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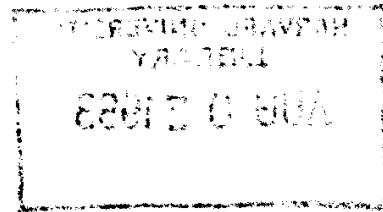
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# INTENTIONALITY

*An essay in the philosophy of mind*

JOHN R. SEARLE



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# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	page vi
Introduction	vii
1 The nature of Intentional states	i
2 The Intentionality of perception	37
3 Intention and action	79
4 Intentional causation	112
5 The Background	141
6 Meaning	160
7 Intensional reports of Intentional states and speech acts	180
8 Are meanings in the head?	197
9 Proper names and Intentionality	231
10 Epilogue: Intentionality and the brain	262
Subject index	273
Name index	277

## ARE MEANINGS IN THE HEAD?

The fundamental question of the philosophy of language has always been: How does language relate to reality? The answer I proposed to that question in *Speech Acts* was that language relates to reality in virtue of the fact that speakers so relate it in the performance of linguistic acts. The original question then reduces to one of analyzing the nature and conditions of the possibility of these acts. In this book I have tried to ground that analysis further in the Intentionality of the mind: the question, "How does language relate to reality?" is only a special case of the question, "How does the mind relate to reality?", and just as the question about language reduced to one about various sorts of speech acts, so the question about the mind reduces to one about the various forms of Intentionality, the representational capacities of speech acts being simply a special case of derived Intentionality.

On one interpretation of Frege, my general approach to Intentionality is a matter of revising and extending Frege's conception of "*Sinn*" to Intentionality in general, including perception and other forms of self-reference; and my approach to the special problem of reference is in some respects Fregean in spirit, though, of course, not in detail. Specifically, it is possible to distinguish at least two independent strands in Frege's account of the relations between expressions and objects. First, in his account of the *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* of *Eigennamen*, an expression refers to an object because the object fits or satisfies the *Sinn* associated with the expression. Second, in his fight against psychologism Frege felt it necessary to postulate the existence of a "third realm" of abstract entities: senses, propositions, etc. Communication in the utterance of an expression is possible only because both the speaker and the hearer can grasp a common abstract sense associated with the expression. My own account is Fregean in accepting the first of these strands, but I reject the second. Linguistic reference is a

special case of Intentional reference, and Intentional reference is always by way of the relation of fitting or satisfaction. But it is not necessary to postulate any special metaphysical realms in order to account for communication and shared Intentionality. If you think about the Evening Star under the mode of presentation “Evening Star”, and I think about the same planet under the same mode of presentation, the sense in which we have an abstract entity in common is the utterly trivial sense in which, if I go for a walk in the Berkeley hills and you go for exactly the same walk, we share an abstract entity, the same walk, in common. The possibility of shared Intentional contents does not require a heavy metaphysical apparatus any more than the possibility of shared walks.

Both the Fregean and the present account of meaning are internalist in the sense that it is in virtue of some mental state in the head of a speaker and hearer – the mental state of grasping an abstract entity or simply having a certain Intentional content – that speaker and hearer can understand linguistic references. At the time of this writing, the most influential theories of reference and meaning reject a Fregean or internalist analysis. There is a variety of reasons for which the anti-internalist position has become fashionable, and there is considerable disagreement among the anti-internalists as to what the correct analysis of reference and meaning is. In this chapter and the next I will consider and answer at least some of the more influential attacks on the internalist, Fregean, or Intentionalistic tradition. These chapters, therefore, are more argumentative than those which preceded them: my aim is not only to present an Intentionalistic account of reference but to do so by way of answering what I believe is a family of mistaken doctrines in contemporary philosophy. Here, in no special order, are some of the most influential theses urged against the internalist picture.

1. There is supposed to be a fundamental distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* beliefs and other sorts of propositional attitudes. *De re* beliefs are relations between agents and objects, they cannot be individuated solely in terms of their mental contents (*de dicto*), because the object itself (*res*) has to be part of the principle of individuation of the belief.

2. There is supposed to be a fundamental distinction between the “referential” and the “attributive” use of definite descrip-

tions. Only in the case of attributive uses of definite descriptions does a speaker “refer” to an object in virtue of the fact that his Intentional content sets conditions which the object satisfies, but these are not genuine cases of referring at all; in the referential use of definite descriptions the speaker need not use an expression that the object referred to satisfies.<sup>1</sup>

3. Indexical expressions, e.g., “I”, “you”, “this”, “that”, “here”, “now”, are supposed to be impossible for an internalist theory to account for, since their utterance lacks a “completing Fregean sense”.

4. Exponents of the so-called causal theory of names and the causal theory of reference are supposed to have refuted something called the “descriptivist theory” of names and of reference, and thereby to have refuted any internalist or Fregean account, and to have shown that reference is achieved in virtue of some *external* causal relations.

5. The causal theory of reference is supposed to be applicable to a large class of general terms, the natural kind terms and perhaps others; and for these terms there are supposed to be decisive arguments showing that knowing their meanings cannot consist in being in psychological states of any sorts, but must involve some more direct causal relations with the world. It is supposed to have been shown that “meanings are not in the head”.

I believe that all these views are false. Furthermore, they share a family resemblance; they suggest a picture of reference and meaning in which the speaker’s internal Intentional content is insufficient to determine what he is referring to, either in his thoughts or in his utterances. They share the view that in order to account for the relations between words and the world we need to introduce (for some? for all? cases) external contextual, non-conceptual, causal relations between the utterance of expressions and the features of the world that the utterance is about. If these views are correct then the account I have given of Intentionality must be mistaken. At this point then I see no alternative to mounting a series of set piece philosophical arguments. The

<sup>1</sup> I will not discuss this view further in this book since I have attempted to refute it elsewhere; see, ‘Referential and attributive’, in J. R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 137–61.

justification for making such a fuss over views I believe are false anyway has to do with the size of the issues involved. If we are unable to account for the relation of reference in terms of internal Intentional contents, either the contents of the individual speaker or the linguistic community of which he is a part, then the entire philosophical tradition since Frege, both the analytic and the phenomenological strands, is mistaken and we need to start over with some external causal account of reference in particular, and the relation of words to the world in general.

#### I. MEANINGS IN THE HEAD

I shall begin by considering Hilary Putnam's argument that "meanings are not in the head".<sup>2</sup> I think in the relevant sense that meanings are precisely in the head – there is nowhere else for them to be – and that Putnam's arguments fail to show anything to the contrary.

Putnam considers two views:

- (1) Knowing the meaning of a word or expression consists in being in a certain psychological state.
- (2) Meaning (intension) determines extension.

Appropriately construed these two entail a third:

- (3) Psychological states determine extension.

Putnam tries to show that we cannot hold both (1) and (2) together and that (3) is false. He proposes to reject (1) and (3) while accepting a revised version of (2). In the discussion which follows it is important to point out that nothing hangs on accepting the traditional analytic–synthetic distinction; for the purposes of this discussion both Putnam and I accept holism, and nothing in our dispute turns on that issue.

Putnam's strategy is to try to construct intuitively plausible cases where the same psychological state will determine different extensions. If type-identical psychological states can determine different extensions, then there must be more to the determination of extension than psychological states, and the traditional view is, therefore, false. Putnam offers two independent arguments to

<sup>2</sup> H. Putnam, 'The meaning of meaning', in *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2, *Mind, Language and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 215–71.



show how the same psychological state can determine different extensions. He sometimes talks as if they were part of the same argument but, in fact, they are quite independent and, I believe, only the second is really serious. I will, therefore, deal rather briefly with the first.

