FREGE'S AND RUSSELL'S SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF NON-EXISTENT SUBJECT TERMS, IDENTITY STATEMENTS AND OPAQUE CONTEXTS

ELIZABETH KITIS

FREGE'S AND RUSSELL'S SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF NON-EXISTENT SUBJECT TERMS, IDENTITY STATEMENTS AND OPAQUE CONTEXTS*

In quest of solutions to philosophical problems, philosophers in the twentieth century felt the need to cross the boundaries of their field and appeal to what we now call "Philosophy of Language". Arguably the Philosophy of Language is a subject-matter within philosophy but one would not want to deny that, although Linguistic Philosophy and the Philosophy of Language have always occupied their part in philosophy since the time of the Greek Philosophers, it was only in our century that such a consciousness was fully developed.

The German philosopher and mathematician, Gottlob Frege with his celebrated essay "On Sense and Reference" (1982) marks the beginning of this new era with Meinong[1] and Russell following. In what follows we will try to give a bare outline of the two theories of language developed by Frege and Russell and we will see how they each solve the above problems.

Frege's most important contribution to the Philosophy of Language was his distinction between Sense (Sinn) and Reference (Bedeutung). How did he arrive at this distinction? Considering the question of equality (identity), he was faced with a number of problems: is equality a relation between objects or between names or signs[2] of objects? If we accept that it is a relation obtaining between objects (Gegenstände), then we will assume that a=a and a=b are identical statements and that a=b is a relation of a thing to itself. But this is a trivial thing to say. Frege maintains that a=b "often contains very valuable extensions of our knowledge" (p. 56); to give an example, "Hesperus = Hesperus" (a=a) holds a priori and is not informative while "Hesperus = Phosphorus" (a=b) contains information; it was an extension of our knowledge because it was an astronomical discovery[3].

Now if we regard equality as a relation between two names or signs designating the same thing, then this equality will hold, provided the two signs refer to the same object. In this case Frege maintains that the identity

Faculty of Philosophy Yearbook 1989, v. 1, 141-158
Aristotle University
Thessaloniki 1989

statement expressed by "a=b" does not refer to the subject matter but to its mode of presentation (Art des Gegebenseins), as we can arbitrarily assign any name to any object we like; "we would express no proper knowledge by its means. But in many cases this is just what we want to do" (p. 57). With a statement of identity "a=b" obtaining between two names describing two modes of designation of the same thing, we do not express proper or comprehensive knowledge (of the world), but we succeed in communicating factual knowledge of the world. In this case our statement "a=b" is informative.

So what is this mode of presentation? It is the way in which an object is given and is contained in what Frege calls Sense (Sinn). A name or a sign refers to an object in the world and this object is the reference of it[4].

So we distinguish between reference and sense. The sense of an expression is grasped by anyone who has knowledge of the language to which it belongs, Frege points out, but it illuminates only one side of the reference (einseitig beleuchtet). "Comprehensive knowledge of the reference", Frege writes, "would require us to be able to say immediately whether any given sense belongs to it" (p. 58). This statement might be given two quite distinct interpretations: (a) we need comprehensive knowledge of the reference in order to be in a position, given any arbitrarily chosen sense, to tell whether this sense is a mode of presentation of this object, or (b) given any arbitrarily chosen sense S, we can never tell whether S is a mode of presentation of object O unless we have comprehensive knowledge of O. Clearly, (b) is a much stronger assertion than (a); since Frege thinks that we never attain comprehensive knowledge of O, it would follow from (b), but not from (a), that we can in fact never tell whether a sense S fits an object of reference , whereas from (a) it follows only that we can't always tell.

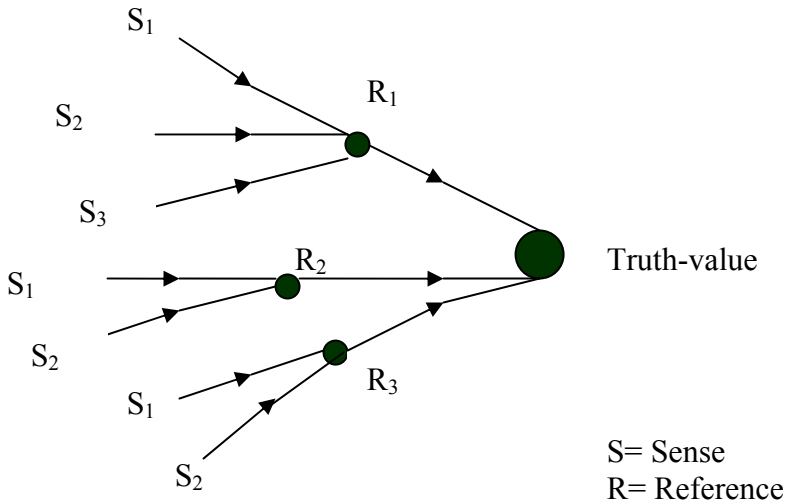
Diagrammatically we may conceive of a reference as a circle and of the senses pertaining to it as each illuminating only one aspect of the reference. This mode of presentation of any aspect of the reference is the sense. It should be noted that senses may overlap. A proper and comprehensive knowledge of the language would require us to be able to acknowledge all the senses of a reference as belonging to it. So to a reference there correspond many senses but not vice versa.

