

The Primacy of the Intentional

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Source: *Synthese*, Vol. 61, No. 1, The Intentionality of Mind, Part I (Oct., 1984), pp. 89-109

Published by: [Springer](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20116050>

Accessed: 09-02-2016 18:13 UTC

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## THE PRIMACY OF THE INTENTIONAL

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to what might be called “the principle of the primacy of the intentional”, the reference of language is to be explicated in terms of the intentionality of *thought*. The word “*Pferd*”, for example, refers to horses in so far as it is used to express thoughts that are directed upon horses. But, according to most contemporary philosophers of language, the intentionality of thought is to be explicated in terms of the reference of *language*. Our thoughts can be directed upon horses only if, somehow (perhaps by means of an inner speech act), we use *words* which, independently of anyone’s thoughts, have the property of meaning or referring to horses.

The two possible procedures may be illustrated by reference to the following statements:

1. There exists an  $x$  such that John believes that  $x$  is a horse.
2. John believes that there are horses.
3. There exists an  $x$  such that John says that  $x$  is a horse.
4. There exists an  $x$  such that John uses  $N$  to designate  $x$ .

In explicating such statements, we may choose between two procedures. We could begin with the concept presupposed by (1), then move to (2), then to (3), and finally to (4). Or we could begin with (4) and move back to (1).

How should one choose between these procedures? This is one of the most fundamental questions of contemporary philosophy. One can answer it only by seeing which of the two yields the simpler conceptual scheme.

In testing and comparing the two approaches, we should consider the way they would deal with such sentences as the following: “There exists an  $x$  and a  $y$  such that  $x$  believes  $y$  to be so-and-so”; “There exists an  $x$

*Synthese* 61 (1984) 89–109. 0039–7857/84/0611–0089 \$02.10  
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and there exists a  $y$  such that  $x$  thinks of  $y$  as being so-and-so"; "There exists an  $x$  and there exists a  $y$  such that  $x$  says of  $y$  that it is so-and-so"; and "There exists an  $x$ , there exists a  $y$ , and there exists a  $z$  such that  $x$  uses  $z$  to designate  $y$ ".

In this essay, I shall suggest what one can do with such questions if one presupposes the principle of the primacy of the intentional.<sup>1</sup> I shall avoid making use of undefined linguistic or semantical concepts, since all such concepts, I believe, should be explicated by reference to intentional concepts. Therefore, I shall not speak of "inner speech acts", "inner language", or "inner systems of representation". I shall make use of three undefined intentional concepts, for which I will use the expressions "attributing", "considering", and "endeavoring". I will make use of the nonintentional expressions, "contributing causally to" and "making an utterance", and will allow myself to speak of the "parts" of an utterance. I will discuss in detail certain features that the three intentional concepts have in common. And, finally, I will formulate intentional definitions of *sense* and *reference*. I believe that this approach to language will throw light upon a number of philosophical questions (e.g., "How are we to interpret the 'he, himself' locution?" and 'Do demonstratives and proper names have senses?').

I assume that, whatever approach one may take to these questions, one will agree that it is important to see how far one can go taking what I have called the intentional approach. Doubtless what I shall say calls for some revision and refinement.

## 2. THE ORTHODOX LINGUISTIC APPROACH

What might be called the orthodox approach to the analysis of sense and reference may be characterized by the following assumptions – each of which seems to me to be questionable.

(1) One assumes that, for each use of any well-formed indicative sentence in our language, there is a proposition that is the proposition constituting the meaning of that sentence in that use. The difficulty I find with this assumption does not pertain to the "the", in "the proposition"; it pertains to the "proposition" – to the presupposition that propositions constitute the meanings of sentences.

I would say that this is not an assumption with which we should *begin* our investigations. It is, at best, a conclusion we should reluctantly draw at the *end* of our investigations. For the "propositions" that are thus

presupposed will not be restricted to the abstract objects now commonly called “states of affairs”. The “singular propositions” that would constitute the meanings of sentences containing demonstratives and proper names would apparently be contingent things, dependent for their being upon those individual things that are thought to “enter into them”.

(2) One assumes that intentional attitudes – such as believing, knowing, endeavoring, and desiring – are primarily propositional. Combining this assumption with the previous one, one then infers that, if a person has a belief that can be expressed in a sentence in our language, then the object of that belief will be one of the propositions constituting the meaning of that sentence.

Since, presumably, we can believe only what we can grasp or conceive, this second assumption presupposes that the believer is able to grasp or conceive, not only those abstract objects that are properties and states of affairs, but also those contingent “singular propositions” constituting the meanings of sentences containing demonstratives and proper names. This, too, is a questionable assumption with which to *begin* an investigation.

(3) One assumes that the intentionality of thought is to be explicated in terms of the reference of language. Thus, it is held, one can think about horses only if one does something involving the word “horse” (or some other word that is thought to designate horses).

This assumption seems to presuppose that the relation of words to the things they refer to (“‘Pferd’ designates horses and has equinity as its sense”) is a kind of ultimate not capable of any further elucidation. But if one assumes the “primacy of the intentional”, one supposes that the word “Pferd” is related as it is to horses because – in a sense to be spelled out – it is used to express thoughts that are directed upon horses.

