

IIA FURTHER REMARKS ON SENSES

Senses as Mind Independent Objects

This feature of Frege's account is most evident when we come to the sense of sentences, i.e. thoughts. Frege holds that the process of thinking involves the grasping of thoughts; but that the thoughts themselves are not psychological entities. Similarly, communication involves the communication of thoughts: I communicate with you by getting you to grasp the same thought that I am grasping; and, if I am communicating knowledge, getting you to recognize that its truth value.

If we take this idea seriously, then we might think that, just as we can see one object twice and not realize that it is the same object, so we can entertain a thought twice without realizing that it is the same thought. And this would help explain what we do when we do philosophical analysis: we come to realize that an analysis has the same sense as the term that we were analyzing. (This provides an answer to the 'paradox of analysis': how can an analysis be both correct and informative?)

In later work Frege takes exactly this path:

How is it possible, one may ask, that it should be doubtful whether a simple sign has the same sense as a complex expression if we know not only the sense of the simple sign, but can recognize the sense of the complex one from the way it is put together? ... the reason must lie in the fact that we do not have a clear grasp of the sense of the simple sign, but that its outlines are confused as if we saw it through a mist. ('Logic in Mathematics' (1914), *Posthumous Writings* p.211)

(Perhaps this is anticipated in the Aristotle footnote; the claim there is not that the sense may differ, but that *opinions* as to the sense may differ.)

But there is an obvious cost to this. Senses were introduced, at least partly, to explain how an identity statement could be informative: they are informative just in case the two terms have the same reference but different sense. But now it seems that we can have an informative identity statement in which the two terms have the sense.