The Semantic Reference of Proper Names:
A Response to Jessica Pepp

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1. Introduction

In her thought-provoking paper, "Towards a New 'Kripke-Donnellan Theory' of Proper Name Reference" (this volume), Jessica Pepp notes that "Kripke holds that a proper name, as used on a given occasion, refers to a particular thing in virtue of the use's tracing back in a certain way to an introduction of that name for that thing" (sec. 1). Pepp is one of a group of philosophers influenced by Keith Donnellan, thus aptly called "neo-Donnellanians" (Bianchi 2020: 129), who have rejected this view of names.[1] Thus, Pepp claims that her discussion of Donnellan's distinction "calls … into question" Kripke's stance on "what makes a particular thing be the semantic referent of a use of a name" (sec. 7). I think that Pepp is quite wrong about this, but it is an interesting challenge to say why she is wrong. This paper takes up the challenge. I think that neo-Donnellanians in general are similarly wrong, but I shall not be arguing that.

Pepp frames her discussion around three good question:

> (a) In virtue of what does a proper name, as used on a given occasion, semantically refer to whatever it in fact semantically refers to?
> (b) Is Donnellan's (1966) distinction between referential and attributive uses of definite descriptions a special case of a general distinction that also applies to proper names?
> (c) Does Donnellan's distinction (or the general distinction of which it is a special case) have semantic significance?

Pepp "advocates 'yes' answers to *both* (b) and (c) and a concomitant duality in the answer to (a)." In contrast, she claims: "Neither Kripke nor Donnellan embraces this duality in the answer to (a)"; she takes Donnellan to answer 'yes' to (c) and 'no' to (b), and Kripke, the reverse (sec. 1)

Now, obviously, answers to these questions depend on an account of Donnellan's distinction. In particular, what is it to be "referential"? On the basis of my account of the distinction, I shall give a *qualified* 'yes' in answer to (b), a 'yes' in answer to (c), and hence a "duality" answer to (a). So, superficially, my answers are much the same as Pepp's. But our accounts of Donnellan's distinction are different and so our routes to those answers differ. I shall not dispute the answers Pepp attributes to Kripke and Donnellan but I will dispute her account of Donnellan's distinction and hence of what counts as a generalization of it. Most importantly, I will reject her anti-Kripkean claim about semantic reference.

Section 2 summarizes the theory of singular terms that I have presented in a series of works (particularly, 1974, 1981a,b, 2004, 2015, 2021, 2022, 2025). This theory includes an

[1] E.g., Almog 2012; Capuano 2012; Almog *et al*. 2015; Pepp 2019.

account of Donnellan's distinction. The section concludes by answering Pepp's three questions. Section 3 looks critically at Pepp's views, including her account of the distinction.

But, first, a word about terminology. 'Reference' and its cognates are ordinary English words with a range of common meanings. When used in philosophy, however, they are technical terms. Many philosophers use 'reference' in a quite restricted sense that picks out a relation that holds only between certain *singular* terms – particularly, proper names and demonstratives - and one semantically significant object. But many, including me, favor a generic use of 'refer' according to which not only certain singular terms but also count nouns, mass nouns, verbs, adjectives, and so on, all refer: they have different *modes* of reference. I then use 'designate' for the mode of reference of certain singular terms, and call the terms "designational". However, what I call a "designational" use of a description, Donnellan calls a "referential" use. So, to avoid confusion here, I shall follow Donnellan and call the use "referential".

2. A Theory of Singular Terms

I was inspired by Saul Kripke's 1967 lectures at Harvard on proper names, and Keith Donnellan's articles on definite descriptions (1966, 1968), to offer a unified theory of referential (my designational) terms. I shall discuss definite descriptions in subsection 2.1, demonstratives (and demonstrations) in 2.2, and proper names in 2.3.

2.1 Definite Descriptions

After Keith Donnellan's classic papers (1966, 1968), it became widely accepted that a definite description, 'the *F*', has a "referential" use as well as an "attributive" use. In an attributive use it has a Russellian quantificational meaning and refers to whatever is the unique *F*. In a referential use, 'the *F*' expresses a "singular" thought and designates a particular object that the speaker has in mind; 'the *F*' "speaker-designates" that object. *In virtue of what?* I argue (1981b, 2004) that 'the F' speaker-designates that object in virtue of the causal link between speaker and object when it is, or was, the focus of the speaker's perception. I call this link to the object a "grounding".

There has been controversy over whether referential uses of 'the *F*' exemplify a literal semantic meaning rather than just a Gricean "implicature", or something similarly pragmatic. Does that use *semantically* designate that object in mind? I think that the case for supposing that it does has been greatly underestimated. Indeed. I think the case is now overwhelming.

