PROPER NAMES: A LINGUISTIC AND PHILOSOPHIC APPROACH

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Abstract
Proper names are different designations of particulars such as people, places etc; this poses the problem of determining their meaningfulness. It has been argued by the 'Millians' that proper names must denote a referent without necessarily conferring any attribute to it and that the meaningfulness of proper names is their referents. On the other hand, the descriptionists such as Russell holds that the meaning of a proper name is also its referent which is the description given to it and that this description is logically equivalent with the proper name. Frege contends that the meaning of a proper name is the sense it communicates; reason is that some proper names can have more than one referent, thus, calls for the understanding of the sense they convey in a given context. Against this background, Kripke advanced a 'casual theory of name' which asserts that the meaning/referent of a name is fixed through the process of 'initial baptism' whereupon the name becomes a rigid designator of that object and meaning. The foregoing underscores the problematics of proper name, that is, their meaningfulness and referential nature. In view of this, the paper first looks at the linguistic concerns of proper names ranging from their nature and then, to their lexicological concerns. In relation to the meaningfulness and referential concerns of proper names, the paper examines the possible implications of some of the arguments advanced so far in this regard and concludes that: since semantic rules are not binding on the references of proper names, it simply underscores the fact that reference/referent/meaning of proper names is determined by the pragmatic intentionality of the speaker which does not necessarily imply lawlessness but establishes the dynamism of the use of proper names in contexts.
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Introduction

"Names" are a linguistic universal. All known languages make use of names; most commonly, but not exclusively, to identify individual people and places. The study of names, known as 'onomastics', is both an old and a young discipline. Since Ancient Greece, names have been regarded as central to the study of language, throwing light on how humans communicate with each other and organize their world. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others were keenly interested in the relationship between names and referents, and this has continued to be a major theme of both philosophical and linguistic enquiry throughout the history of Western thought. The investigation of name origins, on the other hand, is more recent, not developing until the twentieth century in some areas, and being still today at a formative stage in others. Here the emphasis is on etymology, systematically tracing the derivation of individual names back through time, and the resulting data have provided a rich evidence base for the investigation of historical and linguistic topics. Relatively new is the study of names in society, which draws on techniques from sociolinguistics and has gradually been gathering momentum over the last few decades. To name something, as far as human attention goes, is to make it. The unnamed is the unnoticed, and the unnoticed is for cognitive and communicative purposes non-existent. Willems (2000: 86) has stated that "proper names are complex signs with specific linguistic, pragmatic, logical, philosophical, semiotic, historical, psychological, social, and juridical properties, and hence represent a vast interdisciplinary field of study". Indeed "the ramifications of naming are ... vastly complicated, and [naming] represents a much larger segment of human activity than is usually recognized" (Stewart and Pulgram 1971 cited in Zelinsky 2002: 243). The discipline most concerned with names is onomastics. Different disciplines are connected (trivially or seriously) to the study of names. These disciplines include, anthropology, sociology, business, cartography, genealogy, folklore, history, psychology,

religion, orthography and orthoepy, lexicography, literature, linguistics, and philosophy (Algeo and Algeo, 2000). Our interest dwells on the latter two disciplines (linguistics and philosophy). In linguistics, a major issue concerns how proper names have been distinguished from common names and the ramification for this distinction. Algeo and Algeo (2000: 267) argue that if lexicography (field concerned with making and compilation of dictionaries) has found a principled basis for excluding proper names from its purview, linguistics has often done so in an unprincipled way, simply by ignoring the data. Yet proper names are a part of language, and a very important part, which require attention. Furthermore, they assert that proper names are also a significant source of other words in the vocabulary by the derivational process of commonization, such as *zipper* from a trademark. Additionally, they opine that a major theoretical dispute in lexicography is whether a dictionary should list only common nouns, leaving proper names to the encyclopedia. Because dictionary users often look for proper names, however, some contemporary user-friendly (or marketing- conscious) dictionaries enter them in their main body; others list but segregate them in appendices of personal names and place names.

Philosophy on the other hand, questions the meaningfulness of proper names. This question has generated arguments and counter-arguments on what should constitute the meaning of proper names. The descriptionists like Russell argues that the meaning of a proper names is its referents, that is to say that proper names are synonymous with their descriptions; on the other hand, Frege argues for sense, that is, a proper name may not necessarily have a referent but can still be meaningful as long as it communicates some sense. Kripke on the other hand argues for a 'baptismal' act of fixing the referent of a proper name and that this varies from one community of speakers to another. Once a referent is conferred on a particular proper name, it automatically underscores its meaning. A proper understanding of the linguistic nature and meaning of proper names and their accompanying philosophical concerns in relation to their meaning will provide the springboard for the understanding of its peculiarities in usage and meaning.

