How to dub another

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1 Introduction

Three different questions are often raised in philosophical discussions of proper names: "How does a name come to designate a particular object?", "How does a speaker succeed in referring to the bearer of a name?" and "How does a speaker learn to correctly use a name?" More formally:

Designation How is the designation (also called the denotation) of a proper name determined, independently of any occasion of its use?

Reference How does a given speaker, on a given occasion of use, succeed or fail in referring to the object designated by a proper name?[1]

Transmission How does a speaker learn a name from someone else, and go on to successfully refer to the object designated by that name?

Many philosophers of language, including Saul Kripke and Gareth Evans,[2] treat all three as semantic or metasemantic questions. As a result, their answers emphasize the connection between names and their bearers. I think this is a mistake. I think that only the first question has much to do with semantics; that the latter two questions are *pragmatic* questions about communication. To answer these questions, we should look not at the relation between words and objects, but at the communicative intentions of speakers.

[1] Here I am following Bach's recommendation (in (1987, 56) and elsewhere) that we talk of names *designating* (or denoting) objects and speakers using names to *refer* to objects. This terminological point helps to clarify the distinction between semantic and pragmatic aspects of naming.

[2] See, e.g., Evans (1973, 1982); Kripke (1977, 1980).

When we consider the latter two questions as pragmatic ones, they can be answered by drawing upon the theory of referential communication developed by Grice and Bach (among others). This pragmatic theory will not help us answer the first question, however. The first question is a metasemantic question: how and why do semantic facts about proper names obtain in some circumstances and not in others? Why, for instance, is my name 'Alexander Adrian Dunn'? How is this connection between a name and a bearer established?

My eventual answer to this first question will be that a name 'NN' designates an individual x iff at least one entity recognizes x as 'NN'. We will see that 'entity' includes not only human speakers but also institutions such as governments. Moreover, 'recognizing' will be construed broadly to include the possibility that I recognize x as 'NN' without ever referring to her by that name. If this answer is correct, then we may conclude that semantic facts regarding proper names are produced very easily.

The arguments in sections 2 and 3 are attempts to show that, once the second and third questions are recognized as pragmatic questions, they may be readily answered. In section 4 I try to show that the first question is not pragmatic, but metasemantic; I also propose my answer.

Throughout the essay I will draw upon Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* to illustrate various phenomena involving proper names. The number of misidentifications and related confusions that occur during the play are well-suited to test a theory's ability to handle extreme cases. (For those unfamiliar with the plot: Jack is a foundling brought up by a late, generous old man. Jack goes by 'Ernest' in the city, where he is engaged to Gwendolen. While in the country (where he has a very pretty ward named Cecily), he pretends to have a wayward brother named Ernest living in the city, so as to have an excuse to visit Gwendolen. Jack's friend Algernon lives in the city, and, intrigued by what he hears of Cecily, goes to the country, where he pretends to be Jack's wayward brother Ernest. In the end it transpires that Jack and Algernon *are* in fact brothers, and that Jack's Christian name *is* Ernest.)

2 Pragmatics

This section sketches the distinction between semantics and pragmatics and explains how pragmatic theories of communication can answer the questions of reference and transmission.

2.1 Saying and meaning

Very roughly, the distinction between pragmatics and semantics can be understood as a distinction between theories of *linguistic communication* and theories of *linguistic meaning*. There is inevitable blurriness here, because how speakers use words (and what words they use) will depend on what those words mean, and what the words mean will depend to some degree on how speakers use them. But there is almost certainly a distinction to be drawn, for speakers can use a sentence to mean something other than what the words themselves mean. For example, if I see you walking your bulldog, I might ask, "Where are you and Churchill off to today?" Here what I *say* is 'Churchill', but what I *mean* is 'your bulldog' (we are supposing your bulldog is *not* named 'Churchill').

2.2 Referential communication

What a speaker refers to is not fully determined by the meanings of the words they use. My reference to the bulldog was successful (if it was) because my intention to refer to it was recognized by my audience. For a speaker "to refer to something is [for her] to use a singular term with the intention (part of one's communicative intention) of indicating to [her] audience the object of the attitude [she] is expressing" (Bach 1987, 52). Because I intended to refer to the dog, communication with my audience would actually *fail* if she took me to be talking about Winston Churchill. She would not have recognized my referential intention.