(4) One makes the following assumption about the singular terms in our language (or at least about those singular terms that are susceptible to existential generalization): each such term has what might be called an *attributive sense*. This attributive sense is thought to be a property, which is such that the term may be said to designate a thing if and only if the thing has that property. One then looks in vain for those properties constituting the attributive senses of demonstratives (“this”, “I”, “you”, “now”) and of proper names (“Tom”, “Cicero”).

(5) Finally, one assumes that propositions are invariant in their truth-value. This assumption requires an interpretation of tense (and

the interpretations that are usually offered are based upon highly problematic metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions). And it requires the further assumption that the sentences we ordinarily use to express our thoughts (e.g., "It is snowing") are elliptical and such that, if made completely explicit, they would contain terms designating times ("It snows on February 7, 1978"). A consequence of *this* assumption is that, in order to grasp the meaning of such sentences, we must be able to conceive those entities that are thought to be designated by dates. It is sometimes assumed, for example, that dates are definite descriptions of time and that demonstratives such as "now" and "this" function as proper names of times. And so, if we combine this assumption with the previous one, we will want to look for those properties constituting the sense of temporal demonstratives. Evidently many assume that one can grasp different *times* just as one can grasp different colors and flavors. But do we really have such direct acquaintance with times?

How do we decide whether such assumptions are true? The only procedure, surely, is to see how far one can go without them. And this requires a significant amount of philosophical toil.

### 3. ATTRIBUTING

We begin with a description of *believing*. We shall assume that the most fundamental sense of believing involves a relation, not between a believer and a *proposition*, but between a believer and a *property*.

We take as undefined the locution, "the property of being *F* in such that *x* directly attributes it to *y*", and assume that direct attribution is necessarily such that, for every *x* and for every *y*, if *x* directly attributes anything to *y*, then *x* is identical with *y*.<sup>2</sup> We assume that the believer is able to grasp or conceive what he thus can attribute to himself.

We do, therefore, presuppose the ability of a person to grasp or conceive certain properties and to attribute those properties to himself. This is as close as we need to come to the assumption that people make use of "inner systems of representation".

We may now define the "he, himself" locution as follows:

D1.1. *x* believes himself to be *F* = *Df.* *x* directly attributes to *x* the property of being *F*.

The definiendum may also be put by saying: "*x* believes that he, *x*, is *F*".

Let us say that, when a person makes a direct attribution, then the

person himself is the *direct object* of the attribution and that the property he attributes to himself is the *direct content* of the attribution.

*Indirect* attribution may now be defined as follows:

- D1.2.  $y$  is such that  $x$  indirectly attributes to it the property of being  $F = Df.$  There is a relation  $R$  such that  $x$  stands in  $R$  to  $y$  and only to  $y$ ; and  $x$  directly attributes to  $x$  the property of standing in  $R$  to just one thing and to a thing that is  $F.$

If you are the person who lives across the street from me, and if I directly attribute to myself the property of being someone such that the person who lives across the street from him is married, then I indirectly attribute to you the property of being married.

We may now define the familiar *de re* locution, “ $x$  believes  $y$  to be  $F$ ”:

- D1.3.  $x$  believes  $y$  to be  $F = Df.$   $y$  is such that  $x$  directly or indirectly attributes to it the property of being  $F.$

The definiendum may also be put by saying: “ $x$  believes, *with respect to*  $y$ , that it is  $F$ ”. Here we have the broadest possible sense of “*de re*” belief. (Stricter senses of this concept may be obtained by specifying the degree of “epistemic intimacy” that  $x$  bears to  $y$ . Such intimacy may be characterized by reference to the *epistemic justification*  $s$  has for his beliefs about those relations he bears just to  $y$ .)

We could say that, if  $x$  thus attributes to  $y$  the property of being  $F$ , then  $y$  is the *indirect object* of  $x$ 's attribution and the property of being  $F$  is the *indirect content* of the attribution. Alternate readings of the definiendum are: “ $x$  believes  $y$  to be  $F$ ”, “ $y$  is such that  $x$  believes it to be  $F$ ”, and “ $x$  believes with respect to  $y$  that it is  $F$ ”. Given our presupposition that one can directly attribute properties only to oneself, the first disjunct of the above definiens implies that  $x$  is identical with  $y$ .

If I attribute a certain property to myself indirectly but not directly, then, although I will be an  $x$  such that  $x$  believes  $x$  to have that property, I will not be an  $x$  such that  $x$  believes *himself* to have that property. (Imagine a group of doctors, each wired to a set of diagnostic instruments, with their resulting profiles depicted but not identified on a screen. A doctor may say, pointing to a certain profile: “That person has such-and-such a disorder”. But he does not believe himself to have the disorder; he would not say: “I have the disorder”. If the profile he is pointing to is in fact his own, then he has *indirectly* attributed the property to himself but he has not done so *directly*.)

With this distinction between direct and indirect attribution we are able to answer Castañeda's question, "What is the difference between saying (a) there exists an  $x$  such that  $x$  believes himself to be wise, and saying (b) there exists an  $x$  such that  $x$  believes  $x$  to be wise?"<sup>3</sup> The answer is that (a) tells us that the person in question *directly* attributes the property of wisdom to himself and (b) tells us that the person does so *either directly or indirectly*. (Putting the matter this way, we do not need to say that the problem points to a limitation of the usual quantificational notation.)