To do justice to this, the work shall continue in three sections. First Section shall review literature on what are proper names and how they derive their meaning, the second section discusses Proper names and lexicography while the third section will be a philosophical appraisal of the theories of proper names and then, the conclusion.

Proper names and their meaningfulness
Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016) assert that the individual use of names may form an important part of the theory of 'onomastics'. Nevertheless, most if not all scholars within the field of onomastics refer to (proper) names, common nouns, though seldom pronouns, without defining these nominal categories. It is apparently left to the speaker to determine what a name is in discourse since grammarians are sometimes said to just make a mess of it. Hough (2016: 22) opines that the study of names, known as 'onomastics', is both an old and a young discipline. Since Ancient Greece, names have been regarded as central to the study of language, throwing light on how humans communicate with each other and organize their world. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others were keenly interested in the relationship between names and referents, and this has continued to be a major theme of both philosophical and linguistic enquiry throughout the history of Western thought. The investigation of name origins, on the other hand, is more recent, not developing until the twentieth century in some areas, and being still today at a formative stage in others. Theoretical linguists have often treated proper names as the poor cousin of other grammatical categories. It is generally agreed among both linguists and anthropologists (Bean 1980, Akinnasao 1980) that proper names are a universal linguistic category. Some evidence for making a distinction between proper names and common nouns may be found in the context of the animacy hierarchy. So called split ergative languages may exhibit a different case marking system (nominative-accusative) for pronouns and proper names than for common nouns (ergative-absolutive). Nevertheless, as Croft (1990 cited in Van Langendonck 2007b: 2) notes, only few data about proper names are available in the language typological literature because "most grammatical descriptions do not include information on proper names."

Van Langendonck (2007b: 17) also notes that ever since Antiquity, it has been held that proper names are nouns (or possibly noun phrases). However, few scholars seem to dispute the thesis that proper

names are nouns or at least nominal expressions. As to their referential status, proper names certainly designate 'things' in the widest sense and since a thing is designated by a noun (Langacker 1987 cited Van Langendonck 2007b: 17), a proper name must be a noun from the semantic point of view. The definition of proper names has always been an elusive concept in the study of language. Blanár (2014) defines a proper name as a vocabulary element of a particular language which also belongs to a respective onymic subsystem, thereby acquiring a binary character while noting that proper names are formed (as a secondary plan of a language) with the background of appellative vocabulary. Pulgram (1954) defines a proper name as a noun used . . . in a non-universal function, with or without recognizable current lexical value, of which the potential meaning coincides with and never exceeds its actual meaning, and which is attached as a label to one animate being or one inanimate object (or to more than one in the case of collective names) for the purpose of specific distinction from among a number of like or in some respects similar beings or objects that are either in no manner distinguished from one another or, for our interest, not sufficiently distinguished (cited in Zelinsky 2002: 245). He goes further to assert that "by its very nature, the domain of names is fuzzily bounded." Bean (1980) citing Mill (1889) opines that most philosophers of language agree that proper names, distinct from common names, function to denote particulars, i.e., individuals, entities, or members of classes. She goes further in noting that two fundamentally opposed accounts of how proper names fulfil this function have been debated. On one hand, proper names simply stand for something, but in no particular respect, in the other, proper names are shorthand definite descriptions. This first point of view is prominently represented by J.S. Mill who claims that proper names denote the individuals who are called by them; but they do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those individuals (Mill 1889 cited in Bean 1980: 306). To illustrate this point Mill gives an example:

> ...a town may have been named Dartmouth, because it is situated at the mouth of river Dart....If sand should choke up the mouth of the river, or an earthquake change its course, and remove it to a distance from the town, the name of the town would not necessarily be changed. The fact (of being situated at the mouth of river Dart) therefore, can form no part of the signification of the word: for otherwise, when the fact ceased to be true, no [*sic*] would any longer think of applying the name (Mill 1889 cited in Bean 1980: 306)

For Mill, proper names are attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on the continuance of any attribute of the object. Fundamentally, proper names simply stand for their bearer; whether they signify some attribute(s) of the bearer is secondary. Descriptionists such as Russel (1956) argues that a proper name does not refer to a referent but to set of propositions that specifically describe a referent. For instance, the proper name 'Buhari' derives its meaning from "Buhari is the president of Nigeria"; here, the description: 'is the president of Nigeria' confers meaning to the proper name 'Buhari'. Suffices to say that 'president of Nigeria' is synonymous with the proper name 'Buhari'.