We now turn to another problem. What does the distinction between Sense and Reference consist in? according to Frege's theory this is not a distinction between two ingredients within the sphere of meaning. Reference is not an ingredient of meaning; it is a notion entailed in The Theory of Meaning but not within the premises of the meaning which we

intuitively grasp in our understanding the word or expression. Therefore one cannot be accused of not knowing the meaning of a word or an expression if one does not know the reference of it. As Dummett (1981:93) puts it, "the possession of reference by a word or expression consists in an association between it and something in the world –something of an appropriate logical type, according to the logical category to which the word belongs" and our understanding the word or expression does not presuppose this association.

The sense of an expression is an ingredient of meaning[5]. It is everything within the meaning of a word or an expression which is relevant to the determination of its reference. It is an apparatus which will furnish the necessary information to enable us to locate the reference. The distinction between sense and reference should be extended to sentences. The sense of a sentence is the thought of it and the sense of the part is relevant to the sense of the whole sentence. In order for a sentence to have reference all its constituents must have reference. "We are therefore driven into accepting the *truth value*[6] of a sentence as constituting its reference" (Frege, p. 63). The relation of the thought to its truth-value is compared to that of sense to reference. If we replace a part of a sentence with another of the same reference then the truth-value of the whole sentence remains unchanged[7]. It follows that the sense of a word is relevant to determining the truth-value of the sentence containing it.

This can be shown diagrammatically as follows:



The senses determine the references of the components of the sentence, which in their turn determine the truth-value of the whole sentence. It should be noted that this is a one way process, i.e. reference does not determine sense.

We next turn to an examination of Frege's solutions to the problems of non-existent subject terms, opaque contexts and identity statements. Frege introduced the notion of sense mainly to account for such problems as the failure of the substitutivity of identity and the difficulty of quantifying into opaque contexts. As Quine maintains, one of the fundamental principles governing identity is that of substitutivity;[8] "…it provides that, *given a true statement of identity, one of its two terms may be substituted for the other in any true statement and the result will be true*" (Quine, 1953:139). We have seen how Frege tries to solve this puzzle. If we make identity hold between objects then we come up against trivial and false statements devoid of any content of information: "Venus is The Morning Star", "Venus is Venus", or to quote an example by Quine:

> "Giorgone was so called because of his size",
> "Giorgone = Barbarelli",
> "Barbarelli was so called because of his size",

which is a false statement.

We see that we can easily find cases of contradicting the above principle. Frege's argument is set out in terms of the principle of cognitive value: How can an assertion of identity be informative and yet not false? How can we acknowledge that two things are identical and at the same time learn something, which we did not know before, by virtue of this identity statement? Frege claims to have solved the problem by introducing the distinction between sense and reference. The reference of "Venus" is the same as that of "The Morning Star" but their senses are different and as the senses of words determine the sense of the whole sentence, the thought entailed in the sense of the sentence "Venus is The Morning Star" is different from that entailed in "Venus is Venus". In this case the two sentences do not have the same cognitive value, i.e. "Venus is The Morning Star" adds to our knowledge of the world as compared to "Venus is Venus", which is a trivial, uninformative thing to say. Arguably, the underlying principle in this argument is that sense advances knowledge.

However, if this were so it would seem to imply that, because "Venus is Venus" does not, or cannot, extend our knowledge, it lacks sense. But Frege does not demonstrate this; rather, he wants to claim that it has a different sense to "Venus is The Morning Star". Grasping the sense

of a proper name implies not only our association of this name with a particular object but also our ability to identify the object in a particular way revealed by the name. Therefore if we replace a part of a sentence by another having the same reference but different sense, the sense of the whole sentence is affected, though its reference remains unchanged.

Does Frege actually solve the problem? Frege's theory lacks an independent identity condition for senses, with the consequence that, although terms with the same reference are interchangeable *salva veritate,* "senses as objects become idle wheels turning nothing". In Quine's phrase, "No entity without identity" (Linsky, 1971:92)[9].