The main argument *for* the semantic explanation is the "Argument from Convention" (2004: 283). The appeal of rival pragmatic explanations is that *any* quantifier, even 'every', can be *used* referentially to express a singular thought and yet we do not say that just any quantifier has a referential *meaning*. No more should we say that a definite description has such a meaning just because it can be used referentially. But there is a response. The point is that, not only *can* definite descriptions be used referentially to express singular thoughts, as can any quantifier, but that definite descriptions *are regularly* so used. This is good evidence that this way of expressing singular thoughts is *conventional*, and hence that the meaning thus expressed is semantic. The point is driven home by a consideration of metaphors. When an expression is used

metaphorically, it conveys a meaning that it does not literally have; its speaker meaning differs from its semantic meaning. Quite often that metaphorical use catches on and the expression comes to be regularly so used and so the metaphor "dies": we have a new conventional semantic meaning. The sort of thinking exemplified by pragmatic resistance to the Argument from Convention would make metaphors immortal (2004: 284-5).

The case for referential descriptions is bolstered by arguments *against* the view that descriptions have just the Russellian meaning. One main argument is that this view cannot explain the role of "incomplete" descriptions (2004: 297-303). (An incomplete description is one that fails to uniquely describe an object; for example, 'the table' in 'The table is covered with books'.). The "onus" argument is also important (2021: 178-81). There is a "psychological-reality requirement" on a pragmatic explanation of a referential use: for the explanation to be good it must show that the pragmatic derivation of a speaker meaning from the Russellian semantic meaning has an appropriately *active* place in the cognitive lives of speakers and hearers. This requirement has not been met and is unlikely to be met.

I conclude that definite descriptions do indeed have a referential *meaning*, not just a use. The semantic designation of a referential 'the *F*' depends on the causal-perceptual grounding in the referent. Does the nominal '*F*' also play a reference-determining role? Some think not; that is what Pepp calls the "stronger" view. I think so (2004: 291-2), with the consequence that reference determination is "hybrid"; that is what Pepp calls the "weaker" view.

Adopting language from discussions of demonstratives, we can say that the referential meaning of a description demands "saturation" in context by the object of the singular thought expressed. This saturation, brought about by a causal-perceptual grounding, largely determines the semantic referent.

In sum, Donnellan's distinction is between two semantically significant uses of definite descriptions with radically different modes of reference. In an attributive use, the semantic referent is determined wholly by description; in a referential use, the semantic referent is determined largely by a grounding.

I also urged, with much the same arguments (2004), that the referential use of an indefinite description is semantic. I have recently extended the argument to the referential use of some other quantifier phrases: 'some *F*', 'some *F*s', 'many *F*s', 'several *F*s', 'a few *F*s': each of them has a referential meaning (2025: sec. 8P.5). So, Donnellan's distinction generalizes to these expressions. And it generalizes further, as we shall now see.

2.2 Demonstratives and Demonstrations

"Deictic" demonstratives, including pronouns, are terms that most obviously have referential uses. Like definite descriptions, they have a conventional linguistic meaning that demands "saturation" in context by the object of the singular thought expressed. Saturation makes that particular object the semantic reference of the demonstrative in virtue of a causal grounding in the object when it is, or was, the focus of the speaker's perception (2022).

The theory is proposed initially for simple nondescriptive demonstratives: in English, 'this' and 'that'. But many demonstratives are like definite descriptions in having a descriptive element: the pronoun, 'he', implies a male entity; the complex demonstrative, 'that *F*'. implies an *F* entity. I favor the view that the descriptive element joins with the grounding in the determination of reference, which is thus hybrid.

The theory of referential descriptions and demonstratives rests on three other views. (I), on the view that the singularity of a singular thought is explained by its being causally-perceptually grounded in the object of thought. (II), on the view that descriptions and demonstratives are conventional ways of expressing the singularity of a singular thought. (III), given the deep Gricean truth about the priority of thought that underlies the wise saying, "language expresses thought", the grounding that fixes the reference of the thought is crucial in fixing the reference of the referential terms.

It has long been clear that demonstratives are not only used referentially but also occasionally attributively, having their reference determined wholly by description (McGinn 1981: 161-2). A persuasive case has been presented that these uses are conventional and hence semantic (King 2001: 9-10; Hawthorne and Manley 2012: 206-7). So, Donnellan's distinction generalizes to demonstratives.

In proposing my theory of referential demonstratives, I reject several other popular theories: that reference is determined by an associated description (1985: 228-9; 2004: 300, 302); that reference is to the most salient object (2021: 134); that reference is to the object the speaker intends to refer to (2021: 57-62; 2022); that reference is determined by grammar (2023); that reference is to the object demonstrated (2004: 290-1; 2023).

