Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers

Volume 13 | Issue 1

Article 6

1-1-1996

Gale on Reference and Religious Experience

Andrew V. Jeffrey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy>

Recommended Citation

Jeffrey, Andrew V. (1996) "Gale on Reference and Religious Experience," *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*: Vol. 13 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.

DOI: 10.5840/faithphil199613110

Available at: <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/faithandphilosophy/vol13/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers by an authorized editor of ePLACE: preserving, learning, and creative exchange.

GALE ON REFERENCE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Andrew V. Jeffrey

Richard Gale, in *On the Nature and Existence of God*, offers several reasons why an "historical-cum-indexical" theory of reference cannot be appropriate in explaining how people refer to God. The present paper identifies five distinct lines of argument in Gale, attempts to clarify several important desiderata for a successful theory of reference, and argues that Gale fails to discharge the burden of proof he has assumed, leaving the most important features of Alston's "direct reference" theory untouched. Nevertheless, it is conceded that some consequences of Alston's theory are quite counter-intuitive. The paper therefore concludes with a consideration of two alternatives: either taking a hard, Alstonian line in conflict with people's linguistic intuitions, or striking a compromise with descriptivism along lines similar to those found in Gareth Evans's paper, "The Causal Theory of Names."

In the introduction and the eighth chapter of his recent book, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, Richard Gale offers several arguments against the adequacy of a direct reference theory for the term 'God'.¹ After setting the context of this discussion, this paper shall divide Gale's comments on reference into five specific arguments and then discuss each argument. It is concluded that although some descriptivist element may be necessary to an account of how 'God' refers, Gale's arguments fall short of showing this to be so.

The entire discussion concerning reference can be set, for our purposes, in the context of Gale's criticism of William Alston's epistemology of religious experience.² Alston advocates a theory according to which the criteria for justified judgements or reasonable beliefs vary with the subject matter in question and with the socially established belief-forming practice engaged in when forming beliefs about that subject-matter.³ His view is semi-Wittgensteinian in that he simultaneously rejects Wittgenstein's alleged verificationism while accepting the epistemological pluralism implicit in the *Philosophical Investigations* and *On Certainty*.⁴ He therefore asserts that many (if not all) of these practices, while having the common cognitive goal of truth (in the realist sense of correspondence with mind-independent fact), cannot be adversely judged (much less dismissed) for failing to come up to any one universal standard of

epistemic rationality.⁵ On such pluralistic grounds, Alston argues that religious belief-forming practices, specifically what he calls "the Christian mystical practice," should be considered on a near-par with sense-perceptual practice.⁶

An initial objection Gale poses to Alston's defense of the evidential status of religious experience is that whereas existential claims about physical objects ultimately rest on sensory experience, "claims about the existence and nature of God need not [sic], and typically are not, based on religious experience, and thus religious experiences are not constitutive of the religious language game."⁷ Gale claims that rather than using their own or others' religious experiences to anchor their ostensibly referential uses of the name 'God', believing participants typically "do so via the use of descriptions" He concludes: "Religious experiences are not constitutive of any doxastic practice, but instead are an inessential part of the encompassing religious language game."⁸ Gale's demand that religious experience be "constitutive" of the religious language is based on a comparison with our sense perceptual knowledge of the physical universe. The basic idea is that religious doxastic practices must resemble our doxastic practices concerning the physical world in every important respect if the former are to approximate the latter's cognitive respectability.

But, Gale notes, Alston has a reply to the above objection.⁹ Alston accepts a theory of direct reference according to which the reference of a word need not be mediated through any associated descriptive sense.¹⁰ Any good theory of reference is going address two distinct issues. First, it has to give an account of how the references of genuinely referring expressions are originally fixed. Second, it must also give an account of how reference is transmitted, or of how language users employ two tokens of a term or sign to refer to the same thing. Alston holds, for example, that the reference of 'God' in the Christian community's non-experiential doxastic practices (forming beliefs via consultation with religious authorities and teachers, consulting scriptures, reading and doing theology, etc.), as well as in its non-doxastic practices (worship, prayer, etc.), is originally pinned down by or historically grounded upon primordial religious encounters, such as, perhaps, God's revelation to Abraham. The perpetuation of coreferential uses of 'God' then involves the name's being passed on from person to person, with the vital condition being that each new individual learning the name intends to use it with the same reference as the person from whom she heard it. Alston never denies that descriptivist modes of reference are also employed in talk about God; his claims are rather, first, that the employment of identifying descriptions is not the only way to refer to God, and second, that direct reference is "more fundamental" to talk about God than descriptivist reference.¹¹

Gale's opposing theory is mainly descriptivist with some "historical-causal" elements thrown in. He employs what he calls a "bundle version of the cluster theory," according to which the reference of 'God' is both originally fixed and principally transmitted via a set of associated descriptions that gains some members and loses others over time.¹² On

such an account, a reference might be fixed via one description in one generation, but associated with very different descriptions by subsequent generations, reference being preserved across generations by the later cluster of descriptions' being historically connected to earlier clusters in appropriate ways. Gale allows that reference to God might be secured in non-descriptive ways some of the time, but he rejects the notion of an original ostensive "baptism" mediated by a revelatory religious experience. That descriptivist modes of reference are employed in talk about God is therefore not a point of dispute between Gale and Alston; rather, their dispute centers around the ways in which the reference of 'God' might have been initially fixed, and the relative priority of the different modes of reference in transmission. According to Gale, contemporary religious sophisticates paradigmatically fix their reference to God using definite descriptions which also perform an overrider function in theological discourse by limiting the degree to which conceptions of God can vary and still be conceptions of the same thing.¹³ For Alston, the individual's reference to God is typically fixed without employing any definite descriptions through learned usage in a religious community, or through a linguistic community's association with a religious community.¹⁴

By this author's count, Gale advances five specific objections to what he calls Alston's "historical-cum-indexical" theory of reference as applied to the term 'God'.¹⁵ Let us call these objections the Non-ostensibility Objection, the Definition Objection, the Ontological Presuppositions Objection, the Opinion Poll Objection, and the Biblical Illiteracy Objection. In offering these objections, Gale has assumed the burden of proof for descriptivism and against Alston's direct reference theory. In what follows, it will be argued that Gale fails to completely discharge the burden he has assumed.

