

My Own Philosophy

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I think there are at least two sorts of things we are directly aware of – ideas and impressions (similar to Locke and Hume). To some extent, ideas come from impressions, but are not usually like them. Ideas usually are of external objects (the simplest case), which cause the impressions. We have an idea of a table, not all the various impressions caused by the table. Because we learn the word “table” from others who learned the word in similar ways, we come to share the same word “table” for mostly the same objects as others who know English. And the same for other words and objects.

My relations R, S, and T (all of which could mean “means”) are such that

If R is the relation of a word to an idea then $w R i$ iff i is the idea corresponding to the word w .

If S is the relation of a [singular] idea to an object, then $i S o$ iff o is the one and only one objects corresponding to the idea i .

If T is the relation of a [plural] idea to some objects, then $i T o$ iff $I T o$ iff o is among the objects corresponding to the idea i .

S and T make sense even if no such objects exist, and could be used with definite descriptions in any case. One cannot tell from an idea (or word) whether or not there is a corresponding object. With S there is 0 or 1 objects. With T there are 0 or 1 or many. For R, one might have no idea what a word means.

The relative products $R | S$ and $R | T$, are all we can easily talk about with other people. We do not have ideas of other people’s ideas. But such ideas can be inferred (and described in Russell’s manner).

E.g. Quine could infer that Tom’s idea having the R relation from the word “Cicero” was different than Tom’s idea having the R relation from the word “Tully”. And (he could infer in a like manner) That Tom’s ideas corresponding to the words “denounced” and “Catiline” are such that Tom has a belief relation for ideas for denouncing, Cicero and Catiline, but he has a disbelief relation for his ideas of denouncing, Tully and Catiline.

Russell tries to solve this sort of problem by assuming intensional relations. I cannot say that this is impossible, however intensional relations seem more problematic than the sort of ideas I advocate. Intensional relations seem mental – like ideas, and it is difficult to define identity for them. Ideas are just objects as far as identity goes.

What would correspond to the Frege sense of a word n in my philosophy is the set of x such that $n R x$. {one need not really advocate for the existence of sets}.

What would correspond to the denotation of a word n is the set of x such that $n(R|S) x$ or $n(R|T) x$.

Finally, one only needs one [extensional] predicate – Q . No other predicates are needed.

For any thought there is a relation of ideas $Q(R, i_1, i_2, \dots i_n)$.

There would also be relations of belief and disbelief among ideas for a person at a time.

Thoughts could be defined as all possible such tuples.

But Q is not restricted to ideas – it can apply to any sort of objects.

Where, I have used R , S , and T they are relative to a person and time, but I have, for simplicity of expression, dropped their representation.