Traditional causal and descriptive theories of reference treat names of fictional characters as non-referring terms; in *Naming and Necessity* Saul Kripke goes still further to argue that fictional names cannot refer to any actual or possible object. But the position that fictional names cannot or do not refer results in a prima facie inadequate account of fictional discourse and the truth values of our statements about fictional objects. Others have maintained that causal/historical theories cannot offer an account which allows that fictional names can refer; if this were the case and if treating fictional names as “non-refering terms” is inadequate to the task of analyzing fictional discourse, then this would itself be grounds for abandoning an across the board causal-historical model of reference.²

In this paper I argue that names of fictional characters are, like other names, rigid designators: terms which refer to one and the same individual across all possible worlds. Moreover, causal and historical chains play an important role in determining the reference of fictional names as well as that of names of real individuals. Although a full account of their reference must be constructed somewhat differently from that for names of real spatio-temporal individuals, the basic model which Saul Kripke offers in *Naming and Necessity* and Gareth Evans modifies in *The Varieties of Reference* of the determination of the reference of names through a ‘baptism’ and the continuation and proliferation of the use of a name via chains of communication can be applied in a modified version to names of fictional entities.

Developing this account of the reference of fictional names should give the lie to claims that causal theories cannot treat fictional names as referring terms and hence cannot adequately analyze fictional discourse. More importantly, it offers the beginnings of a theory of how fictional names refer, a theory which permits an analysis of fictional discourse adequate to the data without abandoning the general picture according to which historical chains of name use play a central role in determining the reference of any name.⁴

1. Kripke’s Accounts of Naming and of Fiction

In *Naming and Necessity* Kripke argues that the description theory of reference is fundamentally the wrong way to conceive of the reference of proper names and offers an alternative “picture” according to which a proper name is not synonymous with any description of the object, but rather is a rigid designator which refers to a given object in virtue of an initial “baptism” and a historical “chain of communication” among the many users of the name. A name initially acquires its reference to a specific object by means of a “baptism” process, which involves picking out the object to be named either through a description, by pointing at it, or by some other means, and assigning a name to it. Even if a description is used to initially baptize an object, the description merely fixes the reference of the name onto this one individual object, so the name still refers to the object even if the object loses the properties which were originally used in the description, or even if it turns out to be illusory that that object ever had those properties. More commonly, during a baptism someone acquainted with the object will apply the name to the object by ostension.⁵

Once the object is baptized, its name is passed along in a chain of communicators “from link to link”; each user of the name must learn its reference from the previous user and intend to use the name to refer to the same object that her predecessor used the name to refer to. In this way, each use of the name ultimately refers back to the original object by means of the communicative chain amongst name-users.

Where fictional names are concerned, Kripke follows tradition in treating the names of fictional characters as empty designators, but goes further to argue that they are not merely contingently empty, but rather that fictional names cannot refer to any actual or possible entity. His argument is, for the most part, nor those of fictional individuals is the maintenance of the historical chain of name use sufficient to ensure reference to the appropriate entity. This problem surfaces in the phenomenon of reference shifts. See below.

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4. Although in neither the case of names of real individuals
implicit in some terse remarks in the addenda to Naming and Necessity, in particular in his metaphysical and epistemological theses about unicorns and about Sherlock Holmes. His metaphysical view is that not only is there no actual Sherlock Holmes, there is also no possible person, such that if he were actual he would be Sherlock Holmes:

I hold the metaphysical view that, granted that there is no Sherlock Holmes, one cannot say of any possible person that he would have been Sherlock Holmes, had he existed. Several distinct possible people, and even actual ones such as Darwin or Jack the Ripper, might have performed the exploits of Holmes, but there is none of whom we can say that he would have been Holmes had he performed these exploits. For if so, which one?6