The Non-ostensibility Objection

The first objection appears in the introduction of Gale's book:

First, because God is a supernatural being, he seems to defy being indexically pinned down or baptized. There are no lapels to be grabbed hold of by a use of "this." Some would contend that we can ostensively pin down the name "God" by saying "this" when having or after just having a mystical or religious experience, in which "this" denotes the intentional accusative or content of the experience. This would seem to require that these experiences are cognitive and that their objective accusative is a common object of the experiences of different persons as well as of successive experiences of a single person. . . .¹⁶

Gale's point is that the applicability of an historical-cum-indexical theory of reference to 'God' presupposes the cognitivity (and hence the veridicality) of theistic experience, i.e., that the experiences actually represent contact with a genuine supernatural being; but in the chapter on

religious experience in the same book, Gale advances a complicated argument against the veridicality of religious experiences based on what he takes to be a priori requirements for veridicality that the putative objects of religious experiences typically cannot satisfy. As this argument is rather detailed, and involves issues other than those directly connected with reference, it cannot be dealt with in this paper. The point that needs to be made at present is that the religious language-game could be played *as if* theistic experiences were both veridical and cognitive even if they actually were not; i.e., people could play the referential game even with a radically misidentified referent. Thus, Gale's argument against the veridicality of religious experiences turns out to be compatible with the historical-causal component of Alston's theory of reference for 'God'. As Gale has subsequently remarked, so long as it did not presuppose an initial ostensive baptism, he would have little quarrel with a theory of reference for 'God' that explained sameness of reference over time in terms of lineages of linguistic usage.¹⁷ In the same place, Gale distinguishes between "indexical", "externalist", and "intentional" versions of the causal theory of reference. He identifies Alston's view as an externalist theory, according to which "the referent picked up . . . is whatever was in fact the external cause of the seminal religious experiences."¹⁸ Both the externalist and intentional theories can be "historical-*sans*-indexical" in the sense that they base sameness of reference on lineages of linguistic usage, while being compatible with the impossibility of indexically referring to God; but the "intentional" version favoured by Gale also postulates a shared core of associated descriptions. To see why, let us turn to Gale's second major line of attack on direct reference for 'God'.

The Definition Objection

The passage in which Gale presents his Non-Ostensibility Objection continues:

A second disanalogy between "God" and the sort of ordinary proper names to which the historical-cum-indexical reference theory applies is that whereas it is not an analytic truth or true by definition that the referent of an ordinary proper name satisfy some description . . . this does not appear to be so for "God". At any time at which "God" is used there will be some descriptive sense that it has by definition. For example, at the present time it is analytically true that God is a powerful, benevolent being that is eminently worthy of worship and obedience. To this extent, "God" is not distinguishable from a natural-kind term, which also can have at any time a descriptive sense that is definitionally determined. But they part company because some of the descriptive properties that are definitionally tied to God are hard core in that we would not allow a use of "God" to be coreferring with ours if these properties were not at least partially constitutive of the sense of the name.¹⁹

These "hard core" properties are "high-level, emergent properties, . . . an individual can have . . . only in virtue of the possession of other, lower-level properties."²⁰ Gale contrasts these hard core properties with "soft core" descriptive properties, which, on his version of historical-causal theory, can alter over time without compromising sameness of reference. Gale gives the changing meaning of 'gold' as an example:

The historical-causal theory of reference also applies to names of natural kinds. Consider "gold" in this connection. We begin by ostending a paradigmatic class of specimens of gold. We then turn our scientists loose to investigate the nature or essence of these specimens. As time goes by we revise our definition of what constitutes the essential properties of gold, which is what in fact happened as the alchemist's theory gave way to that of modern atomic theory. Thus, the descriptive sense a name might have at some time is not inviolable in that a later use of it can be coreferring even though it lacks this descriptive sense, due to a change in our definition of this natural kind.²¹

Again, note that Gale is combining historical-causal and descriptivist theories. Kripke would deny that natural kind terms have any descriptive senses.²² Also, it seems that since Gale offers the presence of hard-core properties in the descriptive sense of 'God' as something that distinguishes 'God' from natural-kind terms, he holds *all* the properties constitutive of the senses of ordinary natural-kind terms to be of the soft-core variety.

The objection to a purely causal theory of the reference of 'God' that can be extracted from the above passages is that 'God' is significantly disanalogous both to ordinary proper names, the most obvious candidates for a historical-cum-indexical theory of reference, as well as to natural kind terms, which are also sometimes understood to refer in virtue of an historical connection to some original ostensive baptism. It is disanalogous to proper names in always having a descriptive sense. It is disanalogous to natural kind terms in that its sense includes hard-core properties upon which coreference depends, and, although this does not follow from the account given, but is argued for separately, its descriptive sense does not permit indexical reference.²³ All of these alleged dissimilarities, but especially the having of an invariant descriptive sense, are such as to render a causal theory of reference inadequate or at least incomplete when it comes to explaining coreference in the case of 'God'.

There are at least two responses to this objection. First, Gale's assertion to the contrary notwithstanding, it is not really clear that 'God' always has some associated descriptive sense such that nothing counts as God unless it satisfies the relevant description. It could be conceded that if one attended exclusively to the philosophical literature on the subject, or to the dogmatic theology of various organized religions, one might be tempted to suppose with Gale that power, benevolence, and worthiness of worship were analytic of the concept of God. But, as anyone who has ever taught an introductory course in the philosophy of

religion knows, many students will question these alleged linguistic truths in a way they would never question, say, the masculinity of bachelors. If one is taking the concept of God most commonly employed in our culture, and not merely a philosophically refined version of that concept as the object of one's philosophical inquiry, then these students' contentiousness cannot be put down to mere linguistic incompetence in the area of God-talk.²⁴ Even among the theological elite, that God possesses attributes such the ones under consideration is open to dispute in a way that simple analytic truths would not be.²⁵ If possession of these properties is analytic of the concept of God some person employs, it can only be because he or she has determined to use 'God' in such a way as to make this true.

