

The Wonder of Signs

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ABSTRACT

Anscombe (1956) raises a difficulty for the very idea of quotation. Davidson (1979) seeks to dissolve this difficulty. But the difficulty is real. And its lesson is that, in quotation, language takes itself as its topic in a non-objectifying manner. The idea of a non-objectifying manner of being a topic is crucial, not merely for understanding quotation, but for understanding the distinctive form of sensory consciousness in which language is perceived.

For speculation turns not to itself
Till it hath travelled and is mirrored there
Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.¹
Troilus and Cressida (3. 3. 110-113)

1. In 1956, the following problem was set as a competition in the journal *Analysis*.

It is impossible to be told anyone's name. For if I am told 'That man's name is "Smith"', his name is mentioned, not used, and I hear the name of his name but not his name. (Anscombe 1956, p. 121)

We owe this problem to G.E.M. Anscombe.² And it raises a very general difficulty.

¹ The speaker is Achilles, and he is seeking to expound an idea propounded by the 'strange fellow' in the book that his interlocutor, Ulysses, is reading. The critical consensus is that this book is the *Nicomachean Ethics*. (See, for example, Elton (1997).)

² According to Anscombe (1971, p. 68), a problem raised by Reach (1938) 'suggests the formulation' of her problem. Whether these are two different problems, or two different formulations of a single problem, is not an issue we need take a stand on here; for further discussion of Anscombe's problem, and Reach's problem, see Gaskin and Hill (2013).

2. Understanding a sentence in which a linguistic expression is quoted involves identifying the expression, in that it involves knowing what expression is quoted in the sentence. And this in turn is afforded by perceiving the sentence, and in so doing perceiving the expression. But because an expression that is quoted in a sentence is mentioned but not used in the sentence, it is not perceived, in perceiving the sentence. So, there is no such thing as understanding a sentence in which an expression is quoted. This means that it is impossible to be told anyone's name through a sentence in which the name is quoted.³ But more fundamentally, it means that there is no such thing as language taking itself as its topic through quotation, at all.

3. The sense of 'perceiving' that figures in this difficulty is that of hearing what is spoken, or reading what is written. If we group these activities — speaking, and hearing what is spoken; writing, and reading what is written — under the head of 'articulating', then the difficulty may be put as follows. For an expression to be quoted in a sentence is for it to be articulated, in articulating the sentence — specifically, it is for it to be articulated inside quotation marks. We might put this by saying that for an expression to be quoted in a sentence is for it to be pictured, or displayed, in the sentence. In a slogan: *quoting is picturing*. That defines the very idea of quotation. However, it is also widely believed that for an expression to be quoted in a sentence is for it to be mentioned but not used in the sentence, in that it is for it to be referred to by a distinct expression that is used in the sentence. In a slogan: *quoting is referring*. The difficulty is that the second of these ideas repels the first: insofar as an expression is mentioned but not used in a sentence, it is not articulated, in articulating the sentence. If it defines the idea of quotation that quoting is both picturing and referring, then the very idea of quotation is incoherent.

4. This difficulty rests on the principle that what is mentioned but not used in a sentence, is not articulated, in articulating the sentence.

5. We can come to see the truth of this principle by considering the sentence:

³ This is not quite the consequence that it is impossible to be told anyone's name; but Anscombe came to see that the problem should be qualified in this way; see Anscombe (1957a, p. 49).

(1) That man's name is 'Smith'.

Anscombe's problem assumes that what is used in (1) is not the man's name, but the name of his name. On one way of understanding the idea of a name, a name is simply a referring expression, of some kind. We might think that the expression in (1) that refers to the man's name has the following features: it opens and closes with a pair of inverted commas; it is otherwise composed of a series of letters; and it is distinct from the expression to which it refers. We might call an expression of this kind a 'quotation'. The distinctness of such an expression from its object comes out vividly in the following moment in Lewis Carroll. In chapter VIII of *Through the Looking-Glass*, The White Knight sings Alice a song, and tells her, first, that the song is called 'The Aged, Aged Man', and second, that the name of the song is called 'Haddock's Eyes' (Carroll 2009 [1893], p. 218). In (1), the man's name is called "'Smith'". And because this name is distinct from the man's name, the man's name is no more articulated, in articulating (1), than the song's name is articulated, in articulating:

(2) That song's name is Haddock's Eyes.