So-called *de dicto* belief exemplifies the concept defined in D1.3. If, for example, I can be said to accept the proposition that all men are mortal, then the proposition is something such that I believe it to be true. ("The proposition about men and mortality that I'm considering is true"; "The proposition that is the meaning of that sentence is true".) I assume, therefore, that the *de dicto* attitudes are all relatively sophisticated. One does not have a belief *de dicto* until one has acquired the concept of *truth*.

A person, then, may indirectly attribute a property to something other than himself. And he may also *relate* several different things. Suppose, for example, that there is just one person standing in front of me and just one person standing in back of me. If, now, I directly attribute to myself the property of being a thing such that the person who stands in front of it is taller than the person who stands behind it, then, we may say: "There exists an  $x$ , there exists a  $y$ , and there exists a  $z$  such that  $x$  believes that  $y$  is taller than  $z$ ". The following definition, therefore, may suggest itself:

$x$  believes  $y$  to bear the relation  $R$  to  $z = Df$ . There is a relation  $S$  such that  $x$  bears  $S$  to  $y$  and only to  $y$ , there is a relation  $T$  such that  $y$  bears  $T$  to  $z$  and only to  $z$ , and  $x$  directly attributes to  $x$  the property of being such that the thing he bears  $S$  to bears  $R$  to the thing he bears  $T$  to.

But this definition would not allow (a) for the possibility that  $x$  directly attributes to  $x$  the property of bearing  $R$  to itself, or (b) for the possibility that  $x$  directly attributes to  $y$  the property of bearing  $R$  to  $z$ . (We have noted that if a person  $x$  directly attributes anything to a thing  $y$ , then  $x$  is identical with  $y$ .) And so a more exact statement, for two-term relations, would be the following:

- D1.4.  $x$  believes  $y$  to bear the relation  $R$  to  $z = Df.$  Either: (a)  $y$  is identical with  $z$ , and  $x$  directly attributes to  $y$  the property of bearing  $R$  to itself: or (b) there is a relation  $S$  such that  $x$  bears  $S$  to  $z$  and only to  $z$ , and  $x$  directly attributes to  $y$  the property of being such that it bears  $R$  to the thing it bears  $S$  to: or (c) there is a relation  $S$  such that  $x$  bears  $S$  to  $y$  and only to  $y$ , there is a relation  $T$  such that  $y$  bears  $T$  to  $z$  and only to  $z$ , and  $x$  directly attributes to  $x$  the property of being such that the thing he bears  $S$  to bears  $R$  to the thing he bears  $T$  to.

The attribution of more complex relations is analogous. In such cases, instead of speaking of *the* indirect object of one's attitudes, we should speak of the indirect *objects* of one's attitudes. And the indirect *contents* of such attitudes will be the relations in question.

An attribution may only *purport* to have an indirect object. Suppose I believe, mistakenly, that there is one and only one person who is persecuting me and that that person is diabolical. In such a case one may say, somewhat misleadingly, "The object of his belief does not exist". It would be more nearly accurate to say that, although the belief has a *direct* object, it only purports to have an *indirect* object.

Other intentional attitudes – knowing, endeavoring, thinking of, and desiring – may be interpreted analogously. We do not assume that *propositions* are the primary objects of these attitudes.

#### 4. OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

Objection (1): "Your account of *de re* believing is excessively latitudinarian. It requires you to say that, if a person believes that there is one man in California who is richer than all other men in California, and if his belief is true, then that person believes, *with respect to* the richest man in California, that *he* is the richest man in California. But, surely, in order to have a belief that is thus directed upon the richest man in California, one's thought must be *concentrated upon* him in a way that is not exemplified in the present case."

If the richest man in California happens to know of the person in question, then he may truly say: "He believes that I'm identical with the richest man in California. I wonder what else he thinks about me." But if he *can* thus say, "He believes that *I* am the richest man in

California,” then the belief in question *is* a belief that is directed upon him. The account of *de re* belief, therefore, is not excessively latitudinarian.

Objection (2): “In presupposing that we are able to conceive properties, you are ignoring the fact that there are philosophers who sincerely believe that there are no such abstract objects. How could such philosophers be so misled if the conception of properties is essential to the very nature of believing?”

The *conception* of properties is essential to believing. But to believe that there *are* properties is not merely to take them as the *contents* of attribution but also to take them as the *objects* of attribution. And one may attribute properties to things without ever attributing anything to a property.

Objection (3): “You assume that all belief, in the final analysis, is belief about oneself. Isn’t this a large price to pay just to be able to deal with the problem of the ‘he, himself’ locution?”

The answer is, first, that the price *does* enable us to deal with the problem of the ‘he, himself’ locution – the problem of distinguishing between “*x* believes *x* to be *F*” and “*x* believes himself to be *F*”. But what we receive for the price we pay is much more than this:

–We are able to unify the various senses of believing without multiplying psychological concepts.

–We are able to dispense with the “singular propositions” that are sometimes thought to be the objects of those beliefs we express using demonstratives. For we need not suppose that such sentences as “I am standing” and “That is a book” are used to express propositions. Thus, I don’t use “I am standing” to express a proposition implying the property of being identical with me: I use it to express my direct attribution of the property of standing. I don’t use “That is a book” to express a proposition implying the property of being identical with that thing; I use it to express my indirect attribution of the property of being a book to the thing I am trying to call attention to.

