A DK note on Week 9

Quine

Quine’s article is about what Frege called *indirect discourse* and what Russell called *propositional attitudes*. Frege insisted that such constructions had to be *de dicto*, i.e. they had to express a thought, the sense of a complete sentence (and no Mont. Blanc as a constituent of a thought). But in his first puzzle, Russell contemplates GIV wishing to know of (note the italics) the author of Waverly, whom he happens to see appearing out of the fog, whether he is Scott. This would be a *de re* wondering, a wondering about a thing, in which we are not told how the thing is conceptualized, only what it is (here, it is the author of Waverly). In the realm of modality, Quine has fiercely resisted de re constructions, charging them with the metaphysical burdens of what he calls *Aristotelian essentialism*. But he seems to see no way to avoid them for the psychological attitudes without denying us the means to express perfectly reasonable things we should want to say in appropriate circumstances. He begins by convincing us of the need for such forms of expression by describing natural situations and suggesting representations that focus on the scope of quantifiers. He then sets about ways of reforming our use of the psychological verbs, first by claiming they are ambiguous and have two senses and, and then, in part II, reacting to a prohibition on quantifying into de dicto (what he calls notional) contexts, by introducing *intensions*. Note that in part II, Russell’s use of “of” reappears.

Putting aside skepticism about the very existence of de re attitudes, they are indeed puzzling.

Quine aims to evoke this puzzlement with his story about Ralph and his formula (11). Note that in the Ralph story, there is just as much reason to think that Ralph believes of the man in the brown hat that he is a spy as there is to think that he believes of the man seen at the beach that he is not a spy. Thus, that Ralph has seemingly contradictory de re attitudes. Quine worries about this in discussing (12) and (13).

In my “Quantifying In”, I propose that there are certain ways in which a thinker can have an object (thing) in mind (to use a notion from Donnellan), and that these special ways of apprehending an object serve a special *representing* role. I aim to analyze a de re attitude in terms of the existence of a de dicto attitude involving one of these special representing ways of apprehension. Because there can be more than one of these representing ways of apprehension, one need not always recognize an individual towards whom one has de re attitudes. This helps to mend Quine’s worry about (12) and (13).

Donnellan

There are two sides to Donnellan’s famous article. One is the presentation of an analysis of the ways in which we use definite descriptions and the semantic consequences of two kinds
of uses. Donnellan’s analysis is challenged by MacKay. I have posted a short trail of articles on this topic.

Another side of Donnellan’s article is epistemological in that it that his referential use appears to be a de re construction – the speaker wishes to know of a certain martini glass holder who he is. This connects back to the Quine article and reminds us of Ralph (if the brown hat had turned out to be a shadow rather than a hat). On pp 128-32 of my paper on Donnellan I aim to offer a more sophisticated version of my idea from “Quantifying In” regarding ways of representing a thing towards which one has a de re attitude.