The first argument concerns what he calls the principle of “the linguistic division of labor”, i.e., the principle that in any linguistic community some people have more expertise in applying certain terms than others do. For example, in our community some people know more about trees than others and so can tell which trees are, for example, beeches and which are elms. Others, such as myself, don’t know much about the difference between beech trees and elm trees, so insofar as there is any *concept* attaching to the words “beech” and “elm” for me, they are pretty much the same concept. In both cases I have the concept of a big, deciduous tree growing in the Eastern part of the United States. Therefore, according to Putnam, in my idiolect the concept or “intension” is the same, but the extension is clearly different. “Beech” denotes beech trees and “elm” denotes elm trees: same psychological state, different extensions.

I really don’t believe any defender of the traditional view would be worried by this argument. The thesis that meaning determines reference can hardly be refuted by considering cases of speakers who don’t even know the meaning or know it only imperfectly. Or to put the same point another way, the notions of intension and extension are not defined relative to idiolects. As traditionally conceived, an intension or Fregean *Sinn* is an abstract entity which may be more or less imperfectly grasped by individual speakers. But it does not show that intension does not determine extension to show that some speaker might not have grasped the intension, or grasped it only imperfectly; for such a speaker hasn’t got a relevant extension either. The notion of the “extension in my idiolect” has no application for cases where one does not know the meaning of the word.

To make out the case, Putnam would have to argue that the collectivity of speakers’ Intentional states, including those of all the ideal experts, does not determine the correct extensions. But if the argument is to be based on linguistic and factual ignorance, the very doctrine of the linguistic division of labor would seem to

refute the argument from the start, because the doctrine is that where one speaker is ignorant he can appeal to the experts: what is and what is not an elm is for the experts to decide. That is, where *his* intension is inadequate he lets *their* intension determine extension. Furthermore, if we assume that Putnam *knows* this argument to be valid we get something very much like an inconsistency as follows:

1. My (Putnam's) concept of "elm" = my concept of "beech"
- but
2. The extension of "elm" in my idiolect  $\neq$  the extension of "beech" in my idiolect.

How do I know 2 to be true? Obviously because

3. I know that beeches are not elms and elms are not beeches.

And how do I know that? I know that because I know that elms and beeches are two *different* species of trees. Imperfect as my grasp of the relevant concepts is, at least I have enough conceptual knowledge to know that the two are distinct species. But for this very reason,

4. Number 3 states conceptual knowledge.

If such knowledge is not conceptual knowledge, nothing is. Therefore,

5. Contrary to 1, my concept of "elm"  $\neq$  my concept of "beech".

In his more important and influential second argument Putnam tries to show that even the collectivity of speakers' Intentional states might be insufficient to determine extension, for there might be two communities with the same set of collective intensions but with different extensions. Imagine that in a distant galaxy there was a planet very similar to ours with people like ourselves speaking a language indistinguishable from English. Imagine, however, that on this twin earth the stuff they call "water" is perceptually indistinguishable from what we call "water", but in fact it has a different chemical composition. What is called "water" on twin earth is a very complicated chemical compound, the formula for which we will abbreviate as "XYZ". According to

Putnam's intuitions, the expression "water" on earth in 1750, before anything was known about the chemical composition of water referred to  $H_2O$ ; and "water" on twin earth in 1750 referred to XYZ. Thus, even though the people on both earth and twin earth were all in the same psychological state relative to the word "water", they had different extensions and therefore Putnam concludes that psychological states do not determine extension.

Most people who have criticized Putnam's argument have challenged his intuitions about what we would say concerning the twin earth example. My own strategy will be to accept his intuitions entirely for the purpose of this discussion, and then argue that they fail to show that meanings are not in the head. But I want to digress for a moment and consider what the traditional theorists would say about the example as presented so far. I think it would go something like this: Up to 1750 "water" meant the same on both earth and twin earth and had the same extension. After it had been discovered that there were two different chemical compositions, one for earth and one for twin earth, we would have a choice. We could *define* "water" as  $H_2O$ , which is what we have, in fact, done; or we could just say that there are two kinds of water, and that water on twin earth is constructed differently from water on earth. There is, indeed, some support for these intuitions. Suppose, for example, there had been a great deal of going and coming between earth and twin earth, so that speakers were likely to have encountered both. Then it seems likely that we would construe water as we now construe jade. Just as there are two kinds of jade, nephrite and jadeite (Putnam's example), so there would be two kinds of water,  $H_2O$  and XYZ. Furthermore, it looks like we pay a high price for accepting his intuitions. A very large number of things have water as one of their essential components, so if the stuff on twin earth is not water then presumably their mud is not mud, their beer is not beer, their snow is not snow, their ice cream is not ice cream, etc. If we take it really seriously, indeed, it looks as if their chemistry is going to be radically different. On our earth if we drive cars we get  $H_2O$ , CO and  $CO_2$  as products of the combustion of hydrocarbons. What is supposed to come out of the cars on twin earth? I think that a defender of the traditional view might also point out that it is odd that Putnam assumes that " $H_2O$ " is fixed and that "water" is problematic. We could equally

well imagine cases where  $H_2O$  is slightly different on twin earth from what it is on earth. However, I don't want to pursue these alternative intuitions to Putnam's, rather I want to accept his intuitions for the purpose of the argument and continue with his positive account of how extension is determined.

On Putnam's theory the extension of a general term like "water", and indeed on his theory just about any general term, is determined *indexically* as follows. We identify a kind of substance such as water by certain surface features. These are such things as that water is a clear, tasteless, colorless liquid, etc. The crucial point is that the extension of the word "water" is then determined as whatever is identical in structure with this stuff, whatever that structure is. Thus, on his account the reason that "water" on twin earth has a different extension from "water" on earth is that the stuff identified indexically has a different structure on twin earth from the structure that it has on earth, and "water" is simply defined as whatever bears the relation "same *L*" to this stuff.

Now from the point of view of a traditional theorist what exactly does this argument achieve? Even supposing Putnam is right about his intuitions, all he has done is substitute one Intentional content for another. For the traditional cluster-of-concepts Intentional content, Putnam has substituted an indexical Intentional content. In each case it is a meaning in the head that determines extension. In fact, Putnam's suggestion is a rather traditional approach to natural kind terms: a word is defined ostensively as whatever bears the right relation to the denotation of the original ostension. "Water" has simply been defined as whatever is identical in structure to this stuff whatever that structure is. And this is simply one case among others in which intensions, which are in the head, determine extensions.

On the traditional Lockean view, water is defined (nominal essence) by a check list of concepts: liquid, colorless, tasteless, etc. On the Putnam proposal, water is defined (real essence) indexically by identifying something that satisfies the nominal essence and then declaring that water is to be defined as whatever has the same real essence as the stuff so identified. This may be an improvement on Locke but it certainly does not show that meanings are not in the head.

I believe Putnam would not regard this as an adequate response,

since the whole tone of his writings on this topic is to suggest that he takes himself not to be proposing a variation of the traditional view that meanings are in the head but to be rejecting the tradition altogether. The interest of this discussion for the present work only becomes clear when we examine the underlying assumptions about Intentionality that lead him to suppose that the alternative account of meaning that he proposes is somehow fundamentally inconsistent with the view that meanings are in the head. Let us try to state his position a little more precisely. We can distinguish three theses:

- (1) The associated cluster of concepts does not determine extension,
- (2) The indexical definition does determine extension,
- (3) What is in the head does not determine extension.

