well, some defended, some undefended, and some partially defended. I mention these as they come up in the following discussion.

2. Rigid Designators

According to Kripke, a name is a rigid designator because it designates the same thing in all possible worlds in which that thing exists. As Kripke points out, this characterization of names as rigid designators needs to be supplemented, for besides names, there are other expressions that designate rigidly -- descriptions that designate the same thing in all worlds in virtue of their content, such as 'the square root of nine'. So names are not merely rigid designators, for that would leave them indistinguishable from rigid definite descriptions. Kripke distinguishes names from rigid definite descriptions by distinguishing *de jure* from *de facto* rigid designators. Names are *de jure* rigid designators -- they refer rigidly by stipulation. In contrast, certain definite descriptions are *de facto* rigid designators -- they merely happen to designate rigidly in virtue of their descriptive content. So a name is a rigid designator. That is, it is the kind of expression for which it is true that if it is a rigid designator for some thing, then it designates that thing in all the worlds in which that thing exists. But a name also has these two characteristics: first, if it refers to some individual, it refers to that individual rigidly; and second, it rigidly refers by fiat, not as a matter of any descriptive content. The thesis that if names refer they refer rigidly, that they are *de jure* rigid designators, and the rigid designator thesis itself, all need discussion; for it is controversial whether they best capture the phenomenon of names as rigid designators.

I begin by discussing the more general characterization of a rigid

designator – an expression *d* is a rigid designator for *x* if *d* refers to *x* in all worlds in which *x* exists. It is often argued that this thesis ought to be replaced by this: an expression *d* is a rigid designator for *x* if *d* refers to *x* with respect to all worlds, whether *x* exists in those worlds or not. This amendment is offered in response to problems posed by sentences like ‘Hitler might not have existed’. If one adheres to the first formulation of the rigid designator thesis, then it seems that one cannot hold that ‘Hitler might not have existed’ is true; for in evaluating this sentence with respect to a world in which Hitler does not exist, ‘Hitler’ would designate nothing. It is therefore unclear how the sentence could have a truth-value, assuming one distinguishes between something’s being not true and something’s being false.³² What’s more, if one cannot say of something that it might not have existed, then there is the danger that this entails that everything that exists, exists necessarily – a seemingly absurd implication. For these reasons, it is preferable to use the reformed definition of a rigid designator just given, and I do so with no further argument.

The seemingly innocuous that if a name refers, it refers rigidly, is also a controversial idea. One might think, for instance, that the notion of reference is exhausted by the notion of rigid designation. But the former thesis seemingly conflicts with this idea, for it makes reference a phenomenon that is distinct from rigidity. That is, one must evaluate *first* whether a name refers, and if it does, it must do so rigidly. So evaluating whether a term has a referent is prior to evaluating it as a rigid designator, or so the thesis seems to imply. Second, the idea now under discussion also seems to require that it is names qua

³² See Stanley (1997) for more discussion.

expressions in the language that refer, not speakers. Therefore, the seemingly simple observation that if a name refers, it refers rigidly, raises issues about: the nature of reference, and the nature of referential expressions, or an act of referring, and its relation to rigid designation.

I turn now to issues of the relation between reference and rigid designation. As I said, reference is something one might wish analyze in terms of rigid designation. That is, one might eliminate any intentional notions of reference from one's semantic theory by explaining them as rigid designators, where rigid designators are typically explained in a purely extensional formal framework that has the power to represent the modal profiles of sentences. Names might be represented in such a system by assigning those expressions a constant value across all contexts. Expressions whose value was assigned as constant would be said to be the referring expressions.

This assumes that the concept of assigning an expression a value is not itself a notion in need of explanation, nor that it is a problematically intentional notion. But perhaps one need not rely on the idea of an assignment quite so starkly. One might avoid relying too heavily on the notion of an assignment by arguing that a rigid designator, and hence a referential expression, is one whose value does not change for the purposes of *evaluating it for truth*. One can evaluate a sentence for truth only once one has disambiguated ambiguities, and saturated context-sensitive expressions, of course, but the process by which a referent is determined or assigned is irrelevant. It is the truth determining features only that distinguish a rigid from a non-rigid designator, and hence, a referential from a non-referential expression.

This last way of understanding reference would also allow one to accommodate demonstratives and indexicals as referential expressions, for the sentences are evaluated in a context, and in a context, indexicals and demonstratives do not change their values. But there is also the problem of distinguishing rigid definite descriptions from other rigid designators. If referential expressions just are rigid designators in the way just specified, then rigid definite descriptions are referential, but non-rigid definite descriptions are not. This garners the rather odd consequence that some definite descriptions belong to a different semantic category than others simply in virtue of some accidental metaphysical facts.

If one is to eliminate an intentional notion of reference in favor of rigid designation, one must find some further way to distinguish definite descriptions from names. Perhaps one needs to supplement the previous approach with this caveat: rigidly designating definite descriptions are not referential expressions, because while they have the same referent in all circumstances of evaluation, their semantic value needn't be fixed independently of, or prior to, the circumstance of their evaluation. In contrast, referential expressions must have their values fixed independently of their circumstance of evaluation. But now it seems that the notion of an assignment has reared its head again, and that a reductive account of reference *purely* in terms of rigid designation is not in the cards. Indeed, it is just at this point that pragmatic truth-conditionalists claim that the rules of the game have been violated, for they do claim that the notion of fixing a semantic value is as much in need of explanation as is the notion of reference (Recanati, 2006).

There are also more metaphysically robust ways of understanding referential expressions. These more metaphysical ways of understanding reference reflect ideas about referential expressions that do distinguish them from rigid designators: these are not reductive accounts. For instance, if an expression is a rigid designator, if it picks out the same thing in all possible worlds, it doesn't matter how it does so. In contrast, a referential term is sometimes thought of as an expression that does pick out something in a specific way – referential terms are used in expressing singular propositions, propositions that are directly and unmediatedly about a particular object. One might characterize them as propositions that contain the individual referred to as a constituent, to use Russellian terminology. These sorts of propositions are distinct from general, and even particular, propositions. The truth of a general proposition depends on how things are with classes of things; the truth of a particular proposition depends on how things are with a specific object, but the proposition needn't be directly or unmediately about that object. This is a different sort of characterization of a referential expression, one that seemingly relies on some fairly robust metaphysical commitments about propositions; not only are there propositions, but they are metaphysically structured enough to admit of at least three different kinds. This is a way of characterizing referential expressions is not ontologically parsimonious in the same way as the previous view, and for this reason, I don't wish to rely on it.³³

³³ Of course, those who do think that there are propositions would argue that other options do not have the advantages of that their view has. But it is not my interest to here argue about whether propositions do or do not exist. My point is simply to discuss different views of what constitutes reference.

Another possible view is this one: referential expressions are expressions whose content is dependent on extra-linguistic factors for their semantic value where that semantic value is of a particular kind; namely, a single object, or if one is a Fregean, a singular concept. As stated, this is extremely vague. But let us see if there is some way to make it more well-defined by examining each case where such a dependency is *prima facie* present. One way this dependency might and does express itself is this: the expression's content can be understood if a context of utterance is specified. This is the sort of context-sensitivity that indexicals manifest. Another way an expression's semantic value can be dependent on extra-linguistic context is this: the expression's content can be understood only if a speaker makes salient something in the context of use. Demonstratives function this way. Last, an expression's semantic value can also be dependent on extra-linguistic context in this way: a speaker must stipulate a constant value for the expression in question. This is the way that names putatively work. So, the *de jure/de facto* distinction really is needed to characterize names. So it is the thesis that a name rigidly refers by fiat, which explains what makes names referential expressions. Kripke is right that, to distinguish names semantically, they must have properties in addition to being rigid designators.

While characterizing referential expressions in terms of context-dependency may give the appearance that the notion of reference has been neglected, I still think this constitutes at least the beginning of an answer at what defines a referential expression; for it does capture what are intuitively all of the referential expressions in the language (this assumes one counts names as

context-dependent, which I do).³⁴ Context-sensitivity is perhaps a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for an expression's referential status.

Note that, in at least two of these cases, the characterization of a referential expression makes inexorable reference to a speaker, and to a speaker's intentions. This raises the issue of the source of referentiality: is it a property of expressions or is referring only something that speakers do? In some sense referring must be something that speakers do. But in another sense, even if properties of expressions ultimately supervene on facts about speakers of a language, it cannot be that a successful act of reference is purely a matter of a *particular* speaker's occurrent intentions to do so with a certain expression at a particular time of utterance. Expressions have to be apt for referring, and surely objective properties of expressions themselves, whether extrinsic or intrinsic, make them apt for such uses, as well as imposing constraints on what particular speakers are able to do with them. It will later become evident that I allow a significant role for particular localized speaker's intentions; however, that role is proscribed by the semantics of the expression involved.

To summarize this rather lengthy discussion: I claim that reference is a distinct phenomenon from rigidity. Referential expressions are ones that make ineliminable advertence to a speaker's intentions or to a context of utterance where the purpose of the speaker's intentions must be to identify a particular

³⁴ This assumes that names can count as some kind of context-dependent expression. I think they are context-dependent, as I will spell out. So, I ask to reader to provisionally accept this characterization of referential expressions on the condition that the account of names is satisfactory. Of course, one might take this to constitute an argument in favor of names as well. Of course it cannot be both ways, else one begs the question, so take it in the former way (unless one is prepared to make a reflective equilibrium bid for the truth of one's view, which I am not prepared to do, at least not here).

object as a subject of discourse, or where the context of utterance together with a semantic rule, determines an object as the subject of discourse. Rigid expressions, in contrast, have no such ineliminable speaker relativity or context-sensitivity, as the example of 'the square root of nine' demonstrates. Referential expressions are a special case of rigid expressions.

The previous discussion has implications for how to understand the thesis that names rigidly refer by fiat. Is it this act, an act of reference by fiat, which constitutes something *as a name* or is there something about the semantic character of a name that makes it apt for getting its reference assigned by fiat. As I will later argue, it is a name's character that ensures its rigidity of reference, if it refers at all. It is this character that puts constraints on what a speaker can and cannot do when she introduces a name *qua name* into the language.

Even with this more definite characterization of names, there are still open questions about names. In particular, there are questions about empty names that the previous discussion does not address. For Kripke, all empty names are necessarily empty. One might think that an empty name's necessary failure to refer is entailed by the characterization of names as rigid designators. That is, since names are rigid designators, and since rigid designators have the same referent in every possible world, if a name has no referent in the world of utterance, it has no referent in any worlds. But this is not so. The rigid designator thesis has implications only for those cases in which a name refers successfully. To think otherwise is to treat a failure of reference as a kind of reference – that of referring to nothing. It is not at all clear that this should be allowed into one's theory of reference: 'referring' seems to be a success term, a term that denotes an act that, in order to be said to have performed it, one must be successful at

doing so, that is, there is no reference without a referent.³⁵ I return to these questions in the next chapter. I now turn to explicating a view which can accommodate all of the previous discussion. Specifically, it can accommodate the idea that being a referential expression is a distinctive way of being a rigid expression, that is, the view I expound encodes Kripke's intuition that not only are names rigid designators, but they are de jure rigid designators.

3. A Different Approach to Names: Taking Naming Seriously

3.1 Intuitive Motivation

I propose a new view of names to account for the different uses for proper names. Names can't be mere devices of reference. What I propose, instead, is to think of names as context-sensitive expressions that get their meaning in a context of utterance from the event in which they are introduced into discourse. The events in which names are introduced into discourse I call "contexts of introduction" or "dubbings." A context of introduction is an event of using a name to introduce for it a certain purpose, e.g., for referring to an individual. It is this event that partly determines a name's interpretation in a given context of use. The view I propose is one that makes such acts of naming fundamental to a name's interpretation, not simply its reference to an individual, even though a name may refer to an individual. That is, a name's context of introduction is important for understanding it qua linguistic item in the language. Consider an example. The use of 'Bertrand Russell' in (1) is referential. However, it is not referential because a name's semantic function is to refer to objects. Rather, it is

³⁵ But this does not immediately land one into trouble so long as one does not make reference part of the semantic content of a name, which I do not.

referential because one of the dubbings for the name 'Bertrand Russell' assigned to it Bertrand Russell, the great philosopher, and it is this dubbing that is relevant in this case. While a dubbing may involve introducing a referring use for a name, it needn't do so. There is nothing inherent about a dubbing -- the act of introducing a name into discourse -- that requires reference to play a role in it. For instance, reference does not play a role in a fictional dubbing. This makes the puzzles tractable, and allows fictional names to have significance.