The major deficiency of his theory is that it is incapable of picking up the reference of the same name appearing both inside and outside the scope of a modal operator. Consider:

> "Scott was the author of Waverley, although George IV didn't know that he was the author of Waverley".

In this example, "Scott" has its customary reference while "he" has its customary sense as its indirect reference as we will see later. "He" does not have a customary reference because it occurs in an oblique context. How then can "he" be identified with "Scott"? Frege's theory is incapable of providing us with a solution to the problem; on the contrary, it creates the problem. A solution for Frege –which however would lead him into another problem– would be to recognise the opaque / transparent interpretations of sentences.

The results of Frege's theory, namely that the sense of a sentence is the thought expressed by it and the reference of a sentence is its truth-value, hold in ordinary cases, i.e., in isolated sentences. It was these same notions which compelled him to point out that the principle of intersubstitutivity, if applied to the customary (ordinary) reference of names, is not valid in oblique contexts.

Linsky writes that "contexts productive of failure of substitutivity are … called by Quine 'referentially opaque' …. Referential opacity poses a problem because our semantics is inapplicable to opaque contexts" (p. 90).

Why is Frege's theory, as explicated so far, inapplicable to opaque contexts? Consider:

"John knows that Venus is the Morning Star". According to the principle of interchangeability of coreferential terms we could substitute the expression "The Evening Star" for the expression "The Morning Star". In this case we would come up against:

"John knows that Venus is the Evening Star",

which may not be the case. The fact that John knows that Venus is the Morning Star does not imply in any way that he also happens to know that Venus is the Evening Star. The same would happen with a false proposition within an operator:

"Murray believes that Plato was a Roman philosopher".

In this case you can't replace the false proposition by another fals proposition *salva veritate* because the fact that Murray believes something which is not true does not allow us to infer that he also believes another false statement.

In order to account for such problems, Frege had to amend his theory, even at the cost of making it more complicated. On Frege's view, in an oblique context, words have their customary sense but they do not have their customary reference, and in such a context we can replace an expression, or indeed the whole sentence within the context, by another of the same sense. The sentence within an oblique context has its oblique (indirect) reference instead of its ordinary (customary) one, and its oblique sense instead of its ordinary one. It follows, therefore, that the oblique reference of a name is the same as its ordinary sense and the oblique reference of a sentence is not its truth-value but the thought which is its ordinary sense.

The principle puts certain constraints which rule out startling instances like the ones mentioned above. In Linsky's words, "from a Fregean point of view, such contexts are incorrectly characterized as 'referentially opaque' (Ungerade). For Frege, they are producers of reference shift rather than reference failure, and he calls them 'oblique'" (p. 91). So "by shifting the domain of discourse" Frege retains his semantics.

We have seen that Frege differentiates between the ordinary and the oblique sense of a name. was this distinction a consequence of the distinction he made between the ordinary and the oblique reference? Assuming that the customary sense of a name is its meaning, then "what are we to think of as its oblique sense? Another meaning?" (Linsky, 1967:28). Frege failed to qualify this third entity. Linsky's puzzle, however, is resolved if Frege is taken with Dummett's amendment: Dummett argues that oblique sense is a superfluous complication of Frege's theory, and that he ought rather to have said that one and the same sense determines different references in different sentential contexts

(chapter 9). Furthermore, Linsky finds it absurd that we are supposedly referring to sense in an opaque context when we are actually referring to the existence of an object, say to a planet.

The complication of Frege's theory gives rise to the problem of identity we encountered above, namely, that it is incapable of reflecting the identity of terms occurring both inside and outside the scopes of modal operators.

According to Frege's own analysis, another problem arises within certain contexts when one occurrence of a sentence has two different references at the same time. Consider Frege's own examples:

(i) "Bebel fancies that the return of Alsace-Lorraine would appease France's desire for revenge".

Here two thoughts are expressed:

(ia) Bebel believes that the return of Alsace-Lorraine would appease France's desire for revenge.
(1b) The return of Alsace-Lorraine would appease France's desire for revenge.

Frege says that "the subordinate clause in our original complex sentence is to be taken twice over, with different reference, standing once for a thought, once for a truth-value" (p. 76). Indeed our subordinate clause in (ia) has an oblique reference, while (ib) has an ordinary one. The assignment of double references to a name[10] for the same occurrence seems to be an embarrassing consequence of Frege's theory. There are a number of things one could say about this example: Firstly, (i) is perhaps ambiguous; in other words it has a reading where "fancies" means "is of the opinion of", and in this case (ib) has no place. Secondly, it is not clear in what sense the thought of (ib) is "expressed". And, thirdly, (ib) is perhaps "presupposed" under some sort of interpretation of "fancies". However, the curious logic of the word "fancies" is not an artefact of Frege's unnecessarily complicated semantics; the complications are just there.