Now (3) does not follow from (1) and (2). To suppose that it does one must assume that the indexical definition is not in the head. Putnam uses (1) and (2) to argue for (3) and thereby assumes that the indexical definition is not in the head. Now, why does he think that? Why does he think that in the case of these indexical definitions what is in the head does not determine extension? I believe that there are two reasons why he makes this fallacious move. First, he supposes that since we don't know the micro-structure, and since it is the micro-structure that determines extension, then what is in the head is insufficient to determine extension.

But that, I believe, is simply a mistake; and we can illustrate the way it is a mistake by considering the following example. The expression, "The murderer of Brown", has an intension which determines as its extension the murderer of Brown.<sup>3</sup> The intension, "The murderer of Brown", fixes the extension even though it is a fact about the world who murdered Brown. For someone who does not know who murdered Brown the extension of the expression, "The murderer of Brown", is still the murderer of Brown even though he does not know who it is. Now analogously, the Intentional content "identical in structure with this (indexically identified) stuff" is an Intentional content that would determine an

<sup>3</sup> Strictly speaking it determines the unit class whose sole member is the murderer of Brown, but for the purposes of this argument we can ignore this distinction.

extension, even if we don't know what that structure is. The theory that intension determines extension is the theory that intensions set certain conditions which anything has to meet in order to be part of the extension of the relevant intension. But that condition is satisfied by Putnam's example: the indexical definition of water has an Intentional content, that is, it sets certain conditions which any potential sample has to meet if it is to be part of the extension of "water", in exactly the same sense that the expression "The murderer of Brown" sets certain conditions which any potential candidate has to meet if he or she is to be the extension of "The murderer of Brown". But in both cases it is a matter of fact about the world, whether or not some existing entities satisfy the Intentional content. It is, therefore, just a mistake to suppose that because we define "water" in terms of an unknown micro-structure, that intension does not determine extension.

But there is a second and deeper reason why Putnam supposes that his analysis shows that meanings are not in the head. He makes certain assumptions about the nature of Intentional contents and the nature of indexical expressions and especially about the way Intentional contents relate to indexical expressions, which we must now explore. The assumptions emerge when he says:

For these (indexical) words no one has ever suggested the traditional theory that 'intension determines extension'. To take our Twin Earth example: if I have a *Doppelgänger* on Twin Earth, then when I think, 'I have a headache', *he* thinks 'I have a headache'. But the extension of the particular token of 'I' in his verbalized thought is himself (or his unit class, to be precise), while the extension of the token of 'I' in *my* verbalized thought is *me* (or my unit class, to be precise). So the same word, 'I', has two different extensions in two different idiolects; but it does not follow that the concept I have of myself is in any way different from the concept my *Doppelgänger* has of himself.<sup>4</sup>

This passage makes it clear that Putnam supposes both that the traditional view that what is in the head determines extension cannot be applied to indexicals and that if two speakers, I and my "*Doppelgänger*", have type-identical mental states our states must

4 *Op. cit.* p. 234.

have the same conditions of satisfaction. I believe both these assumptions are false. I want to argue, first, that if by "intension" we mean Intentional content then the intension of an utterance of an indexical expression precisely does determine extension; and, second, that in perceptual cases two people can be in type-identical mental states, indeed we can even suppose that a man and his *Doppelgänger* can be type-identical down to the last microparticle, and their Intentional contents can still be different; they can have different conditions of satisfaction. Both perceptual Intentionality and indexicality are cases of self-referentiality of Intentional or semantic content. We will explore the self-referentiality of indexical propositions later in this chapter. For present purposes it is sufficient to remind ourselves of the causal self-referentiality of perceptual experience that we explored in Chapters 2 and 4 and to show how it is relevant to the twin earth argument.

Let us suppose that Jones on the earth in 1750 indexically identifies and baptizes something as "water" and twin Jones on twin earth also indexically identifies and baptizes something as "water". Let us also suppose that they have type-identical mental contents and type-identical visual and other sorts of experiences when they make the indexical identification. Now, since they give the same type-identical definitions, namely, "water" is defined as whatever is identical in structure with this stuff, and since they are having type-identical experiences, Putnam supposes that we cannot account for how "water" has a different extension on earth from the extension on twin earth in terms of their mental contents. If their experiences are the same, how can their mental contents be different? On the account of Intentionality presented in this book the answer to that problem is simple. Though they have type-identical visual experiences in the situation where "water" is for each indexically identified, they do not have type-identical Intentional contents. On the contrary, their Intentional contents can be different because each Intentional content is causally self-referential in the sense that I explained earlier. The indexical definitions given by Jones on earth of "water" can be analyzed as follows: "water" is defined indexically as whatever is identical in structure with the stuff causing *this* visual experience, whatever that structure is. And the analysis for twin Jones on twin earth is: "water" is defined indexically as whatever is identical in structure

with the stuff causing *this* visual experience, whatever that structure is. Thus, in each case we have type-identical experiences, type-identical utterances, but in fact in each case something different is meant. That is, in each case the conditions of satisfaction established by the mental content (in the head) is different because of the causal self-referentiality of perceptual experiences.

This account does not have the consequence that different speakers on earth must mean something different by "water". Most people do not go around baptizing natural kinds; they just intend to use words to mean and refer to whatever the community at large, including the experts, use the words to mean and refer to. And even when there are such public baptisms they would normally involve on the part of the participants shared visual and other experiences of the sort that we discussed in Chapter 2. But the account does have the consequence that, in making indexical definitions, different speakers *can* mean something different because their Intentional contents are self-referential to the token Intentional experiences. I conclude, then, that even if we accept all of his intuitions – which many of us will not – Putnam's arguments do not show that meanings are not in the head. Quite the contrary, what he has done is to offer us an alternative Intentionalistic account, based on indexical presentations, of the meanings of a certain class of general terms.

## II. ARE THERE IRREDUCIBLY *DE RE* BELIEFS?<sup>5</sup>

I have never seen a clear and precise statement of what exactly the *de dicto/de re* distinction as applied to propositional attitudes is supposed to be. Perhaps there are as many versions of it as there are authors on the subject, and certainly the notions have gone far beyond the literal Latin meanings, "of words" and "of things". Suppose one believes, as I do, that all Intentional states are entirely constituted by their Intentional content and their psychological mode, both of which are in the head. On such an account all beliefs are *de dicto*. They are entirely individuated by their Intentional

<sup>5</sup> Like other authors who write on this topic I will use belief as an example for the whole class of propositional attitudes.



content and psychological mode. Some beliefs, however, are also actually about real objects in the real world. One might say that such beliefs are *de re* beliefs, in the sense that they refer to actual objects. *De re* beliefs would then be a subclass of *de dicto* beliefs, in the same way that true beliefs are a subclass of *de dicto* beliefs, and the term "*de dicto* belief" would be redundant since it just means belief.

On such a view, the belief that Santa Claus comes on Christmas Eve and the belief that de Gaulle was President of France are both *de dicto*, and the second is also *de re* since it is about real objects, de Gaulle and France.

With such an account of the *de re/de dicto* distinction I would have no quarrel. But several accounts in the philosophical literature since Quine's original article<sup>6</sup> advance a much stronger thesis: The intuitive idea is that in addition to the class of *de dicto* beliefs which are entirely individuated by their content and mode, by what is in the head, there is a class of beliefs for which what is in the head is insufficient to individuate the beliefs because such beliefs involve relations between believers and objects as part of the identity of the belief. Such beliefs are not a subclass of *de dicto* beliefs, but are irreducibly *de re*. Purely *de dicto* beliefs could be held by a brain in a vat; they are independent of how the world is in fact. But *de re* beliefs, on this view, are relations between believers and objects; for them, if the world were different in certain ways, the beliefs themselves would be different even though what is in the head remained unchanged.