On the other hand, others have argued that proper names do indeed signify, that is, have senses. In this view, proper names denote individuals by functioning as shorthand for, or equivalent to, definite descriptions of their bearers, for example, Aristotle signifies, is short for, 'the pupil of Plato', 'a teacher of Alexander the Great'. A strong argument in support of this view is that a proper name may be used to refer to the same object on different occasions; therefore, the users of the name must have some way of being able to identify the object for which it stands as being the same on multiple occasions (Searle 1969: 167, 168). Additionally, Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 18) applying to the essence of 'properhood' from a semantic-pragmatic point of view, regard a name as a nominal expression that denotes a unique entity at the level of established linguistic convention to make it psychosocially salient within a given basic level category. The meaning of the name, if any, does not (or not any longer) determine its denotation (Van Langendonck 2007b: 125). However, Van Langendonck and Van Verde (2016: 38) conclude that proper names are nouns with unique denotation, they are definite, have no restrictive relative modifiers, and occupy a special place in anaphoric relations. They display an inherent basic level and can be argued to be the most prototypical nominal category. Names have no defining sense. They can have connotative meanings, but this has little grammatical relevance.

Works like Stewart and Pulgram (1971), Zelinsky (2002: 248, 253-258), Van Langendonck (2007b: 183-255) and Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 33-38) have attempted a taxonomy of proper names. For Stewart and Pulgram (1971) and Zelinsky (2002), proper names can broadly be classified into the following groups:

a. Personal names;
b. Quasi-personal names (as for pets, dolls, ships);
c. Names for things not definitely personified but individualized (e.g.,
marker stones or trees);
d. Place names;
e. Names of tribes, groups, etc.;
f. Names of institutions and corporations;
g. Titles, i.e., the names of books and other works of art;
h. Brand names, e.g., Coca Cola, Vaseline;
i. Names of events in history, e.g., the Sicilian Vespers, the Renaissance;
j. Names of abstractions not personified, e.g., Stoicism.

Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016) in their partial taxonomy of proper names outline the following:

a. Personal names
b. Place names
c. Names of months
d. Trade and brand names
e. Numbers
f. Names of diseases and biological species
g. Autonyms

Similarly, Langendonck (2007b: 184) uses a cognitive approach in his taxonomy of proper names and concludes that we have four major subclasses, which can be regarded as constituting a cline. First, there is the most important (prototypical) class mostly displaying a clear proprial lemma: personal names, animal names, place names and a few others. Second, there is the category of non-prototypical proper names with various kinds of lemmas that underlie appellatives as well as proper names. These compare more or less to the class of so-called 'appellative proper names': names of brands, languages, colour diseases, and the like. The dictionary entries underlying these categories can be called proprioappellative lemmas. The third and fourth classes are marginal categories that are not constituted by an *ad hoc* proprial or proprio-appellative lemma, i.e., autonyms (metalinguistic names like *bank* in the appositional structure *the word 'bank '*) and nouns with a restricted proprial function, e.g., the second noun in appositional structures of the form *the notion of relator; the element gold,* where we find an appellative lemma. From the foregoing, it is apparent that all the classifications of proper names include and, in most cases, starts with 'personal names'. We tend to agree with Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 33) who believe that personal names are arguably the most prototypical names. Furthermore, the number and types of names that are bestowed on people are highly culture specific, as are the principles that guide the choice of a name. In the next section, we discuss the different lexicographic positions on the inclusion of names in dictionaries while highlighting the major reasons and argument in the literature.

Proper Names and Lexicography
Marconi (1990: 77) suggests that proper names enjoy a special status from the lexicographer's viewpoint, and it is usually a negative status because proper names do not occur in modern dictionaries, or in the main list while citing examples like the English OED, the French Littré 1876, the German Grimm 1854-1960 among others which do not include proper names. There seems to be a general consensus in modern theories of lexicography that dictionaries do not, and should not include proper nouns. Most notably, Zgusta (1971: 118, 246) notes that they should be included only in case (a) they have developed into appellatives ("a Don Quijote"), or (b) the dictionary in the making is a dictionary of a dead language, or (c) of a language lacking a long literary tradition. In the latter two cases they

should be listed "only with a short indication of the categorial member ship" (such as "family name," "place name," etc.). According to Zgusta, that they represent "an encyclopedic element in the dictionary." Marconi (1990) notes that Migliorini (1961) appears to have correctly represented what still is the state of the art when he stated that "on one thing lexicographers agree at this point: proper names of persons and places should be excluded from dictionaries (or dealt with in special appendices)". Similarly, Grant (2016: 573) reveals that historically, lexicographers have tended to consider onomastic material as beyond the scope of their dictionaries. In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson explained in the preface to his *A Dictionary of the English Language* that:

> As my design was a dictionary, common or appellative, I have omitted all words which have relation to proper names; such as *Arian, Socinian, Calvinist, Benedictine, Mahometan*; but have retained those of a more general nature, as *Heathen, Pagan* (Johnson 1755 cited in Grant 2016: 572).

A similar approach was taken more than a century later by James Murray, the first editor of the original edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*), who explained in his introduction to the first volume that:

> In addition to, and behind, the common vocabulary, in all its diverging lines, lies an infinite number of *Proper* or merely *denotative* names, outside the province of lexicography, yet touching it in thousands of points. (Murray *et al.* 1888–1928 cited in Grant 2016: 572)

Furthermore, Mufwene (1988: 269) maintains that Rey-Debove (1971), for instance, goes as far as to claim that proper names should, more properly, be the concern of encyclopedias, which provide non-linguistic information, rather than of dictionaries. He believes that one of the arguments adduced in support of the common relegation of proper names to encyclopedias is the fact that they are normally used in discourse as referential indices, because their referents vary from network to network of interlocutors (e.g., family, friends, classmates, colleagues). Also, in the case of some languages (particularly those that do not have gender distinctions and a formal number agreement rule between the subject and the verb), one of the most useful pieces of linguistic information that can be provided about a proper name is just 'proper name'. Thus, proper names should, or may, be omitted from dictionaries. Underlying the lexicographic position for the omission of proper names from dictionaries is also the assumption that the speaker's knowledge of proper names is not really part of his/her knowledge of language, or proper names are nouns only in a special kind of way and function as such only peripherally (Rey-Debove 1971 cited in Mufwene 1988: 270).

Interestingly, Marconi (1990: 78) believes that proper names used to be in dictionaries before they were taken out. In an attempt to answer the question of when and why proper names stopped appearing in dictionaries, he notes that before 1700, 77% of the dictionaries had proper names in the main list, 23% lacked them or kept them separate; after 1700, 37% had them, 63% lacked them. It should be added that, among 39 dictionaries which lacked proper names before 1700, 6 were phraseologies (thus closer to conversation manuals than to modern dictionaries), and 8 were "methodic" (arranged by semantic field rather than alphabetically). On the other hand, of 18 dictionaries later than 1700 which did have proper names, 8 were English; and English lexicography was generally retarded with respect to the dominant trends of European lexicography. Marconi maintains that in the 16th, 17th and even early 18th centuries there was a market pressure in favour of proper names in dictionaries. Consequently, most lexicographers, to such pressure, so that most dictionaries had proper names in the main list, and some of those which lacked them added them in later editions (p.83). Consequently, he opines that the reason for the subsequent omission of names from dictionaries was twofold. First, the exclusion of proper names from dictionaries was a prerequisite for the emergence of the modern encyclopedia, because as long as proper names occurred in the dictionaries' lemmaries it was particularly hard to separate core knowledge about words which could be regarded as constitutive of linguistic competence from additional information which could be seen as "factual," or "non-linguistic" (the information that cats are animals as opposed to the information that Manx cats have no tail). This is because proper names

were glossed by mostly "factual" information. Secondly, proper names were the victims of the emergence of meaning as the crucial business of dictionaries. Earlier dictionaries (from the beginning of the Christian era until late 17th century) were not much concerned with "giving the meaning" in the sense in which modern dictionaries are, or think they are. As soon as preoccupation with meanings became prominent and that was an effect of the ideational theory among other factors proper names had to go, because it seemed clear that, even if they had meanings, such meanings were not easily accounted for along the methodological lines which were, at that point, established (Marconi 1990: 87,88).