Names, then, are expressions whose contexts of introduction, or dubbings, determine their interpretations given a context of utterance. But a name can be associated with more than one dubbing -- in fact, it may be associated with a large set. The name 'Elizabeth', for instance, may be used to talk about Elizabeth Taylor, the frequently married movie star, or about Queen Elizabeth II, the current monarch of England, or even about Elizabeth Bennett, the spirited female protagonist of Pride and Prejudice. Before an instance of a name in a particular context of utterance can be interpreted properly, one of its dubbings must be selected. A name, therefore, on this way of thinking, must also include a function mapping each context of utterance to one of its dubbings. So, even though a name, as a type of expression, will have many dubbings associated with it, in a particular context of utterance, only one such dubbing will be relevant. Names, on this view, therefore, cannot be simple syntactic items. Following recent work in philosophy and linguistics, I think of them as structured entities, some of whose structure is covert.³⁶

³⁶ See Stanley (2002) for more discussion of covert elements in language.

Whatever one says about the semantics of names, one had better be able to explain their ubiquitous rigidly designating uses.³⁷ A theory of names should show how their uses result from a shared common semantics.³⁸ One must, then, offer a semantics for names that accounts for the data, including referentialist data without being referentialist. Specifically, a theory of names ought to explain their rigidity. But if referring is not to be part of the semantics for names, then the semantics had better have some way of ensuring that names are rigid that is reference-neutral. In other words, since names do not have referring as a semantic feature, in order to be rigidly referring or non-referring, they must derive their rigidity from somewhere else.

A view that makes the interpretation of a name depend on its context of introduction can preserve the intuition that they are rigid expressions. For the use of a name in a context of utterance that does have a referential context of

³⁷ By non-referentialism I just mean a theory that does not have referring required as part of the semantics of names, but will allow for referring uses of names.

³⁸ One might wonder why this should be the case; for we do not feel that all uses of our language must be explained in any direct way by the semantics of the expressions involved. For instance, we do not think that an inscription of 'the candidate has fine-handwriting' in a letter of reference, where that inscription is conveys the candidate's incompetence, must be explained by the meaning of the expressions involved. There are many differences however between this case and the case of fiction the least of which is the fact that speakers of a language will readily identify the fact that the sentence 'the candidate has fine-handwriting' does not *mean* that the candidate is incompetent. Second, purely pragmatic phenomena rely on the meaning of the sentence in order to convey the things that get conveyed. It is not clear how this would go in the fictional case if one is a referentialist given the problems the referentialist has in accounting for the meaning of sentences like 'Holmes smokes'. There are disputed cases of whether something counts as a pragmatic or semantic phenomenon. Many of which involve the fact that speakers themselves do not hear the utterance in a certain way. These issues apply to the fictional case as well. If so, then accommodating it by giving a semantics that more directly accommodates the uses in question is worth pursuing.

introduction will always pick out the same referent in any context of evaluation. Names, therefore, are still rigid designators, but this is a distinct property from being referential expressions. This way of thinking about names can still explain their rigidity because, for any name in a context of use, only one context of introduction will be relevant for its interpretation. Since a context of introduction is an event in the past whose nature is fixed, if the context of introduction is one where a name was used to introduce it for referring to an individual, then it will always refer to that individual.

On my view, a name like 'Russell' from (1) functions just as Kripke says it should, as an expression that designates an individual. In addition, because the individual designated is determined not by anything about that particular context of utterance per se, but rather by the particular context of introduction selected in the context of utterance, the designation of Russell by 'Russell' is rigid. That is, even though the context of introduction might vary with context, once one has been selected, there is no question about whether a designated individual is designated rigidly. To think otherwise is to confuse issues about the context of utterance with the context of evaluation, and although the selection of a context of introduction is sensitive to the context of utterance, what gets determined afterwards is not.

A name's rigidity, then, is not the result of being fixed to one and only one object. In the referential case, it is rigid because it is associated with an event that tied the name to a particular individual. Making a name's context of introduction constitutive of its semantics both ensures its rigidity, and respects the intuition that a name's history matters for its appropriate use. Given that a proper name is an expression that has a context of introduction that, in part,

determines its interpretation, a speaker, in intending to introduce a name for a certain purpose, intends to do something the very doing of which features as part of the meaning of the name being used.³⁹ So, the particular context of introduction for a particular name will determine what can be expressed using that name. The semantics of proper names has to do with acts of introducing, not with referents at all, at least not inherently. The class of proper names is associated with various events of introducing, where each use of a particular name will be associated with only one context of introduction. One might think this threatens the rigidity of names, but names only need to be rigid in contexts of use.

Making a name's context of introduction constitutive of its semantics both preserves Kripkean intuitions -- that a name's history is important for its appropriate use -- and yet, since it does not *require* the assignment of a referent, it can also leave room for empty names, names that have no referent, to play meaningful role in the language. In particular, it can leave room for fictional names to play a role in the language, since they were never introduced with any intention that they refer, but rather they were introduced with a different intention: perhaps the intention that they be used in games of make-believe, or perhaps with the intention that they be used to think about other possible worlds, or perhaps with the intention that they be used to think about a set of properties in a certain way.⁴⁰

³⁹This suggests that naming is a kind of performative act.

⁴⁰This is not to endorse the make-believe or story operator views; for a name can be introduced in order to allow for certain games without thereby committing oneself to the view that this is the only way in which it can play a role in serious

3.2 Sketch of a Formal Theory

What structure must a name have to reflect this picture? Let's consider what I've said thus far. I have claimed that a name is an expression that is associated with a variety of contexts of introduction, or dubbings, and also with a function that maps each context of utterance into one of these dubbings. A name, therefore, is a three-part entity of the form $S_{P,f}$, where S is a string of the language, like 'Bertrand Russell' or 'Sherlock Holmes', where P represents the set of dubbings associated with the name, and where f is a function mapping each context of use into one of these dubbings.

Contexts of introduction, or dubbings, are themselves structured entities -- they have parts. But what parts? There is a lot in information in an actual dubbing -- not only who the agent is, but the time, the place, what the weather was that day, and so on. Let's suppose that all we care to represent is the agent that introduces the name, the content of the name, and the "kind" or "mode" of dubbing it is, referential or fictional.⁴¹ In that case, contexts of introduction should be represented as ordered triples of the form $\langle A, Q, M \rangle$, where A is understood as the agent of the dubbing, where Q is what I will call the "traditional" content, and where M represents the mode of dubbing. I assume that there are two modes, referential and fictional, which I refer to with the tags REF and FIC,

discourse, nor does one need to therefore commit oneself to the view that it needs to play even some role in explaining its truth-theoretic properties: it depends on which intentions matter, and surely there is more than one intention.

⁴¹ There may also be other kinds of dubbings in addition to these ones, but I focus here only on these two.

respectively.⁴²

The mode M indicates the way the content is to be associated with the proper name being introduced. This is needed; one cannot presuppose that the relation between, say, an individual and a proper name in a “dubbing” context is one of reference, for that is precisely what I reject as an essential feature of a name’s semantic content. So, the mode M modifies the relation between a proper name and the content dependent upon the speaker’s intentions when she initiates a naming event; the mode M codifies a speaker’s intentions.

I will assume that the content Q of a name is that component of a name’s semantic value that affects the truth value of a sentence in which that name occurs -- it is what most nearly corresponds to the traditional semantic content of a name. There are two ways one can think of this aspect. One way to think about it is as a variable that gets things like individuals or properties assigned to it. In other words, the content Q, functions in the same way as the structured parts of a Russellian proposition. Another way to think about the content Q is to understand it in a Fregean way, where senses, or perhaps concepts, get assigned to it. While each of these different ways of thinking of the content Q makes a difference to the details of how to understand proper names, they do not make a difference to the general semantic structure that I am elucidating here. For simplicity, I assume that content is Russellian here.

In the case of a referential name, I make the standard assumption that the content of a name will be an individual, and in the case of a fictional name, I

⁴² See Recanati (1993) for another view that claims that names carry the tag REF. Recanati introduces such a tag in a different context and for different ends. My REF and Recanati’s REF should not be understood as sharing the same meaning.

make the more contentious assumption that its content will be a set of properties. In a fictional context, it cannot be the case that a name is used to introduce a referring use for it, nor is it being used to introduce any sort of denotational use for it. What then is being assigned to as the content Q in the case of a fictional name? Plausibly, the only thing that could be assigned to the content place in a fictional context is something like qualities or properties. So one could think of the context of introduction for a fictional name as an act that stipulatively assigns some properties to the content-place Q. Formally, then, a dubbing $\langle A, Q, M \rangle$ is governed by the following constraint: if M is the tag REF, so that the dubbing is referential, then the content Q must be an individual, and if M is the tag FIC, so that the dubbing is fictional, the content Q must be a set of properties.

There are substantive issues here to address, for it is clear that the sort of account I will develop is one that incorporates descriptivist insights into an account of fictional names. But in the case of fictional names, apart from the problem of accidental reference, descriptivism is not implausible. Indeed it is not even clear that one of the main arguments against descriptivism -- that it gets the modal profile of simple predications containing names wrong -- even applies in the case of fictional names. That is, it is not clear that simple predicative sentences with names in the subject position fail the modal test that Kripke applies to general descriptivist theories of names. I address this issue and the problem of accidental reference as well in the proceeding chapter.

Let's now examine some particular dubbings to illustrate the abstract concept of a dubbing. Consider, for example, the particular dubbing associated with the name 'Bertrand Russell' as it appears in (1). This dubbing would contain, let us assume, Bertrand Russell's mother, Catherine, as its agent, Bertrand

Russell, the great philosopher himself, as its content, and the tag REF to represent the referential mode of introduction. The dubbing, then, could be represented as the triple <Catherine Russell, Bertrand Russell, REF>. Or consider the dubbing associated with 'Sherlock Holmes' in (3). This time the dubbing is a fictional one, in which Conan Doyle introduces a set of properties -- let us say the properties tall, smart, balding, and smokes -- and associates them with the name 'Sherlock Holmes'. This dubbing would then be represented by the ordered triple <Conan Doyle, {tall, smart, balding, smokes}, FIC>. Of course there are more than four properties associated with 'Sherlock Holmes', and of course which properties are included is somewhat difficult to determine. They can't merely be the explicitly introduced properties, but must include those introduced in virtue of deductive closure, and perhaps those reached by abductive reasoning as well. This issue is not my concern here and, for simplicity, I assume that only four properties listed are associated with 'Sherlock Holmes'.

The function f maps each context of use in which a name might occur into a particular dubbing. Suppose, for example, that i is an occasion of use for the sentence (1), containing the name 'Bertrand Russell'. As we have seen, this use of 'Bertrand Russell' is associated with the referential dubbing of Russell by his mother, so we would have

$$f(i) = \langle \text{Catherine Russell, Bertrand Russell, REF} \rangle.$$

And likewise, where j represents an occasion of the use of (3), containing the name 'Sherlock Holmes', we would have

$$f(j) = \langle \text{Conan Doyle, \{tall, smart, balding, smokes\}, FIC} \rangle.$$

Dubbings, then, are ordered triples of the form <A,Q,M>, but not everything in a dubbing need be relevant to the semantics of a name. Still, it is

reasonable to suppose that at least the content Q and the tag M are semantically relevant – the assumption is that, in order to understand a name, we must know something about its traditional semantic content, and also about the way the name was introduced -- whether the name is referential or fictional.⁴³ I therefore postulate a “content extraction” function c that picks out the semantically relevant parts of a dubbing. Since what is semantically relevant is the content Q and the tag M , the c function will take as input the ordered triple $\langle A, Q, M \rangle$ and produce the pair $\langle Q, M \rangle$ as output. More formally, then, $c(\langle A, Q, M \rangle)$ is $\langle Q, M \rangle$, the pairing of a content together with the tag representing a mode of introduction.⁴⁴

With all of this in place, let us now show how to calculate the semantic value for a name $S_{P,f}$ in a particular context of use i . First of all, the function f maps the context of use i to some dubbing $\langle A, Q, M \rangle$ -- it selects a particular dubbing from P to associate with the utterance of the name at i . Once such a dubbing $\langle A, Q, M \rangle$ has been selected, the function c then extracts from it the semantically relevant part $\langle Q, M \rangle$ -- its traditional content and a tag representing the mode of introduction. Formally, then, where v_i is the function that assigns a

⁴³ This is left deliberately somewhat vague for I later claim that a speaker only needs to know the mode for some purposes, and that she only needs to have a partial grasp of the traditional semantic content. I deal with such complications later.