There are as near as I can tell three sets of considerations that incline people to the view that there are irreducibly *de re* beliefs. First, there just does seem to be a class of beliefs which are irreducibly *about* objects, that is, beliefs which relate the believer to an object and not just to a proposition and in that sense are *de re* rather than *de dicto*. For example, suppose that George Bush believes that Ronald Reagan is President of the United States. Now that is clearly a fact about Bush, but under the circumstances isn't it equally clearly a fact about Reagan? Isn't it just a plain fact about Reagan that Bush believes him to be President? Furthermore, there

6 W. V. Quine, 'Quantifiers and propositional attitudes', in *Ways of Paradox* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 183-94.

is no way to account for the fact simply in terms of facts about Bush, including facts which relate him to propositions. The fact in question is stated by a proposition of the form

About Reagan, Bush believes him to be President of the United States

or, more pretentiously,

Reagan is such that Bush believes of him that he is President of the United States.

Such propositions, describing *de re* beliefs, permit quantification into "belief contexts"; that is, each permits an inference to

$(\exists x)$  (Bush believes ( $y$  is President of the United States) of  $x$ )

According to received opinion, both our logical theory and our theory of mind compel us to such an analysis.

Second, there is clearly a distinction between propositional attitudes which are directed at particular objects and those which are not. In Quine's example, we need to make a distinction between the desire a man might have for a sloop where any old sloop will do, and the desire a man might have which is directed at a particular sloop, the sloop *Nellie* parked at the Sausalito Yacht Harbor. In the first or *de dicto* desire, the man seeks – as Quine says – mere "relief from slooplessness", in the second or *de re* desire the man's desire relates him to a particular object. The difference according to Quine is expressed in the following two sentences:<sup>7</sup>

*de dicto*: I wish that  $(\exists x)$  ( $x$  is a sloop & I have  $x$ )

*de re*:  $(\exists x)$  ( $x$  is a sloop & I wish that I have  $x$ )

Third, and I believe most important, there is supposed to be a class of beliefs which contain a "contextual", "nonconceptual" element, and for that reason are not subject to an internalist or *de dicto* account. As Tyler Burge writes,<sup>8</sup> "A *de re* belief is a belief whose correct ascription places a believer in an appropriate *nonconceptual* contextual relation to objects the belief is about . . . The crucial point is that the relation not be merely that of concepts

<sup>7</sup> See Quine, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>8</sup> T. Burge, 'Belief de re', *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 74, no. 6 (June 1977), pp. 338–62.

being concepts *of* the object – concepts that denote or apply to it” (first italics mine). According to Burge such beliefs cannot be completely or exhaustively characterized in terms of their Intentional contents, because, as he puts it, there are contextual, nonconceptual elements which are crucial to the identity of the belief.

I believe that all three of these reasons can be answered rather swiftly, and that all three embody various confused notions of Intentionality. I begin with the third set of reasons, as a discussion of them prepares the way for a discussion of the earlier two; and I will confine my remarks to Burge because he gives the strongest statement of the *de re* thesis known to me.

Implicit in Burge’s account is a contrast between the conceptual and the contextual. A fully conceptual belief is *de dicto* and completely analyzable in general terms. A contextual belief is individuated in part by relations between the believer and objects in the world and is therefore *de re*. His strategy is to argue by way of examples that there are beliefs that are not fully conceptual but are contextual. I agree that there are beliefs that are not fully conceptual in the sense that they do not consist in verbal descriptions in general terms but that does not show that they are contextual or *de re* in his sense. In addition to the two options of “conceptual” or “contextual” there is a third possibility, there are forms of Intentionality which are not general but particular and yet are entirely in the head, entirely internal. Intentionality may contain self-referential elements both of the causal kind that we considered in our discussion of perception, memory, intention, and action, and of the indexical kind that I alluded to briefly in the discussion of Putnam and will say more about later in this chapter. A proper understanding of the self-referentiality of certain forms of Intentionality is, I believe, sufficient to account for all of Burge’s examples of allegedly *de re* beliefs, since in each case the Intentional content can be shown to account completely for the content of the belief. And that is just another way of saying that, in the relevant sense, the belief is *de dicto*.

His first example is of a man seen coming from the distance in a swirling fog. Of this example he says, “We may plausibly be said to believe of him that he is wearing a red cap, but we do not see the man well enough to describe or image him in such a way as to

individuate him fully. Of course, we could individuate him ostensibly with the help of the descriptions that we can apply but there is no reason to believe that we can always describe or conceptualize the entities or spatio-temporal positions that we rely on in our demonstration.”

I find this passage very revealing, since it says nothing at all about the Intentional content of the visual experience itself which in this case is part of the content of the belief. Once you understand that the visual experience has a causally self-referential propositional content you don't need to worry about “describing” or “conceptualizing” anything in words in order to individuate the man: the Intentional content of the visual experience has already done it. On my account the (*de dicto*) Intentional content of the visual experience individuates the man, and that content is part of the (*de dicto*) content of the belief. The relevant *de dicto* Intentional content of the belief can be expressed as follows:

(There is a man there causing this visual experience and that man is wearing a red cap.)

In such a case the “contextual” elements are indeed present, but they are fully internalized in the sense that they are part of the Intentional content. Notice that this *de dicto* belief is quite sufficient to individuate any alleged *de re* analogue but at the same time it is consistent with the hypothesis that there is no man there at all. Such a belief as this could be held by a brain in a vat. It might be objected that this analysis has the consequence that it is in principle impossible for two different people to have the same perceptual belief. But that consequence does not follow, for the same man may be part of the conditions of satisfaction of two different perceptual beliefs; and it may be even part of the content of two perceptual beliefs that they should have exactly the same man as part of their conditions of satisfaction. Thus, in the case of shared visual experiences, I may believe not only that I am seeing a man and that you are seeing a man but that we are both seeing the *same* man. In such a case, the conditions of satisfaction will require not only that there is a man causing my visual experience, but that the same man is also causing your visual experience. Of course our beliefs will be different in the trivial sense that any self-referential perceptual content makes reference to a particular token and not to

qualitatively similar tokens, but that is a result we want anyway, since, when you and I share a visual experience, what we share is a common set of conditions of satisfaction and not the same token visual experiences. Your experience will be numerically different from mine even though they may be qualitatively similar.

The next class of cases considered by Burge are indexicals. His example is that of a man who believes of the present moment that it is in the twentieth century. But this is subject to Intentionalistic analysis formally similar to that we gave in the perceptual case. The method here as before is always to ask what must be the case in order that the Intentional content is satisfied. In the case of visual perception, the visual experience itself must figure causally in the conditions of satisfaction. In the case of the indexicals, there is an analogous self-referentiality though this time it is not causal. The truth conditions of "This moment is in the twentieth century", are that the moment of this utterance is in the twentieth century. Just as the perceptual case is self-referential to the experience, so the indexical case is self-referential to the utterance. I hasten to add that this statement of the conditions of satisfaction is not meant as a *translation* of the original sentence: I am not saying that "this moment" just *means* "the moment of this utterance". Rather, what I am arguing is that the indexical operator in the sentence *indicates*, though does not represent or describe, the form of the self-referentiality. The self-referentiality of indexical expressions is in that sense *shown* but not *said*, just as the self-referentiality of visual experience is 'shown' but not 'seen'. In the case of the statement of the conditions of satisfaction, I describe or represent or say what was indicated or shown in the original.