One problem with the view that a demonstration determines the reference of a demonstrative is that there can be demonstratives without demonstrations. There can also be demonstrations without demonstratives. I argue that demonstrations, like demonstratives, are conventional ways of expressing a singular thought about an object (2021: 283-7; 2022: 1001-3). They are referential devices in their own right. How is the designation of a demonstration determined? In the same causal-perceptual way as the designation of a demonstrative. Just as a person's use of 'he' designates a *male* that is, or was, the focus of her perception, her use of a demonstration designates an *object in the gestured area* that is, or was, the focus of her perception.

2.3 Proper Names

Kripke presented his "better picture" (1980: 94) of proper names in the context of devastating criticisms of received description theories.[2] The central idea of this better picture is that the reference of a name is determined by a series of reference *borrowings* in communications

[2] Most devastating of all was what I called "the arguments from ignorance and error" (1981a: 21): the beliefs that speakers have about things that they refer to are often too meager or too wrong for the speakers to provide the reference-determining descriptions demanded by a description theory.

stretching back to the name's introduction; reference determination is a causal-historical matter. So, we designate Aristotle with his name not because Aristotle fits descriptions we associate with his name, as the ruling description theories supposed, but because others in our linguistic community did so before and we can benefit from them. Thus began the revolution in the theory of reference.

I take over Kripke's theory of borrowing, with a modification.[3] Kripke claims that a person in borrowing a name "must … intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference" (1980: 96). I argue (2021: 57-62; 2022) that talk of referential intentions should have no place in a theory of language. I describe borrowing as a largely sub-personal and unconscious mental process in a borrower in response to the use of the name by a competent speaker. Reference borrowing is a species of lexical acquisition or understanding and we must look to future psycholinguistics to throw more light on it (2015: 115-18).

What matters for the successful use of a name that has been acquired by reference borrowing is that the use be caused by an ability with that name that is, as a matter of fact, the result of causal chains of borrowings going back to people who introduced the name. The speaker exploits this ability that is, as a matter of fact, borrowed, but the speaker need not "defer" to the lender. Indeed, the speaker need not know who the lender was or even that she *has* borrowed the name. There is no need for her to have any semantic thoughts about the name at all. Use of a language does not require any thoughts *about* that language.

So, we have the ability to designate Aristotle with his name because we borrow, ultimately, from those who introduced the name. But how did *they* manage? How did the original users of 'Aristotle' *fix* its designation in a certain person? I proposed that paradigm names have their reference fixed by just the same sort of groundings that fix the reference of descriptions and demonstratives. The designation of a name is fixed in an object when that object is the focus of a speaker's perception, perhaps in a dubbing (baptism) (pp. 113-15). So, the original users have their ability to designate Aristotle by 'Aristotle' in virtue of their causal links to him and then we inherited this ability to designate him by reference borrowing.

I emphasize that groundings will typically occur many times in the history of a named object after its initial naming: names are typically *multiply* grounded in their bearers. These other situations are ones where the name is used as a result of a direct perceptual confrontation with its bearer. So, dubbings and other first uses of a name do not bear all the burden of linking a name to the world. A *network* of causal chains, each grounded in the referent, will typically underlie a name. Multiple grounding is vital in explaining reference *confusion* (pp. 118-21) and reference *change* (pp. 121-4). Reference change takes place when there is a change in a *pattern* of groundings. Multiple grounding is also important in assessing Pepp's view.

Confusion and change arise because a person may "semantically designate" an object that she does not "speaker-designate", as nicely illustrated by Kripke's famous example of Smith being mistaken for Jones in raking leaves (1977: 263). This forces attention to the two distinct

[3] Andrea Bianchi (2020) has argued ingeniously that my theory of names should be seen as a development of Donnellan's views not Kripke's. I think he is wrong about that (2020: 388-97).

causal processes involved in the use of a name, processes that are mostly sub-personal (Devitt 2015: 126). One process features in *speaker designation* and is the process of a speaker using the name to express a thought grounded in a certain object. The other features in *semantic designation* and is the process of the speaker participating in the convention of using the name *because* she has a disposition to use it to express thoughts grounded in a certain object; *because* she has an entry in her "mental lexicon" involving that name grounded in that object. Typically these two groundings are in the same object, but sometimes they are not, as evidenced by the leaf-raking example and Gareth Evans' nice example of 'Madagascar' (1973: 196). Consider also the following example (Devitt 1996: 225-7). A cynical journalist, Bruce, observing General Westmoreland at his desk during the Vietnam War, comments: "Napoleon is inventing his body count". Bruce speaker-designates Westmoreland *by* semantically designating Napoleon. (I shall return to this example in discussing Pepp.)