⁴⁴ Because c is a uniform function, one that simply removes the first member of any triple, it needn't be represented as part of any name. Instead of representing dubbings as ordered triples $\langle A, Q, M \rangle$, I could have, instead, represented them as ordered pairs $\langle Q, M \rangle$, containing only a content and a mode of introduction, thereby omitting the agent entirely, just like the time, the place, the weather, and so on. In that case, the function c would not be necessary since dubbings would contain only parts that we have already determined are semantically relevant. But I here represent the agent as part of a dubbing both for the intuitive reason that the agent plays an important role in a context of introduction, even though only a pragmatic one, and to allow for later generalizations.

semantic value to a name in the context i , we have

$$v_i[S_{P,f}] = c[f(i)],$$

so that, when $f(i)$ is the particular dubbing $\langle A, Q, M \rangle$, we then have:

$$\begin{aligned} v_i[S_{P,f}] &= c[f(i)] \\ &= c[\langle A, Q, M \rangle] \\ &= \langle Q, M \rangle. \end{aligned}$$

Continuing with the previous examples, for illustration, where i is the context of use of (1), we calculate v_i ['Bertrand Russell'] as follows: first, as we have seen, $f(i)$ is $\langle \text{Catherine Russell, Bertrand Russell, REF} \rangle$, so that $c[f(i)]$ is $\langle \text{Bertrand Russell, REF} \rangle$. We therefore have $\langle \text{Bertrand Russell, REF} \rangle$ as $v_i[S_{P,f}]$, the semantic value assigned to 'Bertrand Russell'. And likewise, where j is the context of use for (3), the semantic value of 'Sherlock Holmes' is now calculated in the same way: again, as we have seen $f(j)$ is the dubbing $\langle \text{Conan Doyle, \{tall, smart, balding, smokes\}, FIC} \rangle$, so that $c[f(j)]$ is $\langle \{tall, smart, balding, smokes\}, FIC \rangle$. We therefore have $\langle \{tall, smart, balding, smokes\}, FIC \rangle$ as $v_j[S_{P,f}]$, the semantic value assigned to 'Sherlock Holmes'.

Let us now turn to predication. Predication is slightly problematic, for the kind of semantic value assigned to a name, on this view, is somewhat odd. Typically, semantic value is identified with traditional content -- the component of the semantic value represented by Q . Therefore, typically, what combines with a predicate to produce something truth-evaluable is exactly what one would expect, something that can contribute to a sentence's truth-theoretic properties. But, on the present view, the semantic value of a name is something more complex, containing both traditional content and a tag representing its mode of introduction. And it is not simply more complex and needs to be simplified, the complexity informs the truth-evaluable content of the name as used in simple

predications. I therefore distinguish between semantic value and content. The semantic value of a name can contain information that informs the appropriate use of that expression, but does not directly contribute to its truth-theoretic properties.

The basic idea is that there are two notions of predication at work. When a predicate is applied to a name, if the name is referential, the predication is then, in a sense, ordinary -- to see if the predication is true, one determines if the referent of that name, some individual, has the property expressed by the predicate. If the name is fictional, however, predication takes a different form, pioneered by Frege (1884), and developed by Montague (1974). In this case, to see if the predication is true, one determines whether the set of properties, the content of a fictional name, contains the particular property expressed by the predicate.

To see how all of this works out formally, I first introduce two bookkeeping functions, c_1 and c_2 , whose role is to pick out the first and second values of a name's semantic value. Then, when $\langle Q, M \rangle$ is the semantic value associated with some name, $c_1[\langle Q, M \rangle]$ is Q and $c_2[\langle Q, M \rangle]$ is M . The idea of the predication rule is that, once we have the pair $\langle Q, M \rangle$ as the semantic value for a name, we apply c_2 to that value to extract the tag M , and then look to see if the name is referential or fictional, and that then tells us what to do with the referential content that is extracted by c_1 . If the tag extracted by c_2 is REF, then the content extracted by c_1 combines with a predicate in the ordinary way, and if the tag extracted is FIC, then predication is of the kind elucidated by Montague. The evaluation rule for a simple predication of the form $F(S_{P,f})$, where F is a one-place predicate, can be stated as follows:

$v_i[F(S_{P,f})]$ is true iff either (1) $c_2[v_i(S_{P,f})]$ is REF and $c_1[v_i(S_{P,f})]$ belongs to the set $v(F)$, or (2) $c_2[v_i(S_{P,f})]$ is FIC and $v(F)$ belongs to the set $c_1[v_i(S_{P,f})]$.

To illustrate, consider once more the sentence (1), 'Bertrand Russell smokes', as uttered at i . As we have seen, v_i ['Bertrand Russell'] -- that is, the semantic value of 'Bertrand Russell' -- is the pair <Bertrand Russell, REF>; and we can assume also that Russell belongs to v ('Smokes'), the set of smokers. The sentence is therefore classified as true according to the first clause of our evaluation rule, because $c_2[v_i$ ('Bertrand Russell')] is REF, and $c_1[v_i$ ('Bertrand Russell')] -- that is, Bertrand Russell himself -- belongs to the set v ('Smokes'). Now consider, by contrast, the sentence (3), 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', uttered at j . In this case, as we have seen, v_j ['Sherlock Holmes'] -- the semantic value of 'Sherlock Holmes' -- is the pair <{tall, smart, balding, smokes}, FIC>; and let us suppose also that the property smokes can be identified with v ('Smokes'), the set of smokers. Then again, the sentence is classified as true, but this time according to the second clause of the evaluation rule, since $c_2[v_j$ ('Sherlock Holmes')] is FIC and v ('Smokes') belongs to the set $c_1[v_j(S_{P,f})]$, containing all those properties associated with 'Sherlock Holmes'.

In summary, a proper name is associated with various dubbings, with each use of a particular name being mapped from a context of utterance to a particular dubbing, where the way in which a dubbing contributes to the content of a name varies, depending on the dubbing selected. A proper name first indexes a context of utterance that serves to select a particular dubbing. Second, a name's interpretation is dependent on what occupies the content-place and the mode-place in the represented context of introduction. So, a name turns out to be a fairly complex thing, to be sure, but one that makes the right predictions about,

and can explain, the uses to which we put them, unlike other simpler accounts. I now turn to considering what sort of solution I've offered.

4. Solution to the Puzzle

Recall that the particular puzzle introduced in Chapter One was that sentences like (1), 'Bertrand Russell smokes' and (3), 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', were both true, but were true for different reasons. The former is true because Bertrand Russell, the great philosopher himself, has the property of being a smoker, while the latter was initially described as being true because Conan Doyle stipulated that it be so. Taking the truth of such sentences at face value, if one assumes that 'Bertrand Russell' and 'Sherlock Holmes' are syntactically alike, and therefore semantically alike, there is a problem. If the two names are semantically alike, they should make the same, or at least similar, kinds of contributions to the truth-conditions of the sentences in which they appear. The goal, then, is to give a unified account of names that explains this difference -- that takes the two sentences as true at face value, takes 'Sherlock Holmes' and 'Bertrand Russell' to be semantically alike, and gives a common semantic explanation for both. The answer is already contained in section three, but I will briefly review it here.

As before, the instance of 'Bertrand Russell' in (1) is associated with the dubbing <Catherine Russell, Bertrand Russell, REF>, and as explained earlier, the semantic value associated with this name is therefore <Bertrand Russell, REF>. Our predication rule thus dictates that this instance of the name 'Bertrand Russell' functions in the ordinary way in predicational contexts -- when the name 'Bertrand Russell' is used in a truth-evaluable assertion, it is a fact about

Bertrand Russell, about that individual, that makes the assertion true or false.

In the case of (3), by contrast, the dubbing associated with 'Sherlock Holmes' was <Conan Doyle, {tall, smart, balding, smokes}, FIC>. The semantic value for this instance of 'Sherlock Holmes' was then calculated as <{tall, smart, balding, smokes}, FIC>. In this case, then, we appeal to the second clause of our predication rule -- if 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' is true, it is true because the property of smoking lies among the properties associated with this instance of 'Sherlock Holmes'.

Now how does this account cohere with my earlier discussion of the grounds for fictional truth? What I suggested there was that the truth of a sentence containing a fictional name depends on stipulations by the author of a work of fiction. For example, the sentence (1), 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', is true because it was stipulated true by Conan Doyle or because it follows from a sentence so stipulated. But this does not seem like the explanation I give in the current semantic account of the truth of 'Sherlock Holmes smokes'. Here I say that the sentence is true because the property of smoking lies among the properties associated with the name 'Sherlock Holmes'. But the explanation for this fact is simply that Conan Doyle, in a purely stipulative act, associated a collection of properties with the name 'Sherlock Holmes', one of which was the property smokes.⁴⁵ This is now getting pretty close the intuitive reason I offered earlier. Indeed, I think it is close enough.

I have now given an account that makes both (1) and (3) literally true, true for different reasons, but reasons that are derivable from a common semantic

⁴⁵ The idea that 'Holmes smokes' is some kind of stipulative truth has been defended by others: see for example, Martin and Scotch (1974).

account of both referential and fictional names with some complication about predication for names. But it is complication that is demanded by the semantic values of the names in question. This is precisely the problem I had originally wanted to solve.

5. 'Holmes smokes' as a Language-Dependent Truth

I have said that 'Holmes smokes' is true in a particular context of utterance because the property of smoking is amongst the properties that were assigned to 'Holmes' in its context of introduction. But what sort of truth is it that gets expressed when someone utters 'Holmes smokes'? The sort of truth that gets expressed is a language-dependent truth. 'Holmes smokes' is true because 'smokes' is included in the extension of 'Holmes', and the reason it is so included is because of a purely stipulative linguistic act performed by Doyle, that of stipulating that a particular set of properties is associated with the name 'Holmes' in a context of introduction. The property of smoking is part of the meaning of 'Holmes', and therefore, 'Holmes smokes' is true in virtue of the meaning of 'Holmes'. This explanation, given all of the previous discussion, is now fairly straightforward.

'Holmes smokes' from (3) is a language-dependent truth not simply because the property of smoking falls under 'Holmes', but because the only relevant thing that determines whether this is the case is are facts about the language and speakers of the language. That is, all that determines whether the property smoking is associated with 'Holmes' are facts about the context of introduction and facts about a speaker's linguistic intentions -- linguistic facts. In contrast, this is not the case for 'Russell' from (1). If the property of smoking is

associated with 'Russell' it is not because the speaker decided it was so, nor is it the case that only facts about the context of introduction determine this either. Rather, it is a fact about Russell, the individual, which determines whether 'Russell' is associated with the property of smoking at any given time. But there are objections directed at the plausibility and feasibility of analyzing 'Holmes smokes' as a language-dependent truth that need addressing. Such an analysis also gives rise to a related dilemma. Addressing these objections clarifies the nature of the truth expressed by assertively uttering 'Holmes smokes'.

Martin and Scotch (1974) argue that a sentence like 'Holmes smokes' expresses an analytic truth. It is a sentence that is true solely in virtue of the meanings of its parts. But I do not wish to have details about the specific properties associated with a particular name in a particular context of utterance count as part of what a speaker must know to be competent with a name. The dilemma that if 'Holmes smokes' is analytic in the traditional sense, then either speakers must know all of the properties that are associated with 'Holmes' to be competent with it, or competence can be partial and therefore analytic truths can be informative -- has only one plausible answer: an analytic truth can be informative. So a speaker may have only a partial grasp of the meaning of an expression like 'Holmes', say for instance, she knows only that 'Holmes is a detective' is true. So even though an utterance of 'Holmes smokes' is an analytic truth, and even though the speaker is competent in her language, she learns something new when she is told that 'Holmes smokes' is true. It may seem somewhat strange to say that a speaker is competent in her language, but that she does not know the meanings of her words. But one can recognize degrees of

competence.⁴⁶ There is a more general objection, which also speaks to this issue, and so I turn to that objection and other more general objections now.

6. General Objections

6.1 Epistemic Criticisms

One question that immediately arises is what exactly a speaker must know in order to be competent in using a name. Must she know the particular facts about a name's context of introduction in order to count as understanding a name? So, for instance, does a speaker need to know all or any of the properties or descriptions which 'Holmes' from (3) was used to introduce in order to be linguistically competent with respect to it? My answer is 'No'; a speaker does not need to know all of the particular details about a particular context of introduction to understand a proper name as a matter of linguistic knowledge. This is important; for it means that this view has the advantages of descriptivism without falling prey to one of Kripke's most trenchant criticisms of that view. Nevertheless, a speaker will need to know some details about a name's particular context of introduction in order to know how to properly assign truth-values to utterances that use the name. Enough anyhow to know *how* to evaluate a literal utterance that uses a name for truth. But let me first say what *prima facie* implausible things I am committed to and why. Then I will explain in detail why I am, in fact, not committed to those things.