6. The quotation in (1) might be a name in the more specific sense of a referring expression whose composition plays no role in fixing its reference, and which refers to its object in a manner that does not depend on the context of its historical occurrence (its occurrence on someone's lips, at some time). 'Haddock's Eyes' would be a name in this sense, and insofar as such a name is distinct from its object, to articulate it is not to articulate its object. Alternatively, the quotation in (1) might be an abbreviation of a definite description comprising quotations that refer to letters, where these quotations are themselves names in this more specific sense. Such an expression equally refers to its object in a manner that does not depend on the context of its historical occurrence, but unlike such a name its reference is fixed by the meanings of its elements, and how these are combined. But the conclusion is not substantially affected. For example, (1) might be rendered as:

(3) That man's name is the result of concatenating 'S', 'm', 'i', 't', and 'h'.

And in articulating (3), neither the object of the definite description, nor the objects of the names that compose the description are themselves articulated.

7. Suppose, however, that the expression in (1) that refers to the man's name is not (what we have called) a 'quotation', but rather the expression that plays the role of the quotation marks — namely, the pair of inverted commas. That would be the view of Donald Davidson, who holds that what plays this role in a quoting sentence refers to the quoted expression in the manner of a demonstrative, through pointing either to an inscription, or — if the sentence is spoken — to an utterance of the expression (Davidson 1979). Davidson's account would render (1) as:

(4) That man's name is this. Smith

This rendering points up two salient features of the account: first, the quoted expression is not used in the quoting sentence — the office of the dot after the demonstrative in (4) is to mark that the man's name is not used in this sentence; and, second, the quoted expression is nonetheless articulated in articulating the quoting sentence — for the man's name is articulated in articulating (4).⁴ This second feature reflects both that understanding a demonstrative involves perceiving its object, and that, because the object of the demonstrative in (4) is a linguistic expression, the operative sense of 'perceiving' is that of articulating. Articulating the name is internal to understanding the demonstrative, and as such internal to the demonstrative's capacity to refer to the name — and, for this reason, internal to articulating the quoting sentence. So, the principle — on which the difficulty rests — is false: an expression that is mentioned but not used in a sentence can nonetheless be articulated, in articulating the sentence.

8. W.V.O. Quine wrote that a quotation 'designates its object ... by picturing it' (Quine 1940, p. 26). And Davidson's account seems to give us something very close to this — namely, and in a slogan, that *quoting is referring by picturing*, because it is a way of referring to which it is internal that its object is articulated.

⁴ This feature of Davidson's account of quotation, and how it matches a salient feature of his related account of indirect discourse, is brought out very clearly by McDowell (1980).

9. But Davidson's account is a con.⁵ And we can bring this out by reflecting on the very idea of demonstrative reference.

10. Articulating a demonstrative with understanding identifies its object in a manner that is original, in that it is not mediated by any other manner of identifying its object. If it consists in saying (or perhaps in writing) the demonstrative, then it identifies its object in that it constitutes an answer to a certain kind of question concerning its object, whereas if it consists in hearing (or perhaps in reading) the demonstrative, then it identifies its object in that it constitutes hearing (or reading) such an answer. We find this kind of question and answer in a dialogue of the following form.

'Some *G* is *F*.'

'Which *G* is *F*?'

'This *G*.'

Here the answer identifies the object, in that it distinguishes it from everything else of its kind, and as such from everything else. And it does so in a manner that is original, in that it is not mediated by any other manner of identifying the object. Contrast a name, in the specific sense introduced earlier, whose reference is fixed by an historical occurrence of a demonstrative — by saying something of the form 'I shall call this *G* "*A*"', for example. Articulating such a name with understanding equally identifies its object, in that it equally either constitutes an answer, or constitutes hearing or reading an answer to a certain kind of question concerning its object. We find this kind of question and answer in a dialogue of the following form.

'Some *G* is *F*.'

'Which *G* is *F*?'

'*A*.'

