

Referential Zero Point

Analytic philosophy started with analysis of language with the aim to disambiguate it. The gist of analysis consisted of verifying the descriptive function of language in respect to the situation in the world. The problem of reference is the outcome with which analytic philosophy of language had to struggle. Besides to the supposition that function of language is descriptive, there is as well a deep down non-thematized presupposition of analysis: that the relation of directedness succeeds without constitutive phenomenology. This suppressed precondition of directedness relation bounced back in dealing with the problem of reference. It turns out that the zero point is the main preoccupation of dealing with the language/thought directedness to the world.

The plan.

Our aim is to draw attention at the fact that the problem of reference which underlies a big chunk of preoccupations of analytic philosophy was put in place with two presuppositions. The first of these is the presupposition that the function of language is descriptive. The second presupposition is that the relation of directedness does not need any constitutive phenomenology in order to take off. While the first of these presupposition was thematized, the second one remained non-thematized. It can be appreciated though once as the referential relation is understood as a sub-case of generic directedness relation involving constitutive phenomenology as its precondition. That such is the case indeed is demonstrated by a review of how analytic philosophy of language dealt with the problem of reference. It turns out that its proposals how to hook up language-thought with the world succeeds through the setting of zero point. So the realization is that the analytic philosophy of language deals with the referential zero point.

Some preliminary clarifications.

It is useful to start with preliminary clarifications of some main terms and methodological ways to go used in this inquiry.

Analytic philosophy is understood as the movement with its roots in Fregean distinction between sense and reference, and with its beginning with Russell's theory of descriptions. Its main subsequent stages involve realization of the communication-intention nature of referential act and rigidifying of referential relation by causal and similar means. The third stage consists in realization of phenomenology importance in various respects, including the referential relation. We argue that these trials though happen at the superface, without that deep down constitutive phenomenology of the referential relation would be recognized.

The *problem of reference* is one of analytic philosophy main preoccupations. The question is how to secure language-thought hook-up with the world. Various strategies to tackle this question have been attempted. Our proposal is to take upon the problem of reference as a *generic* problem of language-thought *directedness* to the world. Seen from this angle, the problem of reference is a sub-position of *intentional directedness*. Given that intentional directedness is *phenomenology constituted*, one realizes that phenomenology was suppressed

from analytic philosophy manners to treat referential relation. This denial of constitutive phenomenology however came back with vengeance though in the manner in which analytic philosophy approached the problem of reference. An overview testifies that it dealt with it in the zero point manner.

Zero point is phenomenology constituted first person point of view perspective through which one approaches one's surroundings. There isn't any other possible approach to the world, empiricists may claim. One major characteristics of the zero point is that it enables re-presentation, without though being represented itself. This reminds upon the direct relatedness to the world in which the problem of reference was treated.

The two basic *presuppositions of analytical philosophy* we take to be

(1). The function of language is descriptive.

(2). Referential relation succeeds without constitutive phenomenology.

The first of these presuppositions (1) was thematized in analytic philosophy, through various perspectives how to approach it, ranging from direct acquaintance relation, up to the causal chain and possible or actual world support. The second of these presuppositions (2) was not thematized, and singling it out we take to be our task. In this, we receive help from an overview (preliminary for now) of how analytic philosophy of language treated referential relation.

An important *methodological* point needs to be stressed. Given that analytic philosophy treatment of the problem of reference was minutiously dealt with for more than a century, with all the textual and technical wimpiness, without that it would even realize and even less thematize presupposition (2) of constitutive phenomenology bashing from the referential relation, we here propose a *robust* approach to the topics, relying upon the main shapes of the situation. In this way, we propose a fresh look at the analytic philosophy and the problem of reference, not the least having its impact upon the relation of analytic philosophy with various of the so called continental philosophy brands. In this we are helped by *generic* take upon *directedness* relation which reveals referential relation to be its sub-case. This allows us to explain why the problem of reference in analytic tradition actually dealt with the zero point and not with a kind of external relation. As said, we think that the most efficient way of dealing with our topics now is to paint with wide brush. In this manner we delineate a *research program* though which may be minutiously exercised in scholarly ways. Justification for our robust way to proceed here though comes from the neglected thematizing of *directedness* relation *phenomenological constitution* and of its reduction to the referential relation in analytic philosophy.

The beginnings of analytical philosophy in the aim of disambiguating language.