Second, even if it were conceded for the sake of argument that 'God' always had some descriptive sense or other, it would still be the case that its being associated with a cluster of definite descriptions was a logically distinct thesis from the claim that the term referred in virtue of (some set of) those descriptions. What a term means is a question of what descriptions language users might substitute for it in a given context. How a term refers is quite another matter. One source of this doctrine of the independence of meaning and reference is Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*. In it, Kripke draws a sharp distinction between theories of reference and theories of meaning.²⁶ He also claims that:

... in the case of species terms as in that of proper names, ... one should bear in mind the contrast between the a priori but perhaps contingent properties a term may carry, given by the way its reference was fixed, and the analytic (and hence necessary) properties a term may carry, given by its meaning. For species, as for proper names, the way the reference of a term is fixed should not be regarded as a synonym for the term.²⁷

Kripke in fact thinks a natural kind term's reference could be fixed via a description without that term's thereby being synonymous with that or any other description.²⁸ If a term's reference is fixed descriptively, as Kripke admits was the case with the planet Neptune (79*n*), then it could be said that the term in question had a descriptive sense, but this sense still wouldn't be a synonym for the term. Remember that Kripke criticizes Frege for conflating two separate senses of 'sense:' "... for he takes the sense of a designator to be its meaning; and he also takes it to be the way its reference is determined."²⁹ And if the reference of a term is fixed non-descriptively, say, via indexical dubbing, it is hard to see how there could even be a question of synonymy.

Now it is one thing to suppose, as Kripke does, that a term could refer in virtue of some description without that description's capturing the meaning of (and thus being synonymous with) that term, and quite another to suppose that it is also possible that a term's meaning could be captured by some description without that term's referring in virtue of that or any description. Yet (apart from Kripke's reservations about natural kind terms' *ever* having synonymous descriptions) the latter is not

logically incompatible with the former. Moreover, something like the latter circumstance is alleged to occur on Gale's view, at least as regards 'gold'. If alchemical and post-alchemical uses of the term are corefering, then either their senses jointly share something like hard-core properties in addition to the changing ones,³⁰ or the two uses corefer in virtue of a common history going back to original cases of ostensive dubbing, and not in virtue of a common sense at all. With respect to natural-kind terms, Gale plainly prefers the second disjunct. But, if 'gold's having (at some time *t*) a descriptive meaning does not tell us what the circumstances are in which 'gold' refers, why should we take it that the having, even if at *all* times, of the same descriptive meaning tells us what the circumstances are in which 'God' refers? The answer cannot simply be because some features of the latter term's descriptive meaning remain unaltered and *ipso facto* shared over epoches. To use this alleged disanalogy in the character of the term's descriptive meaning to show that its mechanism of reference is different begs the question. To show that 'God' must refer descriptively, it must be shown that some descriptive properties built into the definition of 'God' are essential to successful coreference—thus making 'God' an exception to the rule that applies to natural-kind terms. Gale only asserts this to be the case. Yet since he embraces the doctrine of the independence of meaning and reference with respect to natural-kind terms, he surely needs more than the availability of an alternative account of reference to demonstrate that a causal account alone would be incomplete in the case of 'God'. He needs other, independent grounds for supposing the causal theory of reference to be insufficient in the case of 'God' before he offers hard core properties as an alternative explanation for sameness of reference.³¹

Against the thesis that reference can be divorced from meaning, it could be argued that if the reference of 'God' were fixed by saying "God is the object I directly experienced last night," the way this reference is fixed would be incompatible with its being analytically true, for instance, that God is a powerful, benevolent being that is eminently worthy of worship. For, if the latter is what is *meant* by 'God', then if the label 'God' refers at all, it refers to something that is powerful, benevolent, and worthy of worship, and the object I experienced last night might lack these properties.³²

There are at least two responses to the objection outlined in the paragraph above. The first stems from Kripke's pragmatic distinction between speaker's reference and semantic reference.³³ Although the following is not an exact quote, semantic reference can be defined as the reference of a designator as determined by the conventions of a speaker's idiolect or language, given various facts about the world.³⁴ Kripke (tentatively) defines the speaker's referent as that object which the speaker "wishes to talk about, on a given occasion, and believes fulfills the conditions for being the semantic referent of the designator."³⁵ This distinction is, in and of itself, neutral with respect to descriptivist versus causal accounts of how the (semantic) reference of 'God' is fixed, but notice: given this distinction and a descriptivist account of the reference of 'God', a speaker could use 'God' to refer to an entity she encountered

the previous evening, and thereby be implying that the being she encountered was necessarily powerful, benevolent, and eminently worthy of worship. Likewise, on a causal-historical account of the reference of 'God', philosophical theologians may be using 'God' to talk about an hypotheticalal being necessarily possessing various attributes, and be wrongly (or rightly but serendipitously) attributing these attributes to a real entity. The point in either case seems to be that the speech-act by which a speaker fixes the referent of a term on a given occasion need not be compatible with the semantic analysis of the term.

Secondly, even if the distinction between speaker's reference and semantic reference does not falsify the objector's argument, there is a question about the argument's validity. The premise of the argument is that if there is some description that could, *contra* Kripke, be substituted for a general term as its meaning in a particular context, then there could not be another description, distinct from the first, in virtue of which the term refers. If by 'God' one *means* "whatever I encountered last night," then one does *not* mean "a being that is powerful, benevolent, and eminently worthy of worship." Of course, it could turn out to be true of the being encountered that it was powerful, benevolent, and eminently worthy of worship. And thus one could, in using 'God' in the first sense, be referring to a being answering to the latter description.³⁶ But one couldn't insist that some description encapsulated what one meant by a term, and still claim that one was fixing the reference of that term via an entirely different description.

But none of the above is sufficient to warrant the clause, "it is this meaning in virtue of which 'God' refers, if it refers at all." This clause says that if a term has a descriptive meaning, then that meaning must be that in virtue of which the term refers. But all the first point really shows is that if a term has a synonymous description, its reference cannot be fixed by *another*, entirely distinct description. It does not rule out the possibility that a term could be synonymous with a description (or disjunction of descriptions), yet refer in virtue of *something entirely other than a description*, such as a causal history.³⁷ The point again is that such facts about a term's meaning may hold even though it is still the case that the term refers solely in virtue of a historical relation to some original ostensive dubbing.