In subsections 2.1 and 2.2, we applied the causal-perceptual theory of designation fixing, of grounding, to referential definite descriptions and demonstratives. Now we apply it to paradigm proper names like 'Aristotle'. This is the unified theory of referential terms.

A few names are not like the paradigm referential ones; 'Jack the Ripper' is a popular example. The semantic reference of these names is not fixed by causal–perceptual links in groundings but rather by an attributively used description. As a result, in my terminology, these names *denote* whatever uniquely fits the description; they do not designate. These names are now usually called "descriptive", but I initially called them "attributive" (1974, 1981a). A descriptive name is like a paradigm referential one in that its reference can be *borrowed* but it differs in the way its reference is *fixed*.

Paradigm proper names are referential and so if descriptive names are *appropriately* called "attributive" then Donnellan's distinction may seem to generalize to names too. And calling descriptive names attributive seems appropriate enough, given that their reference is fixed descriptively. But it is worth noting a significant difference between this referential-attributive distinction for names and Donnellan's distinction for descriptions.

It is a consequence of Donnellan's distinction for descriptions that *every* description in a person's idiolect has both an attributive and a referential way of referring. So, descriptions are ambiguous, indeed, polysemous (Amaral 2008). Proper names tend to be ambiguous in a very different way: they typically have more than one bearer. This ambiguity is not polysemy[4] and it is *not* a consequence of some proper names being attributive and some referential. We can bring out this difference between descriptions and names with examples. Consider Fiona at the ghastly scene of Smith's murder, with no idea of the perpetrator. She can use the definite description, 'Smith's murderer', attributively, thus denoting Jones who in fact committed the crime. Months later at the trial, Fiona can use 'Smith's murderer' referentially to designate the person she is observing in the dock, who happens to be Jones. So, she has two ways of referring to Jones using 'Smith's murderer". The story is very different with proper names. Consider the name 'Aristotle' in its role of referring to the famous philosopher, and 'Jack the Ripper' in its role of referring to the famously unknown murderer. The former is referential, the latter attributive. But,

[4] Proper names are otherwise polysemous, however (Kijania-Placek 2018).

importantly, it is not the case that the former has both an attributive and a referential way of referring to the philosopher, nor the latter both an attributive and a referential way of referring to the murderer. *Each has just one way of referring to its bearer*, in the case of 'Aristotle', referentially, in the case of 'Jack the Ripper', attributively. Contrast this with 'Smith's murderer': it can refer to Jones *both* referentially *and* attributively. So, it is *arguable* that Donnellan's distinction does not really generalize to names.

2.4 Pepp's Three Questions

As noted at the beginning, an answer to Pepp's questions depends on an account of Donnellan's distinction. On my account, the use of a singular term is referential if its reference is fixed fully (proper names, simple demonstratives), or largely (descriptions, complex demonstratives), by a causal-perceptual grounding. The use of a term is attributive if its reference is fixed entirely by an associated description. *The distinction is between different modes of reference*. That is what makes it theoretically important.

> Now consider Pepp's question:
>
> (b) Is Donnellan's (1966) distinction between referential and attributive uses of definite descriptions a special case of a general distinction that also applies to proper names?

I have claimed that not only do definite descriptions have both referential and attributive meanings but that so also do some other quantifier phrases, demonstratives, and proper names. So, it looks as if we should answer (b) "yes". But this answer needs a qualification: we have just noted that Donnellan's distinction may not really generalize to names.

> No qualification is required in answer 'yes' to this question:
>
> (c) Does Donnellan's distinction (or the general distinction of which it is a special case) have semantic significance?

On my view, all the attributive-referential distinctions we have been discussing have semantic significance.

> (a) In virtue of what does a proper name, as used on a given occasion, semantically refer to whatever it in fact semantically refers to?

A consequence of my view is that there is indeed a "duality" to the answer. Both referential and attributive names semantically refer to their bearers in virtue of a causal network of reference borrowings back to a reference fixing, but referential ones are fixed by *causal groundings*, attributive ones by *definite descriptions*. But, note, any proper name in a person's mental lexicon semantically refers to its bearer by the same mode on each occasion of use, whether that mode is referential or attributive one; see qualification on (b) above.

3. Pepp's Theory of Proper Names

3.1 Pepp's Account of Donnellan's Distinction

Pepp's account of Donnellan's distinction leads her to advocate answers to her three questions that differ from mine only in not having any qualification to the 'yes' answer to (b). But her account of the distinction, hence her reasons for these answers, differ from mine. In considering Pepp's account, it is helpful to start with Donnellan.