On the contrary, Mufwene (1988) addresses the question of whether or not proper names deserve as much to be entered in the dictionary as common nouns and other kinds of lexical units. He refers to a *dictionary* as a compendium of information about lexical units as *linguistic signs* while maintaining that dictionaries have treated proper nouns in three different ways:

1.   omit them, except for those that are also used as common nouns or parts thereof (e.g., *Venus, Venus's comb),* or define these common-noun uses and thereby possibly refer to the particular individuals or circumstances which have led to such derivative uses, as in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, compact edition 1971), in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (1961), and in most French dictionaries;

2.   include them as a bonus at the end of the dictionary and A) identify as briefly as possible some famous individuals or places they name (e.g., *'Einstein, Albert,* German-born physicist, became Am. citizen (1940), received Nobel prize (1921)', or *"Aristotle...*Greek philosopher') as in *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* (WNTCD 1979), or B) specify whether they are male or female names and indicate their pronunciations (e.g., *'Amy* (f.) ['eimi]') as in Hornby's (1963) *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English;*

3.   include the most common ones (native and non-native) because they are also lexical units/linguistic signs, and provide, among other things, some linguistic information about them (e.g., 'John1 (j^n). A masculine given name...'), as in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (AHD 1969) (cf. Mufwene 1988: 269).

Crucial to his argument for the inclusion of proper names is his position on the status of proper names as linguistic signs. He insists that proper names and their derivative adjectives are linguistic signs. Thus, they are constrained in the same way as common nouns and the adjectives which are derived from them. Additionally, he affirms that their usage presupposes the same kind of linguistic knowledge that is required to be able to use common nouns, regarding, e.g., pronunciation, spelling, grammatical number, gender, and delimitative possibilities. So far, we have highlighted the various motivations and arguments for and against the inclusion of proper nouns in contemporary dictionaries.

Philosophical implications of theories of proper names and meaning
To facilitate a better understanding of proper names, it is of the essence to evaluate the possible implication of different theories advanced so far on the use and meaningfulness of proper names vis-à-vis their references. Starting with Mill's account which states that proper names must 'in the same sense' refer to 'only one thing' (Mill, 1882, p. 33), that they must 'stand for a thing' (Mill, 1882, p. 35) and that they must 'signify a subject only' (Mill, 1882, p. 38) without implying anything about its attributes. Millian account of proper names has been criticized on the basis of its inability to resolve identity claims and also the negligence of connotation in meanings in favour of denotation. For instance, we can have two names for an object with different senses (this is the stance of Frege); This term, Sense, refers to 'the mode of presentation of the referent' (Morris, 35, p. 35). So, instead of, in the case of Mill, a proper name referring only to the entity itself, Frege suggests that they refer to the sense in which that entity is being regarded. Therefore, instead of the denotative meaning of proper names, we should focus more on the sense proper names convey which underscore their meanings. For instance, the proper name: 'head' may not necessarily denote but can be used in several senses: human head, head of a unit etc. This view presupposes the contextuality of proper names.

Another contentious aspect of Mill's account on proper names is the fact that proper names ought not imply any attribute in relation to their referents. This has been refuted by Russel's descriptive theory of

proper names where he argued that the meaning of a proper name is in its description; an instance of such definite description is: 'Biden is the president of America'. The proper name, 'Biden' derives its meaning from the description: 'is the president of America' and therefore, logically equivalent to it in this particular sense of its usage (Frege). This simply means that beyond the Mill's denotative function of proper names, they do also represent attributes of a referent. This can be seen in the understandings of proper names in Igbo-Nigerian tradition and indeed, a good number of traditions in the world. For instance, the Igbo tribe of Nigeria attach too much importance to names; that is to say that names go beyond mere designatory status given to them in the Mill's account. Proper names for the Igbo are embodiments of values, morals, beliefs, aspirations, etc. This fact can be substantiated by some of the names they give to humans such as: *Nwanneka*: meaning, brotherhood is supreme; this name underscores the communalistic nature and belief of the Igbo. *Amobi*: meaning, the mind is unknown or who can tell what is in the mind? *Obumneme* and *Obumneke*: meaning, Am I the omnipotence? And Am I the He that creates? These two serve as reminders of man's limitations. The same understandings can be seen in the names given to towns, villages and other things amongst the Igbo. They are not just designations but reflections and embodiments of different attributes as against the Millian position.

