

Constance Jones and Bertrand Russell on Denotation

T1. There are two sorts of objects of which we are aware, namely, particulars and universals. Among particulars I include all existents, and all complexes of which one or more constituents are existents, such as this-before-that, this-above-that, the-yellowness-of-this. Among universals I include all objects of which no particular is a constituent. Thus the disjunction “universal-particular” is exhaustive (Russell, *Knowledge by Acquaintance and by Description*, 112).

T2. I shall say that an object is “known by description” when we know that it is “the so-and-so,” i.e., when we know that there is one object, and no more, having a certain property; and it will generally be implied that we do not have knowledge of the same object by acquaintance (ibid., 113).

T3. We shall say that we have “merely descriptive knowledge” of the so-and-so when, although we know that the so-and-so exists, and although we may possibly be acquainted with the object which is, in fact, the so-and-so, yet we do not know any proposition “*a* is the so-and-so,” where *a* is something with which we are acquainted (ibid., 113).

T4. When... I say that we must substitute for “Julius Caesar” some description of Julius Caesar, in order to discover the meaning of a judgment nominally about him, I am not saying that we must substitute an idea. Suppose our description is “the man whose name was *Julius Caesar*.” Let our judgment be “Julius Caesar was assassinated.” Then it becomes “the man whose name was *Julius Caesar* was assassinated.” Here *Julius Caesar* is a noise or shape with which we are acquainted, and all the other constituents of the judgment (neglecting the tense in “was”) are *concepts* with which we are acquainted. Thus our judgment is wholly reduced to constituents with which we are acquainted, but Julius Caesar himself has ceased to be a constituent of our judgment (ibid., 120).

T5. We can think of nothing, speak of nothing, without postulating or assuming both application (or denotation) and intension (*Bedeutung* and *Sinn*) in Frege’s sense—without these two elements, significant assertion is always and forever impossible. Whatever we think of or speak of must be thought of as something and as some sort of something—and *every term* which is used as Subject or Predicate in a Proposition must have both denotation and intension (as Frege, I believe, holds)” (Jones, *Mr. Russell’s Objections to Frege’s Analysis of Propositions*, 381, my emphasis).

T6. It may perhaps be granted that every grammatically well-formed expression representing a proper name always has sense. But this is not to say that to the sense there also corresponds a referent. The words “the celestial body most distant from the earth” have a sense, but it is very doubtful if they also have a referent. The expression “the least rapidly convergent series” has a sense... In grasping a sense, one is not certainly assured of a referent” (Frege, *Sense and Reference*, 211).

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T7. I agree with those logicians who maintain that *every* name or term has what I have called **Denomination and Determination** (if we may admit as part of the Determination of a name the attribute of being called by that name). Indeed, it seems to me that Denomination and Attribution (of which Determination is always a part) are mutually implicated in terms, as inevitably as quantitiveness and qualitiveness in the things indicated, or as lines and angles, or likeness and difference.

In as far as a term is denominative (as I understand denominative), it applies to the quantitiveness, the mere undetermined existence, of the thing of which it is the name—that identity which enables us to speak of a thing as one, under whatever change of attributes. In as far as it is determinative, it applies to the qualitiveness of the thing—including in qualitiveness the kind of its existence (material, fictitious, ideational, etc.) (Jones, *Elements of Logic as a Science of Propositions*, 8-9).

T8. Hobbes' account of the Categorical Proposition—that the Predicate is the name of the same thing of which the Subject is a name—furnishes an absolutely general but a deficient and superficial definition (ibid., 53).

T9. We have thus agreed that “the author of Waverley” is not a mere name, and that its meaning is relevant in propositions in which it occurs. Thus if we are to say, as Miss Jones does, that “Scott is the author of Waverley” asserts an identity of denotation, we must regard the denotation of “the author of Waverley” as *the denotation of what is meant* by “the author of Waverley.” (Russell, *Knowledge by Acquaintance and by Description*, 124, my emphasis).

Bibliography

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