

McDowell. Evans' Frege.

1 Russell on Proper Names and Definite Descriptions

- Subject-predicate sentences (163)
 - Definite descriptions are thought as in the subject position
 - e.g., the F is G
 - but in fact: there is exactly one thing that is F, and it is G
 - Logical proper names: really are in the subject position
- The Theory of Descriptions
- Russell: definite descriptions as opposed to logically proper names (163)
 - The significance of proper names lies in their referent
 - The significance of definite descriptions lies in the fact that they are constituted by independently meaningful words
- The absence of object means that the sentence containing the proper name expresses no thought; whereas the sentence containing the definite descriptions is at worst false (164)

2 Russell's Theory of Descriptions

- For Russell, thoughts expressible through logically proper names are accessible to thinkers only through acquaintance with the objects (164)
- For this reason, the applications of the Theory of Descriptions should be extended to sentences that don't actually contain definite descriptions (164-5)
 - The Theory of Descriptions also apply to what we would normally regard as singular referring expressions, insofar as the objects of the expressions are outside the range of acquaintance
 - e.g., ordinary proper names, ordinary use of demonstratives
 - There are no way to confirm the existence of anything other than what we are acquainted with
 - because we cannot know whether the objects of the sentences exist, we can't say for sure that there are thoughts when uttering sentences
 - So, must consider names as disguised descriptions, to avoid the consequence that there is only an illusion of thoughts when uttering empty sentences
 - Worst case scenario is just that the sentence will be false
- Don't understand what is going on in 165-6: seems to be talking about Russell's own motivation for extending the Theory of Description to ordinary proper names ^[1]
- Stressed that the semantic character of logically proper names differs from that of definite descriptions even though both single out one object (167)

3 Sense

- a singular term indicates the object that the thought expressed by the sentence contains it (167)
 - Cannot be the only way for singular terms to contribute to the thought expressed by the sentence...
 - for otherwise the thought expressed by singular terms with the same referent would be indistinguishable (168)
- sometimes needs sense to distinguish singular terms that have the same referent (167-8)
 - A rational agent can hold different propositional attitudes towards sentences that contain the singular terms with the same referent --> indicates different thoughts
 - the singular terms differ in their contribution to the thoughts expressed by the sentence --> same Bedeutung, different senses
- In connection to Frege's attack on psychologism of logic (169)
 - logic is how mind should proceed in certain transitions from beliefs to beliefs, rather than how mind actually does it
 - Both the concept of sense and the concept of deductive inference are descriptions of the configuration of minds (169-70)
 - but this doesn't mean they are to be construed psychologically...
 - because both the concept of sense and of deductive inference make sense only in the context of the concept of rationality ^[2]
- Sense of different linguistic expressions (170)
 - Thoughts expressed by whole sentences are individuated by the Intuitive Criterion of Difference
 - "...the thought associated with one sentence S as its sense must be different from the thought associated with another sentence S' as its sense, if it is possible for someone *to understand both sentences at a given time while coherently taking different attitudes towards them*, i.e., accepting (rejecting) one while rejecting (accepting), or being agnostic about, the other" (Evans 18-9)
 - Senses of sub-sentential expressions are to be individuated in a way that specifies their contribution to the thoughts expressed by the sentences that contain them

4 Frege, Descriptivism, and Kripke

- Summary: sense as a mode of presentation (170)
- Since Frege illustrates the sense of Aristotle in terms of 'the pupil of Plato' and 'the teacher of Alexander', his concept of sense is assimilated to definite descriptions (171)
- Kripke attacked the idea of descriptive conceptions of singular reference (171)
 - --> people start to focus on contextual relations between the object and the thought and speech in thinking about singular referring expressions

- The relation between the object and the thought can be phrased in terms of Russell's acquaintance, but no one interprets Russell in this way (171-2)
- Kripke's objection to descriptivism is considered as a challenge to Frege's sense (172)
 - sense doesn't determine referent
 - Something outside the sphere of subject's rationality is needed, e.g., causal relations between thinkers and objects

5 Fregean Sense and Object Dependence

- Russell's sense of object dependence: (172-3)
 - propositions are individuated by objects and their properties
 - no room for Fregean sense
- But in another sense of object dependence, one can ascribe Fregean sense (173)
 - Fregean sense can be applied to Russellian thoughts "in the sense of being dependent for their being available to be thought or expressed on the existence of their objects"
 - Fregean sense provides a more fine-grained individuation of thoughts than individuation merely by objects thought about ^[3]
- The sense of a referring expression is the way one thinks of the object of the expression --> Fregean sense doesn't imply object independence (173)
- This recognition allows for a synthesis between Kripke's emphasis on the importance of contextual relation for object directedness and Fregean emphasis on rationality (174-5) ^[4]

6 The Object of Propositions

- Frege's position: the Bedeutung of a sentence is its truth value (175)
 - Common reaction: Bedeutung of the sentence should be a concatenation of the Bedeutung of the significant components of the sentence
 - So the Bedeutung of a sentence should be "a situation...that is actual or not according to whether or not the sentence could be truly asserted"
- Barwise and Perry: Frege's use of 'Bedeutung' is to capture the intuitive idea of 'reference' (176)
 - The idea of 'reference' is controlled by the principle of 'the Priority of External Significance'
 - The principle: "the mental significance of language, including the role of sentences embedded in attitude reports, is adequately explained by their external significance, properly understood" (42, Situations and Attitudes)
 - This is opposed to the conception that an expression's significance is internal to the subjects' mind
 - Barwise and Perry take it that Frege's Bedeutung cannot supply the sentences with a kind of external significance where the specific structure isn't eliminated

- Frege's Bedeutung only allows 'true' or 'false'
- So, for Frege, no specificity is preserved in Bedeutung
- Barwise and Perry assume that the specific structure in external significance is not preserved at the level of Sinn (176)
 - But, not true
 - Sinn in an assertion is what one says in the utterance
 - What one says is that things are thus and so; if it is the case that things are thus and so, then they are states of affairs
 - So, Frege can capture the idea of 'states of affairs' (176, which implies that (176-177):
 - 1. structural specificity is preserved on Frege's account
 - 2. meaningful sentences are directed at external world

Further implications: the compatibility of Sinn and object dependence suggest that one's mental state is already directed at the object when entertaining the Sinn of the sentence (thought) that is about the object

Advancing from a thought to its truth value, which is what we do in judgment on Frege's account, cannot be a step that starts from a configuration that is not world-directed and moves to a stance that is world directed... A thought is already to the effect that things are thus and so. It does not acquire its bearing on the world when someone affirms it inwardly in judgment or outwardly in assertion.

And when we do focus on singular terms, it needs no detail of interpretation to see that for Frege, having an object in mind can only be entertaining a thought partly determined by a singular Sinn. There is no need for a further step - advancing from a thought to a truth value - in order to arrive at a position in which one's mind is directed towards the associated Bedeutung. One's mind is already directed towards the associated Bedeutung just by virtue of entertaining a thought determined by the relevant Sinn (177-8).

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1. suggestion: Bismarck example: everyone excepts Bismarck cannot grasp a thought about Bismarck in the genuine subject-predicate form; but Russell thinks it is fine. This would be strange if Russell's motivation is indeed to avoid illusory thoughts ↩
 2. not sure what is going on here ↩
 3. YY (an unconfident interpretation): in the first sense, the individuation of propositions is completely determined by the objects, whereas in the second sense, the individuation of propositions is merely partially determined by the objects ↩

4. Don't know how it works. Is it saying that contextual relation provides the thoughts with objects, and then rationality based on these objects provides finer distinctions? ↩