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Russell's Objections to Frege's Theory of Sense and Reference by John R. Searle

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*The Journal of Symbolic Logic*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Mar., 1969), pp. 142-143

Published by: [Association for Symbolic Logic](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2271044>

Accessed: 03/10/2013 13:56

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Zweckgesichtspunkte" (S. 547) ein und verzichtet dabei doch auf eine Lehre vom Subjekt. Demgegenüber ist auf Kants Lehre vom moralischen Subjekt, seinen Zwecken und seinem Endzweck zurückzugehen, um der Logik nach dem Scheitern des Fregeschen Begründungsversuches einen "zweifelsfreien Geltungsboden" zu verschaffen. Obwohl Verf. dies auch an anderer Stelle des Textes (S. 546) empfiehlt, schließt die Arbeit lediglich mit einem allgemeinen Hinweis, in dem behauptet wird, eine solche Zurückführung sei mit der operativen Begründung der Logik durch Lorenzen (XXII 289) erfolgt.

CHRISTIAN THIEL

JOHN R. SEARLE. *Russell's objections to Frege's theory of sense and reference. Analysis* (Oxford), vol. 18 (1958), pp. 137–143.

In his famous 1905 article *On denoting* (1119), Russell asserted that the evidence for his newly presented theory of descriptions "is derived from the difficulties which seem unavoidable if we regard denoting phrases [e.g., 'the King of France'] as standing for genuine constituents of the propositions in whose verbal expressions they occur." Just two years earlier, in *The principles of mathematics* (1116), Russell himself had so honored denoting phrases, but he now repudiated his earlier views. Although he explicitly argues only against the theories of Meinong and Frege, Russell believed Frege's theory to be "very nearly the same" as his own 1903 theory. Two arguments are given against Frege's theory. The first, which concerns only *improper* descriptions, is that since "the King of France is bald" is not *about* anything ("the King of France" having meaning but no denotation), "one would suppose that 'the King of France is bald' ought to be nonsense; but it is not nonsense, since it is plainly false." This argument appears to be based on an incorrect identification of nonsense with lack of denotation rather than with lack of meaning.

The second argument, which goes against Frege's treatment even of *proper* descriptions, purports to show that the relation of the meaning of a denoting phrase to the denotation of the phrase is either "wholly mysterious" or else they are one and the same. The argument begins by reference to a questionable symbolic convention, "When we wish to speak about the *meaning* of a denoting phrase as opposed to its *denotation*, the natural mode of doing so is by inverted commas," and concludes, two tortured pages later, "This is an inextricable tangle, and seems to prove that the whole distinction of meaning and denotation has been wrongly conceived." Of this argument, Church remarks in VIII 58, "Russell's objections, it would seem, are traceable merely to confusion between use and mention of expressions of a sort which Frege is careful to avoid by use of quotation marks. Russell applies quotation marks to distinguish the [meaning] of an expression from its denotation, but leaves himself without any notation for the expression itself; upon introduction of (say) a second kind of quotation mark to signalize names of expressions, Russell's objections to Frege completely vanish."

Searle disagrees, arguing that Russell has an objection to Frege which underlies the confusions of mention and use, and that this underlying objection is based on quite a different confusion, namely, that between *being a constituent of a proposition* and *being what a proposition refers to (is about)*.

Some support for Searle's claim, in addition to that adduced by Searle, is provided by the fact that according to Russell's 1903 theory, when the subject of a sentence is a proper name like "John" or "Humanity," the corresponding proposition will be *about* one of its own constituents, namely that one corresponding to (in Russell's terminology: *indicated* by) the proper name. This constituent will be the person or concept so named. But when the subject is a denoting phrase like "the King of England," the corresponding proposition is not (usually) *about* the corresponding constituent itself, but is rather *about* what is denoted by that constituent. The propositional constituent corresponding to a denoting phrase is a *denoting concept* and is reasonably close, or so Russell thought, to Frege's *Sinn*. If Russell took his 'expressions containing inverted commas' (we will use Searle's "§"'s to avoid confusion) as proper names (and there is clear evidence for this both in his remarks and in the fact that it is correct to do so), then the propositional constituent corresponding to the denoting phrase "the King of England" and that corresponding to the proper name "§ the King of England §" would be the same denoting concept. Then forgetting, what Russell acknowledged in 1903, that in 'unusual' cases a proposition may be about one of its constituent denoting concepts rather than about what that

concept denotes, the puzzlement over how to form a proposition about a meaning ensues. Searle's hypothesis regarding Russell's second argument has the additional merit of simultaneously offering an explanation as to why Russell thought that Frege's theory made "the King of France is bald" nonsense.