The upshot of this discussion is as follows. Gale allows that a causal-historical theory of reference is necessary to account for the coreferential use of natural-kind terms through meaning-shifts, in so far as these terms allegedly lack senses involving hard core properties. So, even if a term has a sense or synonymous description, this doesn't preclude its referring in virtue of an historical connection to an ostensive dubbing. While Gale writes as if the alleged disanalogy between the descriptive senses of 'God' and natural kind terms constituted an independent reason for supposing that a purely causal theory could not completely account for the reference of 'God', it turns out that the type of disanalogy alleged to exist, a disanalogy in how the associated senses of the respective terms fix their referents, *presupposes* the necessity of a descriptivist account, thereby begging the question. It may be that the necessity

of a descriptivist account can be demonstrated by one of Gale's remaining three objections. But, as we shall see, each of these objections have problems of their own.

The Ontological Presuppositions Objection

Gale supports his Non-ostensibility Objection with a complex argument against Alston's supposition that God could be the object of a veridical perception, and hence the subject of an ostensive "baptism." But he also objects that a good theory of reference for the term 'God' should make no presuppositions about whether God exists:

That [two uses of 'God'] are coreferring should be independent of God's existence, and this should hold even if the referrers take having necessary existence to be one of God's hard-core properties, which would not be the case if the referent of "God" had to be pinned down indexically.³⁸

And on page 301 he adds:

Another fundamental inadequacy in Alston's causal theory of reference for 'God' is that it cannot account for how two persons who use 'God' can be coreferrers even if God does not exist. As argued in Chapter 1 [sic], our use of 'God' allows for such a case of intentional identity.

At first glance, if one has Alston's indexical-causal theory in mind, one might take these two passages to be expressing precisely the same point. But in fact these passages make subtly different claims, as shall be shown shortly.

Now it is obvious that if an expression lacks a *referent*, then no two individuals using it are *coreferring*, because neither one of them is referring. But that is as true for descriptivism as it is for the causal theory. The problem Gale has got his finger on is really not about coreference, but, as he puts it elsewhere, about intentional identity.³⁹ How can the causal theorist account for two theologians' expressing the same proposition, or even for their being able to disagree, without presupposing the existence of the referent? In the case where two individuals intend to be speaking of the same thing but are both mistaken in their belief that this thing exists or ever has existed, Gale thinks that we can only make sense of the intentional identity exhibited in their speech by positing some associated set of descriptions which both speakers have in mind. With this clarification made, the argument from intentional identity against a causal theory of reference for the term 'God' might be put as follows:

- (1) An adequate account of intentional identity should not presuppose the existence of a term's referent.
- (2) A causal theory of reference for 'God' must presuppose that God exists (or at least once did exist).

- (3) Therefore, a causal theory of reference cannot supply an adequate account of how intentional identity is preserved in talk about God.

The first premise is motivated by the intuition that we can enter into common discourse about entities even when these entities are fictive or mythical. The reason for (2) is supposed to go like this: On a descriptivist account, sameness of intentional object occurs when two language users employing a term have the same descriptive sense, or at least a sufficient number of clauses from an associated bundle of descriptions, in mind. The existence of the referent is not necessary. But how else, if not by presupposing God's existence, can a causal theory of reference for the term 'God' explain intentional identity in talk about God? This is where the subtle distinction between the two passages quoted above comes in. If by a causal theory of reference one means an *indexical*-causal theory, the above argument is surely sound—but not because of its causal elements. An indexical theory concerning how a term acquires its reference surely must presuppose the existence of its referent. But it is the causal-historical component of Alston's theory, the part concerning how the reference of a term is transmitted from one person to another, that would have to be refuted in order to show the necessity of descriptivism. And a good case can be made for the claim that a causal theory of (co-)reference need not presuppose a real-world referent.

To begin with, the assumption that intentional identity requires a descriptive backing needs to be questioned. Gareth Evans, in criticizing the view that "to have an intention or belief concerning some item (which one is not in a position to demonstratively identify) one must be in possession of a description uniquely true of it", remarks:

We constantly use general terms of whose satisfaction conditions we have but the faintest idea. "Microbiologist," "chlorine" (the stuff in swimming pools), "nicotine" (the stuff in cigarettes); these (and countless other words) we cannot define nor offer remarks which would distinguish their meaning from that of closely related words. It is wrong to say that we say nothing by uttering sentences containing these expressions, even if we recoil . . . from saying that what we say is determined by those hazy ideas and half-identifications we would offer if pressed.⁴⁰

But if it is false that even a single speaker need be able to supply a uniquely identifying description of that about which she speaks, how could such a description be a necessary condition for intentional identity of reference between two speakers? Again, Gareth Evans:

A group of people are having a conversation in a pub, about a certain Louis of whom S has never heard before. S becomes interested and asks: 'What did Louis do then?' There seems to be no question but that S denotes a particular man and asks about him. Or on some subsequent occasion S may use the

name to offer some new thought to one of the participants: 'Louis was quite right to do that.' Again he clearly denotes whoever was the subject of conversation in the pub. This is difficult to reconcile with the description theory since the scraps of information which he picked up during the conversation might involve some distortion and fit someone else much better.⁴¹

The same considerations will apply in religious contexts. A six-year old is already just as capable of referring to God as an adult, in virtue of her membership in the same linguistic community. Yet if one asked the six-year old who she thought God was, one might be told that God was a person who lived a long time ago when there weren't any shoes, and that God took care of the animals and had the only cup—everyone else had to drink out of their hands. Theology and even worship are a ways off, developmentally speaking. So, in some sense, there is a difference between what she and the rest of us *mean* by 'God', where speaker's meaning is understood in terms of the alternative descriptions the speaker offers in explaining his or her use of a phrase. But that does not mean there is any difference in what we refer to. Finally, if it is implausible to suppose that we need attach equivalent descriptive senses to a term in order to corefer with each other, it is even more implausible to suppose such a requirement would hold in the case of coreference across epochs. Historically, the real Abraham could have been a henotheist, the concept of monotheism having developed later in the Prophetic Era. Yet knowing this, someone in the Judeo-Christian tradition today could still insist that she worshipped the God of Abraham.