I conclude, then, that there is nothing irreducibly *de re* about either perceptual or indexical beliefs. They are subject to an Intentionalistic or *de dicto* analysis and the mistake of supposing there must be irreducibly *de re* sets of perceptual or indexical beliefs seems to rest on the assumption that all *de dicto* Intentionalistic analyses must be given using purely general words. Once the self-referential forms of indexicality and perceptual experience are explicated it is easy to see that there are forms of Intentionality where the Intentional contents are sufficient to determine the entire sets of conditions of satisfaction but they do not do so by setting purely general conditions, but rather by indicating relations in

which the rest of the conditions of satisfaction must stand to the Intentional state or event itself.

The diagnosis, then, of the mistake made by the *de re* theorists who rely on perceptual and indexical beliefs is the following: they correctly see that there is a class of beliefs that cannot be accounted for in purely general terms. They also see that these beliefs depend on contextual features, and they then mistakenly suppose that these contextual features cannot themselves be entirely represented as part of the Intentional content. Having contrasted the conceptual (in general terms) with the contextual (involving the real world) they then ignore the possibility of a completely internalist account of nonconceptual beliefs. I am arguing for forms of Intentionality that are not conceptual but not *de re* either.

Part of the difficulty here, I am convinced, comes from this archaic terminology which seemingly forces us to choose between the views that all beliefs are in words (*dicta*) and that some involve things (*res*). We can sort this out if we distinguish between several different questions. The question, "Are all beliefs *de dicto*?", tends to oscillate between at least four different interpretations.

1. Are all beliefs expressible using purely general terms?
2. Do all our beliefs occur to us in words which are sufficient to exhaust their content?
3. Do all of our beliefs consist entirely in an Intentional content?
4. Do some beliefs relate the believer directly to an object without the mediation of an Intentional content which is sufficient to individuate the object? Are they such that a change in the world would necessarily mean a change in the belief even if what is in the head remained constant?

The answer to the first two questions is no: the first, because many beliefs contain singular terms essentially, as we will see in our discussion of indexicals; and the second, because many beliefs contain, for example, a perceptual content, as we saw in the case we considered where a belief contains a visual experience as part of its content. But a negative answer to the first two questions does not entail a negative answer to the third: a belief can be exhaustively characterized by its Intentional content, and in that sense be a *de dicto* belief, even though it is not characterizable in general terms and contains nonverbal forms of Intentionality. If by *de dicto* we

mean *verbal, in words*, then not all beliefs are *de dicto*, but it does not follow from that that there are irreducibly *de re* beliefs, because a negative answer to the first two questions does not entail an affirmative answer to the fourth. If the answer to 3 is yes, that is, if, as I believe, all beliefs consist entirely in their Intentional content, then it is consistent to claim that the answer to 1, 2, and 4 is no. In one sense of *de dicto*, there are some beliefs that are not *de dicto* (in words), but that does not show that there are any irreducibly *de re* beliefs, because in another sense of *de dicto* (Intentional content) all beliefs are *de dicto* (which illustrates, among other things, that this terminology is muddled).

Using these results we can now turn to the other two arguments for the belief in irreducibly *de re* attitudes. The first argument says correctly that it is a fact about Ronald Reagan that Bush believes him to be President. But in what does this fact consist? On my account it consists simply in the fact that Bush believes the *de dicto* proposition that Ronald Reagan is President of the United States, and that Ronald Reagan satisfies the Intentional content associated with Bush's use of the name "Ronald Reagan". Some of this content is perceptual, some indexical, much of it is causal; but all of it is *de dicto* in the sense that it consists entirely in an Intentional content. Bush could have had exactly the same belief if Ronald Reagan had never existed and the whole thing, perceptions and all, had been a massive hallucination. In such a case Bush would have had a lot of perceptual, indexical, and causal Intentional contents which nothing satisfied.

Quine's argument I believe rests on confusing the distinction between particular and general propositional attitudes with a distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* propositional attitudes. There really is a distinction between those Intentional states that make reference to a particular object and those that do not. But in each case the state is *de dicto*. On this view, the sentence that Quine gives to express the *de re* attitude cannot be correct, because the sentence expressing the desire for a particular sloop is incomplete: there is no way an agent can have a desire for a *particular* object without representing that object to himself in some way, and Quine's formalization does not tell us how the object is represented. In the example as stated the agent would have to have a belief in the existence of a particular sloop and a desire to have that very sloop.

*Are meanings in the head?*

The only way to express the relation between the belief in the existence of a particular sloop and the desire to have it in the quantifier notation is to allow the scope of the quantifier to cross over the scope of the Intentional operators. That this is the correct way to represent the facts is at least suggested by the fact that we would so express the man's mental state in ordinary language. Suppose the man who wants a particular sloop gave expression to his whole mental state including his representation of the sloop. He might say,

There is this very nice sloop in the yacht harbor and I sure wish I had it.

The mental states he expressed here are, first, a belief in the existence of a particular sloop and, then, a desire to have that sloop. In English,

*I believe* that there is this very nice sloop in the yacht harbor and I *wish* I had it.

Notice that in this formulation the scope of the quantifier in the content of the belief extends to the content of the desire even though the desire is not within the scope of the belief. Thus, using square brackets for the scope of the Intentional verbs and round brackets for the quantifier and  $F$  for the Intentional content which identifies the sloop in question, we have:

Bel  $[(\exists x)((\text{sloop } x \ \& \ Fx) \ \& \ (\forall y)(\text{sloop } y \ \& \ Fy \rightarrow y = x))] \ \&$   
Des [I have  $x$ ]

This *de dicto* form represents the entire content of the desire directed at a particular object.

We have so far considered and rejected some arguments in favor of the belief in *de re* propositional attitudes. I want to conclude with a Wittgensteinian diagnosis of what I believe to be the deepest but unstated motives for the belief in irreducibly *de re* attitudes. The belief in two fundamentally different kinds of propositional attitudes, *de re* and *de dicto*, derives from the possibility that our language provides of giving two different kinds of reports of propositional attitudes, *de re* reports and *de dicto* reports. Suppose, for example, that Ralph believes that the man in the brown hat is a



spy.<sup>9</sup> Now about Ralph's belief we can either say, "About the man in the brown hat, Ralph believes he is a spy", or, "Ralph believes that the man in the brown hat is a spy". The first report commits us, the reporters, to the existence of the man in the brown hat. The second report commits us only to reporting the content of Ralph's belief. Now since sentences about beliefs can differ in this way, and indeed can have different truth conditions, we are inclined to think that there must be a difference in the phenomena reported. But notice that the distinction we can make between the *de re* report of Ralph's belief and the *de dicto* report is not a distinction that Ralph can make. Suppose Ralph says, "About the man in the brown hat, I believe he is a spy", or he says, "I believe that the man in the brown hat is a spy". From Ralph's point of view these amount to exactly the same belief. Imagine the craziness of the following conversation:

Quine: About the man in the brown hat, Ralph, do you believe he is a spy?

Ralph: No Quine, you've asked me if I hold a *de re* belief, but it is not the case that *about* the man in the brown hat I believe that he is a spy. Rather, I believe the *de dicto* belief, I believe *that* the man in the brown hat is a spy.

Just as the belief that Intentional-with-a-t states are somehow intrinsically intensional-with-an-s entities is founded on the confusion between logical properties of reports of Intentional states with logical properties of the Intentional states themselves, so the belief that there are two different kinds of Intentional states, *de re* and *de dicto*, is founded on confusing two different kinds of reports of Intentional states, *de re* and *de dicto* reports, with logical features of the Intentional states themselves. I conclude, then, that there is a genuine *de re/de dicto* distinction, but it is only a distinction in kinds of reports. If *de re* propositional attitudes are supposed to be those in which Intentional content is insufficient to individuate the mental state, then there are no such things as *de re* propositional attitudes; though there are *de re reports* of propositional attitudes in the sense that there are reports that commit the reporter to the existence of objects that the propositional attitudes are about.