The basic insight behind this argument seems to be that people presented in and invented by literary works or myths are described just by words, so all we have to determine reference is something like a description. But Kripke has argued that description is insufficient to determine the reference of names, natural-kind terms and the like. Because of the logical form of a name, it must refer to a single individual if it refers at all. But if we treat names of fictional characters as names of possible people, they will pick out many individuals. In fact, they will pick out infinitely many possible individuals, for the descriptions provided in literary works fail to completely determine what the characters described in them are like, and the unspecified features could be filled out in an infinite variety of ways by different possible people. If, for example, the Arthur Conan Doyle stories do not specify whether or not Holmes has a mole on his back, there may be an infinite number of possible Holmes’ which exhibit all of the properties ascribed to Holmes in the relevant tales, some of which have no mole, some, perhaps, have a mole on the tip of the left shoulder, some with the mole a centimeter to the right, and so on for all other locations of moles, and all other properties not specified by (or obviously suggested or presupposed by) the story. It is the inherent incompleteness of fictional characters with respect to the properties ascribed to them combined with the fact that the possible worlds over which Kripke is quantifying are all completed, which makes this indeterminacy of reference unavoidable.7

Kripke’s epistemological thesis suggests a different means of establishing that names of fictional entities cannot possibly refer. His epistemological thesis is that the mere discovery of a detective with all of the properties attributed to Holmes would not be sufficient to prove that Sherlock Holmes exists, for it could be mere coincidence.8 To prove that this existing individual is Sherlock Holmes we would also need a historical connection to show that Conan Doyle was referring to this man (which would mean having learned to use the name in an appropriate chain of communication) when he used the name in the texts.

The point behind this argument seems to be that, because names refer in virtue of the connection between the use of the name and a historical name-use practice leading back to a baptismal act, if Arthur Conan Doyle is not participating in some such practice when he uses the name “Holmes”, then even if some real person answers Holmes’ description, we could not say that Doyle was referring to that person in writing about Holmes and so could not identify that person with Holmes.

This means that we have a strict necessary condition for a “fictional” entity existing: Sherlock Holmes exists (and so the name refers) only if there is someone, and only one (real person) X about whom Conan Doyle was writing when he wrote the character.9 This means that the name can only refer if in fact the individual referred to is not fictional; it can only refer in the same way as normal names refer, by being applied in a chain of communication to a single individual in the actual world (by virtue of which it then can pick out this same individual across all possible worlds). We need a baptism procedure to fix the referent of a rigid designator; if there is no actual thing there, we cannot baptize anything. But neither a complete (merely) possible entity nor an incomplete possible entity can be at hand to be baptized by the author, or by someone else who starts the name usage chain in which the author participates. So (since these names cannot be applied to things in a baptism) these names cannot possibly refer. This conclusion then seems to be wider than Kripke’s context would suggest, for it would follow that we can never refer to a thing in a possible world, which is not also in our actual world, by name. We can, at best, stipulate such things by description, but designate them rigidly we cannot.

9. Note that this probably should not be counted a sufficient condition. See below.
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Although Kripke's solution to the problem of the reference of fictional names allows him to maintain a consistent account of names as rigid designators (that is, if something looks like a name, it designates rigidly or it does not designate at all), at least as it is offered here it provides little help in understanding fictional discourse or explaining the truth value of propositions about fictional entities. The origin and use of a fictional name cannot be accounted for simply by explaining its failure to refer to any actual entity. In normal uses of a fictional name, by people appropriately initiated into the name-using chain, no one intends to refer to any real entity; such an intent would probably be evidence that the utterer did not properly understand his use of the name. If fictional names are to be interpreted as "there is one and only one entity referred to by X", then all atomic statements involving fictional names will turn out to be false. On another interpretation of sentences involving non-referring terms, they might turn out to all lack truth value, but even in this case all atomic statements apparently about fictional objects will be on the same level, and so we will be unable to distinguish between the acceptability of statements like "Anna Karenina lays down upon the train tracks" and the unacceptability of statements like "Anna Karenina is fiction's best-loved lute-playing frog". Moreover, as has by now been generally recognized in the surrounding literature, the addition of an "in the story" operator to explain the truth-value of sentences apparently about fictional objects will still fail to distinguish true from false so-called "outside" statements about fictional objects, like "Sherlock Holmes is the most famous fictional detective". So, since a good philosophy of language should be able to analyze discourse of all kinds adequately, including that (apparently) about fictional objects, causal theorists already have good reason to seek a new account of the reference of fictional names. Thus if we can find a way of treating fictional names as not-always-empty rigid designators, we may be able to provide an intuitively acceptable classification of the truth-values of our statements involving fictional names without giving up a one-level account of the reference of names.