Prima facie, what I claim is associated with a name, a referent in the case of a referential name, and a set of properties in the case of a fictional name,

⁴⁶ See Higginbotham (1989) who defends the idea that speakers may have only a partial grasp of the meanings of expressions in their own language.

would be a part of the lexical meaning of a name, and therefore, *prima facie*, would be something a speaker would need to know to be competent with a name. Why? For this reason: these are the properties that help determine the truth of sentences containing names. That is, 'Holmes smokes' from (3) is true under the condition that Doyle assigned the property of smoking to the Q as the content, in the context of introduction for 'Holmes'. 'Russell smokes' from (1) is true under the condition that the thing assigned as content, in its context of introduction, smokes. That is, understanding (1) would require that speakers need, somehow, to be acquainted with Russell; to understand (3), speakers would have to know that smoking was associated with 'Holmes'. This makes the standard approach combined with my account of proper names seem implausible; for as Kripke persuasively (1980) argues, speakers need not have descriptive information, nor even an acquaintance with the referent, to be competent with a name.

But I needn't construe the knowledge one needs to understand a sentence as needing to know anything about the actual state of affairs that makes it true, which is how the latter discussion construes it. I need only require that a speaker know that if the sentence (3) is true, then it is true if and only if the property of smoking was assigned to the content place in its context of introduction. Nevertheless, there is still a question for me to answer. If the lexical entry for 'Holmes' from sentence (3) does not contain reference to all of the properties associated with it, and the meaning of 'Russell' does not just consist in referring to Russell, how does the speaker know even the minimal truth-conditions for sentences containing 'Holmes' and 'Russell' I just described? In what does her positive knowledge consist that lets her know that sentence (3) is

true if and only if the property smoking was associated with it, whereas (1) is true if and only if the referent associated with it smokes? So the speaker must know something about the contexts of introduction for 'Holmes' and 'Russell' from (1) and (3); for the knowledge one has when one knows how to evaluate a sentence containing this instance of 'Holmes' is different from the knowledge one has when one knows how to evaluate a sentence containing this instance of 'Russell'.

The important question for me isn't whether there is a difference between sentences (1) and (3), it is whether to account for the difference, I must require speakers to know all of the details of particular contexts of introduction. But I needn't do so for if all the speaker needs to know is the difference between how to evaluate the two sentences for truth, then all she needs to know is the kind of context of introduction at issue. So the speaker must have some knowledge of the context of introduction, but she needn't have full, detailed, knowledge. That is, the speaker might know simply that the kind of context of introduction a name has determines the kind of content it can be used to express in a context of utterance. So, in the case at issue, she would need to know that the context of introduction for 'Holmes' as it appears in (3) is of the fictional kind, and that the context of introduction for 'Russell' as it appears in (1) is referential. This is not quite so implausible. In other words, the speaker needs to know the mode of introduction for the name. Knowledge of the kind of context of introduction would suffice for her knowing how to evaluate sentences containing names for truth or falsity.

But there is a related, yet stronger, criticism of my account concerning what speakers have to know to be competent with a name. This critic argues that requiring that speakers know anything at all about a context of introduction for a

name is too strong.⁴⁷ There are two different ways one might construe this criticism: the first way is as an epistemically-oriented criticism, and therefore has to do with speaker's knowledge. The second way, which does not have to do with a speaker's knowledge per se, and which is much stronger is what's commonly called a "semantic" criticism. I will reply to both, and I will first discuss the epistemic construal of the objection.

The epistemic construal of the objection is this: it is implausible to think that it is any part of a speaker's linguistic understanding of the semantic type, proper name, that she knows anything about a context of introduction. Nor does her knowledge consist in knowing that the context of introduction is important for understanding the appropriate uses of a name.

So why should it be implausible that a speaker, when she knows the meaning of a name, knows that its context of introduction is what is important for its proper use? Presumably, part of the problem here is that in some cases, it may be impossible to know anything about a particular context of introduction. Yet, one may not want to disallow that speakers may still be able to be competent with such names. Take, for instance, a fictional name that survives into the present, but whose origins are completely unknown. In such a case, one might know that a name is fictional, and therefore know whatever one knows when this is the case. But one may not know anything about a context of introduction, and know that such knowledge is practically impossible to attain. But despite this, one can still use the name competently. Given what would count as information about a context of introduction for me, it is unclear how, in such a

⁴⁷ Thanks to Ray Buchanan for pressing me on this.

case, information about the context of introduction does not survive. Or alternatively, if no information survives, it's unclear in what sense it would be plausible to say that a speaker could be competent with those names. If any part of the story is still known, then some information is known about the context of introduction for those names. Even if it is only known that the names are fictional, some information about the context of introduction has been preserved. There is nothing in my account that requires getting information about a context of introduction directly in order to understand a name.

But imagine that one finds some names, not from a work of fiction where this is all that is known about the origin of the names, rather one simply finds a list of names with no information except that they are names. Now there is no knowledge here of any context of introduction. My claim is that linguistic competence with a name requires at least knowledge of the sort of context of introduction at issue. So I must say of this case that the speaker is not linguistically competent with this list of names unless she knows something about the context of introduction. But it is precisely at this point that the objector's, and for that matter Kripke's, commitments or, lack thereof, about what constitutes linguistic competence with names begin to lose their plausibility. In other words, it is cases like this one that make it a matter of some controversy what should be required for linguistic competence with names. Since this is true, this case cannot really be used as a counterexample against my view. Given these considerations, I don't see how the epistemic version of this objection gets very far. However, the semantic version is more difficult to dispense with.

6.2 Semantic Criticisms

What I will call “the semantic version” of the objection does not rely on what speakers need to know or what they can know. Rather, the semantic version of the objection relies on more externalist criteria. I call it “the semantic version” simply to maintain a sense of common reference. But note that calling it “the semantic version” itself relies on a certain conception of semantics -- a conception of semantics more externalist than internalist. Despite issues about calling this objection “semantic”, important intuitions motivate this objection, regardless of whether one wishes to conceive of the intuitions as semantic in nature.

The problem that gives rise to the semantic objection becomes apparent when one considers cases of reference change like the one Evans (1985) considers, a case where an expression has its beginnings as a name for a certain object, but at some point, its reference changes and it becomes a name for another object. Evans, for instance, claims that the name ‘Madagascar’ was originally a name for some part of mainland Africa, but Marco Polo mistakenly took it as a name for an island off the coast of Africa to which it now refers as a result. How, if a name’s truth-theoretic contribution to an utterance is fixed by its context of introduction, can I accommodate such phenomena?

The best reply is this: when a name for one object is used as a name for another object, a new context of introduction for that name is created. That is, once the reference is shifted, what one has, in effect, is a new use for a name-type. Now why isn’t this simply an ad hoc move on my part, or why isn’t this to shift the criterion for what determines a name’s reference? I claim it is a context

of introduction that determines what a name refers to, if anything. But if I now argue that a new context of introduction is initiated because of a change in a name's referent, haven't I put the cart before the horse? Indeed, haven't I given up my own view, and returned to a referent-based account of names? No, and the reason is that the creation of a new context of introduction is initiated because of an act of reference on the part of a speaker using the name, not in virtue of the name changing its referent. Acts of reference are, of course, one of the ways that I fully acknowledge as capable of initiating a context of introduction for a name. The speaker, in using the name to refer to an object to which the object does not refer, initiates a new context of introduction for that name-type, despite the fact that it is inadvertent.

There are three facts to consider when analyzing the Madagascar-case: one, the speaker uses the name with the intention of using it the same way as the person from which she heard it; two, the speaker falsely believes that the name has a use as a device of reference for certain land mass that it does not; three, she engages in an act of reference on the basis of her belief, but that act is contrary to satisfying her intention. The fact that speakers often intend to use a name in the same way as speakers before her is a pragmatic feature of a context of utterance, which can determine which context of introduction is relevant for a name-type; it allows for contextual disambiguation without requiring that speakers are directly acquainted with a particular context of introduction. Since, in the case being considered, the relevant context of introduction is not properly selected because the speaker's same-use intention fails, she unknowingly engages in an act of reference with a name whose character is wholly unsaturated. In such a case, a new context of introduction is created, and a new

use for the name originates with it. While the speaker uses the name in a way not intended, her act of reference, while using the name, certainly is intentional despite the fact that it is not the act that it seems to be. This is sufficient to produce a new context of introduction and to therefore create the conditions necessary for a new name-using practice to begin.⁴⁸

The Madagascar-case is not the same as normal cases of initiating contexts of introduction. Those are cases where a new context of introduction is intentionally created, and where there is typically no significant relationship between old contexts of introduction and new ones. I am already committed to rejecting the former criterion as required to initiate a new context of introduction in virtue of the reply I am offering. But one might complain that, in normal cases, there is no inclination to describe the creation of a new context of introduction as a case of reference-change, so why would this hold in the Madagascar case? Indeed, the normal sort of case usually produces a new use for a name with no impact on any previous uses, it simply introduces another use. This is not so in the case I am considering. Because of this, one might question my explanation of the Madagascar-case. How do I explain the seeming phenomenon of reference-change?

Well, the explanation will be a pragmatic one. Semantically speaking, there should be no difference between the Evans-type cases and cases where someone intentionally introduces a new use for a name. However, given the circumstances in the Evans case -- where one use becomes more popularized at the expense of another -- we tend to describe this as a case of reference change.

⁴⁸ See Evans for discussion of name-using practices

This may seem unsatisfying for this reason: when one tells the story of the change in reference as a speaker of the language, one will tell the story of a *change in reference* for that name. For instance, one might say that the name used to refer to some object, but it later, by some accident, came to refer to some other object. But I don't think that this consideration is conclusive. For one can give a pragmatic explanation of such talk, and one can tell a story about the causal relationship between the initial use and the use that came to supersede the previous use. Add to this consideration the inherent plausibility of some sort of historical model for a semantics of proper names, and I take it that this objection has lost much of its persuasiveness.⁴⁹

Even if one is not satisfied with my answers here, I think that the issues raised here -- issues about changes in a language over time -- are problems for other theories anyway. Suppose one is a descriptivist, if an object meets a certain description, and never fails to meet it, how could it ever fail to have the name it originally had, or how could its name ever change? Or suppose one has a non-historically based Burge-like theory of names where names are *sui generis* predicates that apply to classes of individuals -- why would a name ever stop applying to any individual in that class? If this is right, then even if my replies are unsatisfactory, my proposal is no worse off than those other theories. So while I acknowledge that the phenomenon contentiously described as "reference

⁴⁹ One might worry that I am now appealing to the sort of explanation that I complained of in earlier chapters. But I never said pragmatics was not an explanation for some things, and I am certainly not appealing to pragmatics to explain a ubiquitous phenomenon. Quite the contrary, reference changes, unlike cases of fictional names, really are the exception.

change” needs analysis; I don’t see how it is a problem only for an account of names that incorporates an historical aspect.

6.3 Worries About the Nature of Fictional Dubbings

One might express a concern about the nature of dubbings by asking the question: Could Holmes have been a criminal? The question can be taken in one of two ways. Given the meaning of ‘Holmes’, is the sentence ‘Holmes could have been a criminal’ true? Alternatively, one might construe the question this way: In virtue of the last story, could it have turned out that the sentence ‘Holmes is a criminal’ is true. The first is a question about “Holmes”, the other is a question about the story. The answer to the latter question is, of course, “yes”. Conan Doyle could have written a different sort of story, in the end, he pens the sentence, ‘Holmes was a criminal’. But does this mean that the sentence ‘Holmes could have been a criminal’ is true? This depends on how one construes the meaning of ‘Holmes’, and the meaning of ‘Holmes’ depends on whether everything that occurs in a series of stories counts as part of its dubbing, of introducing it into discourse.