On a causal theory of reference, a language-user's intention to use a term as the other members of his or her social group use it is sufficient for sameness of reference or intentional identity. Following Donnellan, we can say that when the history of a singular term begins in a way that precludes a real world referent from being identified, it ends in a "block."⁴² For example, if someone began using a proper name from a fictitious story in the mistaken belief that the story was a factual account, the history of that person's use of that name ends in a block. Donnellan suggests that a negative existence statement is true just in case the history of the singular term in the statement ends in a block. To counter the objection that this account seems to make the truth of negative existence statements depend upon facts about language, e.g., the history of a proper name, rather than upon facts about the world, Donnellan also suggests that two distinct negative existence statements—with different singular terms—can express the same proposition if the blocks in the histories of the terms are related in the right way. Thus, when an American child says "Santa Claus does not exist," and a French child says "*Pere Noel n'existe pas*," the two are both expressing the same proposition about the world. If Donnellan is right, then we can conclude that when two or more uses of a term end in a common "block," or in blocks sharing the right kind of historical connection, the statements in which these uses appear preserve intentional identity, i.e., are "about the same thing," despite the statements' lack of a real world referent.⁴³ It further

follows that whether a singular term refers to an actual object is equally beside the point on either a descriptivist or a causal theory of reference.

The Opinion Poll and Biblical Illiteracy Objections

In his chapter on religious-experience arguments, Gale adds two final reasons for rejecting the appropriateness of applying a "historical-cum-indexical reference theory" to uses of 'God'.

Alston, following his aforementioned theory to one of its consequences, rhetorically asks, if it were the case that the Biblical patriarchs had actually been in effective contact with Satan rather than God, wouldn't the Christian community have to admit that it was, "despite our bandying about of descriptions that fit the only true God," referring to and thus addressing Satan in its prayers and worship, and thus a Satan-worshipping community?⁴⁴ But while he clearly intends this hypothetical question to be answered affirmatively, he seems to have given Gale the key to his own rebuttal, for Gale reports that in his own informal poll of religious believers, using the very question Alston asked, *all* the believers he asked disagreed with Alston, replying negatively. Gale takes this uniform rejection of Alston's hypothetical conclusion as good anecdotal evidence against Alston's theory as to how coreferential uses of the term 'God' actually work in religious practice, concluding:

I do not doubt that there are Orthodox Jews and Christian Fundamentalists whose religious language game fits Alston's causal theory of reference, but it certainly does not properly describe the religious language game of Phil Quinn's "intellectually sophisticated adults in our culture," many of whom are ignorant of which Biblical dignitaries were alleged to have had religious experiences, and thus cannot be picking up the referent of "God" from them and who, moreover, would not accept the characterization of themselves as devil worshipers or LSD worshipers, if it should turn out to be the case that the experiences of these dignitaries were caused by the devil or LSD.⁴⁵

So here we have the last two objections to Alston's account of how 'God' refers, and thus to treating religious experience as constitutive of Christian doxastic practice. The first is that, by their own account, the religious language-game of the "intellectually sophisticated adults in our culture" fixes the reference of 'God' via metaphysical descriptions. The second is that in order for them to be acquiring the reference of 'God' via Biblical or other historical encounters with God, these intellectual (but not necessarily Biblically literate) sophisticates must know which persons originally had these alleged encounters.

Let us address the last point first, as it can be dealt with in short order by remarking that Gale is clearly mistaken in thinking that these intellectual sophisticates would have to be able to pick out specific experiences, Biblical or otherwise, to successfully corefer with them. It is as if he were thinking of the direct reference theory as another version of the theory of

descriptions, one that differed simply in proposing an alternative set of descriptions, i.e., "The God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob," instead of "He than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-conceived." Instead, coreference only requires that the contemporary users of the term 'God' intend to use it in the same way as those from whom they heard it. This proximate causal connection, repeated over and over again, is all that is required for there to be the right sort of external, historical connection between contemporary usage and the experience of the seminal Biblical referrers.

As for the Opinion Poll Objection, there are two plausible responses available to the causal theorist. The first is to reply that Gale's poll only shows how people *think* reference is fixed in their language-game. We should not be surprised that the religious individuals polled would answer Alston's rhetorical question in the manner they did. Psychologically, being told that one might be unintentionally worshipping Satan would be like hearing it insinuated that one was the very sheltered child of a mafioso, only worse. Moreover, the reaction is probably paralleled by other responses to counter-intuitive results which accompany direct reference theories. Consider, for example, how many people might be surprised by this conclusion of Donnellan's regarding Santa Claus:

Suppose, for example, that contrary to what we adults believe we know, there is, in fact, a man with a long white beard and a belly like a bowl full of jelly who comes down chimneys on Christmas night to leave gifts (the ones whose labels are missing about which parents worry because they don't know what aunt the child should write a thank-you note). We must, of course, imagine that it is absolutely fortuitous that our descriptions of Santa Claus happen to fit so accurately this jolly creature. In that case I do not think that he is Santa Claus. The fact that the story of Santa Claus, told to children as fact, is historically an invention constitutes a block even if the story happens to contain only descriptions that accurately fit some person.⁴⁶

One suspects that a great many people would find this result of a direct reference theory unintuitive—they would want to say, if such a case came to light, "Well, we thought we were pulling one over on the kids, but, what do you know, there really *is* a Santa Claus!" (They would be wrong, and in fact engaging in a new dubbing of the jolly creature described above, but that is how they would see it.)

Gale, in correspondence with the author, claims that Donnellan's Santa Claus example exhibits the same sort of semantic-pragmatic confusion which Kripke uncovered in Donnellan's referential/attributional distinction.⁴⁷ Seeing the Santa Claus story as an instance of fictive discourse, Gale argues it would be perfectly appropriate to react with "Yes, Virginia, there really is a Santa Claus."

I see the fictive use of language as a special sort of illocutionary act that has the normative upshot, provided there is no misfire due to insincerity and the like, of freeing the author from any

challenge of speaking falsely, at least in regard to the singular propositions he expresses. That it would be inappropriate, unfair if you like, to charge the author with saying something false about a real life person, does not entail that he does not do so. Thus, there is no semantic "block" in fictional references, only an illocutionary block to the appropriateness of trying to find a real life referent and verify whether it has the fictionally described properties.⁴⁸

But this is certainly not the way a causal theorist, least of all Kripke himself, need see things. In *Naming and Necessity*, Kripke considers the hypothetical discovery of fossils that superficially resemble the mythical unicorns and claims that these fossils would not be the remains of unicorns unless the myths were somehow historically connected with, and therefore *about*, these ancient animals.⁴⁹ Just as in the Santa Claus example, others might say, "Well! Unicorns really existed after all." Kripke, like Donnellan in the Santa case, would regard these people's intuitions to be mistaken unless such an historical link could be established. Also, Kripke explicitly states that he does not regard his criticisms of Donnellan's referential/attributive distinction to be incompatible with his views on the reference of proper names, which are quite similar to Donnellan's.⁵⁰