–What we have just said, moreover, suggests a way of purifying our ontology. We need not suppose that the demonstratives in such sentences as “I am standing” and “That is a book” have properties as their senses. Although there *are* properties constituting the senses of such expressions as “book”, “unicorn”, “the largest book”, there are no properties constituting the senses of such expressions as “that

book”, “my book”, “his book”. For the only reason for supposing that there *are* these latter properties is one presupposing that the sentences in which they occur are used to express propositions.<sup>4</sup>

–Finally, we are able to characterize *de re* belief – indirect attribution – without reference to haecceities or other identifying properties, and without reference to such concepts as “inner language” or “representation”. For me to believe, say, that you are wise, it is necessary only (i) that I stand in a certain relation to you and just to you and (ii) that I attribute to myself the property of standing in that relation to someone who is wise. This type of situation is at the basis of all objective reference. And it enables us to defend the thesis of the primacy of the intentional.

##### 5. PERCEPTION AS INDIRECT ATTRIBUTION

Any theory of meaning and reference must, sooner or later, appeal to the fact of *perception*. And it is precisely at this point that many such theories seem to break down. Perception is essentially referential. Therefore, if we leave perceptual reference unanalysed, as most theorists do, we can hardly be said to have a theory of reference.<sup>5</sup> And if we do not make clear the relations between believing and perceiving, we cannot claim, as I have claimed, to be able to dispense with such concepts as “inner representation”.

The reference that is involved in perception is that of *indirect attribution*. Let us note briefly, then, how perception may be viewed as a special type of such attribution.<sup>6</sup>

There is, first, the broad concept that may be expressed by saying “*x* perceptually takes *y* to be *F*”. We may define this concept in analogy with our definition of indirect attribution (D1.3):

- D2.1. *x* perceptually takes *y* to be *F* =Df. There is a way of appearing such that: *y* and only *y* appears in that way to *x*: and *x* directly attributes to *x* the property of being appeared to in that way by just one thing and by a thing that is *F*.

The definiendum may be spelled out as: “the property of being *F* is such that *x* perceptually takes *y* to have it”.<sup>7</sup>

If I perceptually take a leaf to be green, then I make an indirect attribution of the following sort: there is a certain way of appearing

which is such that the leaf and only the leaf is appearing to me in that way: and I directly attribute to myself the property of being such that the thing that is appearing to me in that way is green.

The ordinary sense of “ $x$  perceives  $y$  to be  $F$ ” carries the further implication expressed by “it is *evident* to  $x$  that  $y$  is  $F$ ”:

D2.2.  $x$  perceives  $y$  to be  $F = Df.$   $y$  is  $F$ :  $x$  perceptually takes  $y$  to be  $F$ : and it is evident to  $x$  that  $y$  is  $F$ .

“Evident” is here a normative expression and may be explicated in terms of the epistemic concept expressed by “more reasonable than”.

We add, finally, this definition:

D2.3.  $x$  perceives  $y = Df.$  There is a property such that  $x$  perceptually takes  $y$  to have it.

## 6. THINKING OF

We next consider *thinking of*, or *considering*.

We take as undefined the locution, “ $x$  directly thinks of  $y$  as being  $F$ ”, and, in analogy with what we have said about direct attribution, we assume that if  $x$  directly thinks of  $y$  as being  $F$ , then  $x$  is identical with  $y$ . We first introduce the concept of indirect consideration: this is the analogue of our concept of indirect attribution:

D3.1.  $x$  indirectly thinks of  $y$  as being  $F = Df.$  There is a relation  $R$  such that  $x$  bears  $R$  to  $y$  and only to  $y$ ; and  $x$  directly thinks of  $x$  as bearing  $R$  to just one thing and to a thing that is  $F$ .

D3.2.  $x$  thinks of  $y$  as being  $F = Df.$  Either  $x$  directly thinks of  $y$  as being  $F$ , or  $x$  indirectly thinks of  $y$  as being  $F$ .

Here we have the broadest sense of *de re* thought. (Here, too, we may specify more narrow senses by reference to the degrees of epistemic intimacy that  $x$  bears to  $y$ .)

Consider those relations which are such that I bear them just to you. The concept of *thinking of* that we have introduced allows us to say that, if I think of myself as being such that the one to whom I bear those relations is  $F$ , then I can be said to think of you as having the property of being  $F$ . But thinking of involves certain problems that attribution does not involve.

These problems may be suggested by two further facts. First, even

though I may know that I bear the relations in question only to you, I can also think of some *other* person as being the one to whom I bear them (while talking just with you I could think of myself as talking just with a certain other person instead). And, second, I could think of you as *not* being such that you are the one to whom I stand in those relations (I could believe truly that I am talking just with you and yet contemplate your being such that I am not talking with you.)

Suppose, then, I believe truly that you are the one I bear *R* to, and I think of some *other* person – say, Jones – as being the one I bear *R* to. There will be several relations *Y* and several relations *J* which are such that: I bear each of the relations *Y* to you and only to you, and I believe I bear each of them to just one thing and all of them to the same thing; I bear each of the relations *J* to Jones and only to Jones, and I believe I bear each of them to just one thing and all of them to the same thing; and I now consider myself as being such that the one I bear the *J* relations to is the one I bear the *R* relations to.