Analytic philosophy is upon the stage for more than a century now and so it is on time to take a perspectival look at its beginnings. Its *precursor* is to be found in Frege's approach to language, particularly in his distinction between sense and reference of linguistic expressions. It this Frege followed a tradition of *mastering language* so that it would get rid of its ambiguities and vagueness, bringing it closer to an ideal artificial language, in fact to the language of predicate logic. This program of language mastering is a follow-up of the *tractability* underwriting *calculus ratiocinator* and *lingua characterica* Raymond Lullus and Leibniz traditions. The aim of this program was to introduce *tractable* inferential relations and semantically certified referential relations, so that ambiguity that characterizes natural language would disappear from both of

these. Frege did not reject natural language in its entirety. He praised its ambiguity supported richness in poetic practices and in everyday conversations. Yet he insisted with his purifying proposals in respect to what he took to be *scientific language*. Granting all of this, Frege may be treated as *precursor* and not as beginner of analytic philosophy. Notice that in proposing his *Begriffsschrift*, Frege aimed at extinguishing conversational mode of reasoning in favor of *written tracking of the reasoning process*, so that inferential moves would be entirely tractable. Participants involved into the reasoning process would just *write down* their inferential moves on the two-dimensional surface of a page, without any need to have recourse to language and to talk. This *inferential tractability* supporting method was modelled upon arithmetical proceedings. Semantic issues pertaining to the reference were kind of secondary for Frege's overall *Begriffsschrift* project, although they became the main discussion point of Frege's work, due to the ensuing stress put upon these questions from the part of the mainly *semantics* directed analysis of language project started by Russell. So this was widely discussed. The *inferential* part of Frege's overall project though was not extensively discussed, and rather it was accepted as the basis of various forms of predicate logic.

Analytic philosophy started with Bertrand Russell's *theory of definite descriptions*, such as it is delineated in his paper *On Denoting* (1905). The simple fact is that in this paper an *analysis of language* is proposed which was uncontestedly accepted as the trend to follow by analytic philosophers and that remained unchallenged for almost half a century. The main target of Russell's approach were not inferential relations, i.e. relations between compositionality guided semantic items, but rather the semantic relation itself. This is illustrated by the analysis Russell proposed of the linguistic sentence

(S) The actual king of France is bald.

According to Russell, the grammatical form of (S) is misleading, for it presupposes the affirmation of existence of the actual king of France. Here is the *analysis* of (S) proposed by Russell:

(Sa) (ai) There exists actual king of France & (aii) There exists exactly one actual king of France & (aiii) This king has the property of being bald.

The main idea of this proposed analysis is that the *surface* form of the linguistic sentence (S) hides a *deeper underlying* committal structure which may be spelled out by *logical analysis* (Sa), with its three ingredients. The first ingredient of analysis (ai) reveals the supposed ontological commitment of (S) in respect to the existence of the mentioned actual king of France as an entity in the world. The second analysis of (S) ingredient (aii) reveals the presupposition that there exists exactly one king of France, as signaled by the *definite* description introducing "the" (so, we are not talking about "a" king of France). The third ingredient of sentence (S) that the analysis reveals affirms the property (of baldness in this case) attributed to the supposedly existing entity. The deep structure revealed by analysis (Sa) that was misguidedly hidden by the grammatical presuppositions of the sentence (S) is conjunctive, which means that all the ingredients should be satisfied in search of its truthfulness. The main of these presuppositions

that the analysis reveals is the ingredient (ai) with its ontological commitment. Ingredients (aii) and (aiii) obviously depend upon it.

It is therefore interesting to realize the test of analysis (ai) as proposed by Russell. This test is commonsensical supported, which certainly counts in its favor: one *takes a look in the world* whether there really is the entity that (S) presupposes to be there. This look into the world happens from someone's *perspective*, even if one tries to present it in an objectivist manner. This *ontological* check-up for the entity supposedly committed to by (S) is crucial for the test of its *semantic* value. At least we deal with semantic value in a compositional manner, so that (ai) supports as a part the entire semantic composition presumed to govern the sentence (S).

Notice that Russell embraces the view that the *surface grammatical* commitments of language (in (S)) are really *misleading*, up to the point that he practically opts for *exclusion of language* from the analysis (Sa). Russell namely introduces *logical proper name* as the ultimate verification of the presupposition ingrained into (ai). There are proper names, such as "Bertrand", "Matjaz" and "king of France". Now notice that all of these names, by the very fact that they are spelled out in language, bear some *connotative* burden. But this connotative characteristics according to Russell is *misleading* in respect to commitments of sentences such as (S). So he takes over *logical proper name* as properly supporting the analysis of (ai) kind. Logical proper name is a *direct involving relation* between the one *epistemically checking the situation*, and between the *world*. The mentioned directness does away with any *linguistic* ingredients in order to secure ontological verification. In this manner, through introduction of the logical proper name, Russell dismisses *semantic* weight of language, in parallel with Frege's *inferential* weight of language dismissal.