Alternatively, respect for the clear-cut intuitions of Gale's respondents might lead one to seek a middle ground between Gale and Alston, acknowledging, in the words of Gareth Evans, that "the intentions of the speakers to use [a name or general term] to refer to something must be allowed to count in determination of what it denotes."⁵¹ Alston would reply that this only showed that "one would not use 'God' to refer to X unless one firmly believed X alone had certain characteristics."⁵²

But that falls short of showing that it is the possession of those characteristics that makes X the referent. The arguments for the primacy of direct reference remain in full full force. . . . Our dupes of Satan might have a firm resolution to use 'God' to refer only to a being that is absolutely perfect; but, mistakenly supposing the being with whom they are in contact to be absolutely perfect, they are using 'God' to refer to an imperfect being nonetheless.⁵³

To further support this reply, Alston draws an analogy to Donnellan's case of the misdescribed imbibor. In that case, because the speaker has a way of directly picking out the referent, he can use a description to pick out a referent that does not satisfy the description. So, in the case of referential uses of 'God', Alston adds, "Here too it could well be the case that one would not use that description to refer to X unless one believed X uniquely satisfies the description; but the referent is determined otherwise nonetheless."⁵⁴

The plausibility of this reply depends on the relevance of the following disanalogy between the two cases. Donnellan's mistaken speaker at

the party employs a description in an exceptional way; it is a case of a pragmatic glitch in a linguistic practice where speaker's reference and semantic meaning would normally coincide. But in the case of Alston's mistaken Satan-worshippers, we have to imagine a linguistic practice where speakers' reference and semantic meaning continually and systematically fail to coincide. It's like being asked to imagine that people unwittingly entertain radically false beliefs about rhinoceroses every time they talk or think about 'unicorns', despite whatever descriptions and images they employ, on the grounds that the first Western account of unicorns was that of the Greek Historian Ctesias, who is thought to have been relating fanciful reports of the Indian rhino.⁵⁵ It's easy to see why such a global disparity between the semantics and pragmatics of a linguistic practice would lead philosophers to call for an adjustment to the semantic theory that posited it.⁵⁶

How are we to understand the relation between the descriptive constraints arrived at through theological reflection and usage, on the one hand, and historical-causal mechanisms of reference-transmission in the religious tradition, on the other? Worship and prayer commonly borrow definite descriptions from theology in addressing their object. Theological reflection, although certainly dependent on the more "undergirding substance of religious activity," is not epiphenomenal to it. The relation, in other words, between prayer, worship, and other instances of "first order" religious language to the "second order" language of theological reflection, is not a one-way street. Theological reflection, originating in worship and prayer, in turn informs and otherwise affects the activities it reflects upon. Thus, if the reference of terms in theological discourse is sometimes fixed via definite descriptions (which, Alston concedes, is possible),⁵⁷ the same may be true of the reference of these terms when (re)employed in prayer and worship.

An analogue of Evans's idea of "dominance" may be of service at this point. Evans proposes that speakers generally *intend* to refer to the item which is the *causally* dominant source of the information they associate with the term in question.⁵⁸ Dominance is "not merely a function of the *amount* of information," it is also a function of informational detail and significance, as well as of deference to special groups of speakers within the linguistic community.⁵⁹ But since Alston assumes that what a speaker *intends* to refer to does not always guarantee what she *actually* refers to, Evans's original idea will require modification if it is to be of use in the present context. In any case where an item is ostensibly re-identified over time, there is the possibility of misidentification. In such cases, the Alstonian assumption would seem to be that the item picked out in the initial dubbing, whether ostensibly or descriptively, will subsequently always be the real referent of the term. This does not allow for changes in denotation, which do occur. Evans, for instance, cites the case of 'Madagascar,' where "... a heresay report of Malay or Arab sailors . . . has had the effect of transferring a corrupt form of the name of a portion of the African mainland to the great African Island."⁶⁰

We should reject, then, the suggestion that causal chains of linguistic usage must always be linear, with the denotation of a term remaining

inflexibly that of its original referent. Instead, let us suppose that where there have been multiple re-identifications (and possible mis-identifications) over time, a term's semantic referent is that item *dominantly* picked out among the items that may have been speakers' referents at one time or another—and this need not remain the original referent of the term. This view still allows that the original reference could remain dominant, and so it does not automatically rule out Alston's Satanic Dupes scenario, but it does more justice to the intuitions of Gales' respondents, and allows for the possibility of changes in denotation in a way Alston's theory apparently does not. It will also allow for a better understanding of religious syncretism, which figures importantly in the history of all major world religions, and thus in the histories of religious terms, thereby also affecting reference in present-day religious discourse. When, for instance, an indigenous name of a local deity with its own etymology and cultural connotations is appropriated by missionaries to refer to the god of another religion, it would seem we must say that a descriptively based *refixing* of the name's reference occurs. But this is still compatible with this new reference then being transmitted *non-descriptively* via the missionary community's distinctive usage.

Finally, suppose that 'God' really is linguistically associated with a certain cluster of descriptions, that 'God' really does mean such-and-such. How would a causal theory of reference accommodate this fact? In the case of 'heat', we originally fix the reference of the term in this and every possible world via a contingent fact about the sensation it produces in us in the real world.⁶¹ It is not discoverable *a priori* or through conceptual analysis alone that heat just is molecular motion; therefore *being molecular motion* is not built into the meaning of 'heat', even if it does turn out to be heat's essence. The way we originally fix the reference of 'heat', by reference to experienced but contingent and therefore inessential qualities, does not preclude us from later affirming truths about its essence. On a historical-cum-indexical account, the same is true with respect to talk of God, i.e., the reference of 'God' is originally fixed by reference to experiences, ostensibly involving qualities which may or may not be essential to God's nature. As it happens, supreme greatness and eminent worthiness of worship, the properties Gale identifies as "hard core" for God, are properties someone having a numinous experience could certainly ascribe to the intentional object of his or her experience. Indeed, whereas many philosophers have wondered how God could possibly be experienced as omnipotent or omniscient, relatively few have regarded mystical accounts of intuited divine greatness and worthiness as problematic.