Details about the semantic value of ‘Holmes’ are determined by its associated dubbing, specifically, the semantic value of ‘Holmes’ is partly determined by which properties get associated with ‘Holmes’ as its content, and which properties get associated with ‘Holmes’ depends on what counts as part of a dubbing. Recall that a dubbing has a lot of different features. A dubbing has an agent, it contains content, it is done in a certain way, etc. Recall also that I claimed that the only parts that were semantically relevant were the agent, the mode of dubbing, and the content, and that only the content and the mode of

dubbing constituted the semantic value of a name. But the possibilities for the semantic value of a name depend on features of a dubbing that do not constitute part of its semantic value. They depend, for instance, on whether a dubbing can take place over a long period of time, whether it can have multiple agents, and whether its content can be updated or changed, and if so in what ways it can be updated or changed. Take, for instance, a series of stories like the Holmes stories. One might regard the whole series of stories as part of one long dubbing for a fictional name. Alternatively, one might count those stories as updates to a dubbing having already occurred. Yet another option is to have only the first story constituting part of the context of introduction for 'Holmes'.

Which choice one makes has implications for the semantic value of a name. The semantic value of a fictional name depends on how one construes the nature of a dubbing because how one does so affects which properties are assignable as that name's content. If a dubbing can take place over a long period of time, then more properties can count as part of a fictional name's content. If a dubbing can have multiple agents, then properties besides those assigned by the original author of a work can also form part of a name's content. If a dubbing can be updated or changed, then a fictional name's semantic value can change over time. All of these options bear on the question of whether the sentence 'Holmes could have been a criminal' in different ways.

If one allows only the first story to count as part of a fictional name's dubbing, then anything that is not included in that particular story, given the truth-condition for a sentence containing a fictional name, could not be used to assert anything true using that fictional name. This seems rather implausible. There is

some sense in which speakers allow for the truths one can assert using fictional names to change over time.

Consider then the option that there is a context of introduction that begins and ends at some point before the end of the series of stories, but where the set of properties associated with a name can be updated. It is unclear, given what I say about the meaning of a fictional name, and the truths that can be asserted using them, how I can maintain this position. I claim that the semantic value of a fictional name is determined by its context of introduction, and that the truths that can be asserted using it are determined by the set of properties associated with it in that a context of introduction. How then can I say that a context of introduction terminates before the end of a series of novels, but that properties ascribed up until the end of that series determine the truths that can be asserted using that name? I cannot on pain of inconsistency, or of giving up the account I have just defended.

Suppose, however, that the set of properties associated with a fictional name plays the same role as a referent plays. That is, once one has the set of properties, one can evaluate sentences that contain the relevant name for truth in the same way one evaluates a sentence containing a referential name for truth. Then it would make sense to say that the truths about that set, independently of a name's context of introduction, could vary.⁵⁰ That is, one could allow a context of introduction to end before the end of a series of novels and yet still allow for that series of novels to generate truths about a referent. But given that I am not prepared to allow the set of properties associated with a fictional name to play

⁵⁰ Of course if sets have their members essentially then it is not clear how this will help with 'Holmes could have been a criminal'.

such a role, I cannot rely on this idea. All truths using a fictional name are determined by the set of properties associated with the name *in its context of introduction*. Therefore, it seems that I must, on pain of losing some intuitive truths, make a series of stories all count as part of one long context of introduction for a name. Given the model of a context of introduction for a referential name, this seems somewhat strange. But then, fictional names are not referential names -- there is no referent that one can fix in an instant that can then be talked about independently of its context of introduction in the case of a fictional name. So, of course, a fictional name's context of introduction might differ greatly from a referential name's context of introduction.

Making a series of stories count as one long context of introduction determines that one give certain answers to the initial question asked. Recall that the question was this: given the meaning of 'Holmes', can the sentence 'Holmes could have been a criminal' be true? Because the properties contained in the whole series of stories counts as part of the meaning of 'Holmes', and because in considering modal possibilities, meaning stays fixed, if it is not part of the stories that Holmes becomes a criminal, then it cannot be true that Holmes could have been a criminal. 'Holmes' is therefore modally fragile in a way that 'Russell' is not. That is, one cannot predicate a single difference in a particular context of evaluation regarding 'Holmes' that is not already accurately said to apply in the actual circumstance, and still be using our name 'Holmes'. Contrast this with 'Russell'. One can predicate all sorts of different properties of Russell in different circumstances of evaluation without thereby changing the meaning of 'Russell'.

The fact that 'Holmes' is modally fragile might lead one to believe that 'Holmes' is not a rigid expression, in contrast to 'Russell'. However, the

difference between 'Holmes' and 'Russell' is not a difference in the rigidity of the two expressions involved; it is unlike the kind of situation one sees when comparing a definite description with a name. 'Holmes' does not fail to be a rigid expression; it does not determine a different referent in different circumstances of evaluation. It determines no referent at all in any circumstance of evaluation. But it is a rigid expression, for given a context of utterance, in any context of evaluation, it will be associated with the same set of properties. It is for this reason that 'Holmes' is modally fragile. It is because it is a rigid expression that one cannot predicate anything different with respect to 'Holmes' than one can in the actual world. The explanation, then, for the intuition that Holmes could have been a criminal, if one has that intuition at all, is that one confuses possibilities about the meaning of 'Holmes' with possibilities for "Holmes". I discuss this more in Chapter Four. Now I want to turn to some other related issues about dubbings.

Suppose now instead of a finished story, we consider one that is in progress. What should I claim about, say, what can be truthfully asserted using the name 'Harry Potter'? Since, by my lights, the context of introduction is not yet finished, 'Harry Potter' does not yet have a full meaning. However, speakers assert things using 'Harry Potter'. What does one say now of sentences like 'Harry Potter could turn out to be evil'. As before, one might mean two things by this. One could be interpreted as making an assertion about the novel that is perfectly true. But what about the other kind of sentence considered earlier? One like 'Harry Potter could be evil', where the assertion is supposed to be understood as about "Harry Potter". Recall that to evaluate this sort of sentence, one must first hold the meaning of the name in question fixed. Given that, in this

case, 'Harry Potter' has no completed meaning, how does one answer this question?

Since the meaning of the name is not determinate, one can say that there is no determinate answer to the question of whether the sentence 'Harry Potter could turn out to be evil' is true. But this response raises another question: if the meaning of 'Harry Potter' is only partially specified, what do we say about the competence of speakers? Speakers seem perfectly capable of evaluating sentences containing 'Harry Potter'. But how can this be so, if the meaning is not even fully determinate? Since I have already committed myself to having some contexts of introduction take a long time, I must answer this question.

So what do I say about competence? I make it seem as if the answer to the question is easy in earlier replies to objections. Speakers need to know only the mode of introduction in order to be competent with a name. This seems true to a certain degree: speakers, in order to know how to evaluate a sentence containing a name for truth, must know only the sort of mode of introduction at issue. But what of all of the content that serves as *part of the semantic value* of a name? If something is part of the meaning of an expression, don't speakers need to know it in order to count as competent with a name? Well, one might recognize degrees of knowledge of the meaning of expressions, some of which counts towards competence in speaking a language and some of which does not, and the type of expression will determine how much one needs to know to count as competent.⁵¹ Perhaps a "fully competent" or fully knowledgeable speaker would know all of the properties that are associated with the semantic

⁵¹ See Higginbotham (1989).

value of a fictional name, but a speaker, competent for all practical purposes needn't know all such properties. Indeed, in the case I am considering, she could not know all such properties since not all such properties are specified. So the answer then is that competence consists in one thing, full knowledge of meaning, is something else.

But another question arises about what I should say about series of stories in progress. I claim that if the meaning is not fully determinate, there is no determinate answer to a question like 'Could Harry Potter turn out to be a criminal?' But is it really this simple? It's not just that the question isn't determinate. One might argue that given that there is no determinate meaning for 'Harry Potter', as of yet, the question cannot even make sense. For if there is no determinate meaning for 'Harry Potter', one cannot fix the meaning of 'Harry Potter' in order to evaluate modal claims. Indeed, a lot of speculative discourse using the name 'Harry Potter' may not make sense, if this complaint is right. But even if this is so, there is some discourse in the area that does make sense, and it involves speculations about what the author of the stories will do next, or perhaps the discourse should be understood as a way of engaging in games of pretence using the work (there's nothing in my account that prevents me from relying on such accounts for some things). Again, the sort of answer I offered earlier is available to me, but this time in a slightly different guise. Since 'Harry Potter', as of yet, has no fully determinate meaning, speculation using the name 'Harry Potter' is really speculation about the full meaning of 'Harry Potter', they are not speculations about "Harry Potter".

Series of stories also raise other questions about the nature of dubbings. Namely, who can count as the agent of a dubbing? Can there be multiple agents

of a dubbing? That is, suppose a story is continued by another author, as is often the case, does this count as part of the context of introduction for a name or not? Answers to these questions require more detailed analysis of when something counts as the continuation of a new context of introduction, and when it counts as the introduction of a new name with a pragmatic link to another name. That is, in writing a new story about a particular fictional character, does one introduce a new name that is to be understood as associated with another for the purposes of pretence, or is one to be understood as continuing to engage in a particular context of introduction?

I think it is more plausible to say that in the case of a new author, what is occurring is the introduction of a new name, but one that has a strong pragmatic link to a previously used name. For in many cases involving the continuation of a story by a new author, speakers are not prepared to count such new stories as creating objective truths about fictional characters. In such cases, there is a new use of a name. Of course, cases where speakers were prepared to count a new author's actions as being capable of generating more objective truths about a character would count as the continuation of the same context of introduction, but I doubt that many such cases exist. This gives some fairly hefty weight to authorial intention, but it is plausible to give it such weight given that speakers do so. For instance, while speakers will engage in a pretence that certain new works about a fictional character generate new truths about that character, they will frequently disavow such pretences. There are also issues that arise about characters who reappear in movies where the same story, with slight variations, might be told by different people about that character. But this raises issues

about what counts as telling the same story, not about the nature of dubbings. This is something I do not deal with here.

So I allow that a context of introduction for a fictional name might take some time, but this is to be expected, given that for a fictional name, there is no referent to tag with the name. This has certain consequences regarding speaker's competence and the truth of sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes could have been a criminal', namely that speaker's competence can come apart from a speaker's full knowledge of the meaning of expressions, and that sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes could have been a criminal' are false. I think the consequences are worth it given the advantages of allowing a context of introduction to be extended over time, advantages like the possible avoidance of ontological commitments to fictional characters, and the generation of all of the intuitive truths in relation to a work of fiction.

6.4 Objections to Conditional Predication Rules

One might object to my account on the grounds that it introduces a complication into predication. My predication rule is a conditional definition, and conditional definitions are problematic because of their disjunctive nature. But conditional definitions are not eliminable in, at least, some cases. For instance, the notion of absolute value of a number, its distance from zero, must be defined by conditional definition, once one introduces integers. That is, one cannot define the notion of a number's distance from zero simply in terms of simple mathematic operations without a conditional definition. For a number's distance from zero is the same no matter in which direction it is from zero, either negatively or positively. A conditional definition is therefore required. If one did not use a

conditional definition, one would end up with a negative number as the number's absolute value if the number is negative. But this is not what is wanted in asking for the absolute value of a number. In asking for the absolute value of a number one wants to know the number's distance from zero irrespective of direction. To define a number's absolute value, then, one must define it this way: a number's absolute value from zero is that number if it is greater than or equal to zero, but if the number is less than zero that number's absolute value is the negation of that number. This is an ineliminable conditional definition. I claim that names are the kinds of expressions, which the data shows, require an ineliminable conditional definition for their predication rule. That is, names are janus-faced in a way that makes such a conditional definition unavoidable. There is a related objection to using the Montague strategy to begin with, and to which I will now turn.

6.5 Objections to Relying on Montague-style Predication

If one thinks of individuals as sets of properties, or better, if one can think of names as indicating sets of properties, one can also think of an act of predication as an act of stating that a particular property is in the extension of the noun phrase (the individual now being understood as a set of properties). As I've indicated, it is this latter way of understanding predication that I think is appropriate in the case of fiction because, as I claim, it does not require there to be an individual of whom one is predicating a property when one asserts 'Holmes smokes', only that one can treat some properties as assignable as a set to 'Holmes'. But there is an issue here, for one might argue that the only way Montague predication should be invoked is if there is an individual that one can treat as a set of properties. That is, Montague-style predication is legitimate only

if one can apply a function that goes from individuals to sets of properties and vice versa. In the case of a referential name, there is an individual that we can think of, or understand instead as, a set of properties. In this case, since there is an object named, a name can easily be an expression that can be a function from individuals to sets of properties or from sets of properties to individuals. But what about fictional names? There is no individual about whom one can say that a name for it can be a function from that individual to a set of properties, nor can it be a function from a set of properties to an individual; for there is no individual Holmes.