The descriptive function of language thematized presupposition of analysis.

The first presupposition involved into Russell's *theory of descriptions* is

- (1). The function of language is descriptive.

This presupposition is clear from the very name of the theory of descriptions. The main ingredient of the analysis of (S) is the purported ontological supposition (ai), which is ultimately tackled by the logical proper name. The very simple idea is that language is there first of all to *describe* the world. And if it fails in this manner all in acting as if it would be at the level with the job, it will be misleading.

The descriptive function of language is the first ingredient of *philosophical analysis* presupposition (1) that was approached in several ways and thus was well thematized throughout its debates. In more than a century an abundance of proposals came onto the stage. Descriptive function and thus relation of the presupposition such as (ai) tried to be secured through causal or historical chains, by direct and indirect referential and sense involving relations, through preconditions set by possible worlds and through the actual world(s). That's sufficient to claim that the presupposition of philosophical analysis was well *thematized*.

The absence of constitutive phenomenology in directedness relation non-thematized presupposition of analysis.

There is a second presupposition of philosophical analysis though that was *not thematized*:

(2). Referential relation succeeds without constitutive phenomenology.

In order to understand the weight of this presupposition we need to take a look at the beginning of philosophical analysis such as these were delineated in Russell's *On denoting* (1905). This brings us to the *background* of the presupposition (1), introducing a direct relation between the cognizer and the world, securing descriptive function of language along the requirements of the logical proper name.

The answer comes from considering what presupposition (1) was arguing against. It was Russell's own view about what the entities presupposed in sentences such as (S) would be. In his phase before theory of descriptions Russell adopted a view of *possible objects* as candidates that may satisfy semantic relation. That was the time when Russell subscribed to a version of Meinongian possible objects. Now with the theory of description he rejected such ontological and semantic commitments. Russell thus now embraced actualism (followed in that by Quine and by David Lewis pluralistic actualism) all in rebelling against Meinong's and his former own brand of possibilism.

In order to understand the importance of presupposition (2) we need to take a quick look though at the nature of *Meinongian possible objects* (to which Russell himself earlier subscribed as we just said). Just what are these possible objects? Meinongian possible objects constituted one version of the *intentional* relation resuscitated by Brentano from its medieval and Aristotelian origins. Famously, Brentano claimed that in each thought something is thought about and that in each desire something is desired. What exactly this relation of *directedness* involves though became disputed in Brentano school. Twardowski pointed out that two interpretations are possible: one may be directed either at the *content* or at the *object*. If I think about the cat which does not happen to be here, I may be either interpreted as entertaining a directedness towards a *content*, or again towards an *object*. In this manner, the intentional relation joined the historical tradition of interpretative possibilities. Meinong embraced the interpretation of intentional relation as being directed at *objects*. That one included not just actual, but as well possible and impossible objects, often interpreted as joining of properties in subsets (that may participate in a superset of all properties, therewith avoiding ontological proliferation objection to the view (Dale Jacquette)). Russell's attack upon non-actual objects was well thematized in the subsequent discussion. What was not thematized however was his presupposition (2), according to which referential relation succeeds without constitutive phenomenology. What does this mean?

We have to appreciate that *possible* and *impossible objects* Russell argued against with his presupposition of analysis (1) and (2) were *intentional* objects. Now, a very deep presupposition about intentional objects as treated in Brentano school was that these objects are *phenomenology constituted*. This meant that intentional relation is not possible without *consciousness*, i.e. without somebody engaging into this relation in a *consciousness-phenomenology* based manner. This presupposition of Brentanian school was so widely shared in it that it was taken for granted: consciousness or phenomenology is precondition of intentional directedness.

Now, seen from this perspective, *referential* relation to which Russell subscribed as contra-indication against possible objects with his presupposition (2) has to be treated *generically* as sub-case of the relation of *directedness*. It would be perhaps appropriate to say that referential relation is a sub-case of intentional directedness. It is such a case indeed, yet a wanting one, for it expelled the precondition of *intentional* directedness by the very presupposition (2).

This does not bar *phenomenology-consciousness* of making appearance along the philosophy of language problem of reference trail as perhaps the most important chapter of analytic philosophy.

Bouncing back of the phenomenology constitution suppressed precondition of directedness in problem of reference dealing with the zero point.