The remainder of this paper should provide a sketch of how we can create an account which allows for a continuity between the way in which fictional names refer and the way in which non-fictional names refer; one which preserves the key features of Kripke's account as well as the status of names as rigid designators, and which nonetheless can distinguish correct from incorrect statements about fictional entities.

A final motivation for developing a causal account of the reference of fictional names is to help adjudicate between speech-act and causal theories of reference in general. Charles Crittenden suggests, in an argument which is prima facie plausible, that usages of fictional names constitute a counter-example to causal theories of reference:

It has been traditional for mainstream philosophers, perhaps under Russell's influence, to call names and descriptions in fiction and mythology "nondenoting", "nonreferential", "empty" and the like, on the ground that there is no real thing designated by them. Causal theorists would find this congenial, since obviously the use of a name for a fictional character cannot be accounted for by supposing that there is a historical individual baptized by the name and initiating a causal relation. Nevertheless, on the face of it such names constitute counterexamples to the causal theory: here are names in perfectly acceptable sentences which are not in any evident way causally related to a referent. So causal theorists have a particularly pressing reason for dealing with the nonexistence issue: their theory of reference seems to be at stake. While he is historically correct in that causal theorists like Kripke have found non-reference a "congenial" solution to the problem of fictional names, as well as correct that one cannot account for the reference of the name of a fictional character by means of a causal connection to some real, historical person who is the referent of the name, it is far from obvious that no causal account whatsoever can be offered of fictional names. Fictional objects do have close relations to entities in the actual world even if they are not themselves spatio-temporal members of it. Crittenden takes this supposed failure of causal theories as evidence in favor of a speech act theory of reference. Thus causal theorists have an additional motivation for showing how a causal theory of the reference of fictional names could be developed: namely, in order to defend their theory against these and simi-

10. Even though he could perhaps still successfully refer to the right fictional entity. See Evans.
11. "Outside" is Crittenden's terminology (op. cit., p.94-110); his distinction of outside and inside statements about fictional objects parallels and draws upon Parson's distinction between statements about the "nuclear" and "extra-nuclear" properties of fictional objects (see Nonexistent Objects. New Haven, Connecticut 1980, pp.22-27).
tar accusations; doing so will leave causal and speech-act theories evenly scored on this account, and remove one objection to causal theories of reference.

2. A Historical Model of the Reference of Fictional Names

Although I shall argue that fictional names can refer, I think that Kripke’s arguments about fictional terms are partly right: there is no real (spatio-temporal) thing to which the term “Holmes” refers, and there is no completed possible man to whom it refers, and we cannot say, without knowing what entity the author was referring to, what entity is the referent of a name in a fictional context. But this does not show that these terms cannot possibly refer, but only that they cannot refer to actually real or possibly real (i.e. completely possible) entities. The major claim of this revised theory is that fictional names can indeed serve as rigid designators, with referents not reducible to any particular description, but the objects they designate are not real or possibly-real objects but rather fictional objects. This is, indeed, in a way what we should expect, and what our theories and discourse about fictional objects would tell us to expect if we left out of consideration the traditional attempts in philosophy of language to eliminate fictional objects by paraphrasing away apparent references to them. The assumptions in Kripke’s argument which are unjustified are 1) that fictional works can merely provide us with descriptions (this is the same assumption which generally leads even those who allow for fictional entities to treat them as abstract beings) and 2) that, because there is no actual real, spatio-temporal thing to be given the name in baptism, there can be no baptism process, and hence no rigid reference (of the sort names require). I shall thus begin this account with an exposition of how fictional objects can be baptized, and of what beyond descriptions fictional works provide.