<sup>9</sup> The example is, of course, Quine's, 'Quantifiers and propositional attitudes'.

III. INDEXICAL EXPRESSIONS

In both our discussion of Putnam's attack on internalism in semantics and our discussion of the alleged existence of irreducibly *de re* beliefs, we have suggested an account of indexical expressions and it is now time to make that account fully explicit.

There is at least one big difference between the problem of *de re* attitudes and the problem of indexicals: there are no such things as irreducibly *de re* propositional attitudes, but there really are indexical expressions and indexical propositions. The strategy therefore in this section will differ from that of the previous sections. First, we need to develop a theory of indexicals; second, to do it in such a way as to show how it fits in with the general account of Intentionality developed in this book; and, third, in so doing to answer those accounts of indexicals which claim that it is impossible to assimilate indexicals to an internalist or Fregean account of language. I begin with some of the arguments of the opposition.

Various authors, notably Perry<sup>10</sup> and Kaplan<sup>11</sup> maintain that there are thought contents which are essentially indexical. Consider, for example, the belief I might have if I come to believe that I am inadvertently making a mess in a supermarket by spilling sugar out of my cart. If I come to believe that I am making a mess, the content of my Intentional state seems to contain an essential indexical element; and this is shown by the fact that no paraphrase of my belief into any nonindexical terms will capture exactly the belief I have when I believe that I am making a mess. If I try to specify the belief using space and time coordinates, I will not be able to specify the content of my belief. For example, my possession of the belief that person *p* is making a mess at location *l* and at time *t* would not explain how my behavior changes when I discover that it is *me* that is making the mess, since I might have the belief that some person satisfying certain space-time coordinates is making a mess without realizing that it is me. Analogous remarks apply to definite descriptions and proper names: the belief that I am

<sup>10</sup> J. Perry, 'The problem of the essential indexical', *NOUS*, vol. 13, no. 1 (March 1979), pp. 3-21.

<sup>11</sup> D. Kaplan, 'Demonstratives', mimeo, UCLA, 1977.

making a mess is not the same as the belief that the only non-bearded philosopher in the Berkeley Co Op is making a mess or the belief that JS is making a mess, for I might have these latter beliefs without knowing that I am the only non-bearded philosopher in the Berkeley Co Op or that I am JS. The content of my belief seems, then, to be essentially indexical.

As I am sure both Perry and Kaplan are aware, there is nothing so far that is anti-Fregean or anti-internalist about this point. In fact, it looks like a paradigm example of Frege's distinction between sense and reference. Just as the proposition that the Evening Star shines near the horizon is different from the proposition that the Morning Star shines near the horizon, so the proposition that I am making a mess is different from the proposition that JS is making a mess. So far, so Fregean.

The anti-Fregean point comes next. According to Perry<sup>12</sup> and Kaplan<sup>13</sup> there is no way a Fregean can account for such essentially indexical Intentional contents, because in such cases there is no "completing Fregean sense" which is sufficient by itself to determine the conditions of satisfaction. To illustrate and support this claim Perry introduces the following sort of example. Suppose David Hume believes "I am David Hume". Suppose also that Heimson believes "I am David Hume", and just to make the strongest case let us suppose that Heimson is David Hume's *Doppelgänger* on twin earth and that he has type-identical mental states with David Hume, and indeed we can suppose that he is type identical with Hume down to the last microparticle. Now the sentence that Hume and Heimson both utter (or think), "I am David Hume", has the same Fregean sense on both occasions and Heimson and Hume are in type-identical mental states. But the propositions expressed must be different because they have different truth values. Hume's is true, Heimson's is false. There is a Fregean sense to the sentence, "I am David Hume", but it is not sufficient to determine which proposition is expressed. Kaplan and Perry conclude from such examples that the Fregean account of sense and reference and the Fregean account of propositions must

<sup>12</sup> J. Perry, 'Frege on demonstratives', *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 86, no. 4 (October 1977), pp. 474-97.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*

be inadequate to explain indexicals. Since what is expressed in such utterances is essentially indexical and since there is no completing Fregean sense, we need another theory of propositions at least for such cases.

At this point they adopt what I believe is a desperate expedient, the theory of "direct reference" and "singular propositions". According to them, in such cases the proposition is not the Intentional content in the mind of the speaker but rather the proposition must contain the actual objects referred to. Hume's proposition contains Hume, the actual man and not some representation of him, and Heimson's proposition contains Heimson, the actual man and not some representation of him. Expressions which (like Russell's logically proper names) introduce objects themselves into propositions are said to be "directly referential" and the propositions in question are (misleadingly) said to be "singular propositions".

I am, frankly, unable to make any sense of the theory of direct reference and singular propositions, but for the purposes of this argument I am not attacking its intelligibility but its necessity to account for the data: I think that the arguments for it are inadequate and rest on a misconception of the nature of Intentionality and of the nature of the functioning of indexicals.

*(i) How do indexical expressions work?*

We need to develop an account of indexicals which will show how the utterance of an indexical expression can have a "completing Fregean sense":<sup>14</sup> that is, we need to show how in the utterance of an indexical expression a speaker can express an Intentional content which is sufficient to identify the object he is referring to in virtue of the fact that the object *satisfies* or *fits* that Intentional content.

In what follows I will confine the discussion to indexical *referring* expressions such as "I", "you", "this", "that", "here", "now",

<sup>14</sup> Though remember, the account is not Fregean in postulating a third realm of abstract entities. Ordinary Intentional contents will do the job. When I say "completing Fregean sense" I do not mean to imply that such senses are abstract entities, but rather that they are sufficient to provide adequate "modes of presentation".

*Are meanings in the head?*

“he”, “she”, etc. But it is worth pointing out that the *phenomenon* of indexicality – the phenomenon of the conditions of satisfaction being determined in virtue of relations things have to the realization of the Intentional content itself – is quite general and extends beyond just referring expressions and indeed even beyond cases of indexical *expressions*. Various forms of indexicality are part of the nonrepresentational Background. For example, I now believe that Benjamin Franklin was the inventor of bifocals. Suppose that it was discovered that 80 billion years before Benjamin Franklin’s discovery, in a distant galaxy, populated by organisms somewhat like humans, some humanoid invented the functional equivalent of bifocals. Would I regard my view that Benjamin Franklin had invented bifocals as false? I think not. When I say Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals there is a concealed indexical in the background: the functioning of the Background in such cases assigns an indexical interpretation to the sentence. Relative to *our* earth and *our* history, Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals; the statement that Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals is, therefore, like most statements, indexical; even though there are no indexical *expressions* (other than the tense of the verb) contained in the *sentence* used to make the statement.