“But if this is the way you must put the matter, then there will be cases where you simply cannot say whether you are thinking of *me* as being so-and-so or whether you are thinking of *Jones* as being so-and-so.”

The reply is that there *are* such difficult cases. This fact may be indicated by considering the following question: Which of Plato’s characteristics can you imagine Aristotle to have had? Perhaps you will say: “I can think of Aristotle as being such that, although he wrote the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*, and did not write the *Phaedo* and the *Philebus*, he did not write the *Nicomachean Ethics* and did write the *Republic*.” Suppose now you are asked: “And now try to think of him in those ways and as also being such that he had the name ‘Plato’ instead of ‘Aristotle’.” The result will be that you cannot say whether you are thinking of Aristotle as having had certain of Plato’s characteristics or are thinking of Plato as having had certain of Aristotle’s characteristics.<sup>8</sup>

What we have said about object and content in the case of attribution has its analogues in the case of thinking of. If I think of you as being wise, then you are the *object* of my thought and the property of being wise is the *content*. We may distinguish, as before, between *direct* and *indirect object* and between *direct* and *indirect content*. And, finally, we may single out those cases where the thought has a content and *purports* to have an indirect object:

- D3.3.  $x$  has a thought that purports to be about something that is  $F = Df$ . There is a relation  $R$  such that  $x$  directly considers  $x$  as bearing  $R$  to just one thing and to a thing that is  $F$ .

If we wish to say further that  $x$ 's thought *merely* purports to be about something, we will add that there is no  $y$  such that  $x$  bears  $R$  just to  $y$ . This is the way we should describe those cases where one is said to "think of something that doesn't exist".

We could not define relational considering ("x considers  $y$  as standing in the relation being  $R$  to  $z$ "). The definition would be analogous to D1.4 above – our definition of relational attribution ("x believes  $y$  to bear the relation of being  $R$  to  $z$ ").

## 7. ENDEAVORING AND CAUSING

The concept of *endeavor* or *intentional action* is also essential to the theory of meaning. It is analogous to that of attribution.

Let us add the following to our undefined locutions: "There is something that  $x$  does *in the endeavor* to have the property of being  $F$ ". (Alternative formulations are: "There is something that  $x$  does *with the intention* of having the property of being  $F$ "; and "There is something that  $x$  does *in undertaking* to have the property of being  $F$ ".) We will also make use of the concept of *causal contribution*. Now we may formulate a definition of *indirect endeavor* that is analogous to our definition of indirect attribution:

- D4.1.  $y$  is such that  $x$  indirectly endeavors that it have the property of being  $F = Df$ . There is a relation  $R$  such that:  $x$  will bear  $R$  to  $y$  and will not bear  $R$  to anything other than  $y$ ; and there is something that  $S$  does in the endeavor to have the property of being such that the thing it will bear  $R$  to is  $F$ .
- D4.2.  $y$  is such that  $x$  endeavors that it have the property of being  $F = Df$ . Either (1)  $y$  is such that  $x$  directly endeavors that it have the property of being  $F$ , or (2)  $y$  is such that  $x$  indirectly endeavors that it have the property of being  $F$ .

If need be, we could also mark off those cases where there only purports to be an indirect object of endeavor – where one has "an object that doesn't exist". See D2.4.

One may also endeavor to bring about one thing *in order* thereby to bring about another:

- D4.3.  $y$  is such that  $x$  endeavors that it have the property of being  $F$ , and  $x$  does so in order that  $z$  have the property of being  $G = Df.$   $x$  endeavors (i) that  $y$  have the property of being  $F$  and (ii) that his endeavor that  $y$  have the property of being  $F$  cause  $z$  to have the property of being  $G$ .

Instead of saying, in the definiendum, “ $x$  does so in order that . . .”, we may also say, “ $x$ ’s *purpose* in doing so is that . . .”.

We may be tempted to define *successful* endeavor merely by adding that the intended effect is in fact brought about. But it is necessary to make use of a more restricted concept. The need for this concept becomes clear if we consider the fact that intending to convey a certain message normally involves a series of steps – which may consist in a series of utterances, one after the other, or in a more complex activity.

Suppose, for example, I set out to convey a certain message to you on the telephone, but I am prevented from completing the project since the telephone connection has been broken. If now by some happy accident, you correctly guess what the message was, it would follow that, by endeavoring to cause you to have a certain belief, I have in fact caused you to have that belief. But we should not say, in such a case, that I have *conveyed* the message to you. I did not successfully carry out the plan that I had. For I had envisaged several steps – each such that it would put me in a position to take the next step. But since the telephone connection was broken, I was prevented from carrying out the final step in my plan; I didn’t say everything I had intended to say. (I refer here to the final step in my plan to get the message across – not to the final step of the larger plan in which getting the message across may itself be only a preliminary step.<sup>9</sup>)

In short, I had planned to utter several different things to you on the telephone, but it was not possible for me to utter them all. Hence, there was a series of endeavors I had undertaken: I set out in the endeavor to make several different endeavors. I had undertaken these things in the endeavor to bring about one possible way of getting my message to you. Had I *successfully completed* the endeavor, then I would have made each of the endeavors in the series that I had undertaken – and these would have caused my message to get across to you.