Before entering into the details of the account, however, a few preliminary ontological remarks are in order. I have declared the thesis of this paper to be that fictional names are rigid designators, much as real names are. But to be a rigid designator is generally interpreted to mean that the term designates the same individual across all possible worlds. Yet I have just argued that the entities designated by fictional terms are not possible people; so what can it mean to say that the terms designate the same object in all possible worlds? Fictional objects are, on my view, purely intentional objects: created entities dependent for their creation on the conscious and physical (writing or speaking) acts of an author or authors, and dependent for their continued existence on acts of consciousness of readers as well as on the texts in which they appear. Fictional characters are not mere descriptions, nor are they eternal abstract objects answering to a certain description. They are instead created entities brought about at a particular time by an author’s acts of thought and of writing or speaking.

Our actual utterances of fictional names refer not to real, spatio-temporal entities in the actual world, but to fictional objects dependent upon certain real inhabitants of the actual world. Fictional objects are not ordinary members of possible worlds which just happen to not be real, spatio-temporal entities, for their existential status is different: they are brought into existence by the conscious acts of an author or authors, and depend generically upon some copy of the relevant text and some conscious acts of readers for their continued existence. Unlike possibilia, they are incomplete with regard to their content (i.e. for each fictional object there are some properties which are neither ascribed to it nor the lack of which is ascribed to it). Moreover, they have no particular location in space and time (though they may be ascribed one) and so on.

Although fictional objects in the actual world are dependent entities, we can nonetheless refer to them, think about them and so on. We can talk about fictional entities in different possible worlds in much the same way as we can talk about them in the actual world: a fictional character in a different possible world is one whose foundations are members of that

14. This view of fictional objects as purely intentional objects derives from Roman Ingarden’s views of the ontological status of fictional objects and art objects, as developed in his The Literary Work of Art, The Ontology of the Work of Art, and Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt. I cannot argue for this view here, but merely demonstrate a particular benefit of this ontological position: that a one-level theory of the reference of names can be made by offering an account of fictional names which follows the general picture developed by Kripke and Evans and which can also adequately analyze fictional discourse.

15. For example, Sherlock Holmes may be ascribed the property of living on Baker Street, but he is not really there, nor (I would argue) is it possible that Sherlock Holmes, the fictional character, be located on Baker Street.

possible world, although it is not itself a (possibly) real member of that world. Fictional entities may be indexed according to the possible worlds in which their foundations reside; thus a further benefit of this ontological position with regard to fictional objects is that we are able to make sense of modal statements about fictional characters. So to say that a fictional term refers to one and the same fictional object across all possible worlds is to say that all actual utterances of the term pick out the same fictional object in all of those possible worlds in which it finds its necessary foundations.

2.1. The Baptism of Fictional Objects

The baptism process for fictional entities clearly must be conceived differently from that in the case of spatio-temporal entities, for in the case of fictional characters, there is no one to point at when naming, nor is there (normally) anything answering to an initial description that we might give to pick out an object in the first place and assign it a name. I can point at the child who I name “Richard Nixon” and thus fix the reference of that name in all possible worlds; but there is nothing that either I or Virginia Woolf or anyone else can point at to declare “This is called Clarissa Dalloway”.

This shows, however, not that there is no baptism process for fictional characters, but only that it must be conceived of differently than that for spatio-temporal objects. Although no real or fictional person may be present to be baptized in a naming ceremony of a fictional character, a copy of the text which serves as the character’s real foundation may be present for the naming ceremony. The baptismal ceremony can be performed by means of writing the words of the text or it can be merely recorded in the text, or (if the character is named later, for example by readers), it can remain unrecorded in the text. In any case, however, although there can be no direct pointing at a fictional character on the other side of the room, the textual foundation of the character serves as the means whereby a kind of indexical reference to the character can be made. Via this reference, the fictional object can be baptized by author or readers. Although, as Crittenden argues, the name cannot be causally related to its referent when the referent is a fictional character, it can be causally related to a foundation of the referent (namely the text), to which in turn the referent is connected by the relation of ontological dependence.