Let us begin by asking what indexical referring expressions have in common that makes them indexical? What is the essence of indexicality? The defining trait of indexical referring expressions is simply this: In uttering indexical referring expressions, speakers refer by means of indicating relations in which the object referred to stands to the utterance of the expression itself. “I” refers to the person uttering the expression, “you” refers to the person addressed in the utterance of the expression, “here” refers to the place of the utterance of the expression, “now” refers to the time of the utterance of the expression, and so on. Notice that in every case the speaker will refer to a particular entity because his utterance expresses an Intentional content that indicates relations that the object he is referring to has to the utterance itself. The utterance of indexical expressions, therefore, has a form of self-referentiality which is similar to the self-referentiality of certain Intentional states and events, and we will need to explore it in more detail. But at this point we need only note that this self-referential feature is sufficient to account for how the utterance of an indexical

expression can have a completing Fregean sense. The problem for a Fregean (internalist or Intentionalist) account of reference is to show in every case how reference succeeds in virtue of the fact that the utterance sets conditions of satisfaction and an object is referred to in virtue of the fact that it meets those conditions. An object is referred to in virtue of satisfying an Intentional content, normally expressed by a speaker in the utterance of an expression. This is the basic idea of Frege's notion of the "*Sinn*" of "*Eigennamen*". His favorite examples are cases such as "the Morning Star", where the lexical meaning of the expression is supposedly sufficient to determine which object is referred to. What is special about indexical expressions is that the lexical meaning of the expression by itself does not determine which object it can be used to refer to, rather the lexical meaning gives a rule for determining reference relative to each utterance of the expression. Thus the same unambiguous expression used with the same lexical meaning can be used to refer to different objects because the lexical meaning determines that the conditions laid down by the utterance of the expression, viz., the completing sense expressed by the speaker in its utterance, is always self-referential to the utterance itself. Thus, for example, "I" has the same lexical meaning when uttered by you or me, but the reference in each case is different because the sense expressed by my utterance is self-referential to that very utterance and the sense expressed by your utterance is self-referential to your utterance: in any utterance "I" refers to the person who utters it.

There are, then, three components to the Fregean sense expressed by a speaker in the utterance of indexical expressions: the self-referential feature which is the defining trait or essence of indexicality; the rest of the lexical meaning, which can be expressed in general terms; and for many indexical utterances, the awareness by the speaker and the hearer of the relevant features of the actual context of the utterance, as in, for example, perceptual demonstratives, e.g., "that man over there". We need to explore each of these features in turn.

*Self-referentiality.* How does it work? Recall that for visual experiences the specification of the conditions of satisfaction makes reference to the visual experience itself. If I see my hand in front of my face then the conditions of satisfaction are

Vis Exp (there is a hand there and the fact that there is a hand there is causing this Vis Exp).

The form of the conditions of satisfaction of indexical propositions is analogously self-referential; though there is a difference in that the self-referentiality of the indexical cases is not causal. The sense in which the indexical cases are self-referential, like the case of Intentional self-reference, does not imply that the speaker in making the utterance performs a *speech act of referring* to the utterance, nor is the utterance explicitly *represented* in itself. Rather, the specification of the conditions of satisfaction, e.g., the truth conditions, requires reference to the utterance itself. Consider any utterance of the sentence, "I am now hungry". That utterance will be the making of a true statement iff the person uttering the sentence is hungry at the time of the utterance of the sentence. The conditions of satisfaction can therefore be represented as follows:

(the person making this utterance, "I", is hungry at the time of this utterance, "now").

This analysis does not imply that "I" is *synonymous* with "the person making this utterance", nor is "now" synonymous with "the time of this utterance". They could not be synonymous because the self-referentiality of the original is shown but not stated, and in the statement of the truth conditions we have stated it and not shown it. Just as we do not see the visual experience even though the visual experience is part of its own conditions of satisfaction, and is in that sense self-referential, so we do not refer to (in the speech act sense) the utterance of the indexical expression, even though the utterance is part of its own truth conditions and is in that sense self-referential. The self-referentiality of the visual experience is *shown* but not *seen*; the self-referentiality of the indexical utterance is *shown* but not *stated*. If we wanted to introduce a synonym which *showed* the indexicality we could introduce an arbitrary device, such as the asterisk symbol (\*) to indicate the indexicality, i.e., to express the fact without stating it that the expression was being used to refer by way of indicating relations in which the referred to object stood to the utterance of the expression itself. Such a form of expression would give a

*Are meanings in the head?*

canonical notation for isolating the self-referentiality of indexical expressions:

I = \*person uttering  
you = \*person addressed  
here = \*cospatial  
now = \*cotemporal

and so on. All of these equivalences give us a *display* of the meaning of expressions, and consequently a display of the meanings of sentences containing these expressions. Thus, for example, the meaning of the sentence "I am hungry" is given by

\*person uttering is hungry at \*cotemporal.

*Nonindexical descriptive content.* We will deepen our understanding of the self-referential feature of indexical expressions if we see how it latches on to the rest of the lexical meaning, the nonindexical descriptive content, of the expression. I said that all indexical referring expressions refer by indicating relations in which the object referred to stands to the utterance of the expression. This naturally raises the question, how many kinds of relations are indicated in this manner? In English and in other languages known to me there are certainly four, and possibly five, relations indicated by the literal meaning of indexical expressions. These four are:

- (1) time: examples of such expressions are "now", "yesterday", "tomorrow", and "later on";
- (2) place: e.g., "here" and "there";
- (3) utterance directionality: "you" refers to the person being addressed in the utterance, "I" refers to the person uttering;
- (4) discursal relations: anaphoric pronouns and expressions such as "the former" and "the latter" refer to something in virtue of its relation to the rest of the discourse in which the indexical utterance is embedded.

Notice that in each of these examples the nonindexical descriptive lexical meaning contains two elements: a sense which expresses the particular determinate form of the determinable relation indicated, and a sense which expresses the sort of entity being referred to. Thus, "yesterday" expresses the determinate time indication "one day before", and the type of entity referred to is a day. Thus the



entire set of conditions of satisfaction expressed by "yesterday" are: the day which is one day before the day of this utterance. Not all indexicals have a lexical meaning which is in this way complete, for example, the demonstratives "this" and "that" usually require an extra expression ("this man" or "that tree"), as well as an awareness of the context in order to express a completing Fregean sense in a given utterance. More about this later.

These four are certainly forms of indexical relations expressed in the literal meaning of English indexical expressions. It has been argued that another relation is indicated by such words as "actual" and "real", the idea being that the word "actual" expresses its sense indexically by referring to *the world* in which it is uttered; and thus among *possible* worlds the *actual* world is picked out indexically. I think this claim is completely false; however, since it involves modal issues that go beyond the scope of this book I will not discuss it further here.<sup>15</sup>

Though there are only four (or arguably five) forms of indexical relations indicated in the lexical meaning of expressions in actual languages such as English, there is no limit in principle to introducing new forms of indexicality. We might, for example, have an expression which when uttered at a certain pitch would indicate sounds of a higher or lower pitch or of the same pitch. That is, we could imagine a class of indexical expressions that are used to refer to tonal qualities by indicating relations in which the tonal qualities stand to the tonal quality of the utterance analogously to the way that "today", "yesterday", and "tomorrow" refer to days by indicating relations in which they stand to the day of the utterance of the expression itself.

*Awareness of the context of utterance.* Often the literal utterance of an indexical expression will not by itself carry a completing Fregean sense, but the completing Fregean sense is provided by the Intentional content of the indexical utterance together with the Intentional content of the awareness by the speaker and the hearer of the context of the utterance. One sees this most clearly in the case of the utterance of the demonstratives "this" and "that".

<sup>15</sup> For a criticism of the view see P. van Inwagen, 'Indexicality and actuality', *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 89, no. 3 (July 1980), pp. 403-26.

Suppose upon seeing a man behave strangely at a party I say "That man is drunk". Now, in this case the descriptive content of "man" together with the indexical does not provide the completing Fregean sense because the utterance is only meant and understood in the context of an accompanying visual perception of which man is meant, and the proposition expressed has to contain the Intentional content of the perceptual experience that accompanied the utterance. The argument for this is simply that somebody who doesn't have the relevant perceptual experiences, e.g., because he is listening to me on the telephone or is blind or overhears me from the next room, cannot fully grasp the proposition I express; without the perceptual experience, he literally doesn't understand the entire proposition even though he understands all the words uttered.