This answer equally identifies the object, in that it equally distinguishes it from everything else of its kind, and as such from everything else. But it does not do so in a manner that is original, because its manner of identifying the object is mediated by the

⁵ I am not suggesting that Davidson is trying to deceive anyone. When a philosopher cons, he cons himself.

different manner of identifying it that is afforded by the demonstrative that fixes the reference of the name. In general, the reference of a name is fixed by something whose comprehending articulation originally identifies its object; and this provides for the possibility of explaining its reference in a manner that is informative, in that it identifies its object, not through the name, but through that which fixes its reference — a demonstrative, for example. It is only because this possibility is provided for that articulating a name with understanding can be said to identify its object at all. (On the face of it, the office of (1) is to explain the reference of the name that it concerns in just this informative manner.) As we might put it: a demonstrative identifies its object in an original manner, whereas a name identifies its object in a manner that is not original. That way of putting things represents the referring expression as achieving what, in a fuller description, is achieved not merely by the expression, but by articulating it with understanding.

11. But articulating a referring expression does not merely help to identify its object. It equally identifies the expression. And it equally does so in a manner that is original, in that it is not mediated by any other manner of identifying the expression. If it consists in saying or writing the expression, then it identifies the expression in that it constitutes an answer to a certain kind of question concerning the expression, whereas if it consists in hearing or reading the expression, then it identifies the expression in that it constitutes hearing or reading such an answer. This kind of question and answer is different from the kinds considered above. But it is familiar in life, and in literature. For example:

Perhaps it was chiefly with a diplomatic design to linger and ingratiate himself that Deronda patted the boy's head, saying—

‘What is your name, sirrah?’

‘Jacob Alexander Cohen,’ said the small man, with much ease and distinctness. (Eliot 2014 [1876], p. 327)

Here the boy answers the question, not by demonstrating his name, but by saying his name. In general, this kind of question and answer consists in a question concerning an expression, which is to be answered not by saying or writing an expression that refers to the expression, but by saying or writing the expression. Such an answer

identifies the expression, in that it distinguishes it from every other expression — but not by referring to it, and rather by articulating it. As we might put it: an expression identifies itself, in a manner that is original. That way of putting things represents the expression as achieving what, in a fuller description, is achieved not merely by the expression, but by its articulation.

12. It is tempting to think that understanding (4) depends on articulating, and in so doing identifying, the name after the dot. In reading (4), we read, *inter alia*, this name. In reading the name, we identify it. And, because we have identified it, in this manner, we are able to understand the demonstrative before the dot as referring to it. To understand the demonstrative as referring to the name is to identify the name by articulating it, and on the basis of this articulatory identification to understand the demonstrative as referring to the name. Or so we might think. But then the (so called) demonstrative is not a demonstrative at all — because the manner of identification that it affords is not original, but mediated by an articulatory identification of its object. Only insofar as understanding the demonstrative does not rest on articulating its object can its *bona fides* as a demonstrative be sustained.

13. But then Davidson's account faces a dilemma. If understanding the (putative) demonstrative before the dot in (4) rests on articulating its object, then it is not a demonstrative — because its manner of identifying its object is not original, but mediated by an articulatory identification of the name. But if understanding the (putative) demonstrative does not rest on articulating its object, then Davidson's account does not live up to its promise of understanding quotation as referring in a manner that involves the articulation of the quoted expression. The con in Davidson's account is reflected in the fact that it would render (1) as (4) — because (4) is naturally understood in a manner that the account must preclude.

14. On either horn of this dilemma, Davidson's account falls apart. This is evidently true of the first horn. And we can see that it is equally true of the second, by seeing that even though, if the quotation marks are a device of demonstrative reference, understanding them involves perceiving their object, the sense of 'perceiving' that figures here cannot be that of articulating a linguistic expression. On the contrary: it must be merely that of being given an object in the way that is expressed by a

demonstrative, in an historical occurrence. As this is a specifically sensory way of being given an object, it is right to think that an object's being given in this way is a kind of perception.⁶ Davidson's account wants to say that being given an object in this way involves articulating the given object — by saying that the capacity of the demonstrative in (4) to express this way, and so to refer to the name after the dot, depends on articulating the name. But we have seen that it cannot involve this: the 'this' that comes before the dot in a historical occurrence of (4) must express the way in question without any dependence on the articulation of what comes after, on pain of being stripped of its character as an original manner of identifying its object, and as such, on pain of being stripped of its character as a demonstrative. And this means that Davidson's account is not entitled to render (1) as (4), but merely as:

(5) That man's name is this.