Such considerations indicate that we should characterize successful completion in some such way as this:

- D4.4.  $x$  successfully completes an endeavor at  $t$  to bring it about that  $y$  is  $F = Df.$   $x$  completes at  $t$  a series of endeavors he had undertaken in the endeavor to bring it about that  $y$  is  $F$ ; and these endeavors contribute causally to  $y$ 's being  $F$ .

The definiens could be spelled out more explicitly in terms just of our undefined locution (“There is something  $x$  does in the endeavor to bring it about that he is  $F$ ”).

And we may construe relative endeavor (“ $x$  endeavors to bring it about that  $y$  bears being  $R$  to  $z$ ”) in analogy with the way we have construed relative attribution (D1.4).

## 8. MEANING TO CONVEY

The relation between thought and language may now be described by reference to the concept of *meaning to convey*.

What are we to say of conveying? Let us understand the word in such a way that it implies having something to communicate: if I want to convey something to you, then I have a certain thought I want to communicate to you: and this means, in part, that there is something I want to cause you to think of.

I here take “cause to think of” broadly – to cover both the case where one is caused to *begin* to think of a certain thing and also the case where one is caused to *continue* to think of that thing.

Conveying is more than merely causing to think of. Let us consider three cases of causing to think of that are not cases of conveying.

(1) I inject you with a certain drug that makes people paranoid and then I present you to Mr. Jones. The result is that you believe that Mr. Jones desires to persecute you. But, even if it had been my intention to cause you to believe this, I cannot be said to have *conveyed* this to you.

(2) I appear before you in a chef's hat and apron in order to make you think that I am a professional cook. Again, even if I'm successful, we cannot say that I had something to convey to you.

(3) Kant cites the following as a case of intended deception that is not a case of lying: “I may wish people to think that I am off on a journey, and so I pack my luggage: people draw the conclusion I want

them to draw . . . I have not lied to them, for I have not stated that I am expressing my opinion.”<sup>10</sup>

Kant’s remark may suggest that, in order to be able to tell you anything, I must first tell you that I am going to tell you something, and in order to be able to convey anything, I must first convey that I’m going to convey something. This type of regress would hardly be acceptable.

What, then, does *conveying* involve that mere *causing to think of* does not involve? I suggest that there are three marks.

*One* mark of conveying may be illustrated by this: If I convey something to you, I do so by causing you to believe that *I* am thinking of that something. This is not what happens when, merely by injecting a drug, I cause you have a certain belief.

*Second*, if I convey something to you, then my purpose in causing you to believe that I am thinking of a certain thing is that of causing *you* to think of that thing.

A *third* mark of conveying pertains to the attitude one means to bring about with respect to the act of conveying itself. To make clear what that attitude is, let us revise the case of the chef’s hat and apron. Suppose you had asked me, “What is your profession?”, and I had replied “I’m not allowed to tell you, but I’ll come to you tomorrow in my professional clothes.” In *this* case, if I do appear before you tomorrow in the chef’s hat and apron and you draw the desired conclusion, then I *can* be said to have conveyed to you that I am a cook. But I did more than cause you to believe that I am a cook: I also caused you to believe that I *intended* you to believe that I am a cook.

We will now add the concept of *making an utterance* to our technical vocabulary, and we will permit ourselves to speak of the *parts* of an utterance. Now we are in a position to define the intentional concept, *meaning to convey*. For simplicity, we will restrict ourselves to the situation wherein the speaker is addressing just one person. The definition makes reference to the kind of relational belief explicated in D1.4 and to the kind of purposive activity explicated in D4.3.

- D5.1. *x* makes an utterance for the purpose of thereby conveying to *z* the thought that *y* has the property of being *F* = *Df.* (i) *x* makes an utterance with the intention of causing *z* to believe that he, *x*, thinks of *y* as being *F*; (ii) *x* does this in order to cause *z* to think of *y* as being *F*; and (iii) *x* believes that, if he does thus cause *z* to think of *y* as being *F*, he will do so by

causing  $z$  to believe that he,  $x$ , intended to cause  $z$  to think of  $y$  as being  $F$ .

When the conditions of D5.1 are fulfilled, we may say that  $y$  is the *object* concerning which  $x$  means to convey something, and that the property of being  $F$  is the *content* of what it is that  $x$  means to convey with respect to  $y$ .<sup>11</sup>

We should also single out a sense of “meaning to convey” that is broader than that defined in D5.1. We have distinguished the case where there *is* something such that one thinks of it as being  $F$  (see D3.2) from that wherein we say that one’s thought purports to be about something as being  $F$  (see D3.3). We said that the latter concept, but not the former, is exemplified when I believe, mistakenly, that there is one and only one person who is persecuting me and I think of him as not persecuting me. Suppose now that I want to convey to you my thought that that person is not persecuting me. Our definition D5.1 is not adequate to this situation, for there *is* no  $y$  such that I mean to convey to you the thought that  $y$  is persecuting me. But the concept defined in the following definition *is* exemplified by this situation.