Does this concede much to Gale? Not really. Descriptions and individual intentions matter more on this view than on Alston's, but the points made earlier against the necessity of a descriptive backing for coreference still stand, and Alston's overall position that direct reference is (genetically) more fundamental than definite descriptions hasn't been touched.⁶² Similarly, accepting an Evans-like modification to Alston's theory of reference will leave intact the idea that referential success has little to do with the "fit" of associated descriptions.⁶³ The result will be

a more complex, less linear version of the historical-causal theory—one according to which reference, although transmitted causally, is repeatedly refixed, both *via* descriptions, and *via* experiences the intentional objects of which are *taken to satisfy* those descriptions.

Summary

We have attempted to sort out several distinct objections contained in Gale's argument against the applicability of a direct reference theory to theological statements. First of all, the Non-Ostensibility Objection isn't really an objection to causal theories of reference *per se*, but only to indexical elements in such. The objection could stand against the veridicality of religious experiences without having any bearing on what role such experiences play in the overall religious language-game. The Definition Objection fails to stand as an independent objection because Gale has to prove that coreference across meaning-shifts must occur for different reasons in the case of 'God' than it does in the case of natural-kind terms, and none of the remaining objections succeed at supplying the needed proof. The Ontological Presuppositions Objection falsely assumes that a causal theory of reference cannot explain shared meaning in the absence of an existing referent, while the Biblical Illiteracy Objection, begs the question by covertly assuming the truth of descriptivism. The strongest of the objections we have considered, the Opinion Poll Objection, applies specifically to conclusions Alston draws from his version of direct reference theory. It must assume both that, in general, people have an accurate, intuitive grasp as to how reference actually works in the language-games they play, and that Alston's inferences are inescapably correct as to the hypothetical consequence in question.

This concludes my remarks concerning Gale on this topic. There are other important issues concerning theology and direct reference that could be addressed, but such questions are beyond the scope of this paper. What has been at issue is a collection of objections to the idea that any predominantly causal theory of reference could hold as regards 'God' and its cognates, and, possibly also, an objection to considering religious experience as a constitutive part of an over-all religious language-game, and thus to treating religious experience's contribution to religious belief as on a par with sensory experience's contribution to our knowledge of the physical world. It may be that other reasons for embracing descriptivism as regards the reference of 'God' have been overlooked. But, if the conclusions presented in this paper are correct, then at least we know where the issue is *not* to be joined.

Seattle Pacific University

NOTES

1. Richard M. Gale 1991, *On the Nature and Existence of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

2. This epistemology, which was developed in a series of articles during the eighties, has recently been superseded in Alston 1991, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).

3. Hereafter such practices will be referred to as *doxastic* practices.

4. Ludwig Wittgenstein 1953, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan Publishing); Wittgenstein 1972, *On Certainty* (New York: Harper & Row).

5. Alston 1991, 153-155.

6. *Ibid.*, 7.

7. Gale 1991, 300. Gale's expectation that some experiential basis be "constitutive" of religious doxastic practice is the requirement that the former be essential, either as a part or as a cause of the latter. He regards the putative difference between religious and sensory experience thus identified to be one of series of cognitively invidious disanalogies showing that religious experiences are not knowledge-yielding. In this paper, however, our concern is only with how Gale's arguments concerning reference affect the Alstonian assessment of religious experience's centrality to the religious form of life.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.* Alston actually has a second reply to the objection, given Gale's presuppositions about the paradigmatic status of sense perception. Alston could accuse Gale of "epistemic chauvinism."

10. "Referring to God," reprinted in Alston 1989, *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press); see especially 106-107.

11. Alston 1989, 103.

12. Gale 1991, 5.

13. Gale 1991, 7-8; 1993b, 4.

14. Alston 1989, 109.

15. Gale 1991, 6-7. Alston's theory is "historical" in its emphasis on chains of social transmission that guarantee intentional identity or coreferential usage between speakers. It is "indexical" in that it presupposes an ostensive "baptism" by which the reference is originally fixed.

16. *Ibid.* Gale (or, perhaps, his typesetter) uses double quotes when mentioning a term. In this paper, single quotes will be used for this purpose.

17. Gale 1993, "Reply to Andrew Jeffery," unpublished remarks at the Central Division Meeting of the APA in Chicago, 2.

18. *Ibid.* This classification of Alston's view as external rather than indexical seems to be mistaken. Consider the following passage from Alston 1989, 108:

We will think of a non-derivative reference to God as secured by labeling something presented in experience. This presupposes, of course, that God can be presented to one's experience in such a way that one can make a name the name of God just by using that name to label an object of experience.

19. Gale 1991, 7. Gale regards power and benevolence (and, perhaps, omnipotence and moral perfection) as revisable, "soft core" properties presently taken to be determinative of the more essential, high-level "hard core" properties, supreme greatness and worthiness of worship (*ibid.*, 8).

20. *Ibid.*, 8.

21. *Ibid.*, 6. George Bealer argues that meaning-shift theories like the

one described by Gale are incompatible with the kind of essentialism that has been associated with causal accounts of reference such as Kripke's. See Bealer 1987, "The Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism," *Philosophical Perspectives* 1, *Metaphysics*: 306-308. In this I think Bealer is only partly right. He is correct in arguing that scientists did not merely stipulate, rather than discover, that water was H₂O or that heat was molecular motion. Thus these metaphysical necessities are not instances of pure a priori knowledge. But this is not to say that meaning-shifts, following such a posteriori discoveries, have not occurred. Actual usage must be the final court of appeal for questions of meaning, and, in archaic usage, to take another example Bealer cites, the extension of the class *fish* really did include whales. So the meaning of 'fish' has shifted in the wake of scientific "precisification," but a precisification grounded in an empirical discovery about the essence of the natural kind whale.

22. See Saul A. Kripke 1972, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 134-135; and Kripke 1979, "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference," in Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein, eds., *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 25 n27.

23. Gale 1991, 326-343.

24. Corey Washington suggests that since we live in a pluralistic society, we can neither assume that our students employ any conception of god in common, nor that their uses of 'god' corefer in virtue of any common history. But the disagreements in question are not limited to those who come from different cultures, as the next point about the theological elite makes clear.

25. See for instance Coburn 1988, "Metaphysical Theology and the Life of Faith," *Philosophical Investigations* 11:3 (March): 197-198.

