



NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE STUDY OF THE MIND

research project 2015-2017

 UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



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newdirectionsproject.com

Seminar 23

1. Recap: Intensionality and semantics
2. The legacy of Frege
3. Psychologism: where this is all going...

1. Recap: intensionality and semantics

Intensionality:

- (1) Failure of existential generalisation
- (2) Failure of substitution of co-referring terms
- (3) Non-truth-functionality

NB importance of **guarantee**

How these relate to intentionality

They are all consequences of the fact of representation:

- (1) Representations can be of the non-existent
- (2) Representations represent from a particular perspective/
point of view (Searle: 'aspectual shape')
- (3) Representation that p entails neither p nor not- p

Semantics: a reminder

The two senses of the word 'semantics'

I will use the word to mean ***the principles that determine the truth-conditions and truth-values of sentences***

Relations to propositions

The semantics of propositional attitudes treats propositional attitudes as relations between thinkers and propositions

Propositions \neq sentences

NB sometimes people say propositions **are** truth-conditions, others say they **have** truth-conditions

What are propositions?

Russellian propositions: contain the objects and properties the attitude is about

Sets of possible worlds (Lewis, Stalnaker)

Fregean 'thoughts' (*Gedanken*): made up of 'senses'

All conceived of as **abstract objects**

Relations to propositions

The semantic approach conceives of propositional attitudes as relations to these abstract objects

Question: what does this really mean?

This question will be answered shortly...

Linguistic evidence for relations to propositions

Henry believes that p

Laura believes that p

Therefore there is something that Henry and Laura both believe

See Jerry Fodor, 'Propositional Attitudes' (1980)

(2) The legacy of Frege

Many analytic discussions of intentionality begin with Frege's theory of sense and reference

'On Sense and Reference' (1896)

'The Thought' (1918-19)

Reference

Referring expressions (singular terms like names and descriptions) refer to objects

Predicates refer to 'concepts' (functions from objects to truth-values)

Sentences refer to truth-values

Sense or 'mode of presentation'

The sense of a singular term = mode of presentation of an object

The sense of a predicate = mode of presentation of a 'concept'

The sense of a sentence = a thought (*Gedanke*), a mode of presentation of a truth-value

Sense is objective

The sense is what enables communication

‘The task of our vernacular languages is essentially fulfilled if people engaged in communication with one another connect the same thought, or approximately the same thought, with the same proposition.’

Frege (‘On Sense and Reference’ 1896)

‘Ideas’

‘I have used the word “idea” always in the psychological sense, and have distinguished ideas from concepts and from objects’

Frege *Grundlagen* (1884)

‘what is a content of my consciousness, my idea, should be sharply distinguished from what is an object of my thought’

Frege ‘The Thought’ (1918-19)

The moon analogy

The **reference** of a word is analogous to the moon itself

The **sense** is analogous to the image in the telescope – it is the ‘property of many people’ (Frege 1892).

The **idea** is analogous to the image on the retina of the person viewing the moon

What are ideas?

‘the sense impression I have of green exists only because of me, I am its bearer. It seems absurd to us that a pain, a mood, a wish, should rove around the world without a bearer, independently. An experience is impossible without an experiencer. The inner world presupposes the person whose inner world it is.’

Frege ‘The Thought’ (1918-19)

What are ideas? ctd.

‘the inner world of sense-impressions, of creations of [the] imagination, or sensations, of feelings and moods a world of inclinations, wishes and decisions ... I want to collect all these, with the exception of decisions, under the word “idea”’.

Frege, ‘The Thought’ (1918-19)

These inhabitants of the ‘inner world’ are episodes with intentional content: imaginings, feelings, inclinations and wishes etc.

(NB: compare translation of *Vorstellung* as representation)

3. Psychologism

Many analytic theories of intentionality treat the theory of intentionality as the theory of sense and reference

My alternative: sense and reference should come into the picture, but ...

The heart of the theory of intentionality is a theory of what Frege calls 'ideas'

I call this **Psychologism about the Psychological**

Kinds of psychologism

- (1) Psychologism about logic
- (2) Psychologism about meaning
- (3) Psychologism about the psychological

Cavell on psychogism

‘We know of the efforts of such philosophers as Frege and Husserl to undo the “psychologizing” of logic (like Kant’s undoing Hume’s psychologizing of knowledge): now, the shortest way I might describe such a book as the Philosophical Investigations is to say that it attempts to undo the psychologizing of psychology.’

Stanley Cavell, ‘Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy’ (2002)



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