- D5.2.  $x$  makes an utterance for the purpose of thereby conveying to  $z$  the thought, with respect to a certain thing, that that thing is  $F = Df$ . (i)  $x$  makes an utterance with the intention of causing  $z$  to perceive the utterance and in consequence to believe that there is a  $y$  such that he,  $x$ , thinks of  $y$  as being  $F$ ; (ii)  $x$  does this in order thereby to cause  $z$  to think of  $y$  as being  $F$ ; and (iii)  $x$  believes that, if he does thus cause  $z$  to think this way, he will do so by causing  $z$  to believe that he,  $x$ , intended to cause  $z$  to think this way.

One may object: “But isn’t the variable ‘ $y$ ’ free in your formulation of clause (ii)?” The answer is that, if we spell out the definiens in accordance with our definition of purposive activity (D4.3), then we will see that “ $y$ ” is bound by the quantifier that appears in clause (i).

The concept defined in D5.1 implies that defined in D5.2, but not conversely.

One can, of course, convey something other than what one intends to convey: in such a case, one conveys something unintentionally or inadvertently. In discussing language, however, we will be interested primarily in what it is that one intends to convey.<sup>12</sup>

## 9. SENSE AND REFERENCE

We have distinguished between the *direct* object and the *indirect* object of a thought and also between the *direct content* and the *indirect content* of a thought. Some thoughts, we have said, have just one indirect object, others have none, and still others have many. In terms of these intentional distinctions, we may now explicate the concepts of sense and reference.<sup>13</sup>

- D6.1.  $x$  uses  $N$  to designate  $y = Df.$   $x$  makes an utterance for the purpose of thereby conveying something about  $y$ ; and  $N$  is that part of  $x$ 's utterance which is intended to bring it about that  $y$  is the object of the thought that  $x$  thus endeavors to cause.

“How does it happen that  $x$ 's utterance of  $N$  can bring about the desired effect?” If  $x$ 's utterance is successful, then there will be someone  $z$  who is caused to perceive  $N$  and in consequence to think of  $y$ . A *causal* factor is therefore involved:  $x$ 's utterance of  $N$  causes  $z$  to think of  $y$ . Hence there *can* be a “causal theory of meaning”: that is to say, there can be a causal *explanation* of the fact that a person's perception of an utterance, or of part of an utterance, causes him to think of a certain thing  $y$ . But this is not a causal theory of *what* it is for one to think of another thing – much less of what it is for one thing to designate another thing.

In discussing thinking we distinguished the case where one's thought has an indirect object from the case where one's thought only purports to have an indirect object. It was suggested that the latter situation may arise when I believe that there is one and only one person who is persecuting me. Now it might be that I use the name “Satan” for this person. But we cannot say that I use “Satan” to *designate* him, for the person doesn't exist. Let us say that, in such a case, I “mean to use ‘Satan’ to designate something”. The relevant concept is this:

- D6.2.  $x$  means to use  $N$  to designate something =  $Df.$   $x$  makes an utterance for the purpose of thereby conveying something about a certain thing; and  $N$  is that part of  $x$ 's utterance which is intended to bring it about that the thing, with respect to which he endeavors to convey this something, is the object of the thought he thus endeavors to convey.

The concept defined in D6.1 implies that defined in D6.2, but not conversely.

We now turn to “hearer’s designation”. We make use of the senses of perception explicated in D2.2 and D2.3.

- D6.3.  $z$  interprets  $x$ ’s use of  $N$  as designating  $y = Df.$   $z$  perceives that part of  $x$ ’s utterance which is  $N$  and believes of it that  $x$  meant to use it to designate  $y$ .
- D6.4.  $z$  interprets  $x$ ’s use of  $N$  as purporting to designate something  $= Df.$   $z$  perceives that part of  $x$ ’s utterance which is  $N$  and believes of it that  $x$  used it for the purpose of designating something.

Where the explication of *designation*, or *reference*, makes use of the concept of the *object* of thought, the explication of *sense* makes use of the concept of the *content* of thought. We now consider the concept of the “speaker’s sense”:

- D6.5.  $x$  uses  $P$  with the attributive sense  $S = Df.$   $x$  makes an utterance for the purpose of conveying something, and  $P$  is that part of  $x$ ’s utterance which is intended to bring it about that  $S$  is the content of the thought that  $x$  thus endeavors to cause.

Here the word “content” abbreviates: “either the content of an indirect thought or the content of a direct thought that is not indirect”.

- D6.6.  $z$  interprets  $x$ ’s use of  $P$  as having the attributive sense  $S = Df.$   $z$  perceives that part of  $x$ ’s utterance which is  $P$  and believes of it that  $x$  meant to use it with the attributive sense  $S$ .

And so we may also speak of “ways of predicating”. You and I share ways of predicating to the extent that we use the same things with the same attributive senses.

## 10. DEMONSTRATIVE SENSE

What should we say of the *sense* of such designative expressions as demonstratives and proper names?

If we are to say that such expressions have a sense at all, then this

sense might appropriately be called a “demonstrative sense”.<sup>14</sup> To locate the requisite sense of “demonstrative sense”, let us look back at our concept of *indirect attribution*. We have said that, when a person indirectly attributes a property to an object, then he singles out the object by means of a certain identifying relation – a relation which is such that the object is *the* thing to which the person bears that relation. The demonstrative sense of proper names and demonstratives could, therefore, be explicated by reference to such relations.