There remains to be examined the problem of non-existent subject terms. Making use of the distinction between sense and reference Frege was able to account for this problem. He points out that in natural language there are proper names without a reference, and as the references of the parts of a sentence determine the reference of the whole sentence, he adds that likewise there are sentences without a reference. This does not prevent

them from having a sense; what they lack is their reference. The sentence, "Odysseus was set ashore at Ithaca while sound asleep", has a sense but lacks reference because one of its components, "Odysseus", lacks a reference.

Frege warns, that if we try to advance from sense to reference, i.e., if we try to regard the sentence as true or false, we will assign to the name "Odysseus" a reference, "for it is of the reference of the name that the predicate is affirmed or denied" (p. 62). What we are concerned with in poetry, mythology or fiction, Frege says, is the sense of the sentences, the images and feelings. The question of truth would then be an intruder.

Linsky in *Referring* seems dissatisfied; he points out that we can't be happy about the statement: "The home of Ulysses was in Italy". We want to say that it actually was in Greece and that this statement was false. But if Homer had placed Ulysses's home in Italy, he would not have said something which was either true or false. The same uneasiness is implicit in Dummett's relevant point when he argues that "the use of a name in literary criticism to refer to a fictional character differs … from its use *in* fiction, for here, while the sense is quite specific, the reference does not fail" (p. 160). When a critic refers to Hamlet he refers to a specific figure in Literature; he can't claim that he was a poor carpenter but Shakespeare could have made him anything but a Prince had he decided so, and it would not have been false had he made him a poor carpenter.

Another contradiction is that the statement "Cerberus does not exist" is true; how can it be true since "Cerberus" lacks a reference? A Fregean answer would go as follows: In a sentence like this, we are not talking about a certain identifiable dog, nor yet is this a misleading way of saying that "Cerberus" names no dog;[11] it is about a certain well-known use or sense of the name "Cerberus", and tells us that to this sense there answers no reference.

It should be made clear that, although Frege believed that this was a correct account of the workings of natural language, he maintained that it was an entirely unsatisfactory state of affairs and in a well-constructed language such a defect should not be tolerated. No proper name[12] could have a place in such a language without being ascribed a reference.

It is clear that while Frege was mainly concerned with the theme of identity, Russell centred around the problem of non-existent subject terms which constituted the departing point for inventing his Theory of Descriptions.

In order to understand Russell's Theory of Descriptions (1905, 1910) –with which he purports to solve all the puzzles which "a theory as to denoting ought to be able to solve"– we must first understand its

background which, in fact, constitutes the incentive for the formulation of this theory. His earlier theory of Denoting, as expounded in his "Principles of Mathematics", appears to be very different from his Theory of Descriptions and similar to Meinong's views which Russell later attacks in his "On Denoting". "When a class-concept[13], preceded by one of the six words, "all", "every", "any", "a", "some", "the"[14], occurs in a proposition, the proposition is, as a rule, not "about" the concept formed of the two words together, but about an object quite different from this, in general, not a concept at all, but a term or complex of terms" (1903:64). In order to understand the import of his statement we must understand the meaning of the technical word "term"; in Russell's own words a term is "whatever may be an object of thought, or may occur in any true or false proposition or can be counted as one" (ibid., p. 43). He regards this term as the widest word in the philosophical vocabulary[15] and as synonymous with the words "unit", "individual"[16] and "entity". "A man, a moment or number, a class, a relation, a chimera, or anything else that can be mentioned, is sure to be a term". He adds that every term is a logical subject, a view which in two years' time was going to offend his feeling of reality. So, he concludes, every denoting phrase in a sentence stands for some kind of entity.

However this was a view Russell wanted to be liberated from[17] because "logic … must no more admit a unicorn than zoology can" (1920:169). Russell was concerned with the "reconstruction" of ordinary language which would culminate in a "logically" perfect language, through which, he believed, the clarification of ontological problems should be pursued. Not having a distinction between Sense and Reference to make use of in connection with the problem of non-existing subject terms, he would either accept that everything we talk about had some sort of being or he should rid his theory of embarrassing descriptive phrases lacking a nominatum. From the first view he gradually moved toward his Theory of Descriptions, dictated by the notion that "obstinate addiction to ordinary language" bars the way toward the solution of metaphysical problems.