Sometimes referential communication *appears* to succeed, but in fact fails. This apparent communication can occur when speakers believe that they are thinking of, and talking about, the same person, but in fact have different referential intentions. For example, in the passage quoted below, Cecily intends to refer to Algernon, who is pretending to be Jack's nonexistent brother Ernest (and who has proposed to her), while Gwendolen intends to refer to Jack, who

goes by 'Ernest' in the city (and who has proposed to *her*):

CECILY *(Rather shy and confidingly)*

> Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little country newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

GWENDOLEN *(Quite politely, rising)*

> My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday at the latest.

CECILY *(Very politely, rising)*

> I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago.

(Wilde 1980, Act 2, lines 644–652)

These are unusual cases, of course; generally referential communication involving proper names succeeds in an ordinary fashion. I say "Kripke is here", and you, recognizing my intention to refer to someone named 'Kripke', and knowing that we invited Saul A. Kripke (*the* Kripke) over at this hour, recognize my intention to refer to Saul Kripke and come to think of him as the object of my intention.

3 Pragmatic answers to pragmatic questions

Having outlined the pragmatic approach to referential communication, I can now propose answers to the questions of reference and transmission.

3.1 Answering the question of reference

How does a given speaker, on a given occasion of use, succeed or fail in referring to the individual designated by a proper name? This question has been given a number of answers, especially since the publication of *Naming and Necessity*. In that work Kripke understood the question of reference to be "What *does* make my use of 'Cicero' into a name of *him*" (1980, 90–91)? Kripke himself proposes this answer:

> An initial 'baptism' takes place. Here the object may be named by ostension, or the reference of the name may be

> fixed by a description. When the name is 'passed from link to link', the receiver of the name must, I think, intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from whom he heard it (1980, 96).

Gareth Evans developed his own account of proper names in response to what he saw as shortcomings in Kripke's account. The key idea of Evans' is the 'name-using practice', which is something like a tradition of using a name to refer to a particular individual. 'Producers' in the practice are acquainted with the object designated by the name; "they have on some occasion been told, or anyway have come to learn, a truth which they could then express as 'This is NN', where 'This' makes a demonstrative reference to x" (Evans 1982, 376). 'Consumers' learn the name by being provided with descriptive information that allows them to engage in the name-using practice. Evans thought that these distinctions were necessary to account for the designation of a name changing from one object to another (the Madagascar case) and to explain how people learn to use a name. He therefore encourages

> individuating the words of a language not only phonetically but also by reference to the practices in which they are used. In these terms, the requirement on a speaker using a proper name is not that he indicate which *object* he intends to be (taken to be) referring to, but that he indicate which *name* he intends to be (taken to be) using (1982, 384).

Depending on which 'NN' practice we are participating in, we will refer to different people when we use the name 'NN'. If we fail to enter into a practice, we may thereby fail to refer: "the use we make of a name depends upon the existence in our community of a coherent practice of using that name to refer to a particular object" (1982, 386). Imogen Dickie summarizes Evans' view thus: "o is the bearer of my uses of ['NN'] if and only if I am either a producer, a participating consumer, or a parasitic consumer in a practice of using ['NN'] to refer to o" (2011, 53).

Dickie herself has revived Evans' project and proposed that "I am a participant in a practice of using ['NN'] to refer to o only if my uses of ['NN'] are constrained by the representationally relevant ways it is possible for o to behave" (2011, 43). Roughly, the information

I gather about o must be organized in such a way that the things I say about o are things that it is 'behaviorally possible' for o to do.[3]

The theories of Kripke, Evans and Dickie are semantic theories. Each attempts to explain how a particular use of a name is connected to an object. When certain conditions are fulfilled, my use of 'Cicero' becomes a name *of him*—the utterance designates Cicero, and in virtue of that I am said to have referred to Cicero.

I think there's a problem with this model of reference. Assuming the conditions for reference are fulfilled (I intend to refer to the person at the end of a causal chain, or participate in a name-using practice), I thereby refer to to whoever is in fact designated by that chain or practice. It may be, however, that the person designated is not who I think it is. I may take myself to be referring to y when I am actually referring to x due to the semantic facts of the causal chain or name-using practice. Suppose the object of a practice at t is x; then

> x disappears from the scene, and, at the same time, some producers begin to misidentify a different but similar looking individual, y, as NN. At this early point, of course, the name 'NN', as used by *anyone* who participates in this practice, still refers to x (Evans 1982, 388–389, my emphasis).