If I use a proper name in speaking to you, then the demonstrative sense of that name on that occasion could be said to pertain to the relation or relations by means of which I then single out the object – or objects – of the belief I am expressing to you. Any such identifying relation will be a relation such that the bearer of the name is the thing to which the user of the name bears that relation. The demonstrative sense of a name, then, would *not* be a property of the bearer of the name. It would be, rather, a relational property that the user of the name attributes to himself. The property, therefore, would be a property of the *user* of the name – provided there is a bearer of the name. And the corresponding relation is one that the user of the name bears only to the bearer of the name.

But is there any point in introducing this concept of a demonstrative sense? If there is one relation which is such that you are *the* thing to which I stand in that relation and if I am aware of this relation, then it is likely that there are *many* different relations which are such that you are the thing to which I bear those relations – and I will be aware of this fact. What, then, will be the demonstrative sense of my use of “you”? Will it be just one of these relations, or will it be all of them, or will it be some “cluster” of them?

A prior question is this: Why say that *any* of them is the “demonstrative sense” of “you”? It is not clear that anything is to be gained by introducing this concept. For, as we have just seen, we do not need to use it in explicating the designative function of proper names and demonstratives.

“But how can proper names be used to designate the things they do designate if they do *not* have senses?” We have already referred to the *causal* relations that are presupposed by successful communication: one person’s attempt to designate or to predicate will cause another person to think of a certain thing or to conceive of a certain property. The concept of a demonstrative sense *could* be used in describing these

relations. But anything that could be said about them can also be said *without* presupposing that proper names have senses.

In this way, then, I would defend the principle of the primacy of the intentional.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Certain of the points that are made here are discussed in more detail in my book, *The First Person: An Essay on Reference and Intentionality* Harvester and the University of Minnesota Press, Sussex and Minneapolis, 1981. See also 'Converse Intentional Properties', *Journal of Philosophy* **79**, 1982, 537–545. Compare David Lewis, 'Attitudes *De Dicto* and *De Se*', *Philosophical Review* **88**, 1979, 513–543.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest Sosa has suggested the possibility of modifying the above statement as follows: for every *x* and for every *y*, if *x* directly attributes anything to *y*, and *y* is an individual thing, then *x* is identical with *y*. This modified formula would allow for the possibility that abstract objects might be objects of direct attribution.

<sup>3</sup> See Hector Neri Castañeda, 'Indicators and Quasi-indicators', *American Philosophical Quarterly* **4**, 1967, 85–100.

<sup>4</sup> Similar considerations suggest that proper names do not ordinarily have senses: they are ordinarily used to express *objects* of belief rather than a part of the *content* of belief.

<sup>5</sup> Husserl in a case in point. In his *Logical Investigations* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1970, he professes to set forth an intentional theory of reference. At first, this theory seems to be highly promising. But he makes essential use of the concept of *perception*, and what he tells us about the nature of perception seems to leave us with the entire problem of objective reference. See especially: *Investigation I*, Section 26; *Investigation V*, Section 3; *Investigation VI*, Sections 4 and 5; and *Ideas* Allen & Unwin, London, 1931, Section 131.

<sup>6</sup> A more detailed statement may be found in Chapter 8 of *The First Person*.

<sup>7</sup> We obtain a stricter sense of "perceptually taking" if we restrict the properties in question to what might be called *sensible properties*. The problems involved in characterizing sensible properties, so conceived, are not relevant to the concerns of the present paper.

<sup>8</sup> Compare L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1953, p. 177.

<sup>9</sup> I have discussed these concepts in detail in *Person and Object: A Metaphysical Study* George Allen & Unwin and the Open Court Publishing Company, London and La Salle, Ill., 1976, Chapter II: see especially, pp. 80–84.

<sup>10</sup> I. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, Harper & Row, New York, 1963, p. 226. The German reads "...dann habe ich ihn nicht belogen, denn ich habe nicht deklariert, meine Gesinnung to aussern." See Paul Menzer (ed.), *Eine Vorlesung Kants uber Ethik*, Rolf Heise, Berlin, 1925, p. 286.

<sup>11</sup> Ernest Sosa notes that, strictly speaking, definition D5.1 is not adequate to the case of joint authors – the case where two or more people, working together, mean to convey a thought that both of them have. I assume, however, that no special problems are involved in adapting the definitions to this type of situation. Instead of speaking of a single person

*x*, we could speak of a set of persons, saying for example that “they endeavor to cause *z* to believe that *they* intended to cause *z* to think of *y* as being *F*”.

<sup>12</sup> It may be instructive to consider this account of conveying in application to the various examples H. P. Grice has formulated in his attempt to explicate what he calls the “nonnatural” sense of meaning. See H. P. Grice, ‘Utterer’s Meaning and Intention’, *Philosophical Review* **77**, 1969, 147–177, and ‘Meaning’, *Philosophical Review* **66**, 1957, 377–388.

<sup>13</sup> Compare the distinction between “referential” and “attributive” made in the following paper by Keith Donnellan: ‘Reference and Definite Descriptions’, *Philosophical Review* **75**, 1966, 281–304.

<sup>14</sup> I introduced this concept in *The First Person*, Chapter Six.

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