Perhaps the most typical case of naming a fictional character (though it is by no means necessary that naming should occur in this way) is the case wherein an author names her character in the text in which he appears: the textual use of the name of a fictional character in the context of a description in a work of fiction serves as a kind of indexical reference to the character founded in those very words of that very narrative. Often the use of a name in conjunction with words describing the character being written itself constitutes an “official” baptism of the character. For example, in the opening pages of George Eliot’s Silas Marner she writes: “In the early years of this century, such a linen-weaver named Silas Marner worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the nutty hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted stone pit”.

When the name “Silas Marner” is here employed it is as if it were to say, for example, “the character founded on these very words is to be called ‘Silas Marner’”, so that the very use of the name in the text constitutes the naming ceremony, or at least an official and public record thereof. The intra-textual naming ceremony can take place at any point in the writing or revision process, from the initial stages of beginning to develop and introduce a character, through to the stages of final revision in which a name is changed or given to a previously unnamed character. It is with good reason that the naming...
ceremony is normally recorded in the text, for this allows the character to be re-identified at various points and across various descriptions in the text; the recording of the baptism in the text corresponds to the requirement that the naming ceremony be somehow public.

But there is no reason in principle why a character's baptismal ceremony should have to be performed by its author or recorded in the text, and whether from oversight, for suspense, style or innovation, there are countless examples in literature in which a fictional object is left unnamed in the text, to be named later, if at all. In some cases, there is an identifying description of some kind which serves as a kind of name to keep track of the character until the naming practice associated with some identified character is grafted onto it. The identifying description, if it is unique given the context and used consistently to identify a single character ("the gray-eyed woman"), can itself function non-problematically as the name of that character, as there is of course no reason in principle that a fictional character (or anyone) be named with something resembling a standard proper name.

But more difficult cases also arise, where there seems to be a single character who is identified not by a single name or unique and repeated description, but is only unifiable by certain patterns of behavior, of dress, of speech, or of the descriptions associated with it. This, for example, is the case in the first half of Stephen Fry's The Liar, where the characters in the italicized portions of the text are given neither names nor fixed descriptions, but are merely described in terms of the clothes they are wearing on that occasion. The clothes change, so there is no fixed description to act as a pseudo-name; the reader can unify these characters only by recognizing certain patterns in style of dress. In such cases the naming process may come later, by a sort of consensus amongst readers and critics rather than by the stipulation of the author. This has occurred, for example, with the "dark woman" of Shakespeare's sonnets. This of course requires a sort of public identification process of the character to be baptized, but as long as the readers can, through discussion, agree on the character they mean, at least in part by identifying the literary work in which it appears (whether by description or ostension) and the passages of the text which describe the character to be named, this should not be a problem. The chain of reference of the name then begins later, but still refers to that very character created by that very author in the literary work in question, just as a real person could be given a name relatively late in life. Once again, it is by way of the textual foundation of the character that one may make an indexical kind of reference to "the character founded on these words of this text" and thus perform a baptism ceremony.

But what distinguishes the character which is the appropriate referent of a name from another character, fantasy, or real object which has the same properties as those ascribed to the character in the story? In the case of proper names of real objects this is fairly clear: they are different individuals (with different spatio-temporal locations, different origins, different matter), and the naming ceremony was conferred upon only one of them. Yet fictional entities have no matter out of which they are composed to differentiate them, nor have they any (actual) spatio-temporal location (although they may be ascribed one).

Fictional characters do, however, like real people, have origins: they come into being at a certain time as the product of a certain creator (or creators). Thus although they are not spatio-temporal entities, they are what Barry Smith calls "temporally indexed" according to the time and source of their origin. Even if two characters have all of the same nuclear properties assigned to them, if they have different origins, then they are different characters. This parallels an insight of Kripke's about real entities. Kripke argues that it is necessary that a given individual have the origin that it has, and no other. The same holds true for fictional characters: it is necessary that Hamlet was created by Shakespeare, and no one else. Now this, as in the cases Kripke discusses, is not-chapter to chapter.