On the other hand, Russell's descriptive position may not totally be in consonance with the Igbo's approach to proper names; this is because, the description of a proper name amongst the Igbo may not be logically equivalent to the proper name. For instance, the proper name *Nwanneka* may not be logically equivalent to its description: '*Nwanneka* is the son of Mr. *Okoro*'; here, '…the son of Mr. *Okoro*' cannot be said to be logically equivalent to '*Nwanneka*' (but can be one of the logical equivalents). This is because, as a name, *Nwanneka* underscores a reality about Nigerians of Igbo extraction and therefore, meaningful on itself. The attachment of a referential description to the name does only confer additional meaning but not logically equivalent to the name. A critical mind may raise an objection to this view on the ground that whatever description (may be, the brotherhood-belief description) the Igbo give to *Nwanneka*, it still goes a long way to authenticate Russel's descriptive theory.   This point raises another important debate on the issue of proper names and meaning which bothers on the user's intention and pragmatism in relation to the question: must proper names refer in order to be meaningful?

On the referential implication of names, it is important to state that references must not necessarily denote existentially, a view captured by Ridley (2016: 160) stating that the expectation of reference does not require that objects of reference exist. An analogy can be drawn between this (that is, the belief that references must be existentially established) and the 'verification principle' of the logical positivists in philosophy. The logical positivists believe that every meaningful proposition must be empirically verified. Sequel to this view, religious and metaphysical statements were adjudged nonsensical simply because they do not refer to the observables. Amongst the criticisms levelled against this position was the fact that they refused to see language as a game; a view captured by Wittgenstein (1953) where he holds that just like the games with their accompanying rules, language is also used in contexts with their accompanying rules as well. The same way one cannot use the rules guiding the game of football to judge the game of basketball is the same way one cannot use semantic rules guiding language used in pure sciences to measure that of metaphysics or religion. Therefore, the logical positivists thought wrongly that the pure scientific verification yardstick can be employed to measure the meaningfulness of propositions in religion and metaphysics.

What one can deduce from the above analogy is the fact that the speaker's intention and use of proper names determine their referents and this varies from one context to another. The possibility of a context where a name may refer to something that cannot be empirically established is granted. This is because, there is always this tendency to tie references to existence. For instance, the proposition: "Buhari is the present king of Nigeria" may be treated as meaningless because of the seeming non-existent of the referent; that is, the fact that Nigeria does not have a king but a president. When viewed from the intention of the speaker, then, we can ask: did the use of the proper name and the assigned referent serve the communicative intention of the speaker? If the choice of referent serves the intention, then, one begins to understand the meaning. It could be that that the user was trying to buttress the fact that Buhari's style of leadership depicts that of a king and not that of a democratic president. In line with the above explanations, yes, proper names must refer because without references, proper names will be

in self-denial but names do not refer *tout court*. Only uses of a name, or a name as uttered on an occasion, or speakers using names, can refer (Ridley: *Ibid*). This may go a long way to explaining the near-none-presence of proper names in our lexicons because of the inexhaustible connotative nature of proper names.

The major concerns with subjecting references of proper names to the intentions of the user are: the risk of slippery slope and lack of orderliness. This simply means that no proper name will have a particular attached reference which is coetaneous with it, rather the references and by extension; the meaning of proper names is subject to the whims of the user. The possible consequence of this can be seen when one says something like: "New York is a Nigerian City" and will be adjudged correct in consonance with the 'intention argument'. The speaker may have a reason for making New York to refer in that sense. One can easily see that such would definitely bring distortion to our communicative systems. On the other hand, a coetaneous fixing of referents to proper names would also foreclose the future possible expansion of the use of proper names. Proper names function in contexts and this also determines their references, thus, makes it improper to have proper names coetaneous with their accompanying references. Where does this leave us?

Conclusion
Pragmatism is a philosophical movement that includes those who claim that an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that unpractical ideas are to be rejected (McDermid: Internet encyclopaedia of Philosophy). In a nutshell, pragmatism preaches workability; that is, whatever that works is true and meaningful. Without going into some of the demerits of pragmatism, it is important to be eclectic in selecting the aspects of it that can serve the purpose of this research. A deep reflection on names and their references will unveil an uncensored union of the two; that is, all the semantic laws are not binding on references of names, they are silent in that respect. This simply leaves us with the only option of determining what referent to assign to a name giving to the nature of the context and what serves our communicative purpose in it---- thus, pragmatism. Therefore, we attribute referents to names in line with what works and serves our communicative purposes in different contexts. This does not suggest some kind of anarchism in the use of names but it underscores the dynamism of the use of names and contexts. From the arguments so far, one can see the possible reason for non-inclusion of most proper names in the lexicons. Apart from containing the meaning of words, lexicons also incapsulate the use of words and their accompanying rules; proper names as stated earlier, do not abide by these semantic rules, thus, arguably the justifiability of their not being prominently included in the lexicons.

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