The problem put more simply is that in case of a referential name, there is an individual that counts as the “container” for these properties, there won’t be any such thing in the case of ‘Holmes’. But one needn’t understand the Montagovian proposal as one that transforms a referential expression to one that denotes a set of properties, or vice versa. Instead, one should think of both ways a name can behave as getting in at the ground level, so to speak. And while we can perform the Montagovian operation on referential names as a higher-order operation, when it comes to fictional names, the understanding of it as an indicator of a set of properties is what is basic.

6.6 Objections Concerning Ontological Commitments

Some might argue that because I have a set of properties as part of the semantic value for ‘Holmes’ that this means there is an object Holmes, and that ‘Holmes’ refers to it, an abstract object. If so, then it follows, at least on a classical interpretation of the existential quantifier, that Holmes exists, and therefore I have not avoided an ontological commitment to Holmes after all. First of all, I don’t

take it that association need be a relation of reference. All I've said is that a set of properties is associated with 'Holmes' in the instance of (3), not that 'Holmes' refers to that set. Recall that, for me, reference is something that must be explicitly engaged in by the agent of a dubbing. Since no agent engages in an act of reference in the case of fictional names, the set of properties assigned is not assigned as a referent. In fact the second clause of the predication rule does not require there to be an individual of whom one is predicating a property when one asserts 'Holmes smokes', only that one can treat some properties as assignable as a set to 'Holmes'. But, at any rate, let us have a closer look at this worry.

To claim that an act of stipulating that a set of properties are assigned to a name results in an entity seems to me to be a reification of certain functions of the language that is not necessary. For the reason there is a set as part of the semantic value for 'Holmes' is because of the semantic structure and operations of a name as a grammatical type, not for any deep metaphysical reasons. If one countenances a language that sanctions unrestricted mereological summing, then I take it there is no problem with 'Holmes' having some properties assigned to it as a set. Of course, most who allow for unrestricted mereological summing see it as an act of identifying *an object*. For instance, the mereological sum of The Eiffel Tower and America count as an object.⁵² But these are surely not objects in any robust sense, they are only so-called for the purposes of fitting them into to a formal system. In other words, their object-hood is a mere artifact of a formal system; they are language-dependent "objects".⁵³ I do not wish to call

⁵² See Lewis (1991) for discussion.

⁵³ See Thomasson (1999), Crittendon (1991), Deutsch (2000), and Schiffer

such things “objects.” Unless one *just* means by “object”, anything or things that a speaker of a language can count as a member of a set or class merely by an act of stipulation -- a most liberal conception of object-hood indeed.⁵⁴ For now, let us just say that a set of properties gets assigned as the content Q in a context of introduction for a fictional name, but those properties are not assigned in a way that purports to uniquely identify any object. It is just a stipulated set of properties introduced to be associated with the name ‘Holmes’.

7. Conclusion

I have offered a sketch of a different semantics for proper names, one that allows for names to refer, but without being referentialist. It is also one that allows for names to be descriptive, without being descriptivist. I think this is the right result. Names seem to have a character that is somewhat janus-faced. This might at first seem problematic for a systematic semantic theory. But I have here offered a systematic semantic account of names that explains their duplicitous nature. I do so by making acts of naming fundamental to the semantics of proper names. This allows for names to play more than one role in contexts of utterance, depending on what occurred in some contextually specified act of naming. In short, my account successfully explains a name’s seeming ability to vary its semantic type in virtue of a single semantic character. Precisely what I claimed was needed. I have here provided a general hypothesis of how such a theory

(2003) for discussion of this sort of idea.

⁵⁴ This seems to make acts of reference the determinant of object-hood rather than the independent existence of objects being the determinants of acts of reference. It puts the cart before the horse.

must look, and I have at least provided a plausible outline of what the details of such a theory might look like.

Chapter Four: Further Puzzles

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I simply consider a couple of more puzzles that require treatment and for which I have answers. One of them is a puzzle about the modal profiles of sentences containing fictional names: simple predications containing fictional names are plausibly necessary, whereas the same kind of predication containing a referential name is plausibly contingent. This requires explanation. The other is a puzzle I have already mentioned. This is the puzzle of how to explain the essential emptiness of fictional names. Because it is not obvious that there is not already an answer from Kripke, the treatment of this puzzle is much more involved than the puzzle about modal profiles.

2. Fictional Names and Modal Profiles

The kind of name contained in a simple sentence makes a difference to that sentence's modal profile, a difference that needs some explanation. Consider the following sentences, one of which contains a fictional name:

(5) Bertrand Russell is the philosopher who wrote Principles of Mathematics.

(6) Sherlock Holmes is the detective who solved all of his crimes.

In order to see the difference in the modal profiles between these sentences, one must consider intuitions of the sort that Kripke (1980) relies on in arguing against descriptivism.

In disputing descriptivist claims, Kripke examines the modal profiles only

of sentences like (5), those containing referring names.⁵⁵ He rightly points out that, if the name 'Bertrand Russell' shares the meaning of 'The philosopher who wrote Principles of Mathematics', then the sentence 'Bertrand Russell is the philosopher who wrote Principles of Mathematics' should be a necessary truth. But obviously, it's possible that Bertrand Russell did no such thing. The expressions 'Bertrand Russell' and 'The philosopher who wrote Principles of Mathematics', therefore, cannot be equivalent in meaning, and so descriptivism for names must be false.

Now consider (6), by contrast. One can ask about whether this sentence can likewise be used in a counterexample against descriptivism. That is, can the same kind of argument against descriptivism work here? Well, it is not so obvious in this case that it can. Arguably, sentence (6) is necessary. For suppose the sentence is not necessary. That is, suppose the sentence 'Sherlock Holmes is the detective who solved all of his crimes' could be false. Then, by the same reasoning, almost every analogous sentence written by Conan Doyle could be false as well. For instance, the sentence 'Sherlock Holmes is tall' could be false, and likewise 'Sherlock Holmes smokes', as well as 'Sherlock Holmes was smart'. Could it really be the case that all such sentences are both about Sherlock Holmes and yet are false? It's a rather odd question, given that Sherlock Holmes does not exist. That is, it seems rather bizarre that all of the various sentences written about Sherlock Holmes by Conan Doyle might be false, given that all there is to "being Sherlock Holmes" is what we are told by Conan Doyle. While this argument is not conclusive, it does make it reasonable to think that the

⁵⁵ Kripke does apply other arguments against descriptivism to fictional names, but he considers fictional names only as an afterthought in the addenda (1980).

modal profiles of (5) and (6) differ. If they do differ, then an account of names must explain that difference.

One explanation that is available to the Kripkean, but which is implausible, is to claim that sentences like (6) are necessary in the same way as sentences like

(7) Bertrand Russell is the being that came from this sperm and this egg.

This is a sentence that allegedly predicates an essential property of its subject. The claim, then, would be that sentence (6) is more similar to (7) than to (5) with respect to its modal profile. The problem with this explanation is that it seems to require Holmes to exist, and for him to have all, or at least most, of his properties essentially. But I am committed to the idea that Holmes does not exist, and even if he did exist, surely he would not have all, or even most, of his properties essentially. Even if one did wish to maintain such a position, it's not clear that it is even coherent. If Sherlock Holmes existed, he would be a person, and persons do not have properties like being a smoker, being tall, being smart, or being the detective who solved all of his crimes, essentially. Another possible explanation would be that it is stipulated that 'Sherlock Holmes' is equivalent in meaning to some set of definite descriptions, which would include the definite description 'the detective who solved all of his crimes'. This would make the sentence necessary, but without the ontological commitments of the Kripkean line. However, Kripke convincingly showed that descriptivism is not a plausible analysis of the meaning of a name.

How should this problem be resolved? I will argue that part of the answer lies in including a set of properties as part of a name's semantic value. But one must do so without making the meaning of a name descriptive: one must respect

Kripke's results. I give a contextualist account of proper names, which accommodates both Kripkean and descriptivist intuitions, and which maintains a common semantics for names.

2.1 Solution to the Puzzle

My view of names, like the view that names are rigid designators, ensures the correct modal profile for the sentence (5) 'Russell is the author of Principles of Mathematics'. For, on my view, once the context of utterance is fixed, if a name turns out to be referential -- that is, if the mode M in its semantic value $\langle Q, M \rangle$ is the tag REF -- then, in that context, the name operates in exactly same way as a rigid designator. It does so for this reason: if the name is referential, then its traditional semantic content -- the Q-part of its semantic value $\langle Q, M \rangle$ -- must be an individual. So, it will be the properties of that individual which determine the truth-value of the appropriate sentences.

As we have seen, the name 'Bertrand Russell' from (5), uttered in some typical context, is normally taken as referential -- with $\langle \text{Bertrand Russell}, \text{REF} \rangle$ as its semantic value, and so with Bertrand Russell, the individual, as its traditional semantic content. It follows from our predication rule, then, that the sentence (5) will be made true and false in different contexts of evaluation by facts about this individual. Since Bertrand Russell presumably does not have as one of his essential properties having written Principles of Mathematics, it is natural to suppose that the sentence (5) is therefore contingent -- that, although it is true, it might be false at some possible world.

Now what of the sentence (6)? According to the view set out here, if a name is fictional -- that is, if the mode M in its semantic value $\langle Q, M \rangle$ is the tag

FIC -- then it has as its traditional semantic content a set of properties, rather than an individual. It follows from our predication rule, then, that if a simple sentence containing such a name is true, it is not because some individual has some property, but instead, because that property belongs to the set of properties associated with the name. It is at least plausible to suppose that a set must have the same members at all worlds -- that a set would not be the set it is if it contained different members. And so, it is at least plausible to suppose that, if a property belongs to the same set, the fact that it belongs to that set is a necessary truth.

Returning to the sentence (6), uttered in some typical context, the name 'Sherlock Holmes', as we have seen, is fictional -- with $\langle\{\text{tall, smart, balding, smokes}\}, \text{FIC}\rangle$ as its semantic value, and so with the set $\{\text{tall, smart, balding, smokes}\}$ as its traditional semantic content, and presumably that set will contain lots of other properties as well, including the property of being the detective who solves all of his crimes. By our evaluation rule, again, the sentence (6) is true just in case the property associated with the predicate from this sentence -- that is, the property of being the detective who solved all of his crimes -- belongs to the set of properties associated with the name 'Holmes' in (6). Presumably, it is a property associated with the name, and therefore the sentence is true, because the property does belong to the set, and again, it is at least plausible to suppose that the truth is necessary, since it is at least plausible to suppose that a property that belongs to a set does so necessarily.

But isn't this just to give the same sort of answer that I claimed was implausible to give on the part of the rigid designator theorist? I claimed that it was implausible to make 'Holmes' refer to some object that had its properties

essentially. But haven't I done just this very thing in claiming that a set has its members essentially and therefore (6) must be a necessary truth? Well, in a sense I have, but note that I have not made 'Holmes' refer to some thing that must instantiate those properties, like the rigid designator theorist does. In fact, 'Holmes' does not refer to anything. It is part of the meaning of 'Holmes' that certain properties are associated with it, and therefore (6) is a language-dependent truth, and those happen to be necessary.

So, the necessary status of sentences like (6) is explained, but it is explained without positing an individual referent for 'Sherlock Holmes', which has its properties essentially. It is explained instead by the fact that there is a set of properties associated with 'Sherlock Holmes', and membership in that set is criterial for the truth of simple predications like (6). The contingent status of (5) is also explained, but unlike (6), it is explained in virtue of facts about the properties of an individual referent for 'Bertrand Russell'. Because Bertrand Russell has the property of smoking in this world, but not in others, a sentence like (5) is contingent.

3. The Puzzle About Accidental Reference

For Kripke, fictional names could never come to refer. That is, there are no possible circumstances in which it could turn out that a fictional name refers to something. The descriptivist view, of course, has the consequence that a fictional name could refer, if it turned out that some individual satisfied all of the descriptions associated with a name. That is, it allows for the possibility that speakers could discover that fictional names are about things in the world because of something's satisfying the descriptive content associated with a

name. And, this seems ridiculous. No one would say that because someone satisfied the descriptions associated with 'Holmes' that this is the referent for it. It seems that given how 'Holmes' was introduced, speakers could never discover that 'Holmes' picks anything out. Kripke calls this "the problem of accidental reference." Any account of names must avoid this problem.