Donnellan (1966, 1968) explained a referential use with expressions like "having in mind" and "speaking about". The application of these vague ordinary English expressions badly needs explanation, as has often been noted (e.g., Kaplan 1978: 222; Devitt 1981b: 513-4; Burge 2012: 107-8; Wulfemeyer 2017: 2). The expressions should be treated as just "a stepping stone" (Devitt 1974: 202) to a proper explanation of referential uses. Thus, we need to know *in virtue of what* a speaker had a certain object "in mind" rather than something else or nothing. Here's another way of posing this question. Presumably, for the speaker to have *x* in mind in making an utterance is for the utterance to be the expression of a thought that has *x* as its "intentional object". In virtue of what is *x* the intentional object? The answer to our question, however posed, cannot appeal to associated descriptions, for it is part of the very nature of referential uses that they differ from attributive uses in not having their reference fixed by descriptions. What our question demands is a *non-descriptive theory of reference* for referential uses. Absent such a theory, referential uses are left unexplained.

Pepp has the novel idea of explaining referential uses in terms of "independent targeting": she claims that "a referential use of a definite description has a *target* while an attributive use does not." A targeted use of a name "calls attention to" something with the name; it "makes a subject of discourse" (sec. 2). But these ordinary English expressions are as much in need of explanation as Donnellan's: *In virtue of what* does a speaker "target", "call attention to", etc. a certain object rather than something else or nothing? Pepp notes the "prevalent idea … that what makes something be the target of a referential use of a definite description is the obtaining of a certain sort of causal relation between the object and the speaker's mental state" (sec. 2). But Pepp does not embrace this prevalent idea. Indeed, she is surprisingly content to make judgments about what is or is not independently targeted[5] that seem to be based only on intuitions about the application of these vague ordinary expressions.[6] And these judgments often seem to be at odds with the prevalent idea. This leaves the judgments inadequately supported and her theory of semantic reference seriously incomplete.

To assess Pepp's view that her referential uses are semantically significant we need to assume some theory of targeting. We have no alternative but the above prevalent idea: independent targeting is indeed some sort of causal relation between object and speaker. For, *how else* could we explain the targeting, given that it is not determined by associated

[5] Pepp often talks simply of "targeted" uses but I take it that such talk is short for "independently targeted" uses, for her theory is that referential uses are *independently* targeted uses.
[6] For more on the importance of moving from folk talk to theory, see my discussion (2020: 394-5) of an earlier paper by Pepp (2019). Pepp is right to think that it is not a problem for her distinction that there are difficult cases. But it is a problem that she provides no theoretical basis for settling clear cases.

descriptions? For convenience, I will assume my development of that idea: the target is the object which is, or was, the focus of the perception that led to this use of the term. But I think that any version would do for my criticisms.

Pepp rightly notes that with a referentially used description, unlike an attributively used one, "the speaker uses the description to point or call attention to something that she has in mind *independently of its fitting that description*." But then Pepp makes

> an analogous distinction … between uses of names that have independently determined targets and uses of names that do not. In a targeted use, what the name, as used, refers to, calls attention to, or makes a subject of discourse is determined independently of the name's naming something. For instance, the speaker might be perceiving that thing, or remembering having perceived it. On the other hand, one might use a proper name without having any such independently determined target, as, perhaps, in reading a previously unknown name off of a roll call list. (sec. 2)

As I shall soon argue, Pepp's distinction for names is not *relevantly* analogous to Donnellan's for descriptions. Aside from that, there is much truth in what Pepp says here, from the perspective of the prevalent idea of targeting. Thus, according to my theory, Pepp's independently targeted uses of names are *groundings*, perhaps the initial groundings that first established the semantic referent, but typically *re*groundings of names with already established referents. And grounding uses can obviously be distinguished from non-grounding uses.

It is important to note that what Pepp and I are talking about here are *paradigm* names; Pepp (note 7) explicitly sets aside descriptive names - for example, 'Jack the Ripper' – which are the only ones *I* (2.3) count as attributive.