This rendering removes the con in the account, by no longer being apt to trick us into thinking that the articulation of the name is internal to the capacity to refer to it demonstratively. And in so doing, it dissolves the account. If quoting is a matter of referring demonstratively then — because it cannot be internal to demonstrative reference that its object is articulated — it cannot be that the quoted expression is articulated, in articulating the quoting sentence. Being given an object in the way expressed by a demonstrative is a kind of perception; but it is not a matter of articulation at all; and for this reason, we can say that, in perception of this kind, what is perceived figures *as an object*, but not *as a linguistic expression*. On either horn of the dilemma, then, Davidson's account dissolves. And because it does, the principle remains intact. As things stand, we have no reason to think that an expression that is not used in a sentence can nonetheless be articulated, in articulating the sentence.

15. But if the principle cannot be denied, then, insofar as identifying the expression that is quoted in a sentence is to be afforded by articulating the sentence, and in so doing articulating the expression, it seems that the expression that is quoted in the sentence must be used in the sentence. And that seems to generate absurd results —

⁶ More will be said about the contrast of kinds of perception that this introduces in §§30-38 below.

for example, it seems that, if the man's name were used in (1), then (1) would say that a certain man's name is a certain man. It becomes hard to see how language can take itself as its topic through quotation, at all.

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16. We seem to have reached a dead-end. And that might motivate a change of tack. Each of the accounts of quotation that we have considered assumes that, if quoting is referring, then the office of quotation is performed by an expression that refers in the manner of a referring expression of a recognized kind: either in that of a name (in the specific sense), or a definite description, or a demonstrative. And just for this reason, it might seem that an alternative is possible: namely, to understand quotation as performing its office through a quotation, understood as a referring expression of a *sui generis* kind — one that is constituted as the expression it is simply on account of its conforming to the rule that ‘the denotation of the result of enclosing any [expression] in quotes is the [expression] itself’ (Wallace 1970, p. 135).⁷

17. But this ‘alternative’ is of no help. Our difficulty is concerned with what is understood in understanding a quoting sentence, and *a fortiori* with the identification of the quoted expression that understanding such a sentence involves. And this ‘alternative’ does not address this concern. Each of the foregoing accounts of quotation addressed it, by holding that the identification is secured by a referring expression that refers to its object in a certain way. And, because they each addressed it in this manner, they each failed to make sense of the identification as afforded by the articulation of the quoted expression. The present ‘alternative’ equally fails to do this: because ‘the result of enclosing [an expression] in quotes’ is not the quoted expression, but a distinct expression that refers to this expression, the quoted expression is no more articulated, in articulating the quoting sentence, than it would be if the quotation referred in the manner of a referring expression of one of the recognized kinds. But there is a more fundamental problem with this ‘alternative’: because it elevates its disregard of the question of how the referring expression refers to its object into a point of principle, it bypasses the concern with what is understood

⁷ For examples of this ‘alternative’, see — in addition to Wallace (1970) — Richard (1986), Ludwig and Rey (1998), and Gaskin and Hill (2013).

in understanding a quoting sentence. We can bring this out by considering an influential version of the ‘alternative’. This version casts the rule into the following ‘self-explanatory notation’ (Wallace 1970, p. 135):

$$(6) \text{ den (quot } (x)) = x.$$

And it goes on to suggest, as an instance of (6):

$$(7) \text{ den (quot (before)) = before.}$$

It would be a mistake to think that, in articulating either the left hand side, or the right hand side of (7), we articulate the familiar English word ‘before’. As the variable in (6) ranges over expressions, its replacements are terms that refer to expressions. So, what we articulate, in articulating what is inside the embedded pair of brackets on the left hand side of (7), is not the quoted expression, but a term (namely, ‘before’) that refers to the quoted expression⁸; and in articulating the right hand side, we merely repeat this referring term. This version of the ‘alternative’ might seem to speak to the concern of the difficulty, because it claims that the rule forms part of a theory of meaning for a language, of the sort advanced by Davidson: if it forms part of such a theory, then knowing the truth expressed by the rule, and being able to derive from this truth, in the context of knowledge of the rest of the theory, the truths expressed by instances such as (7), will suffice for understanding the expressions that perform the office of quotation in quoting sentences, and as such for identifying the expressions quoted in these sentences; and, insofar as it does suffice for this, the rule will shed some light on what is understood in understanding these sentences. But knowing the truth expressed by (7) cannot suffice for understanding an expression that, according to the rule, performs this office. And the same goes for any other instance of the rule. The expression is designated on the left hand side of the instance; knowing the truth expressed by the instance could suffice for understanding this expression only insofar as either the expression, or an expression equivalent to it in sense, were used on the right hand side; and neither expression is used, on either side. What is understood, in understanding an expression that, according to the rule, performs the office of