Thus Russell proceeds to declare ordinary language grammar misleading as to its logical form; in this respect language is defective, a defect which should be remedied. Indeed he felt that sentences in ordinary language disguised their logical forms instead of exhibiting it and it was our responsibility to make it explicit by the correct analysis of language; the remedy consisted in recasting or "reconstructing" language.

One of the defects of ordinary language Russell sets out to remedy, in his Theory of Descriptions, is in connection with descriptive phrases which do not always function referentially and therefore are incomplete symbols, i.e., do not have any meaning in isolation, but acquire one, only in

context like the syncategorematic words. Russell held that every "symbol" was either an incomplete one or a proper name. The logically proper names of the language must be words that designate objects with which we are acquainted, and these words will be the ultimate constituents in an ideal language.

His doctrine of logically proper names results from his theory of acquaintance; "…in every proposition that we can apprehend … all the constituents are really entities with which we have immediate acquaintance" (1905, 1949:119). Implicit in this quotation is a correlation between the logicoontological aspect of constituents and his theory of acquaintance. Therefore, Russell assumes that the individual directly designated by the symbol –in this case specified as a proper name– is its meaning, which implies that the meaning of a logically proper name is its bearer[18].

It follows that in any subject-predicate sentence the meaning of the subject-term is its bearer; therefore, the subject of a genuine subject-predicate sentence must be a logically proper name. now consider:

"The round square does not exist".

If it is a genuine subject-predicate sentence, then, in order to be meaningful, its subject should be a proper name. but "the round square" does not have any bearer and therefore cannot be a proper name, which implies that it is not meaningful –against our intuitions. So Russell concludes that an analysis on the subject-predicate pattern is not correct since this apparent subject term cannon be a proper name. therefore, this subject-predicate sentence is not a genuine one. Sham subject-predicate sentences are the ones which are not rendered meaningless by the disappearance of the grammatical subject. Therefore, they should be analysed in such a way that we dispose of the subject:

"It is not the case that there is one and only one object which is both round and square".

This analysis enables us to eliminate the startling definite description which "disappears on analysis".

We have seen how Russell solves the problem of non-existent subject terms. It remains for us to consider a sentence with a subject term which is not contradictory in itself like "the round square", and which might refer but does not:

"Pegasus does not exist".

Pegasus is an ordinary proper name and according to Russell's theory of Acquaintance, simple proper names do not qualify as logically proper names, since they can be replaced by some description which will convey the meaning we assign to the name. he maintains that when we use the word "Aristotle", we are actually using it descriptively; we cannot name him since we are not acquainted with him. Our thought may be represented by the phrases: "The Greek philosopher" or "The philosopher born in Stageira", or "Plato's pupil"[19]. Therefore, "Pegasus" is not a genuine proper name but a disguised description and it may be rendered by the phrase "The winged horse captured by Bellerophon". Now, if analysed according to Russell's theory, there will be no subject about which it will be asserted that it does not exist. The analysis, which will avoid engendering such embarrassing situations, will be:

> "Either nothing is winged and a horse and was captured by Belerophon ort more than one thing was".

This analysis is really "the denial of an existential generalization" (Linsky, 1967).

Russell's solution to the problem is indicative of his notion of the philosophical significance of the referential function of language. He equates meaning with reference. Therefore, anything we say must be either true or false, or meaningless. Attacking this view, Cooper (1973) argues that an expression does not have to refer to be meaningful[20]. It is, however, difficult to understand how a theory of communication can be evolved which does not depend crucially on "reference" to some shared objective world.

Frege's solution to the problem of non-existent subject terms is not "comprehensive" according to ideal language standards. Indeed he acknowledges the deficiency of his theory as regards the solution of this problem seen from the point of view of ideal language. This was something that was not to be tolerated by Russell, an avowed "revolutionary" against "ordinary language addiction". Employing ordinary usage criteria, Russell's solution is bound to be implausible. Strawson (1950) also accuses Russell of confusing meaning with mentioning; he goes on to say: "To refer is not to assert". This argument is in accordance with Frege's view that when we intend to speak of the Moon "we presuppose a reference"[21]. Had Frege not been held back by his beliefs he would have advanced his theory at this point. In connection with the problem of non-existent subject terms, Frege gave an account of the functionings of ordinary language[22],

located its defects, but did not set out to construe it in a logical form of a perfect language. In this "omission" consists the vigour of his theory.