As long as I intend to engage in a certain practice or act as a link in a causal chain, my utterance of the name automatically refers to the object designated by that practice or the object at the start of that chain. Beyond indicating my intent to engage in a certain practice, I have no direct control over who I actually refer to. Evans recognizes that on this model, I might not even know who I am referring to:

> Many of those who are in a position to *use* a name to refer (those who have, in that sense, been introduced to the practice in question) cannot themselves properly *understand* utterances involving the name (1982, 400).

In such cases, the speaker does not herself have to be thinking of the object in question. The *semantic* properties of the name-using practice do the work for her by 'linking' her utterance to the object

[3] "I am a participating consumer in the practice of using ['NN'] to refer to o if and only if my ['NN']-file inherits its possibilities for deployment from the ['NN']-files of producers in the practice" (2011, 76).

designated by the practice. Only in *some* cases of referring must "the intended referent be the object which the speaker is *aiming at* with his use of the name" (1982, 402).

For speaker to successfully communicate about someone, it doesn't seem unreasonable to demand that both speakers know who they are talking about, and know that they are talking about the same person. In the example above, where Cecily and Gwendolen argued over who was engaged to Ernest, Cecily intends to refer to Algernon and Gwendolen to Jack. It seems right to say that referential communication is *not* occurring—they're talking past each other. But what do our semantic theories say? A causal theorist might say that Cecily intends to use 'Ernest' to refer to the person referred to by whoever she originally heard the name from. But she learns the name from Jack, who has invented a wayward younger brother named Ernest who needs looking after in the city. Jack intends to refer to *nobody* with 'Ernest'. But it seems bizarre to say that Cecily therefore intends to refer to nobody—she intends to refer to Algernon. (The causal theory is right that she does not in fact refer to anyone, but it is right for the wrong reason; reference fails because Gwendolen fails to recognize Cecily's intention to refer to Algernon.)

The theories of Evans and Dickie appear to give the wrong results as well. The only established name-using practice for the name 'Ernest' involves it being used to refer to Jack. Algernon uses it for the first time on the day he introduces himself to Cecily; there is certainly no tradition of using 'Ernest' to refer to Algernon. If one must participate in a name-using practice in order to engage in referential communication, then what practice is Cecily engaged in? If she is engaged in the practice of using 'Ernest' to refer to Jack, then she and Gwendolen are both referring to Jack. But I think it is clear that this is not the case. Alternatively, we might say that Cecily has not indicated her participation in any name-using practice. But this would appear to mean that Cecily has no referential intention, which is false.

The semantic theories of reference that we've been looking at place too much emphasis on the binary relationship between words and objects. Referring does not consist only in a relationship between one's words and an object; "speaker reference is a four-place relation between a speaker, an expression, an audience, and a ref-

erent: you use an expression to refer someone to something" (Bach 2006, 518). For your reference to be successful, your words do not have to somehow make contact with the person designated; what *is* required is that you express your referential intention in such a way that your listener can recognize who you intend to refer to, and so come to think of that very same person. If you not know *who* you are talking about, your intention is directed at nobody in particular; listeners cannot recognize a referential intention, and referential communication cannot succeed.

Emphasizing the pragmatic rather than semantic aspect of reference, I propose this answer:

Answer to the question of reference A speaker succeeds in using some name 'NN' to refer to x if the speaker's audience thinks of x and understands the speaker to be referring to x, all as a result of their recognition of the speaker's communicative intention to refer to x.[4]

Kripke's causal chains and Evans' name-using practices were attempts at using semantics to explain reference: provided we are appropriately related with some chain or practice P, we thereby refer to whatever individual is designated by P. But this allows us to 'refer' blindly, knowing nothing more about the referent of our utterance than that it is the object designated by a certain practice or causal chain. This undermines referential communication, the very phenomenon we want to explain. Dickie has inherited name-using practices from Evans, and so inherits the same problems.