Pepp goes on to apply the Argument from Convention to support "the semantic significance" of her distinction:

> Targeted uses of names are regular and standard. They require no special stage setting, nor any unusual inference on the part of hearers. Moreover, they do something different from untargeted uses in calling attention to an independently determined target. Thus, the Argument from Convention provides reason for thinking that targeted and untargeted uses of names should receive different semantic treatments. (sec. 7)

Pepp thus takes Donnellan's distinction for descriptions to generalize to her targeted-untargeted distinction for names:

> proper names, like definite descriptions, not only have targeted and untargeted uses, but also *semantically significant* targeted and untargeted readings. Proper names, *qua* noun phrases, are systematically ambiguous … between untargeted readings on which they simply refer, semantically, to their established bearers and targeted readings on which they semantically refer to (or, at least, are constrained to refer to) independently determined targets. (sec. 7)

Pepp (sec. 7) entertains "stronger" and "weaker" versions of the targeted reading, which she takes to be analogous to the stronger and weaker versions of the theory of referential descriptions (2.1). The stronger version for names, which she attributes to Donnellan, is that the independently determined target simply *is* the semantic referent of the name;[7] "it refers to a target determined independently of the name's naming something"; analogously, a referential description refers to its target independently of its applying to the target. So, the name semantically refers to that target whatever object underlies the causal network for that name as a result of prior reference fixing. The weaker version is that it refers to that independent target "*so long as that thing is also what the name names*"; analogously, a referential description refers to its target so long as the description applies to it.

I noted earlier that we needed to add a theory of independent targeting to assess Pepp's view. We also need to add a theory of the "untargeted readings" which are contrasted with targeted ones. In virtue of what do names "simply refer, semantically, to their established bearers"? Pepp writes as if she has in mind a Kripkean causal-historical answer. I shall adopt that answer, assuming my version for convenience. Again, I think that any version would do for my criticisms.

Pepp's view, on either version, is truly radical. It is strikingly at odds with Kripke's view and, it seems to me, with reality. I shall argue that the semantic referent of a name is not determined by Pepp's independent targeting and that a generalization of Donnellan's distinction does not apply to her distinction for names.

3.2 A Critique of Pepp's Theory

I start by noting differences between Pepp's generalized distinction and mine. (1) Whereas mine takes it to be definitive of referential uses that their reference is determined *at least partly causally*, Pepp's takes it to be definitive that their reference is determined *independently of the reference determination of attributive uses*, whether the latter is descriptive or causal. (2) The use of a paradigm proper name is often prompted by the presence, or recent presence, of its bearer, by what I call a grounding. But most uses are not so prompted. Indeed, a great advantage of proper names is that they can be used to refer to things distant in time and space, things that are not around to be perceived. For Pepp, these uses are not independently targeted and so are *attributive*. For me, these uses are *referential*. Only uses of descriptive names, which Pepp has set aside, are attributive. (3) For Pepp, *all* paradigm proper names have two ways of referring to their bearers, a referential way and an attributive way, and hence are polysemous. For me, as emphasized in my reason for qualifying my positive answer to (b) in subsection 2.4, *no* proper name, whether paradigm or descriptive, is of that sort. (4) I follow Donnellan in taking an attributive use to be distinguished from a referential one in having an entirely descriptive mode

[7] I doubt (2020: 388-97) that this foundational error of neo-Donnellanianism is rightly attributed to Donnellan.

of reference. On Pepp's view, given our Kripkean theory of non-independently-targeted names, it follows from (2) above that attributive names have causal modes of reference. So, Pepp's attributive uses of names are fundamentally different from Donnellan's attributive use of descriptions.

I turn now to criticism. A sign that all is not well with Pepp's view, in either version, is its inability to handle non-literal uses of names, uses where a speaker intentionally means something by a name that it does not semantically mean. Consider the earlier example of the cynical journalist, Bruce, observing General Westmoreland and saying: "Napoleon is inventing his body count" (2.3). Bruce speaker-refers to Westmoreland *by* semantically referring to Napoleon. This ironic remark cannot be explained unless we take the utterance of 'Napoleon' to literally refer to the famous French general. Two distinct causal processes explain Bruce's use of 'Napoleon'. First, Bruce is *expressing a thought* grounded in Westmoreland, and hence *speaker*-referring to Westmoreland. Second, Bruce is *participating in a convention* of using 'Napoleon' to express thoughts grounded in the famous French general, and hence *semantically* referring to him. It is *because* 'Napoleon' semantically refers to Napoleon that Bruce chooses to express his thought about Westmoreland using 'Napoleon'. So, it is central to the explanation of what Bruce did that his use of 'Napoleon' semantically refers to Napoleon. So, Pepp is in trouble. For, on her view, Bruce's 'Napoleon' independently targets Westmoreland. So, on the stronger version of Pepp's view, 'Napoleon' semantically refers to Westmoreland and on the weaker, to nothing. This trouble is indicative of the error in Pepp's account of semantic reference.