For Kripke, the reasons descriptivism is a bad account for referential names, are the same as the reasons that make it a bad account for fictional names. The semantic objection to descriptivism is particularly damning.⁵⁶ Recall that the semantic objection relies on the assumption that the objective reference of an expression, and speakers' intuitions about the reference of an expression, should not be wildly at odds. Indeed, it is exactly this sort of intuition that makes Donnellan-style cases compelling (Donnellan, 1966). But if what I claim about fictional names is true, isn't it now possible for 'Holmes' to accidentally pick out something that has the properties associated with the name 'Holmes'? No, but before I explain why, let us review why Kripke thinks that his account avoids this problem.

⁵⁶ In fact I think that at least one aspect of the modal argument is not as problematic for fictional names as it is for referential names. Namely, I do not think that a theory of fictional names that entails that 'Holmes is a detective' is a necessary or conceptual truth is particularly bad. I suspect speaker's intuitions would support this; I doubt that speakers would be as quick to accept the sentence 'Holmes could have been a criminal' as they would be to accept the sentence 'Aristotle could have been a criminal'. I think this fact undermines one of the main arguments against a descriptivist account of fictional names, and could also be used to distinguish the content of discourse qualified by a story operator from that which isn't – the modal profile of true sentences qualified by a story operator is different from the modal profile of putatively true sentences that are not. If the latter is the case, then this would constitute a different sort of argument that the truth of 'In the story, Holmes smokes' can explain, pragmatically or otherwise, the truth expressed using 'Holmes smokes'.

Kripke avoids the problem of accidental reference by arguing that all empty names, including fictional ones, are necessarily empty in virtue of epistemic and metaphysical considerations. He offers these kinds of reasons because the characterization of names offered -- that if they refer, they do so rigidly, that a rigid designator is an expression that refers to the same object at all possible worlds, and that a name refers by fiat -- does not settle the question of an empty name's reference. One wonders why a name that initially fails to get a referent, could not, if given the opportunity, come to have one, so long as it *then* referred in every possible world to the thing it finally acquires as its referent. The characterization of names as rigid designators does not explain the necessity of an empty name's failure to refer; for the issue of a name's rigidity of reference arises only after it has been settled that the name refers, that is, only after the reference has been fixed. So, it is not obvious at all what to say about an empty name. The question raised is this: how does the fact that a referring name is a rigid designator entail that an empty name is rigidly empty?

Kripke's epistemological argument is this: even if there was a man who fit all of the descriptions Doyle inscribed in his novels, this would not entail that 'Holmes' referred to the man who happened to fit the descriptions in the novels. A name, unlike other sorts of expressions, has its reference determined in virtue of a historical connection between the name and something in the world. So 'Holmes' could refer only if, somewhere in its history, it was linked to an object. It is not obvious how this explains the necessity of 'Holmes' failure to refer.⁵⁷ To put this in the context of the earlier discussion about reference, one could take the

⁵⁷ Devitt (1981) offers an account of the semantics of names that resembles this one.

historical connection thesis as an account of the sort of context-dependence a name, qua device of reference, must exhibit. Namely, there must be, in the history of the expression, a time at which the expression gets linked to an object, and it is this that determines the reference of a name. It is still unclear how it follows merely from that fact that a name that failed to establish a connection with an object in the past entails that at some point in the future it cannot have such a connection. Why, for instance, if a certain name was intentionally introduced with an attributive use of a definite description, couldn't it come to be linked to an object at some point in its history supposing the definite description was at some point satisfied in the actual world?

Whether the previous question can be answered depends on how one understands the thesis that a name's history plays an important role in determining its semantic value. It cannot be that it is past events of connecting a name to an object that determine its reference, for this allows that a name may at some point acquire such a past. So there must be something else besides this at work. The historical connection is not merely a requirement that, at some point, in a name's history, it is connected to an object. Rather, it must be something more like this: if a name can refer at all, it can do so only if it is connected to an object at the time the name first gets used in the language. Given this way of understanding the historical requirement, it does follow that, at the point of its first use, if a name is not associated with an object, it never can be.

The previous way of ensuring that empty names are rigid non-designators has problems, however. For one thing, it assumes that names are expressions that are supposed to be used to refer to objects. But it is unclear how this squares with the existence of fictional names. Additionally, issues about

individuating names arise. It is implausible to distinguish names on the basis of their referents, for this entails the following destructive trilemma: either empty names are not names; or they are all the same name since they all “refer” to the same thing -- the empty set; or there are no identity conditions for empty names. None of these consequences are *prima facie* plausible. Names must, therefore, be distinguished on grounds other than their referents. Perhaps the first use requirement can do double-duty here: they can be distinguished on the grounds of their first use in the language. That is, perhaps they can be distinguished in terms of their histories.⁵⁸

So, what counts as a name’s *first* use? For instance, let us suppose that A-R-I-S-T-O-T-L-E, as a string of letters, was first used as a name for the philosopher, Aristotle. But, of course, not every subsequent use of the string of letters A-R-I-S-T-O-T-L-E, as a name, refers to the philosopher. At some point, A-R-I-S-T-O-T-L-E, was used to refer to Aristotle the shipping magnate. Does this use of A-R-I-S-T-O-T-L-E count as a new name distinct from the name used for the philosopher or not? I claim that it does not, but whatever answer one offers to the previous question, the two uses for ‘Aristotle’ cannot both turn out to refer to the philosopher. However, if a name’s reference is determined by aspects of its *first* use, then it seems that it could turn out that both names refer to the philosopher. So, one needs a criterion that individuates names that does not leave open this possibility. That is, one needs such a thing if one is to rely on the previous historical argument that empty names are rigid non-designators. The

⁵⁸ Perhaps one would wish to rely on a name’s reference condition to individuate names. I am friendly to this sort of approach myself, but I think calling such conditions reference-conditions is inappropriate for I do not believe that names should have reference built-into their semantic character.

obvious alternative in this case is to individuate different names by their referents, but I already ruled out this possibility. So the historical connection version of the epistemological argument has some questions that need addressing before it is a good explanation of rigid non-designation. Before I discuss an issue that affects both the epistemological and metaphysical arguments, I want to first explain the metaphysical argument that empty names could not refer, and offer an objection.

The metaphysical argument for the idea that empty names are rigid non-designators claims that given that some object does not exist, while many objects, even actual objects, might have the properties ascribed to “that object”, one cannot say of any one of these possible objects that it would have been “that object”, had it existed. For there is no reason to choose one of these possible objects over another, they are all equally good candidates, and therefore they are equally bad ones. But this means that necessarily an object that fails to exist here, fails to exist everywhere. If it is necessary that an object fails to exist, then it is surely not possible that the name that purportedly refers to it could do so; for in order for it to refer, there must be one particular possible object to which it could be said to rigidly refer. Kripke therefore commits himself to saying that all non-referring names necessarily fail to refer.

Several questions arise about this argument that make one a bit squeamish about relying on it. One of the underlying assumptions in Kripke’s argument is that if something fails to exist here, then the only way to identify it in

other possible worlds, or to fix its reference, is by description.⁵⁹ Rather strange given everything he says against this picture. But is identification by description the only way to identify non-actual objects in other possible worlds? It seems that the answer could be “no”. This is especially true if one assumes that an object can be identified by its origins, which Kripke does. In fact, there is a case I will now consider that does seem to indicate that non-actual objects can be identified in other worlds. If so, then this appears to cast doubt on Kripke’s argument that all empty names, including fictional ones, are necessarily empty.

There are *prima facie* differences between several different kinds of names: there are those that are clearly failed devices of reference, such as ‘Vulcan’; there are those whose success or failure is yet to be determined, such as names for future or possible children; and finally, there are those that were never meant to refer in the first place, such as ‘Sherlock Holmes’.⁶⁰ The first kind is arguably necessarily empty, and the third is without question a rigid non-designator. However, names of the second kind are plausibly empty, but not necessarily so. If this is right, any argument that shows that all empty names are necessarily empty must be wrong.

One way to think about empty names is to examine their reference-conditions and examine under what circumstances one thinks a name could and

⁵⁹ Kripke (1980) recognizes that not all names are introduced by an act of ostension -- that descriptions can be related to naming somehow, for sometimes one cannot be directly acquainted with a referent, and therefore one must use a description to introduce a name. But Kripke quite rightly points out that one should not treat such incidents as meaning-making. Rather, one should understand the use of the description in such cases as merely a way of assigning a referent, as a way of fixing the referent.

⁶⁰ See Salmon (1998) for some discussion of these sorts of these cases. He discusses these cases in a different context than I do.

could not refer. If one finds that, at least in some cases, a name could refer, then at least some names can be contingently non-referring, and therefore Kripke's argument that all empty names must be necessarily empty must be false. To use an example of Nathan Salmon's (1998), consider the child that could be born from a specific sperm and egg. If that child is born, its name would be 'Newman'. Prima facie, 'Newman' is an empty name, or so it would seem. The name is empty, and yet it seems that 'Newman' could exist -- we can identify him as the being that came from a particular sperm and egg. If this is right, then there is such a thing as a contingently non-referring empty name. But perhaps, as Salmon argues, 'Newman' does refer: it is a name for an object in another possible world. If the latter, then there is no problem for the idea that all empty names are rigid non-designators, for 'Newman' is not a contingently empty name -- it is not even empty. According to Salmon (1998), 'Newman' is not empty but has as its referent, a possible, but non-actual child.

Salmon's motivation is to attempt to narrow the number of empty names, and hence to narrow the number of problems for a Millian-style theory of names. But from a natural language standpoint, it is not obvious that 'Newman' and 'Vulcan' do refer. Of course, framed the right way, a relatively informed native speaker of English might, in response to the question, to what does 'Vulcan' refer?', answer: 'It refers to the planet LeVerrier thought was between Mercury and the Sun', or perhaps 'It refers to Vulcan'. But, of course, this question is loaded. It presupposes that Vulcan must refer to something. If one asked instead 'Does 'Vulcan' refer to anything?' one might get these former responses, but one might also get the response that 'Vulcan' refers to nothing. So whether 'Vulcan' and 'Newman' refer, or are empty, is controversial.

If 'Newman' is empty, it is contingently so. Plausibly, 'Newman' does not currently refer to some possible object because when 'Newman' is introduced, it is introduced as a name whose reference-condition is modal; it is a name that could refer if certain events are possible. That is, it could refer given the facts, and the reference-condition with which it was introduced.⁶¹ While the reference-condition for 'Newman' tracks a possible state of the actual world, this does not mean that it gets a referent in the actual world – some possible object to which it actually refers -- it means only that it could have a referent. So prima facie, not all empty names are rigid non-designators. If that's right, then the conclusion that all empty names are necessarily empty seems to be too broad. It is not obvious that all empty names are necessarily empty. So any argument along the lines of Kripke's, which shows that all empty names are rigid non-designators, must be false. Still, it does seem obvious that a name like 'Sherlock Holmes' could never come to refer. Because fictional names could not refer, and because Kripke's arguments are inapplicable, an explanation for a fictional name's status as a rigid non-designator is still needed.⁶²

⁶¹ One might wonder whether there isn't a tension in holding both that 'Newman' is contingently empty and that rigid designators refer to the same object in all possible worlds. For if 'Newman' is a name, and it here refers to nothing, then given thesis (2) – that rigid designators designate the same thing with respect to all possible worlds – 'Newman' should designate nothing with respect to all possible worlds. But this would be to ignore thesis (1), the thesis that says that if a name refers, it refers rigidly. Indeed Kripke must have thought similarly for he felt the need to offer distinct arguments for the claim that empty names were necessarily non-designating in the appendix to Naming and Necessity, arguments that rely on metaphysical, and epistemic, not semantic, considerations.

⁶² Of course, another alternative is simply to modify the claim that, if a name refers to some thing, then it refers to that thing rigidly, to this: if a name refers to something, it refers to that thing rigidly, and if it does not refer, then it does not refer rigidly. But if this is right, then one needn't make any arguments whatsoever

However, one might agree with all of the previous reasoning and claim that there is still no need to rely on any other explanation other than the metaphysical one to account for the necessary emptiness of 'Holmes'. That is, one can rely on the metaphysical argument in a limited way: not to prove the necessary non-designation of all empty names, but only those whose reference is fixed by description, of which fictional names must be an example for lack of any other alternative. One only needs to limit the scope of Kripke's arguments. For even if 'Newman' could exist, and therefore 'Newman' is contingently non-referring, this is only because his reference can be fixed by something other than a description, its reference-condition specifies Newman's origins in terms of possibilities for existent objects in the actual world, and since an object's origins are essential to it, a single object *could* be identified as *the* referent of 'Newman'. The possible object that originates from *this* sperm and *this* egg is the possible referent for 'Newman'. But because 'Holmes' is a purely descriptive name in the sense that its reference could be fixed only by description, and since all kinds of things in other possible worlds could satisfy the descriptions that could be used to fix the reference of 'Holmes', and since names are supposed to be rigid designators, then no single object can be fixed as the referent of 'Holmes'. Therefore, there can be no Holmes, and there can be no referent for 'Holmes'. So there is no need for any additional explanation of why 'Holmes' cannot refer. It is guaranteed by the metaphysical argument.

about the necessity of empty name's failure to refer; it is already built-in to the characterization of a name. But the claim that all empty names are rigid non-designators is controversial, and building it into one's theory, rather than its being a consequence of some more principled reason, seems a bit risky. So the fact that 'Holmes' could not refer is still something that needs explaining.