3.2 Answering the question of transmission

How does a speaker learn a name from someone else, and go on to successfully refer to an individual designated by that name? What are the conditions under which someone can use the name 'NN' to refer to some x who is designated by 'NN'? As in the above answer, the speaker's success in referring depends not on the 'semantic glue' connecting her words with an object, but rather on her ability to make her referential intentions clear. Unlike the above answer, it is

[4]Of course, there's plenty to quibble about here. What counts as thinking of x, how does recognition of intentions secure reference—these and other questions remain. All I want to show is that it is *pragmatic* considerations such as these that bear on the question of reference. Semantic considerations are not involved.

not enough for the listener merely to recognize the speaker's intention to refer to x, and so come to think of x herself. She must come to think of x as a result of recognizing the speaker's intention to *use the name 'NN'* to refer to x.

If I start telling a story about Jack, for instance, a listener will recognize my intention to refer her to someone named Jack. But unless I give her enough information to infer *which* Jack I am talking about, referential communication does not succeed. It is "precisely because a name provides so little information about the referent [that] a speaker who uses a name is likely to have some further information in mind on which his audience is to rely, information which is not part of the meaning of the name" (Bach 1987, 170). For example, if my story is in the context of a discussion about *The Importance of Being Earnest*, then my audience can probably infer that I am referring to the character Jack who marries Gwendolen.[5]

While this additional information was necessary for my audience to fully recognize my referential intention, the decisive bit of information was that I was referring to someone named 'Jack'. If I had used the name 'Algernon' in the same context, then my audience could reasonably infer that I was referring to Algernon, not Jack. Moreover, if in the middle of our discussion about *The Importance of Being Earnest* I say "What would Churchill have done here?" then my audience will understand me to be talking about someone named 'Churchill', despite the fact that this requires them to ignore the surrounding context (there is nobody with that name in the play).

So we may say that in referential communication, the use of a name often constitutes the *decisive* referential intention. If some of my intentions appear to conflict—if I start talking about "Eisenhower, the 35th president"—then my audience will probably take be to be talking about Eisenhower, not JFK. They will suppose that I am simply confused as to when Eisenhower was president, and will correct me. (If it turns out that I actually think that 'Eisenhower' was the name of the president assassinated in Dallas, then things will take a little longer to sort out.)

Armed with the notion of a 'decisive' referential intention, we can attempt to give another answer:

Answer to the question of transmission A speaker is able to

[5]Let us suppose that referring to fictional characters is unproblematic.

use a name 'NN' if she can refer her audience to x with 'NN' as her *decisive* referential intention (that is, she intends her audience to infer that she is referring to x on the basis of her use of the name 'NN').[6]

4 Metasemantic facts

How is the designation (or denotation) of a proper name determined, independently of any occasion of its use? I'm going to argue that this is a metasemantic question. That a particular name designates a particular object is a semantic fact, but to explain *why* this connection obtains, we must appeal to metasemantic facts. I'll start with some examples.

What facts explain my being named 'Alexander Adrian Dunn'? This is my legal name; I have a birth certificate and passports with that name on it. While it was my parents' decision to give me that name, they cannot change it *now* without going through a legal process. This is because governmental bodies most commonly identify me by my legal name, rather than, say, my Social Security number. Changing my name requires updating their records. So whatever document it is that determines what name governmental bodies use when recording information about me (in most cases, a birth certificate), the fact that *that* document reads 'Alexander Adrian Dunn' seems to be an example of a metasemantic fact—it explains the semantic fact that the name designates me.

But legal facts are not the only sort of metasemantic fact that determines who is designated by a name. In fact, they are a rather poor paradigm; most metasemantic facts are more flexible than those related to legal documents. In places with no government presence, some people do not have legal names at all. They have 'common-law' names, and the metasemantic facts that explain why these people bear these names are not facts about government records. There are evidently metasemantic facts based in social practice as well as government policy; we should certainly not say that these individuals don't *really* have names.

Even those of us who are designated by legal names are desig-

[6] On decisive intentions, see Bach (1987, 182–186). As with the answer to reference, there are pragmatic issues left unresolved here. But I intend to leave them aside and focus on the metasemantics of proper names.

nated by other names as well. For example, the semantic fact that 'Alex' designates me is not explained fully by the metasemantic facts grounded in governmental records. For I am not also 'Ander'; the second half of my first name does not designate me, nor do people refer to me using it. That I am designated by 'Alex' must therefore be explained by the metasemantic fact that my family decided to abbreviate my name. They decided to recognize me as 'Alex', as opposed to another abbreviation.