Consider the stronger version of Pepp's view first. On this version, the reference-determining semantic meaning of an independently targeted, referentially used name is the same as that of a simple referential demonstrative like 'that'. The conventional semantic meaning of the demonstrative demands a "saturation" in context which solely determines its referent (2.2). The same goes for Pepp's stronger version for names. She thinks a referentially used name "refers to a target determined independently of the name's naming something". So, the name must have a conventional semantic meaning that demands saturation in context, which solely determines its referent. Saturation, we are presuming, is explained in the causal way of the "prevalent idea". The problem for Pepp's stronger version is that there is no reason to think that names have a referential meaning like simple demonstratives, and some good reasons to suppose that they don't.

Pepp's argument for that referential meaning is the Argument from Convention: independently targeted uses of names are "regular and standard". And so they are, for it is common, though not essential, for a name to be multiple grounded (2.3). But the Argument for Convention requires significantly more than this of a regularity for it to provide evidence of a meaning. The Argument for a semantic meaning *M* requires a regularity in *expressing thoughts with content M*, a regularity in *speaker meaning M* (Devitt 2021: 48-51, 79-80). So, Pepp needs evidence that her regular independently targeted uses of a name *express thoughts that have their reference solely determined by the independent targeting of an object*. There is surely no such

evidence to be found. Aside from the early days of a name, when such uses may serve to *establish* the conventional semantic referent of a name, I doubt that there are *any* such uses at all.

From my perspective, as noted, Pepp's independently targeted uses of a name are groundings. Groundings are semantically significant, but not in the way Pepp thinks. *The mode that determines the semantic referent of N in a grounding use is the same as that in a non-grounding use*. Reference is fixed in an object *X* by underlying causal chains *of a certain type*. Chains of this type must start with a speaker grounding the name in *X*. Chains may continue, and almost always will continue, through a series of reference borrowings: a grounder lends reference to a borrower in a communication situation; that person lends to another borrower; and so on, perhaps through millennia; 'Aristotle' is a paradigm. Typically there will many chains of this type underlying *N*, for there will be a network arising from multiple groundings. But reference to *X* requires only one chain of this type grounded in *X*; adding more does not change reference determination. Set aside confusion for a moment and consider only cases where all goes well and the name *N* is regrounded in the semantic referent *X*. Such a regrounding creates another chain of the type that determines the referent of *N* but it is not necessary to that determination.[8] On this view, independently targeted uses, grounding uses, are semantically significant in that they add a chain of the type that determines the reference of all uses, including non-grounding ones; for, all uses of *N* refer to *X* in virtue of having a causal chain of that type underlying them.

But suppose that all does not go well and there is confusion: *N* is not regrounded in *X* but in something else. There are some well-known examples: Kripke's leaf raking and Evans' 'Madagascar' (2.3). An occasional such grounding does not affect semantic reference but if there is a pattern of such groundings, as there was with 'Madagascar', then, after a period of indeterminacy, the semantic reference of a name will change (2015: 122-3). Obviously, the groundings in that pattern are semantically significant.

Suppose that *N*, referring to *X*, is an established name in *S*'s mental lexicon. As a result, *S* frequently uses *N* to express thoughts in situations where *X* is not present and there is no independent targeting. For Pepp, these uses of *N* are attributive, with their semantic reference determined, we are assuming, by a Kripkean causal network. So, the underlying thoughts must have their reference determined similarly: on my account, the thoughts refer to *X* in virtue of underlying causal chains grounded in *X*. Now place *S* in an independent targeting situation: *S* observes *X* and has a new thought *T* about *X* that she expresses using *N*. What determines the semantic referent of *T*?

The obvious answer is that *T*'s referent, like the referent of the prior *N*-thoughts, is determined by those pre-existing causal chains that grounded *N* in *X*, now reinforced by the present grounding (if all has gone well). The answer is obvious because it explains *why S used N to express T* rather than another name, a demonstrative, or description. Furthermore, among the many previously formed thoughts that will have played a causal role in her forming her thought

[8] For more details, see Devitt 2015: 134-5.

T about *X* – for, "observation" thoughts are theory-laden (1981b: 515) – there were likely some that *S* would express using *N*. These thoughts refer to *X* in virtue of the causal network. How then could the thought *T* that they partly cause not do so?