How does Russell solve the problem of identity statements with his Theory of Descriptions? He advocates that "a denoting phrase is …part of a sentence, and does not, like most single words, have any significance on its own account" (Russell, 1905, 1949:113). We can, therefore, represent "Scott was a man" as a statement of the form "x was a man", but we cannot do the same with "the author of Waverley was a man". It can only be rendered by "one and only one entity wrote Waverley and that one was a man".

Considering now the example "Scott is the author of Waverley", we can say that it asserts an identity. It is not an identity between two names applying to the same individual, but an identity between an individual named and an individual described[23]. Scott is "described" as "the author of Waverley". Had he not been the author of "Waverley"[24], he would not have been called (described as) the author of "Waverley". Russell maintains that in true and non-tautological statements of identity, there must be at least one description on one side of the identity sign which will be analysed as shown above. In such an analysis the subject is eliminated:

> "one and only one man wrote Waverley, and that man is Scott".

The proposition involves:

1) at least one person authored[25] Waverley;
2) at most one person authored Waverley;
3) That person was Scott.

These three assertions read conjointly will render our original one "Scott is the author of Waverley".

We, thus, make it impossible to substitute "Scott" for "the author of Waverley" since in its analysis there is nothing to be substituted for: the subject disappears. Therefore, we solve the problem of "trivial truisms", like "Scott is Scott[26], or false identity statements.

Arguing against Russell's solution to the problem of identity, Linsky wonders on what grounds Russell assumes that the expression "the author of Waverley" is not functioning as a proper name in his sense. But then Linsky completely disregards Russell's theory of acquaintance which underlies such an assumption; unless it is meant as criticism of it. Indeed Russell does not proceed to expound his theory of Descriptions until after

he has stated his principle of acquaintance. Besides, Linsky is ignoring Russell's idea that a name must be syntactically simple.

The view that descriptions are not names entails a problem: What is the descriptive phrase ascribed to in a sentence in which it occurs in the place of the grammatical subject? Russell claims that it is not the case that the descriptive phrase refers to an entity by virtue of its being the grammatical subject of the sentence; we will be in error to make such presuppositions. If it is properly analysed, it becomes clear that the referring expression gives way to an expression which expresses a property; this property may or may not be found instantiated in the world. This point contrasts sharply with Frege's theory which touches on presuppositions.

Frege solves this problem much more elegantly without having to resort to cumbersome analyses like Russell. Besides, he does not deviate far from forms of ordinary speech in that his theory does not ignore the language user's intuitions. Indeed his deviation mainly consists in refusing to take into account the role played by the user of the language in communicating and in his belief that a perfect language should be constructed.

Frege actually succeeds in giving a respectable answer to Russell's question as stated in "The Principles of Mathematics": "…it may be said, identity cannot be a relation, since, where it is truly asserted, we have only one term, whereas two terms are required for a relation. And indeed identity … cannot be anything at all; two terms plainly are not identical, and one term cannot be, for what is it identical with? Nevertheless identity must be something".

Having solved the problem of identity statements, Russell proceeds to solve the puzzle about George IV's curiosity. This, he says, is very simple. The expression "the author of Waverley" cannot be replaced by "Scott" since it is not a constituent. If properly analysed, it disappears, giving way to an expression about a property attributed to "Scott". Therefore in our opaque context:

> "George IV wanted to know whether Scott was the author of Waverley",

we cannot substitute "Scott" for "the author of Waverley", thus avoiding an uninformative truism or a false proposition; at the same time we preserve the principle of substitutivity.

This solution presents difficulties: since ordinary names are disguised descriptions, one wonders how communication is achieved.

Suppose "Scott" is a proper name for me and suppose that it is a disguised description for you; what you understand by it may be "the author of Ivanhoe". The meaning of words becomes "private" and Russell seems to be aware of it. "The proposition understood by the hearer would not then be the proposition intended by the speaker … and communication would be possible only by the grace of some kind of pre-established speaker-hearer ambiguity in virtue of which what was a logically proper name for the one functioned as a description for the other" (Max Black, 1963:253). Communication then is relegated to a "happy accident".

Russell also deals with "propositional attitudes", in his "Inquiry into Meaning and Truth". There he acknowledges that in subordinate sentences "we have a complicated mixture of empirical and syntactical questions" (1973:159). When we say "A believes p", then expression is relevant, not indication as in assertions. The principle of extensionality (ibid., p. 160) does not apply to occurrences in which only the expression is relevant; therefore "the principle of extensionality in its general form must … be rejected (ibid., p. 256).