4.1 Producing metasemantic facts

What gives my parents the ability to create these semantic facts? How did they make it that 'Alex' designates me? Gareth Evans' notion of a *producer* may help us here. Recall that a producer is someone acquainted with the object designated by the name; the producer S knows the individual o *as* NN. "S has a specific kind of rapport with o, where the use of ['NN'] forms part of this rapport: S has the capacity to identify o demonstratively and reidentify o after breaks in observation; S exercises this capacity from time to time, [&c.]" (Dickie 2011, 52). Having this rapport with o, S must presumably be disposed to assert "this is 'NN' " while demonstrating o if the question of o's (or NN's) identity arises.

We might be able to develop this notion and so claim that producers *produce* semantic facts. We might say that x is named 'NN' iff a number of producers are disposed to assert demonstrative statements in the style of "This is NN" with respect to x. These producers can be said to recognize or know x as NN.

4.2 Accounting for legal names

But even if this is a roughly accurate picture of the metasemantics behind the designation of names like 'Alex', it does not account for legal names. My birth certificate would say 'Alexander Adrian Dunn'—and in virtue of that fact I would *be* Alexander Adrian Dunn—even if nobody knew it. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Jack has used 'Ernest' as a pseudonym, but is found out and is forced to admit that he is Jack, not Ernest. But, after the consultation of some old records, it finally emerges that his legal name really *is* 'Ernest':

JACK ... I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest,

didn't I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

Lady Bracknell

Yes, I remember now that the General was called Ernest. I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

Gwendolen

Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

Jack Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

Gwendolen

I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

(Wilde 1980, Act 3, lines 470–480)

So we need a notion of 'recognizing x as NN' that accounts for legal names that are entirely forgotten. The first thing to recognize, though, is a necessary qualification of something said above. I wrote that I would be Alexander Adrian Dunn simply in virtue of the metasemantic fact that my birth certificate reads 'Alexander Adrian Dunn'. But without the legal apparatus behind the system of birth certificates, a name on a piece of paper would not be able to produce semantic facts. In fact, it is the legal institutions that legitimize the birth certificate, not the certificate itself, that produces the semantic fact linking me to the name 'Alexander Adrian Dunn'. Governmental entities recognize me as 'Alexander Adrian Dunn', and the birth certificate reflects this fact. If the government did not exist or if its records were destroyed, the only metasemantic explanation for my being named 'Alexander Adrian Dunn' would be the social facts (that other *people* recognize me as 'Alexander Adrian Dunn'). In the case of Jack above, if the records had been destroyed before he found them, it would simply not be true that 'Ernest' designates him.

So we can amend our criterion thus: a name 'NN' designates a person x iff some entities recognize x as 'NN'. Persons or impersonal entities may recognize x as 'NN' by knowing or coming to believe or deciding that 'NN' designates x and being disposed to behave appropriately. ('Behavior' in the case of governmental entities includes securing us rights based on our identity, e.g., voting rights

and residency.)

4.3 Nicknames

The phenomenon of nicknames requires us to make our criterion more precise. Until now we have not specified how many people must recognize x as 'NN' before it is a semantic fact that 'NN' designates x. Legal names of course involve a large bureaucratic institution that collectively recognizes an individual as the bearer of a name. Non-legal 'common-law' names of individuals who are not recognized as such by governments are well-established through social practice. But nicknames seem less 'official' than the legal and common-law names we have examined so far. They are not formally established but instead 'catch on' over time, and their use is generally less widespread.

Are nicknames *really* names, on a par with legal names? It seems difficult to draw a principled distinction that would allow us to consider legal names and common-law names 'real names' and nicknames 'fake names' or pseudonyms. It is true that the semantic facts created by governments are generally the most durable; a lot of information would have to be lost (including memories) in order for 'Alexander Adrian Dunn' to no longer designate me. But the semantic fact that I am so designated is not invulnerable (the information *could* be lost), and it differs from a common-law name only in degree. Common-law names will probably disappear more quickly than legal names, and less quickly than nicknames. But again, the difference in durability between common-law names and nicknames is one only of degree. And there are well-known nicknames that rival the durability and recognizability of their common-law or legal counterparts. 'Ike' is a nickname of Eisenhower, and 'Dubya' is a nickname for Bush. Why shouldn't we think that these names properly designate their respective presidents?