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withstanding the fact that we could discover that Francis Bacon actually wrote Hamlet. It would be an empirical discovery if we could learn, once and for all, that Shakespeare really wrote Hamlet; but assuming he did, it is a necessary truth that Hamlet was created by Shakespeare and not by Francis Bacon.

Just as the name “Gödel” is not synonymous with “The discoverer of the incompleteness of mathematics (whoever that is)”, so the name “Hamlet” is not synonymous with “The Dane whose uncle murdered his father, who killed Polonius, loved Ophelia... (whatever real or fictional object that is)”. When I think about Hamlet, I do not think about just any entity which has this conjunction of properties (and no others); I think about the character created by Shakespeare early in the 17th century, written down in a play which has been read and performed for many generations, discussed in literature classes, alluded to by Stoppard’s play, analyzed by Freud, and so on. In short, I think about an entity created at a certain time and with a certain history of being discussed in a speech community. My use of the name “Hamlet” refers back to the fictional object created by Shakespeare by means of the naming chain which goes back to that character’s baptism as “Hamlet”.

So whether by an author’s ascription of a name to a fictional entity being created, by later naming of a character identifiable through descriptions, or by agreement of readers based on discussion of an intersubjectively accessible text, fictional objects can be baptized with names that rigidly identify them as individuals indexed according to the circumstances of their own creation.

2.2. Chains of Communication and Publication

Once conferred on a fictional entity by an act of baptism, a fictional name is then used in a chain of communication, much like proper names of existent people, except that the people who use a fictional name need not learn to use it just from each other but may also learn it directly from the work of literature. Kripke discusses only communicative chains wherein the name is passed “from link to link” in a given speech community, but in literature the name of a character may be passed along in a chain of publication of copies of the novel(s) in which the character appears. Like the chain of communication, the chain of publication leads back to the origin of the character, and normally (that is, apart from cases in which the name is conferred on the character later by readers) to the baptismal act. This is again a difference from the basic case which Kripke discusses, for there is a possibility of a new chain originating even after all of the original users of the name have died out. It is possible that a literary work be rediscovered after hundreds of years, in which case we cannot learn the reference of the names in question by means of a communicative link with other speakers who knew the conditions of its creation. In this case a chain of publication may substitute for the chain of communication.

But to speak of the substitution of a publication chain for the communication chain is misleading, for the standard case of passing a name along for fictional objects indeed is that which follows the chain of publication rather than communication. That is, the name of a fictional object is most frequently and most securely passed along by the printed rather than spoken word. Readers become initiated into the naming practice through reading the relevant novel; in the standard case they will be “told” the name as they are introduced to the character by reading about it in the act of reading the novel.

Evans distinguishes between the producers and consumers of a name use practice for the names of real individuals. Producers are those individuals who know the individual named, can identify her, provide information about her to be disseminated through the communicative chain, and so on. Consumers are those sufficiently introduced into the name use practice, with some idea of the referent of the name and of the information associated with that name, but who do not themselves know the referent of the name, and thus, in general, cannot add new information to be associated with the name in the communicative chain, but merely pass the old information along. The consumers are thus parasitic on the producers of the naming practice.21

The distinction between producers and consumers of a naming practice applies equally clearly and plays an equally important role in the case of fictional names. Readers are acquainted with the characters in a novel in the only way possible: by reading about them. We may call these readers the “producers” in

20. Although Kripke does not discuss it, this possibility of re-starting a communicative chain on the basis of one of publication also exists in the case of historically documented real people, who could be long forgotten (all of the original name users could die out) and yet, if documents about them were rediscovered, a new name-use chain on that basis could begin again. (Thanks to Peter Simons for this example).