He also maintains that a word[27] has a primary use when it is used as a complete exclamatory sentence "from which its use as part of a larger sentence is derivative". The basis of his distinction between primary and secondary occurrence derives from his distinction between the expression and the indication of a word[28]. This distinction is relevant to opaque contexts since a primary occurrence of a word or description is outside the "intensional" context and does not participate in the rules which govern propositional attitudes. This point leads to a considerable increase in complexity.

Does Russell's theory account for ambiguity in sentences like, "Oedipus wanted to marry his moth?" The sentence can be read opaquely or transparently. Employing his distinction between primary and secondary occurrence can we differentiate between the two interpretations? On what grounds shall we employ the one or the other?

A lot of problems are raised in the interrogative form. According to his theory we often split the question in two parts; should we then give two affirmative answers in place of one whereas ordinary usage demands only one? For example "Is the author of Waverley Scott?" If analysed according to the theory of Descriptions the answer should be: "Yes and Yes".

Russell's theory of Descriptions is a method of analysis of ordinary language aiming at correcting its defects in structure. Since it purports to correct ordinary language, this theory cannot appeal to ordinary usage and our approach to it, in trying to evaluate it, can hardly be determined by ordinary usage criteria. Employing such criteria the whole edifice of the

theory of Descriptions is bound to collapse. Russell is aware of the disparity between ordinary language and the philosophical language he is trying to construct. In reply to a critique determined by such criteria, he says: "I have no wish to claim the support of common usage (Russell, 1957); he goes on to add: "I agree, however, with Mr. Strawson's statement that ordinary language has no exact logic". It is his notion of "a symbolic mirror of the fundamental structure of reality" that language should be that calls for criticism.

Yet one cannot fail to pay tribute to Russell's work on the Philosophy of Language "that paradigm of philosophy", as Ramsey (. 263n) called the Theory of Descriptions –for he made Language the focus of philosophical investigation. As he himself put it in 1924: "The influence of language on philosophy has … been profound but almost unrecognized". Some twenty years later, after Russell's contribution, one should amend his statement to: "the influence of language on philosophy is profound and almost universally recognized" (M. Black: 229).

Neither of the two theories examined here can provide an analysis of ordinary language as such. Both theories appear to be much simpler formally, than ordinary language is. They both function on certain stipulations which are not relevant to common usage. For instance, Russell's theory does away with all descriptive phrases while Frege's theory construes all descriptions in terms of names. It is easy to see the gap between the two theories and the real world, which consists not only of words but of their users, and the relation between the two, a fact that places language in another perspective. Frege appears to be less preoccupied with the construction of language pure as to its logical form and, with his distinction between sense and reference, his theory of language emerges stronger.

Faculty of Philosophy Yearbook 1989, v. 1, 141-158
Aristotle University
Thessaloniki 1989

REFERENCES

Black, Max (1963) "Russell's Philosophy of Language", in P. A. Schilpp (ed.) *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell.* VI, New York, Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row.

Cooper, D. E. (1973) *Philosophy and the Nature of Language,* London, Longman.

Dummettt, M. (1981) *Frege: Philosophy of Language,* second edition, Great Britain, Duckworth.

Frege, G. (1892) "On Sens and Reference", in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege,* ed. And trans. By Peter Geach and Max Black, Oxford and New York.

Linsky, L. (1967) *Referring,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

_____ (1971) "Reference, Essentialism, and Modality", in Linsky (ed.) *Reference and Modality,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

_____ (1974) "Reference and Referents", in D. Steinberg and L. Jakobovits (eds.) *Semantics,* Cambridge, CUP, pp. 76-85.

Quine, W. V. O. (1953) "Reference and Modality", in Quine *From a logical point of view*. N. York, Harper Torchbooks, pp. 139-59.

Ramsey, F. P. (1931) *The Foundations of Mathematics, and other Logical Essays,* London, Routledge.

Ryle, G. (1931-32) "Systematically Misleading Expressions", in *Procceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* XXXII, rer. In A. Flew (ed.) *Essays on Logic and Language,* N. York, First Series, (1951).

Russell, B. (1903) *The Principles of Mathematics (P. of M.),* London.

_____ (1905) "On Denoting", in *Mind,* XIV, pp. 479-93, repr. In H. Feigl and W. Sellars (eds.) (1949) *Readings in Philosophical Analysis,* N. York, Appleton-Century=Crofts, pp. 103-119.