⁸ Wallace brings this out by putting a line over ‘before’.

quotation, is not expressed by any instance of the rule. As we might put it: the rule is ‘from sideways on’, in that its instances do not express what is understood, in understanding the expressions designated on their left hand sides. This is why the rule cannot form part of a theory of meaning of Davidson’s sort — because the point of such a theory is that it is not from sideways on: its theorems are to express what is understood, in understanding the sentences of the language that it concerns.⁹ And this interest in avoiding a sideways-on standpoint informs Davidson’s account of quotation.¹⁰ Although his account ultimately falls apart, it does at least try to speak to the concern of the difficulty, because its ambition is to specify a way of rendering quoting sentences that expresses what is understood, in understanding them, and in so doing expresses how the identification of the quoted expression is secured: that is why it would hold that what is understood in understanding (1) is expressed by (4), for example. The ‘alternative’ does not share this ambition, and this reflects its failure to speak to the concern of the difficulty.

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18. As quoting is picturing, it is not referring. That is the lesson of the difficulty. Davidson’s account tries to have it both ways, through the idea that quoting is referring demonstratively to an expression in a manner that involves articulating it. But because articulating an expression identifies the expression, this idea falls through. As we put it earlier: an expression identifies itself. We brought this out through the idea of a certain kind of question concerning the expression, which question is to be answered by articulating the expression. In answering such a question, the expression is articulated in a context that is equally articulated. And this idea — of articulating an expression in an equally articulated context — is the key to understanding quotation.

⁹ For the sideways-on image, as it applies to Davidson, see McDowell (1996 [1994], pp. 152-3).

¹⁰ According to Ludwig and Rey (1998), ‘[i]t is surprising that Davidson does not follow [Wallace’s suggestion about how to understand quotation] in his own treatment’ of quotation. (p. 163, n. 43). But it is not surprising, given that Davidson thinks that knowledge of a theory of meaning is to suffice for understanding the sentences of the language that the theory concerns.

19. When the context is a sentence, the ‘key’ is as follows: identifying the expression that is quoted in a sentence is afforded by articulating the quoted sentence, and in so doing articulating the expression inside the quotation marks. (Here we assume for simplicity that, in any quoting sentence, only one expression is quoted.)

20. There is a problem, however. If the expression inside the quotation marks is articulated, in articulating the quoting sentence, then — given the principle that underwrites our difficulty — this expression is used in the quoting sentence; the ‘key’ fixes it that this expression is the quoted expression; so, the quoted expression is used in the quoted sentence; and so, absurdity can result — as we saw in the case of (1). It might seem possible to retain the idea that the quoted expression is used in the quoting sentence, without generating absurdity, by insisting that this expression does not bear the meaning that it bears in sentences in which it is not inside quotation marks. In the case of the expression quoted in (1): in sentences in which this expression is not inside quotation marks, it refers, in the manner of a name (in the specific sense), to a certain man; this fixes its identity as the name of a certain man; and it is this very name that is inside quotation marks in quoting sentences such as (1); but in these sentences, this name refers, not to a man, but to itself — and, because it does, absurdity is avoided. Anscombe herself advances a suggestion on these lines (Anscombe 1957).¹¹ And it might seem, not merely to avoid absurdity, but to show that it is not true to say that, as quoting is picturing, it is not referring. Quoting is referring, because if an expression is inside quotation marks then it refers to itself, and it is because it refers to itself in such a context that it is quoted; but quoting is also picturing, because the quoted expression is used in the quoting sentence, and as such is articulated in articulating it. The lesson of the difficulty is not what was claimed above.