21. The Varieties of Reference, ch. 11.
the naming practice associated with the fictional character. Any producer in the naming practice of a fictional object should be acquainted with a significant portion of the information about the character which is internal to the novel, and should even be competent to propagate this information and create appropriate bits of new information about the character through interpretation of the text. Producers in the naming practices associated with fictional characters are also, like producers in practices associated with the names of real individuals, those competent to recognize the same character when she appears in later contexts in the same novel, in different stories, and so on. Information about a character includes but is not limited to those properties ascribed to the character in the story; it can also include “outside” information about the circumstances of the character’s creation, how it has historically been received, what, if any, real-world models it was based upon, and so on.

People who have never read the work in question may also use the name to refer to the fictional character in question, even if they know little about that character or make (some) mistakes in the properties that they think it has, as long as their use of the name has been learned in the community which passes the use of the name along in the chain of communication and publication. This is important in explaining how it is that a Nebraska farmer who has never read or seen the play, and could not provide a complete or accurate description of Hamlet, can nonetheless use the name to refer to the same character as that referred to by a literary critic. The most famous literary characters of any culture or era become publicly discussed by individuals who have never read the work in question; this kind of discussion is possible because the producers can pass relevant pieces of information associated with the fictional name on to non-readers, who can learn the appropriate use of the name from readers and hence become consumers in the naming practice. Ebeneezer Scrooge of Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* is a fine example of such a character in our culture: most contemporary Anglo-Americans know sufficient information to be competent users of this name, and even to pass along information about Scrooge to others (to teach their children that Scrooge was visited by three ghosts), even though but a small proportion of them have actually read the text.

Because the chains of communication and publication can take different routes in supporting the naming practice, there can be cases where their mutual interference leaves us with a naming practice regarding which we must just say that there is no clear reference. Conflicts can arise between the two chains. I could, for example, read a contemporary play about an indecisive Danish prince called “Hamlet”, thinking that I’m reading about Shakespeare’s Hamlet, and having (as a consumer) heard of Shakespeare’s Hamlet all my life. Then my Hamlet thoughts may be confused, and have no clear reference. These problems of confused reference are, however, no different in principle than those which we can encounter in our naming practices regarding real individuals.

2.3. Reference Shifts and Other Difficulties

Having said so much, however, I must stop to add even more cautions than Kripke offers that these cannot be taken as sufficient conditions for reference to the appropriate entity. The case is ontologically much more precarious in the case of fictional entities than in that of real entities, which makes the danger of reference shifts far greater and hence demands some suggested precautions against them. Reference shifts occur when people intend to refer to a different object (but maybe think it’s the same object) and thereby redirect the naming practice to refer to a different entity than that initially baptized with the name. In practices involving real names, reference shifts can occur even though the causal communicative chain remains intact; Kripke’s example is the name “Santa Claus”. Kripke must conceive interpretations of him have varied. This information may then be passed along to other members of the naming practice. Although Evans does not make the distinction between inside and outside information, there seems to be a parallel case for real individuals: someone who had never met Jones, and was hence a consumer in the naming practice, could nonetheless collect outside information about Jones, like how many times he had been mentioned in the local paper, what his children think of him, and so on and then pass this information along.

22. Assuming that, as in the standard case, the baptism takes place in the novel. Cases where a character is later named by readers will be a cross-over case, where being initiated as a producer into the name use practice will require both reading the story, for acquaintance with the relevant character, as well as initiation into the speech practice that assigns the name to that character.

23. It is interesting to note that these consumers may themselves be sources of external but not internal information about the character. That is, one may learn who Hamlet is by conversation, never read the play, yet do research to learn outside information about how historical
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of this reference shift as one of a name which had a historical referent migrating into the current state where children's use of the name no longer refers to the historical saint, but fails to refer. I would say that their use of the name now refers to a mythical entity rather than the real man in regard to whom the naming practice originated. In the case of fictional objects, the dangers of name usage shifting undetected into naming a mythical or imaginary entity are far greater than those for the practice of a real name: since fictional entities haven't got a matter or a real chemical composition, the reference of an originally fictional name can easily migrate to reference to imaginary entities without our noticing. Such a shift has occurred, for example, with the name "Frankenstein", which was conferred on Mary Shelley's fictional cowardly Swiss scientist, but by now has migrated, at least in the common speech practices of American children, to refer to a remorseless and stupid green monster with a bolt through its neck (rather than even to the yellow, quick-minded, and angst-ridden unnamed monster of Dr. Frankenstein's creation).