_____ (1920) *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy,* London, Allen and Unwin.

_____ (1924) "Logical Atomism", in *Contemporary British Philosophy,* Vol. I.

_____ (1973) *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth,* The William James Lectures for 1940, Penguin.

_____ (1957) "Mr. Strawson on Referring", in *Mind,* 66.

_____ and A. N. Whitehead (1910) *Principia Mathematica (P.M.)* three vols., Cambridge, 1910, 1912, 1913.

Strawson, P. F. (1950) "On Referring", in *Mind,* LIX, pp. 320-44. Repr. In A. Flew (ed.) (1956) *Essays in Conceptual analysis,* London, pp. 21-52.

NOTES

[*] This paper owes a great deal to Martin Atkinson and Peter Geach, who read an older version in 1975, for very meticulous and invaluable comments. All errors are the author's.

[1] Although Meinong chronologically follows Frege, it is only fair to note that he belongs to a very different school of Philosophy. However, he is relevant in that he thought about the problems for which Frege and Russell tried to produce a new type of solution.

[2] By "sign" or "name" Frege understands "any designation representing a proper name, which thus has as its reference a definite object" (p. 57).

[3] Professor Geach furnished me (personal communication) with the following example: In a Victorian horseracing scandal, Lord George Bentinck discovered that the Derby winner, Running Rein, was none other than Maccabeus, a four-year-old ineligible to run in the Derby. What then did Bentinck discover? Not that Running Rein was the same horse as Running Rein, or Maccabeus the same horse as Maccabeus! The information that he gained was certainly valuable: a lot of men stood to win or lose money on it; and in saying "Running Rein is Maccabeus", Bentinck was certainly expressing what Frege calls proper knowledge.

[4] Frege uses the word "Bedeutung" in two (or perhaps three) different ways: for the relation obtaining between the name and the object which it designates and for the object itself to which the name refers. The former we could call "reference", the latter "referent". In this paper we will use the term "reference" as applying to both (context will indicate applicandum) for the sake of terminological simplicity and because we want to keep in accordance with relevant binary oppositions such as sense-nominatum, connotation-denotation, intension-extension (Carnap), meaning-denotation (Russell), some of which are different terms for the same distinction.

[5] Frege also mentions the ideas (Vorstellungen) within the category of meaning. Although he claims that ideas are subjective, he concludes that "without some affinity in human ideas, art would certainly be impossible" (Frege, p. 61). In this paper we must confine ourselves to the main points because of lack of space. For a critical exposition of this point see Dummett (1981).

[6] The circumstance that it is true or false.

[7] By "sentence" we understand "declarative sentence" (Behauptungssatz, Behauptung = assertion).

[8] Leibniz's law: *a* is identical with *b* if and only if *a* and *b* have exactly the same properties.

[9] The proper names we use in ordinary language are equiform with proper names of other objects; but we seem to be able to sort things out pretty well –to identify a given use of a proper name on different occasions and distinguish it from other uses of an equiform name. is then what we identify when we thus identify a use of a proper name, what Frege calls the sense of the name?

[10] Frege calls sentences proper names.

Faculty of Philosophy Yearbook 1989, v. 1, 141-158
Aristotle University
Thessaloniki 1989

[11] This was Ryle's view (1931-2).

[12] It should be noted that Frege's *Eigennamen* include syntactically complex singular designations as well as what ordinarily count as proper names.

[13] Russell distinguishes between "class" and "class-concept", e.g., men are a class, while "man" is a class-concept (1903). However, this formulation by Russell contains gross use-mention confusions, of the same kind as "A dog is an animal beginning with *d*".

[14] Later, Russell distinguishes between definite and indefinite descriptions (*P.M.*).

[15] The universality of the expression "term" is qualified (*P. of M.*, p. 132).

[16] Realised as having being, i.e., "is" in some sense.

[17] Already in *P. of M.*, section 73, Russell says that we must "reject" propositions quantifying over chimeras (as one would now call them).

[18] This assumption is based on his theory of Acquaintance; space prevents us from further explication.

[19] This is considered a weak point in Russell's theory; one wonders how communication is effected. Logically proper names, on the other hand, are relegated to ostensively designating symbols.

[20] See also Linsky (1974).

[21] This point is not taken as meaning that Strawson's account of the problem is the same as Frege's. What Strawson counts as an indispensable feature of ordinary language –the facility of "referring" when there is nothing to refer to– Frege counts as an (in principle removable) infirmity of language.

[22] This point is disputable.

[23] We here assume that "Scott" is a proper name.

[24] Linsky disputes this point, but I think his argument is trivial.

[25] By substituting "authored" for "wrote" we are guarded against trivial criticism (G. E. Moore's point).

[26] This solution does not require that Russell deny "Leibniz's law".

[27] What Russell calls "object-word".

[28] Space does not allow an adequate explication of this point.