



Kemp, G. (2013) *Review of Hawthorne and Manley: The Reference Book*. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 63 (253). pp. 827-830. ISSN 0031-8094

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Deposited on: 27 October 2014

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The Reference Book. By John Hawthorne and David Manley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. viii + 264. Price £30.00). (To appear in *The Philosophical Quarterly*)

Many moons ago, Bertrand Russell thought of reference in epistemic terms: to *mean* an object—to refer to it—one had to be *acquainted* with it; for it is ‘scarcely conceivable’ that one should judge without knowing what one is judging about. The rest of the relation between language and the world is conceived as *denoting*, a feature of linguistic expressions and bits of the world which crucially holds or fails to hold without affecting the reference or meaning of those expressions. Since acquaintance is here explained as epistemically fundamental—if one is acquainted with something then one cannot be mistaken about either the existence or the identity of the thing—he was led to posit sense-data as the only individuals we genuinely refer to. Post World War Two, for various reasons, the last part was not popular, but the idea of acquaintance remained standing, an item ripe for philosophical analysis. It seems there has to be distinction between one’s accepting, on the mere probabilities concerning the relative heights of spies, the trivial ‘The shortest spy is a spy’, and one’s accepting in typical circumstances ‘You smell’; only the latter undergirds the inference to a *de re* statement of belief. Surely the difference is that only in the latter case is one suitably related epistemically to the object, does one know which object is in question, is one *acquainted* with it. David Kaplan produced memorable work on the issue, as did Gareth Evans in much of his book *The Varieties of Reference*; with the rise of the causal-historical account of reference, and especially Kaplan’s later work on demonstratives, their efforts (and that of many others) made for a picture that remains recognisably Russellian.

John Hawthorne and David Manley have written a formidable book—*The Reference Book* (OUP 2012)—that must give anyone pursuing this paradigm, or assuming it, however vaguely, a great deal to think about. If they are right, no useful version of the relation of reference necessarily involves acquaintance, not even a modern causal version; instead they defend *Liberalism*, according to which acquaintance is not required for ‘object-directed thought’. Furthermore, they argue that there is no single category of expression with a special right to be called ‘referential’; the genuine work can be accomplished by the use of names, indexicals and demonstratives, definite descriptions, and indefinite descriptions such as ‘a certain philosopher’, and furthermore that the semantics of these does not fit the pattern of reference as classically conceived. The upshot is a major reconfiguration of what has been known as the theory of reference, with not only ramifications for further work on the semantics of natural language but general philosophical ramifications.

The avowedly more philosophical Part I of the book takes on the key ideas underlying the idea of acquaintance, both Russell’s variety and the causal variety; they consider well known arguments involving the shortest spy, the distinction between *de dicto* and *de re* belief and their respective reports, the story of Leverrier and Neptune, Evans’ stories including the famous rotating steel balls and Julius, the inventor of the zip, and the purported requirement that one can think a singular thought about an object only if one knows of the existence of the object. These ideas, carefully considered, do not point towards the usual conclusion but towards Liberalism. This material is effectively organised and articulated in terms of what the authors call *Constraint* (‘To have a singular thought about an object, one must be acquainted with it’; p. 37), *Harmony* (‘Any belief report whose complement clause contains either a singular term or a variable bound from the outside by an existential quantifier requires for its truth the subject believe a singular proposition’; p. 38), and *Sufficiency* (‘Believing a singular proposition about an object is sufficient for having a singular

thought about it'; *ibid.*). More broadly, the aim is to press *much* harder on the extant characterisations of acquaintance that 'seldom go beyond the off-hand and picturesque'; for '[o]ne gets the sense that theorists are not quite happy to leave such a significant notion unexplored, but at the same time they have not anything very precise to say about it' (p. 20). Especially effective was a surprisingly compact criticism of the Evans' intriguing but baroque view; it's revealed to be an unstable, 'thick' epistemic conception of knowledge of truth-conditions, an unhappy mixture of Cartesian phenomenology with truth-conditional semantics (pp. 74-83).

Part II is more applied and technical, displaying mastery of a great deal of the work in semantics over the past fifty years. If Frege, Russell, Quine and perhaps even Kaplan used natural language only for illustration of points they took to be fundamental and general of application, Hawthorne and Manley, carrying on a newer tradition which had its roots in the work of Montague in the 1960's, take fine details of natural language and linguistic intuition as *prima facie* authoritative. And through a wealth of examples, they find that the phenomena associated with reference are not restricted, say, to indexicals and proper names; what they find is that they extend also to definite and *indefinite* descriptions. In particular, all these are restricted existentially quantified kinds of expression, each with a separate manner of presupposing a singleton extension. Crucially, the case of indefinite descriptions is unlike the case of ordinary quantifiers in that a felicitous use of one needn't be *candid* in how the domain is restricted; it can be *coy*—there is nothing infelicitous about one's saying out of the blue 'A certain friend of mine is absent'; the hearer's understanding will piggy-back on the speaker's. Whereas an audience without a means of delimiting the relevant domain can rightly find fault with a use of 'every' (pp. 138-41). After a long and careful tour through the competing views—Russellianism, Montague-Fregeanism—they settle on a similar view of definite descriptions; the only important difference between indefinites and definites is that definites must be restricted candidly (p. 160); this, they argue, explains the appearance that there is a requirement of familiarity on the use of definites. Demonstratives meanwhile are distinguished by the hearer's ability to grasp the singular restrictor 'non-parasitically', which must exploit some information that is salient in the context (p. 218). As for names, they give Burge's predicate (or rather general term) view a good run for its money, but find that it fails to capture the distinction between *calling*—where one presupposes that one engages in a name-using practice—and *describing*—where one explicitly invokes such a practice, as when one says 'He is a Smith' (p. 233f). Their conclusion is that although it remains open to prefer the standard referential view of names, but, impressed with the apparent affinity with indefinites, definites and demonstratives, one may well prefer what they call the 'minimal' approach to proper names: They involve a covert existential quantifier and singular restrictor, but all this is at the level of presupposition. Thus a unified treatment of the four types of expression is definitely not ruled out. The book concludes with some speculations as to possible options for future work; especially provocative is their consideration of a proposal by Paul Pietroski that the work of referring is accomplished entirely at the sub-lexical level, a subject properly of cognitive science, not of theorists of language.

In their handling of cases, I found very, very few places where I took serious issue (except on p. 58: as astronomers now teach, there are eight planets, not nine!) and much to admire. Some might wonder whether some of these phenomena might be handled better by means 'pragmatic apologetics' (p. 49): for such apologists, semanticists often seem to hallucinate precise structure where she sees only linguistic participants—aided perhaps by Gricean maxims, the principle of charity or principles of relevance—scrambling to communicate by less than perfect means. But that

calls for a different book. Their conclusions are exciting, promising philosophers of language liberation from an illusory track whereby acquaintance and reference (as traditionally conceived) must be regarded as fundamental. Erratum: p. 196, '(54)' should be '(60)'.

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