In addition to the Santa Claus case, where the reference of a real name has in practice shifted to the point where it has no reference (alternatively: it refers to a mythical object), Kripke discusses cases in which reference may shift from one real entity to another, such as that of the name "Madagascar", which was originally used by natives to refer to a part of Africa, but mistakenly applied to the island by Marco Polo, initiating our current usage.

Similar kinds of reference shift may occur with the names of fictional objects: the reference of these names may shift from one fictional object to another as the name "Hamlet" has shifted reference from the Hamlet of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* to that of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, or from a fictional object to a real object, or from a real object to a fictional object (for example, although Romeo and Juliet are reputed to have been genuine Veronese youths, whose homes are tentatively and lucratively identified for tourists, current name-use practices surely refer to the literary characters as created by Shakespeare rather than to these genuine individuals on whom they were based), or from any of these to mythical or imaginary objects (as in the Frankenstein case), and so on.

But although reference shifts may be more difficult to detect in the case of fictional objects, there are in fact more precautions which can be specified to prevent reference shifts from occurring in the case of the communicative chains associated with fictional names. Keeping the name usage chain closely tied to the chain of publication is probably the best method of insuring against reference shifts: shifts from a fictional to an imaginary character are most likely to occur when the name usage practice is most distanced from the practices of actual producers who have read the relevant book, and instead left in the hands of consumers, who are far more likely to spread false information along the naming chain; false information which, we would eventually want to say, supports a merely imaginary object (like Frankenstein) which is distinct from the original fictional object. Perhaps it is with this worry in mind that Evans provides the similar specification that, for historical individuals whose tales are preserved in documents, "every modern user of these names either is introduced to them by reading such documents, or is but a short chain away from someone thus introduced". The point at which a name-use practice shifts from merely spreading false information about a certain individual, real or fictional, to the point where we would say that it is no longer about that individual, but about some mythical or imaginary entity, is hard to specify, and can at best be done through a case by case examination of the naming practices involved. I should re-emphasize here, however, that the problem is no different in kind for fictional than for real individuals. Moreover, in the case of fictional individuals we do have the advantage, where the longevity and accuracy of a naming practice is concerned, for we have necessarily definitive texts which can maintain an accurate naming practice (passed along primarily through copying texts rather than talking) maintained by producers for an indefinite period of time; whereas real individuals eventually die, as do the original producers of their naming practices, leaving behind only possibly-unreliable documents and the hearsay of generations of consumers to carry on the practice of names of real individuals.

What the prevalence of reference-shifts, whether in the case of names of real or of fictional individuals, seems to show, is that the maintenance of an historical chain of name use leading back to a baptism is only a necessary, and not a sufficient, condition for a particular use of a name to refer back to the appropriate individual. Reference shifts serve as a reminder that other factors than historical circumstances, including the mental contents of speakers, need to be

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25. *Naming and Necessity*, p.163.

taken into account in a complete theory of reference, one which may temper strict causal/historical accounts without abandoning the general picture according to which historical chains and baptisms play a central role in determining the reference of a name, regardless of whether it is the name of a real person or of a fictional character.

3. Conclusion

The above is merely a sketch intended to show that an account of the role of causal/historical chains and a baptism reference of fictional names can be offered which is very similar, and indeed structurally parallel to that which Kripke and Evans offer for the reference of real names. Whether or not we are justified overall in bringing fictional objects into our ontology as the referents of fictional names is a broader question which cannot be fully addressed here. But even showing that a sensible analysis of the origin and usage of a fictional name as a rigid designator can be offered should, first, by showing how we can make sense of fictional discourse without abandoning the causal approach to naming overall, eliminate fiction as counter-evidence to causal theories of reference; and, secondly, should constitute the first steps in developing a reasonable account of fictional objects as created entities which are referred to in discourse about fictional characters.