In such cases a complete analysis of the proposition which makes the completing Fregean sense fully explicit would have to include both the Intentional content of the utterance and the Intentional content of the visual experience, and it would have to show how the latter is nested in the former. Here is how it works. The indexical expression refers by indicating relations in which the object stands to the utterance of the expression itself. In this case, then, there is some relation  $R$  such that the truth conditions of the utterance are expressible as

The man who stands in relation  $R$  to this utterance is drunk.

And, in the case as described,  $R$  is perceptual and temporal; the man who is referred to is the man we are *seeing* at the *time* of this utterance. But if we are seeing someone at the time of this utterance each of us will also have a visual experience with its own present-tense propositional content:

Vis exp (there is a man there and the fact that there is a man there is causing this visual experience).

Now that Intentional content simply plugs into the Intentional content of the rest of the utterance to give us the completing Fregean sense which identifies the man uniquely in virtue of both the self-referentiality of the utterance and the self-referentiality of the visual experience. The entire conditions of satisfaction of the

whole proposition (with the self-referential parts italicized) are expressible as follows:

((there is a man,  $x$ , there, and the fact that  $x$  is there is causing *this vis exp*) and  $x$  is the man visually experienced at the time of *this utterance* and  $x$  is drunk).

This may look strange, but I think that the reader who is prepared to recognize the Intentionality of the visual experience, its role in the Intentionality of the proposition expressed by the utterance, the self-referentiality of the visual experience, and the self-referentiality of the indexical utterance, will see that something like this formulation has to be right. It is intended to capture both the indexical and the perceptual content of the proposition and the relations between them. In the case of the perceptual use of the demonstratives, both the sense of the indexical expression and the Intentional content contained in the perceptual experience that accompanies the utterance contribute to the propositional content expressed in the utterance. Notice that in these cases we have a completing Fregean sense sufficient to identify the object. Notice, further, that there is no twin earth problem for these cases. I, on this earth, and my *Doppelgänger*, on twin earth, will express different Fregean senses in our use of the demonstrative "That man", even though our utterances and our experiences are qualitatively type identical. His perception and his utterance are both self-referential, as are mine.

Let us now summarize the account. We need to distinguish between an indexical expression with its literal meaning, the literal utterance of an indexical expression, and the sense expressed by a speaker in the literal utterance of the expression. Analogously, we need to distinguish the indexical sentence (i.e., any sentence containing an indexical expression or morpheme, such as the tense of a verb) with its literal meaning, the literal utterance of an indexical sentence, and the proposition expressed by the speaker in a literal utterance of an indexical sentence. The meaning of the indexical expression by itself is not sufficient to provide the completing Fregean sense, since the same expression with the same meaning can be used to refer to different objects, e.g., different people refer to themselves by uttering "I". But the literal indexical

meaning is such as to determine that when a speaker makes an utterance of that expression the sense he expresses will be relative to that utterance. So the sense of the expression can become a completing Fregean sense relative to an utterance because the lexical sense determines that any utterance is self-referential to that very utterance. And this explains how two different speakers can utter the same sentence with the same meaning, e.g., "I am hungry", and still express different Fregean propositions: each proposition expressed is self-referential to the utterance in which it is expressed. It is the completing Fregean sense expressed which determines the reference and it is the Fregean sense and not the reference which is a constituent of the proposition. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that there is nothing reductionist or eliminative about this account of indexicality. I am not trying to show that indexicality is really something else, but rather I am trying to show what it is and how it works in utterances to express Intentional contents.

*(ii) How this account answers the objection to an internalist account of indexicals*

In the course of developing an independently motivated account of indexicals we have, in passing, answered the objection of Perry and Kaplan that no Frege-like account of indexicals can provide a completing Fregean sense. Hume and Heimson utter the same sentence with the same literal meaning but each utterance expresses a different Intentional content; and each, therefore, has a different completing Fregean sense, because each proposition expressed is self-referential to the utterance which expresses the proposition. In every case we have shown how the self-referentiality of the indexical utterance, as determined by the rule for using the indexical expression, sets the conditions which an object has to meet in order to be the referent of that utterance. Perry argues correctly that there are essentially indexical thought contents (propositions, in my sense), but he argues, in my view incorrectly, that there is no completing Fregean sense for essentially indexical thought contents. And from these two premises he concludes that the propositions expressed in such cases can only be accounted for on a direct reference theory. I

accept the first of his premises but reject the second and his conclusion. Indexical expressions are not counterexamples to the claim of the theory of Intentionality that objects are referred to by utterances only in virtue of the sense of the utterance, only by virtue of the fact that the utterance sets conditions of satisfaction which the objects referred to must meet.

Two concluding remarks: First, I have called my account of indexicals "Fregean" in spirit, but it is quite different from Frege's few actual remarks about indexicals. What little Frege did say seems both mistaken and inconsistent with his general account of sense and reference. About "I" he says that since each of us is aware of himself in a special, private way, "I" has both a public and a private sense. About "yesterday" and "today" he says that if we want to express today the same proposition that was expressed yesterday by an utterance containing "today" we must use the word "yesterday",<sup>16</sup> thus he seems to adopt a *de re* account of such indexical propositions. What is one to make of these remarks? The idea of incommunicable senses of expressions is profoundly anti-Fregean, since the notion of sense was introduced, in part, to provide a publicly graspable content to be shared by speaker and hearer. And the example of "yesterday" and "today" looks like a stock example of the sort of case where different senses can determine the same reference. Just as "the Evening Star" and "the Morning Star" can have the same reference with different senses because the referent is presented in each case with a different "mode of presentation", so "today" said yesterday and "yesterday" said today have different senses and hence are parts of the expression of different Fregean propositions, even though they both are used to refer to the same day. I believe Frege failed to see that it was possible to give a Fregean account of indexicals because he failed to see their self-referential character, and this failure is part of a larger failure to see the nature of Intentionality.

Second, discussions like this can tend to degenerate into a kind of fussy scholasticism which conceals the basic 'metaphysical' assumptions at issue, and, as far as possible, I believe, we should allow those assumptions to surface. My basic assumption is simply

<sup>16</sup> G. Frege, 'The thought: a logical inquiry', reprinted in P. F. Strawson (ed.) *Philosophical Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 17-38.

*Are meanings in the head?*

this: causal and other sorts of natural relations to the real world are only relevant to language and other sorts of Intentionality insofar as they impact on the brain (and the rest of the central nervous system), and the only impacts that matter are those that produce Intentionality, including the Network and the Background. Some form of internalism must be right because there isn't anything else to do the job. The brain is all we have for the purpose of representing the world to ourselves and everything we can use must be inside the brain. Each of our beliefs must be possible for a being who is a brain in a vat because each of us is precisely a brain in a vat; the vat is a skull and the 'messages' coming in are coming in by way of impacts on the nervous system. The necessity of this internalism is masked from us in many of these discussions by the adoption of a third-person point of view. By adopting a God's eye view we think we can see what Ralph's real beliefs are even if he can't. But what we forget when we try to construct a belief that is not entirely in Ralph's head is that we have only constructed it in our head. Or, to put the point another way, even if there were a set of external semantic concepts they would have to be parasitic on and entirely reducible to a set of internal concepts.

Paradoxically, then, the point of view from which I defend a 'Fregean' account of reference is one Frege would have found utterly foreign, a kind of biological naturalism. Intentionality is a biological phenomenon and it is part of the natural world like any other biological phenomenon.