

Russell \leftrightarrow Frege correspondence, 1902: discovery of Russell's Paradox

let w be the predicate: to be a predicate that cannot be predicated of itself.

can w be predicated of itself?

1904: Frege: 'Mont Blanc w/ its snow fields is not itself a component part of the thought that Mont Blanc is >4000m high'

key dif. Russell thinks that objects/people are component parts of thoughts about them

Today: Russell on definite descriptions

'X is the daughter of Y' - do we really mean the (uniqueness)?

Russell: definite descriptions and names are slightly different (not a subclass)

Before 'On Denoting': the Principles of Mathematics view (1903)

sentences express Russellian (singular) propositions: complexes of objects/properties/relation

propositions are different from Frege's view that propositions are functional

complex objects w/ unique breakdown into constituents

name-predicate sentences: <property: object> propositions

not an ordered pair

'term position': the 'thing place' in a proposition

what about sentences w/ denoting phrases where proper names would otherwise be, syntactically?

seems like these phrases are on a par - should have a unified theory

'the dog' expresses the denoting complex [the: being a dog]

'the dog is hungry' expresses <being hungry: [the: being a dog]>

↑
property

↑
denoting concept/complex (Russell uses both)

this expression does not characterize the denoting complex as being hungry (unlike Frege)

↳ an object related in a particular way by the complex (the denotation) is hungry

denoting phrases do not refer to things at all - they contribute denoting complexes

the propositions are only about their denotations in an importantly indirect way

denoting phrases are 'devices of indirection'

they function to make the propositions about things not in the propositions

definite Russellian thing: 'if you can believe it, it's a proposition'

but what about Zeus? (can be talked about, but he lacks existence)

meaningful language as if there's something to refer to

negative existential: 'Zeus does not exist'

Fregean view: 'the monster under my bed' doesn't contribute an object

proposition is neither true nor false ('nonsense') if no denotation exists

the Grey's Glegg argument

if a denoting complex is an object place in a proposition

makes that proposition about something else

(by denoting it)

then there can be no propositions (directly) about that denoting concept

weird that you can't have these, because you can have propositions about everything else

<being a denoting complex: [the: being a red planet]>

device of prop. indirection sitting
in the object position

can instead characterize a denoting complex 'by the phrase'

eg. 'the denoting complex expressed by the phrase 'the red planet''

points (indirectly) to a 3-word linguistic object/phrase

problem: doesn't reveal the 'achievement of understanding': we know which denoting concept is being got at (namely, Mars!)

is there a better way to think about DCs indirectly?

(see slides)

is Russell's account fair against Frege?

Does Frege hold views that make fair the problems Russell claims to find?

↳ not entirely: on Frege's view, prop. abstractness is always indirect
nominatum determined by mode of presentation
↳ we do think about these