We need to decide, then, when exactly a name begins to designate a person. Does a nickname (or any name) need to build up some sort of public currency? Do a certain number of people need to learn the name before it sticks? I have no idea how to go about specifying these sorts of conditions. Fortunately, I don't think we have to:

Answer to the question of designation A name 'NN' designates an individual x iff at least one entity recognizes x as 'NN'.

This, of course, means that if I decide to start calling my friend 'Sudsy', then it is a semantic fact that 'Sudsy' designates him. Someone who doesn't think that just anyone should be able to go around producing semantic facts can quibble with my interpretation of 'recognizes'. I understand this term liberally; all I need to do is *decide* to call him 'Sudsy'. I don't think it's even necessary that I ever call him 'Sudsy', although there isn't much point in giving someone a name without actually using it.[7]

5 Conclusion

I have argued that two of the commonly discussed questions relating to proper names have been approached from the wrong direction. Many philosophers have attempted to provide largely semantic answers to the questions of reference and transmission, when these questions can be satisfactorily answered by pragmatic means.

An answer to the question of designation requires us to give a metasemantic explanation of how and why certain semantic facts obtain. Without making any claims as to the nature of those semantic facts—whether they designate directly or indirectly through a 'sense'—we can answer the question of designation: *A name 'NN' designates an individual x iff at least one entity recognizes x as 'NN'.* This liberal criterion allows us to explain ordinary situations involving legal and common-law names, but also accounts for extraordinary cases involving unknown birth names (like Jack's in *The Importance of Being Earnest*) and assumed names (like Algernon's use of 'Ernest').

This answer raises more questions, of course. The question I will discuss here has to do with my answer's relation to the notion of consumerist and subjectivist semantics.

[7] One might privately give someone a name as an insult, not in order to publicly humiliate them but as a sort of personal revenge:

> "Good evening, my dear," said Professor Trelawney, focusing upon Luna with some difficulty. Harry could smell cooking sherry again. "I haven't seen you in my classes lately . . . "
>
> "No, I've got Firenze this year," said Luna.
>
> "Oh, of course," said Professor Trelawney with an angry, drunken titter. "Or 'Dobbin', as I prefer to think of him." (Rowling 2005, 317)

5.1 Consumerist/subjectivist semantics

David Kaplan has drawn a distinction between semantic theories that are *subjectivist* and those that are *consumerist*. According to subjectivist semantics,

> like Humpty Dumpty, everyone runs their own language. When we speak, we *assign* meanings to our words; the words themselves do not *have* meanings. These assignments are, in the theory, unconstrained (except by whatever limitations our epistemic situation places on what we can apprehend). In practice, it may be prudent to try to *coordinate* with the meanings others have assigned, but this is only a practical matter (1989, 600).

This contrasts with consumerist semantic theories, which claim that "words come to us prepackaged with a semantic value... the role of language creators is largely reserved to parents, scientists, and headline writers for *Variety*" (1989, 602).

How does my answer fit in here? I do claim that I can give someone a name just by deciding to call them by that name; this would no doubt please H. Dumpty. But my friend Sudsy's legal name is George, and I can't easily change *that*. Without convincing Sudsy to legally change his name (or burning a lot of documents and modifying a few memories) I can't alter the semantic fact that 'George' designates Sudsy. It's possible, certainly, but not at all easy. I therefore agree with the consumerist that names have meanings independently of each speaker's use of them. But I think that *assigning* names to bearers (thereby producing new semantic facts) is just as easy as the subjectivists say it is. By simply deciding to recognize someone by a name, that name comes to designate that person.

It appears, then, to be easier to give someone a name than to take it away. A nickname can be given as a joke, but if it sticks then there might be no getting rid of it. (I think I must *decide* to no longer recognize my friend as 'Sudsy' if the name is to no longer designate him. For if I simply forgot, then when I remember I would say "Oh yes, you're Sudsy!" I would *not* say "Ah! You're Sudsy again!" For despite the fact that I forgot, I was still disposed to call him Sudsy; all I needed was a reminder.)

So it seems that the semantics of proper names are not fully captured by the consumerist/subjectivist dichotomy. Facts about who bears a name are public, non-subjective facts, but they are 'grounded'

in subjective dispositions: I am only 'Alex' because people (myself included) recognize me by that name. If nobody recognized my by that name, it would not designate me.

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