26. Kripke 1972: 57ff, 135.

27. *Ibid*, 135.

28. This is what he means when he says he disputes Mill's view that general terms have "connotations" (*ibid*).

29. *Ibid*, 59. Because of this distinction I will endeavor throughout the rest of this discussion to discriminate between the loaded Fregean term 'sense', having the connotation of a description that gives the meaning and reference of a term, and simple *descriptive meaning*.

30. The sensible properties of gold in virtue of which we originally fix the reference of the term 'gold' would seem to be good examples of "high-level, emergent properties" gold has only in virtue of other, lower-level (but essential and therefore necessary) properties. The difference between the sensible properties of 'gold' and the hard core properties associated with God is that the latter set of properties are allegedly possessed by their object necessarily, whereas those by which we fix the reference 'gold' across possible worlds are had by gold contingently in relation to the sensory apparatus we possess and the environment we share with the metal as a reference-fixing species.

31. The additional element, Gale would say, is supplied by the "override function" played by these hard core properties. The best evidence that 'God' has a sense such that some of its elements play such a role will be discussed when we come to the Opinion Poll Objection below. Gale's hybrid theory of reference, with its insistence reference, even if causally transmitted, requires a minimal condition of fit between the associated concepts of two speakers, is reminiscent of the theory of reference proposed in Gareth Evans 1973, "The Causal Theory of Names," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: Supplementary Volume* 47: 187-208. Reprinted in A. P. Martinich, ed.

1990, *The Philosophy of Language*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press). All references are to the reprint (301).

32. I owe the present formulation of this objection to Robert Coburn and Charles Marks.

33. Kripke 1979, 14-15.

34. *Ibid.*, 14 (including n20).

35. *Ibid.*, 15.

36. In such a case it would not be analytically true, under that description, that "God" possessed such properties—even if it was, nevertheless, a necessary truth about the being one had encountered.

37. Gale, 7-10. Many contemporary theists share very different a priori intuitions about how God could possibly behave from those an ancient Hebrew would have had, yet would not scruple to allow that that Hebrew referred to the same deity.

38. Gale 1991, 8.

39. *Ibid.* I owe this insight to Genoveva Marti.

40. Evans 1973, 296-297.

41. *Ibid.*, 298.

42. Keith S. Donnellan 1974, "Speaking of Nothing," *The Philosophical Review* 83:1 (January), 23.

43. *Ibid.*, see especially 27-30.

44. Alston 1989, 110-111.

45. Gale 1991, 301.

46. Donnellan 1974, 24-25.

47. See Kripke 1979.

48. From private correspondence with the author, March 1993. But see Gale 1971, "The Fictive Use of Language," *Philosophy* 46 (October), esp. 328-330. For a critique of the view that the fictive use of language involves a special type of illocutionary act, see John R. Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," in French, Peter A., Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (eds.) 1979, *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press). 1979, esp. 236-237.

49. Kripke 1972, 157.

50. Kripke 1979, 24 n20.

51. Evans 1973, 300.

52. Alston 1989, 113.

53. *Ibid.*, 113-114.

54. *Ibid.*, 114.

55. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (1991), s. v. "Unicorn."

56. Another possible problem, raised by one of this journal's referees, runs as follows:

The direct reference theorist thinks that when, say, the Hebrews of old had experiences they took to be of God, they dubbed the thing they were experiencing God; hence the term 'God' (the Hebrew equivalent) is designated as 'the cause of our religious experience.' The problem is . . . that it is uncontroversial that there is *some* cause of their experience. But now suppose that the cause of their religious experience is merely a psychological mechanism that functions to help us keep our sanity in a world that we cannot control. But then 'God' refers to this mechanism. The question is, if one accepts something like the baptism view of fixing the reference of 'God,' then it's hard to say how 'atheism' (the claim that there is no God) could be true.

It seems to me, however, that this problem is not terribly serious. Atheists would surely reply that their intention is to deny the existence of anything fitting the metaphysical descriptions which theists attach to the term 'God.' Alston himself takes genetic challenges to religious belief, such as the one implied in the above story, as *gaining* significance under a direct reference theory (Alston 1989, 115).

57. Ibid, 112.

58. Evans 1973, 303.

59. Ibid, 303-5.

60. Ibid, 300. Evans is quoting from Issac Taylor 1898, *Names and Their History*.

61. Kripke 1972, 132.

62. Alston gives two reasons for supposing direct reference to be genetically more basic than descriptivist reference:

First . . . almost all uniquely identifying predicates themselves contain one or more singular referring expressions. . . . Second, and more crucial, the use of a description to pick out a referent presupposes the mastery of a referential apparatus. For I refer descriptively by taking myself to be speaking of whatever uniquely satisfies certain predicates. And how could I understand that notion of *something's* satisfying a predicate without already having made some singular references, or at least having acquired the ability to do so? [Ibid, 109-110.]

63. Evans 1973, 301, 306.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alston, William P. 1989. *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

_____. 1991. *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

_____. 1993. Correspondence with the author dated August 25.

Bealer, George. 1987. "The Philosophical Limits of Scientific Essentialism." *Philosophical Perspectives* 1, *Metaphysics*; 289-365.

Coburn, Robert C. 1988. "Metaphysical Theology and the Life of Faith." *Philosophical Investigations* 11:3 (March), 197-217.

Donnellan, Keith S. 1974. "Speaking of Nothing." *The Philosophical Review* 83:1 (January); 3-31.

Evans, Gareth. 1973. "The Causal Theory of Names." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society: Supplementary Volume* 47: 187-208. Reprinted in A. P. Martinich, ed. 1990. *The Philosophy of Language*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

French, Peter A., Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein, eds. 1979. *Contemporary Perspectives in the Philosophy of Language*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gale, Richard M. 1971. "The Fictive Use of Language." *Philosophy* 46 (October): 324-340.

_____. 1991. *On the Nature and Existence of God*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1993. "Reply to Andrew Jeffery." Unpublished. Presented at the Central Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Chicago.

Kripke, Saul. 1972. *Naming and Necessity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

_____. 1979. "Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference." In French 1979.

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed. 1991. S. v. "Unicorn."

Searle, John R. 1979. "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse." In French, 1979.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1953. *Philosophical Investigations*. G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. New York: Macmillan Publishing.

_____. 1972. *On Certainty*. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds. New York: Harper & Row.