But if the reference of a name is fixed by a description, then if it does not refer, it does not do so because the metaphysics happens to be what it is. Suppose there were a single world in which all of the descriptions associated with Holmes were met by a single individual. Or suppose there were some way to fix the origin of Holmes by some actual properties in this world. Would this possibility make the name 'Holmes' a potentially referential name? If so, then the metaphysical argument ought not to be relied upon, for if 'Holmes' fails to refer necessarily, it is a thorough-going necessary failure to refer, not a mere metaphysical necessity. Indeed, it seems part of the very nature of 'Holmes' that it fails to refer. That is, a metaphysical reason seems to be the wrong kind of reason for 'Holmes' necessary emptiness. Compare 'Holmes' with other sorts of rigid non-designators. For instance, a name introduced with a reference-condition that is contradictory, or a name introduced with a reference-condition that is indexed to a particular time and place. It might illuminate the fictional case to first examine other sorts of cases, and then look for similarities and differences between them.

So let us look at the case of 'Vulcan'. Plausibly, the description used to fix the referent for 'Vulcan' was something like this: 'the actual planet between Mercury and the Sun that is responsible for the perturbations in Mercury's orbit'. Now 'Vulcan' is different from 'Newman' in that its reference-condition does not track any modal facts. Given that this description failed to be satisfied when LeVerrier introduced 'Vulcan', 'Vulcan' could never refer; nor given the facts, could it have ever referred. Our intuitions support that it is impossible for 'Vulcan' ever to come to refer. It's not as if, if a planet came to exist between Mercury and the Sun today, one would say that LeVerrier had been right all along. 'Vulcan'

was introduced to refer to an object that causally explained certain then-occurring planetary phenomenon. So, the facts, and the facts the reference-fixing description tracks, fix the name as necessarily empty. Now we might want to say that 'Vulcan' could have referred if there had been a planet between Mercury and the Sun. But this would be to subtly shift the reference-condition of the name in question. It would be to shift it from ranging not only over actual states, but also over possible states. This is something the reference-fixing description for 'Vulcan' does not do.

Consider now a case where a name is introduced and its "reference-fixing" description is contradictory, although unbeknownst to the agent of the dubbing at the time. Let's take the case of introducing a name, say 'Bertie', for the set of all sets that does not include itself. Now, of course, 'Bertie' could not refer given its reference-condition and certain logical facts -- that the description entails a contradiction. So 'Bertie' is necessarily non-referential for certain logical reasons.

'Vulcan' necessarily fails to refer for metaphysical reasons, 'Bertie' for logical reasons, and 'Newman' does not necessarily fail to refer at all. Can the reason for the failure of 'Holmes' to refer necessarily be assimilated to any one of these reasons? No. Assuming that 'Holmes' is a descriptive name that is a rigid non-designator, 'Holmes' cannot be like 'Newman' since 'Holmes' necessarily fails to refer and 'Newman' does not. Perhaps 'Holmes' is like 'Vulcan'. But it seems fairly obvious without much examination that while 'Holmes' is a rigid non-designator, it cannot be so in the same way as 'Vulcan'. 'Holmes' is not a rigid non-designator because of a failed attempt at reference, because the descriptions used in its introduction failed to pick anything out at the time. This

seems like the wrong sort of explanation for why 'Holmes' fails to refer, and why therefore, 'Holmes' necessarily fails to refer. Last, 'Holmes' was not introduced with any contradictory descriptions, at least let us assume, so it cannot be the case that 'Holmes' fails to refer for any logical reasons. So if 'Holmes' is necessarily non-referring, which I maintain, there must be more than one sort of underlying explanation for a name's having the property of being a rigid non-designator. Plausibly, the explanation will involve citing the fact that in writing a novel, an author is not engaging in any sort of referential act.

So given that I am rejecting Kripke's arguments for the necessary non-designative status of empty names in general, I now return to the thesis that the initial characterization of names as rigid designators requires that argument is needed for the claim that fictional names are rigid non-designators. For if the characterization of names as rigid designators in the previous chapter is the right way to think about the relationship between a name, its referential status, and rigidity, the following argument can be made:

- (i) The two theses that characterize names – that if a name refers, it refers rigidly, and that a name refers rigidly by fiat -- apply only to names that refer, not empty names.
- (ii) So, either empty names are not meaningful, or they are not names.
- (iii) It is implausible to say that empty names lack meaning, or fail to be names.
- (iv) Either an empty name could refer, or it couldn't, or it is a matter for stipulation.
- (v) If there is an independent answer about whether it could refer, since the two theses from (i) do not settle the question, and since empty names are names, then there must be some more general underlying semantic feature that both empty and non-empty names share, that is, the characterization of names as rigid designators is incomplete or wrong as an account of names.

Some of this was mentioned earlier in connection with individuating names. But I here reprise it in connection with empty names. Of course, one way to deal with

the issues raised by the argument in (i)-(v) is to modify the thesis that says that if a name refers, then it is a rigid designator -- and replace it with something like this: if a name refers to something, it refers to that thing rigidly, and if it does not refer, then it does not refer rigidly. If this is right, then one needn't make any arguments whatsoever about the necessary non-referringness of empty names; it is already built-in to the characterization of a name. But the necessary emptiness of a non-referring names is controversial, and building it into one's theory, rather than deriving it as a consequence, seems a bit risky. Another alternative is this: if a name is a referential expression, then it refers rigidly. But, as stated, this thesis is simply false, for it implies that a name's being a referential expression is sufficient for it to have its reference rigidly, and some seeming referential expressions, empty names, have no referent at all. One must reinterpret this principle in a way that makes it true. The only two options I see are those I have discussed and we've seen the problems with those.

I think (v) is true. But I also think that stipulations play a role in determining a name's necessary non-referring status. But this is not to reject (v) in favour of (iv), so long as the role of stipulation is itself incorporated in a systematic way into the semantics for names. For instance, one might claim that some empty names could never refer because of a stipulation that they do not do so. So long as the stipulation itself serves as an independent objective measure of an empty name's referential status, and so long as it is predicted by the semantic theory that stipulation can play such a role, one can still hold (v). This is what I will argue is true of fictional names. In fact, I think that relying on the notion of stipulation is the only way to explain the non-referential status of fictional names like 'Holmes', if one allows that some empty names are contingently non-referring.

3.1 Solution to the Problem of Accidental Reference

As I claimed, Kripke arguments establishing that all empty names are necessarily empty are too strong, in the sense that they over-generalize. Surely not all empty names are necessarily empty. Recall that there are empty names that are, at least arguably, contingently non-referring, such as those one may introduce for possible, but as yet unborn, children. Since there are, in fact, contingently non-referring names, and since Kripke's arguments are too broad, and since the rigid designator thesis alone does not settle the question, there must be some other explanation for a fictional name's status as a rigid non-designator. As I also noted, even one narrows the scope of Kripke's arguments, the explanations he offers seem to get the reasons for the necessary non-designative status of a name like 'Holmes' from (3) wrong.

A better explanation for the fact that 'Holmes' is rigid non-designator relies on the stipulative intentions with which a name is introduced; 'Holmes' could not refer because the author of a work of fiction used that name in act that introduced it for non-referential use. So the name 'Holmes' cannot possibly refer because its context of introduction specifies that it cannot do so. The reason the name 'Holmes' cannot refer is that it is stipulated that it cannot do so by the speaker who introduces a certain use for the name. Even Kripke, himself, at times, offers the same sort of reason for the fact that 'Holmes' is a rigid non-designator when discussing "the characteristic disclaimer: 'The characters in this work are fictional, and any resemblance to anyone, living or dead, is purely coincidental.')" (Kripke, 1980).

But if one is a referentialist, and there are names that are rigid non-

designators by stipulation, this needs explaining. For if one is a referentialist, any name used intentionally as a non-designator will be inappropriate. This seems rather odd; for presumably competent speakers will not *regularly* use terms in ways that are inappropriate, or that go against the defining characteristics of their supposed semantic type.⁶³ On the supposition that names are for designating objects, stipulating that a name is a rigid non-designator would be a violation of its supposed appropriate use. So, either authors are guilty of inappropriately using names, or names are not necessarily for designating. The latter is the more plausible option. Since the explanation for the fact that 'Holmes' is a rigid non-designator cannot have to do with names being essentially referential, it must be a consequence of some other underlying fact about a name's semantics.

The explanation I apply to fictional names relies on notions Kripke himself uses to describe referential names. Recall that Kripke claims that if names refer rigidly, they do so by stipulation, they are *de jure* rigid designators. My claim will be that fictional names are, similarly, *de jure* rigid non-designators -- their necessary failure to refer is simply a matter of stipulation. Kripke himself cannot rely on this notion to explain the necessary non-reference of fictional names because, for Kripke, the sole appropriate use of a name is to designate an individual; thus, classifying an intentional act of non-reference as appropriate for a name conflicts with this idea. However, I have a wider view of names, one that

⁶³ Metaphor and irony challenge this assumption. But I do not think there is a plausible case to be made that uttering 'Holmes smokes' is ironic or metaphorical. My point here is that if names were *essentially* for referring, then attempting to stipulate that a name does not refer would be to commit the same sort of mistake Humpty-Dumpty commits in telling Alice that 'There's glory for you' can mean 'there's a nice knock down argument for you'.

does not tie them so closely with referring to individuals. So I am able to rely on this stipulative explanation for a fictional name's essential emptiness.

On my account, the solution to the problem of accidental reference lies in the referential intentions with which a name is introduced. This makes a solution to the problem fairly simple: a fictional name cannot refer simply because it is stipulated by the agent of a dubbing that the name is fictional -- that is part of the agent's intentions in introducing the name. On the current account, as we have seen, these intentions are encoded by the tags REF and FIC. The name 'Sherlock Holmes' in the sentence (3), for instance, cannot refer simply because Conan Doyle introduced it as essentially non-referential; its tag, on this occasion, is FIC. Because this name carries the tag FIC, a speaker who uses 'Sherlock Holmes' in the way intended by Conan Doyle likewise picks up these non-referential intentions. The name 'Sherlock Holmes', therefore, cannot possibly refer. Its semantic value specifies that it cannot do so -- the fictional nature of the dubbing is directly represented in its semantic value. It is not just non-referential, but in a sense, anti-referential.

Because an agent stipulates that she is engaged in a fictional mode of introduction when she writes a work of fiction, a fictional name is therefore a de jure rigid non-designator. Just like referring names, which are de jure rigid designators, fictional names, analogously, must be de jure rigid non-designators. The reason for a fictional name's rigid non-reference is not therefore metaphysical or epistemic. Rather, the reason is semantic.

4. Conclusion

I have introduced several problems that the existence of fictional names poses for semantic theorizing. The primary problem, to which most of the discussion has been devoted, is the problem about the role that names plays in truths that that can be expressed using them. The two secondary problems were these: a problem about modal profiles, and a problem about accidental reference. I have tried to sketch an account of names that can make such problems tractable. However, there is more work to be done before these problems can be said to be solved. I list here only a few issues. First, the ontological commitments of the present account need to be explored more carefully to see whether there are any implausible assumptions underlying the account I offer here. Second, the kinds of intentions associated with referential and fictional uses of names, here encoded in the tags REF and FIC, need to be investigated more thoroughly given the large role they play in solving at least two of the three problems. Third, the structure of the predication rule employed here raises issues about conditional definitions and their legitimacy which require more argument and exploration. Fourth, the claims made here about the modal status of names need to be spelled out and explored in more detail. Fifth, the general question of what the formal semantic theory set out here tells us about the speaker's understanding of a name needs more thorough investigation. Finally, the theory needs to be related much more carefully to linguistic data about the use of names, for instance, is it at all plausible to think that names in natural language function the way I claim they do.

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