Pepp must accept that this is *one possible* answer to our question because this would be an account of the thought underlying her *attributive* use of *N*, a use that must always be available to *S*, even if observing *X*. But Pepp thinks that *N also* has a *referential* use and that this is the likely use in the present situation. The thought underlying Pepp's referential use has its referent determined entirely by the present grounding (independent targeting). Now *S* might well have such a thought: it is a thought that *S* could conventionally express using a *demonstrative*. But why suppose that this demonstrative thought is *T*, the thought that *S* expressed using the *name N*? Why would *S* use *X*'s name, thus *identifying X* as the object named *N*, to express a demonstrative thought that does not identify *X*? We can certainly think of the occasional use of *another* name to non-conventionally express such a demonstrative thought: Bruce's ironic use of 'Napoleon' to express a thought about Westmoreland is a plausible example. But Pepp owes us some plausible examples of *S* using *X*'s name for that purpose. I doubt that there are any. Indeed, there is no reason to suppose that *S*, who can already use *N* to express thoughts that are about *X* in virtue of *a network of causal chains* grounded in *X* (Pepp's attributive use), would *ever* use *N* to express a thought that is about that very same *X* in virtue of *a restricted part of the network*, the one causal chain grounded in *X* by *S*'s current observation of *X* (Pepp's referential use). What could motivate a use with this restricted mode of reference? Finally, for the Argument from Convention to support the semantic significance of her referential uses, Pepp needs not just an occasional use of names with the restricted mode but their *regular* use with that mode. There is surely no evidence of this.

Finally, it is likely that *S* has another demonstrative thought in the independent targeting situation: the identity thought that she would express using *N* and a demonstrative referring to *X*. This thought is not trivial, yet it would be if the reference of the *N* part of it, like the reference of the demonstrative part, was solely determined by the independent targeting of *X*. So, the *N* part is not so determined. Why then would the *N* part of *T* be so determined?

What about Pepp's weaker version? On this version, *X* is the semantic referent of a referential *N* only partly in virtue of *S*'s independent targeting of *X*, only partly in virtue of the saturation by *X* in context; reference depends also on "what [*N*] names". So, reference determination is hybrid. Now, *N* names *X* because the causal network underlying *N* is grounded in *X*. We are assuming that, according to Pepp, it is in virtue of that network that *X* is the semantic referent of an *attributive* use of *N*. So, as with the stronger version, her referential meaning is more restrictive than her attributive one, but in a different way. On the weaker version, the referential meaning determines that the semantic referent is the object in which the network is grounded *provided that* this object grounds the one causal chain generated by *S*'s saturating observation, a chain that is the most recent addition to the network.

On Pepp's stronger version, the reference determination of a referential name is *the same as* that of a *simple* demonstrative: determination is by saturation in context. On the weaker version, the determination is *analogous to* that of a *complex* demonstrative. The semantic

referent of 'that *F*' is determined by saturation in context *and by the description 'F'* (2.2). The semantic referent of the referential *N* is determined by saturation in context *and by the causal network for N*.

The problem for Pepp's weaker version is that there is no more reason to think that names have a referential meaning like complex demonstratives than like simple demonstratives, and some good reasons to suppose that they don't. Pepp needs evidence that her regular independently targeted uses of a name *express thoughts that have their reference determined in the hybrid way*.

S expresses many thoughts about *X* using *N* that are not independently targeted; these are Pepp's attributive uses. These thoughts and their expression refer to *X* in virtue of the underlying causal network. When *S* observes *X*, she has another thought about *X* that she expresses using *N*. What reason is there to suppose that the reference determination of this thought and its expression is any different? Why should we suppose that that S would *ever* use *N* to express a thought that is about *X* not simply in virtue of the network in general, but only in virtue of one causal chain in particular, the one grounded in *X* by *S*'s current observation of *X*? There is no motivation for this restricted mode of reference. And Pepp needs not just an occasional use of names with the restricted mode but their *regular* use with that mode. There is surely no evidence of this.

According to Grice's, "Modified Occam's Razor", "Senses are not to be multiplied beyond necessity" (1989: 47). This should be understood as advising against positing a linguistic meaning, *unless it is needed for the best explanation* of utterances.[9] There is no such need for Pepp's referential meaning of names.

Pepp's mistaken view of semantic reference arises partly from a mistaken account of Donnellan's distinction for descriptions. As a result, she wrongly takes a generalization of Donnellan's distinction to apply to her distinction for proper names. First, and most important, the mode of reference of Donnellan's referentially used descriptions determine a semantic referent, the mode of Pepp's referentially used names do not. Second, Donnellan's attributively used descriptions have their referents determined descriptively, Pepp's attributively used names, causally.

4. Conclusion

On the basis of a unified causal-perceptual theory of referential terms, I have argued that Pepp wrongly takes a generalization of Donnellan's semantically significant distinction for definite descriptions to apply to her distinction between "targeted" and "untargeted" uses of names. Pepp's independently targeted uses of a proper name, regroundings, do not have a semantic

[9] The Maxim is often understood in another way which, I argue, we should not embrace (2021: 143-69).

referent determined wholly (stronger), or even partly (weaker) by that targeting. Kripke's stance on "what makes a particular thing be the semantic referent of a use of a name" is right: the semantic referent is determined solely by the causal network; independent targeting is essential to building the network but otherwise is indeed "neither here nor there".[10]

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