Let us take a look again at the theory of descriptions procedure and commitments. Whereas procedure consisted of analysis of the supposed surface misleading commitments of linguistic items such as (S) in direction of analysis along the model of (Sa), the real commitments of analysis were these of *securing referential relation through cognizer's direct check-up involvement in the world*, from his immediate perspective, avoiding the potentially misleading linguistic means. That was the basis of the (ai) kind of analysis in the Russell's logical proper name of the basis ontological and semantic commitment of sentence such as (S). Notice that such a *logical proper name* involving relation dismissed language indeed, but actually brought in the *perspective* of the cognizer and therewith the *phenomenology* that is constitutive for such a *perspectival engagement*. Russell tried to expel phenomenological constitution in the generic *directedness* relation that he conceived as the one of reference, but it bounced back in his main proposed logical proper name cure, involving phenomenology constituted aspect upon the referential situation.

A whole industry of tackling the problem of reference followed this lead, although without thematizing it. We will quickly hint at some prominent examples. *Kripke* tried to secure referential relation through his proposal of rigid designation, which ranges over all possible worlds, thereby providing a criticism of the theory of description. Yet causal chain and social character of names lead to the *direct relation to the world* that may then be causally transmitted. This direct relation we take it again needs to involve phenomenology as supporting direct causal hook-up. The story is again based in immediate contact with the world.

Donnellan objected to the theory of descriptions univocity, distinguishing between referential and attributive uses, supported by pragmatic considerations. In this, he continued P.F. *Strawson's* refusal to stick to the clear truth-value securing presupposition (1), towards implicature embracing neither true nor false truth-value gaps. *Grice's* conversational implicatures point into this direction as well. All of these communication-intention approaches point out the *phenomenology* involved into the entire situation of *directedness*, and should be treated through *holistic phenomenology* contribution angle to this one. In this respect, trying to seize direct relation between cognizer and the world in tackling referential relation is more instructive,

Kaplan tried to improve descriptions through his emphasis upon *demonstratives*, starting with *indexicals*. Notice that Russell's logical proper name was a demonstrative, involving direct

pointing (“that”) at the world. Indexicals systematically change reference with the context of their enunciation. Demonstratives are supposed to secure referential relation, at the cost of definite descriptions. And they involve *demonstrative aspect* that needs to be supported by *phenomenology* such as it is to be found in *one’s aspectual pointing at the world*, when one tries to secure referential hook-up.

Evans argued for Fregean theory of indexicals, thereby opposing *Kaplan* who thought that it is not possible. He introduced indexical senses as *showing* the reference from several angles in opposition to *saying* it, spelling it out in an explicit manner.

Putnam again used direct causal relation as an immediate access to the world, through the experts provided objective means, such as specifying the DNA as a referential hook-up of an observed animal kind, and H₂O as the referential hook-up for the substance which is psychologically accessible through stereotypes. In this way, *Putnam* degrades psychology in profit of direct referential externalist relation secured by scientific experts. Yet these experts need a *situation* of direct referential checkup, in which we may suppose that phenomenological constitution is basic again.

These quick remarks need elaboration. Yet they are perhaps sufficient for the evaluation of the importance of presupposition (2) of philosophical analysis, This is a negative presupposition, rejecting phenomenological constitution of referential relation. And indeed, one may think that referential externalistically minded relation succeeds without phenomenological constitution. This would seem plausible if it is opposed to the intentional, phenomenology constituted directedness. And yet, our quick review of how the problem of reference was treated in analytic tradition shows how the suppressed phenomenological constitution bounced back through the zero point phenomenologically constituted angle, through which direct referential relation tried to be secured, through demonstratives and indexicals.

Referential zero point as the outcome of analysis.

Considering the above hints about coming back of the phenomenological constitution in the search for securing of referential relation, through demonstratives and indexicals, one comes to the *referential zero point*. This means that reference, through the practice of securing it in analytic philosophy, encounters the *zero point*, the *direct perspectival angle* of the one exercising the securing practice.

Zero point, as we hinted at, is the direct environment involving perspective. *Mach* illustrated it by a picture of what he visually notices being comfortably seated in a reclining chair. He sees the surrounding room, the objects positioned in it, and his body. But he does not see his eyes. Whatever enables him to represent the surrounding world is not itself represented. That’s the zero point. Now, referential relation was supposed to be secured by the support of objective and descriptive means. But it turned out that the practice of analytic philosophy in respect hoe the securing of referential relation was treated, repeatedly returned to the zero point. And th9s one is not externalist, but rather it is narrowly evidentially supported.

We may thus say that the *referential zero point* is the outcome of philosophical analysis. What is to be recommended now is that *phenomenological constitution* should be recognized as the basic take on *intentional directedness*, so that referential relation is just one of its impersonations. Despite of its externalist credences, the problem of reference as the basis of

philosophical analysis shows that it is *phenomenologically constituted* through the *zero point* that recurs in it through embracing of *demonstrative* and *indexical* tactics that it engages in.

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