21. But this is an illusion. The idea that quoting is picturing is the idea that identifying the expression that is quoted in a sentence is afforded by articulating the sentence, and in so doing articulating the expression inside the quotation marks. But identifying the object of a referring expression — knowing what the expression refers to, in a manner that constitutes understanding it — is not afforded by articulating the referring

¹¹ She advances this suggestion for consideration, but not (I think) for acceptance: she describes it as ‘not perfectly clear’ (1957b, p. 18), and as such not acceptable as it stands.

expression. If the expression that is quoted in a sentence is the object of an expression that is used in the sentence — specifically, if it is the object of the expression inside quotation marks — then, in the absence of knowledge of what this expression refers to, articulating this expression does not identify the quoted expression. It might be that this expression *is* the quoted expression. But because articulating this expression does not afford knowledge of what this expression refers to, it does not afford knowledge of what expression is quoted in the sentence, and as such it cannot be said to identify the quoted expression.¹² So, it is not true to say that — on this suggestion — quoting is picturing; on the contrary: it is merely referring. Davidson (1979) sees this; as he puts it: ‘if an expression inside quotation marks refers to itself, the fact that it also pictures itself is a distracting irrelevancy ... once the expression is assigned a standard linguistic role, the [fact that it is articulated, in articulating the quoting sentence] has no more significance for semantics than onomatopoeia or the fact that the word “polysyllabic” is polysyllabic’ (p. 84).

22. Short of this suggestion, however, it might seem that we merely return to the earlier absurdity. But an assumption holds this appearance in place: that if an expression quoted in a sentence is used in the sentence, then it is what Irad Kimhi (2018, p. 81) calls a ‘categorematic unit’ — an element in a sentence with the form of reference and predication. Each of the accounts of quotation that we have rejected assumes that a quoting sentence is a sentence of this form, in which a categorematic unit performs the office of quotation — specifically, the unit refers to an expression, and the rest of the sentence says something about the object of this unit. But the lesson of our reflections is that, if quoting is picturing, then the quoted expression is neither the object of a categorematic unit that is used in the quoting sentence, nor such

¹² This might be questioned, as follows: articulating the expression inside quotation marks affords knowledge of what expression is inside the marks; and — on the best way of understanding the present suggestion — this just is knowledge of what expression is quoted. There can be no objection to understanding the present suggestion in this way. But then we must say that, because articulating the expression inside the quotation marks does not afford knowledge of what this expression refers to, articulating this expression cannot afford knowledge of what expression is inside the quotation marks: it can afford knowledge of what expression is inside the inverted commas, or some other device; but it cannot afford knowledge of this device as playing the role of quotation marks, because that will amount to knowledge of what expression is quoted, and as such will presuppose knowledge of what the expression refers to. (I am grateful to Alec Hinshelwood here.)

a unit itself, but rather what Kimhi calls a ‘syncategorematic unit’ — an element in a sentence that is not of the form of reference and predication.

23. Let us say that a sentence of the form of reference and predication is ‘an expression of consciousness’, and a quoting sentence, which *ex hypothesi* is not of this form, is ‘an expression of self-consciousness’.¹³ A quoting sentence, so understood, identifies the quoted expression in just the manner that the foregoing ‘key’ prescribes. We can better understand this conception of quoting sentences — and with it the idea of self-consciousness that I have just invoked — by reflecting on how this conception addresses the following question: can a sentence be, at once, quoted in a sentence, and preserved in its directedness to the world?

24. Consider a sentence of the following form:

(8) ‘*p*’ is true.

We might think that a sentence of this form preserves the quoted sentence in its directedness to the world, in that an assertion of a sentence of this form is, *inter alia*, an assertion of the quoted sentence. But if the quoted sentence is either mentioned but not used in a sentence of this form, or used not as a sentence but as a term that refers to itself, then an assertion of a sentence of this form is an assertion, not of the quoted sentence, but of a distinct sentence in which the quoted sentence figures only as the object of a referring term. This comes out in the difference between sentences of the following forms:

(9) *p*, and not-*p*.

And:

(10) ‘*p*’ is true, and not-*p*.

¹³ Compare Kimhi (2018, p. 31).

We might think that, just as a sentence of the form of (9) is formally a contradiction, so is a sentence of the form of (10). But if quoting is referring, then this cannot be right. If the sentence negated in the second conjunct of a sentence of the form of (10) is the very sentence that is quoted in the first conjunct, then this sameness cannot be recognized without understanding a categorematic unit in the first conjunct that refers to a sentence. But recognizing the sameness of the sentence negated in the second conjunct of a sentence of the form of (9) and the sentence used in the first conjunct does not require understanding any categorematic unit that refers to a sentence. And for this reason, there is an obstacle to acknowledging a sentence of the form of (10) as formally a contradiction that does not stand in the way of acknowledging this of a sentence of the form of (9). But if a sentence of the form of (8) were an expression of self-consciousness, then this obstacle would lapse — because then the recognition of the sameness of the quoted sentence and the negated sentence in (10) would not require understanding a categorematic unit in the first conjunct that refers to a sentence.

