

Is Perry a Fregean?

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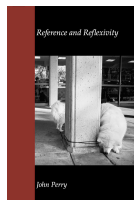
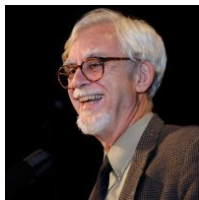
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Outline

- 1 Introduction
 - John Perry
 - Gottlob Frege
- 2 Reference of Proper Names
 - Referentialism
 - Frege's Sense
 - Perry's Reflexivity
- 3 Reference of Indexicals
 - Perry on Indexicals
 - Frege on Indexicals
- 4 Conclusion
 - Is Perry a Fregean?
 - Concluding remarks
 - Discussion

John Perry - Reference and Reflexivity



John Perry (born 1943) - Reference and Reflexivity (2001)

*[Philosophy] didn't have a lot of facts or results to keep straight . . . any chain of reasoning more than three steps long can be ignored, so I became a **philosopher** and have been happy ever since.*

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Referentialism

Referential content captures intuitions about *what is said*.

referential content \rightarrow reference

Arguments in favour of Referentialism:

- Argument from same saying
- Argument from counterfactual truth-conditions

Problems for Referentialism

The problems for Referentialism are problems any semantic theory should deal with:

- Co-reference problem
- No-reference problem

Cognitive significance needs to be explained.

Frege's alternative

Frege introduces sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung).

sense \rightarrow reference

- Co-reference: different senses, same reference
- No-reference: a sense, but no reference

Cognitive significance is explained.

Perry introduces Reflexive Content

The reflexive content of a proper name appeals to permissive naming conventions.

reflexive content \rightarrow referential content \rightarrow reference

- Co-reference: different conventions exploited, same reference
- No-reference: use of name exploits connection to a notion network, but has reference

Cognitive significance is explained.

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Indexicals

Perry defines indexicals as

... words like 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'that woman', 'here', 'now' and 'today', that designate different objects depending on who says them and when. 'I', for example, designates me if I say it, and you if you say it; 'today' designates a new day every twenty-four hours.

Indexical content

Indexical content is a type of reflexive content that explains the cognitive significance of indexicals.

indexical content \rightarrow referential content \rightarrow reference

Example:

(1) *I am a philosopher.*

Indexical content:

That the speaker of (1) is a philosopher.

Example

(2) *I am Ruben.*

Reflexive content (before indexical content):

That the speaker of (2) is the person the convention exploited by (2) permits one to designate with 'Ruben'.

Indexical content:

That the speaker of (2) is Ruben.

Referential content:

That Ruben is Ruben.

The Sense of an Indexical

Does an indexical have a sense?
The co-reference problem revisited.

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What Perry accepts

Perry accepts the basics of Frege's theory.

- The cognitive constraint on semantics.
- The distinction between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) as recognizing the distinction between 'conditions of standing for things' and 'things words stand for'.

What Perry rejects

Perry rejects Frege's theory on some key points:

- That sense (Sinn) determines thought (Gedanke).
- That Frege tries to find a singular proposition to fit his needs (he commits the 'subject matter fallacy').

Perry is a bit of a Fregean

- Indexicals force Perry to let go of some of Frege's theory.
- Perry shows that being a Fregean and a Referentialist is hard, but doable (kind of).

If the acceptance of this distinction and its importance is all that is required to be Fregean, the reflexive-referential theory is surely Fregean. (Reference and Reflexivity, p.194)

Discussion points

Questions?