The difficulty in evaluating Searle's claim lies in the fact that when expressions, their meanings, and their denotations are carefully distinguished, and the various possible interpretations of certain other difficult expressions such as "proposition," "denoting complex," and "about" are sorted out, it becomes possible to supply for each sentence of Russell's argument an interpretation which makes the sentence correct. Of course, in the repaired version certain sentential transitions signaled by "thus," "this leads us to say," etc., become inexplicable, but this is to be expected in an argument with (now) true premisses leading to a false conclusion. Further, there are often a number of different interpretations each of which would correct some part of Russell's argument and which relocate the non-sequiturs. Thus the complete justification of any analysis of Russell's argument clearly awaits a fully annotated version of the two pages. (Although it is probably not ultimately crucial, it is annoying to discover that the two most accessible reprints of *On denoting*, in XIV 184 and XXV 332, differ from one another and from the original in their use of quotation marks and displayed material. In XXV 332 it is claimed that Russell sanctioned the changes therein.)

While awaiting the work of the scholars, the attempt to 'correct' Russell's argument provides an unsurpassed exercise for students of Frege's theory and the principles of mention and use.

DAVID KAPLAN

RONALD J. BUTLER. *The scaffolding of Russell's theory of descriptions. The philosophical review*, vol. 63 (1954), pp. 350–364.

Butler gives a generally accurate account of Russell's 1903 semantical theory as given in *Principles of mathematics* and shows in some detail how the theory of *On denoting* can be viewed against this background. This article along with J. W. Reeves's *The origins and consequences of the theory of descriptions (Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 24 (1934), pp. 211–230) provide a most useful historical accompaniment to *On denoting*.

On the question of Russell's second argument against Frege (see the preceding review), Butler proclaims the radical view that Russell's conception of 1903, retained in *On denoting*, that propositional constituents are entities of the world (universals, etc.) and not merely the names of those entities "left no room for distinguishing the sign from its referent. His logical tools forced him to refuse recognition of the distinction between use and mention." Russell's inattention to the distinction certainly makes it harder to reconstruct his theory confidently and may even have led him at places to draw unwarranted conclusions (as possibly in the argument against Frege), but it seems an exaggeration to claim that no plausible reconstruction of his theory can be made in accord with current canons of mention and use. Given this view of the author's, it is not surprising that he agrees with Church in analyzing Russell's argument. But in his own reconstruction of Russell's attempt to show that there is no valid distinction between meaning and denotation, Butler appears to require both the identification of a sign with its denotation (referent) and also the identification of a sign with its meaning. From these two the result follows easily. Though a peculiar theory emerges from either alone, the identification of meaning and denotation is not immediately obtainable.

DAVID KAPLAN

P. T. GEACH. *Russell on meaning and denoting. Analysis* (Oxford), vol. 19 (1959), pp. 69–72.

Geach claims to explain what he terms "the odd irrelevance" of Russell's criticism of Frege in the passage discussed by Searle (see above). The explanation is that "Russell has excusably, but wrongly, conflated Frege's distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* with his own distinction between what an expression 'means' and what it 'denotes', as expounded in *The principles of mathematics*." To establish that Russell's 1903 theory differs radically from that of Frege, Geach argues that Frege's "*bedeuten*, *Bedeutung*" should be equated with Russell's 1903 use of "mean, meaning" rather than with Russell's "denote, denotation" as has commonly been supposed. He further claims that there is really nothing in Frege that quite corresponds to Russell's "denotation."

The reviewer finds Geach's arguments on these points unconvincing. In presenting them