25. Consider, by contrast, a sentence of the following form:

(11) A said ' p '.

On the face of it, unlike an assertion of a sentence of the form of (8), an assertion of a sentence of the form of (11) is not an assertion of the quoted sentence, and this is reflected in the fact that a sentence of the following form is not a contradiction:

(12) A said ' p ', but not- p .

We might think, however, that the sentence negated in the second conjunct of a sentence of this form is the very sentence that is quoted in its first. And as such, we might think that a sentence of this form is, formally, not a contradiction, but a falsification of the quoted sentence.¹⁴ This would allow us to say that the sentence quoted in a sentence of the form of (11) is, at once, quoted and preserved in its directedness to the world: that the sentence quoted in a sentence of the form of (8) is

¹⁴ Compare Rödl (2020).

at once quoted and preserved in its world-directedness comes out in the fact that a sentence of the form of (10) is formally a contradiction; and that the sentence quoted in a sentence of the form of (11) is at once quoted and so preserved comes out in the fact that a sentence of the form of (12) is formally a falsification of the quoted sentence. In each case, the fact that the quoted sentence is, at once, quoted and so preserved is reflected in these facts about sentences of the forms of (10) and (12).

26. As before, however, if quoting is referring, then a sentence of the form of (12) cannot be formally a falsification — because, if the sentence negated in the second conjunct of a sentence of the form of (12) is the very sentence that is quoted in the first, then this sameness cannot be recognized without understanding a categorematic unit in the first conjunct that refers to a sentence; and then we should really speak of a sentence of the *apparent* form of (12), because the real form of such a sentence would have to be given differently. To bring this out, suppose that what follows ‘said’ in a sentence of the apparent form of (12) is a quotation, in the sense introduced at the start, and suppose that this quotation is a name (in the specific sense introduced there). Then the real form of such a sentence would be given by:

(13) *A* said *B*, but not-*p*.

The point would not be substantially affected if the quotation in such a sentence were a definite description, for then the real form would be given by:

(14) *A* said the *G*, but not-*p*.

And a similar consequence would follow if quoting were a matter of demonstrative reference — for then the real form would be given by:

(15) *A* said that, but not-*p*.

Davidson, of course, would insist on placing a dot in that which gives the real form, in parataxis with ‘*p*’ — perhaps by trying to give the real form as:

(16) *p*. *A* said that, but not-*p*.

But this is because his account is a con; (15) removes the con, by refusing to give the real form of (12) in a manner that is apt to trick us into thinking that the articulation of the (supposedly) quoted sentence is internal to the capacity of the demonstrative to refer to it. In contrast to each of these accounts, the ‘self-reference’ suggestion (from §20) does not specify how reference to the quoted sentence is achieved — whether in the manner of a name, a definite description, or a demonstrative. But effectively the same point applies. If we let the sign for a singular referring expression of some kind be ‘*a*’, then the real form would be given by:

(17) *A* said *a*, but not-*p*.

And no sentence of the form of (13), (14), (15), or (17) is formally a falsification, just because, if the sentence negated in the second conjunct is the very sentence that is said to be quoted in the first, then this sameness cannot be recognized without understanding a categorematic unit in the first conjunct that refers to a sentence. I say ‘said to be quoted’, because each of these renderings makes vivid that, if it gives the real form of a sentence of the apparent form of (12), then the supposedly quoted sentence is not identified by articulating a sentence of this apparent form, and as such — because quoting is picturing — a sentence of this apparent form is not really a quoting sentence at all. To acknowledge that a sentence of this apparent form is really of this form is to acknowledge that it is really a quoting sentence. And that removes the present obstacle to acknowledging that it is formally a falsification.

27. The repetition of a sentence is an aspect of what is articulated, in articulating not merely a sentence of the form of (9), but sentences that are really of the form of (10) and (12). And the recognition of the sameness of the sentence that is quoted in the first conjunct of a sentence of the form of (10) or (12), and the sentence that is negated in the second conjunct, is a moment in the articulation of a sentence of such a form — and as such a moment in perceiving such a sentence, in the sense of ‘perceiving’ that we have taken for granted in this essay. This sense of ‘perceiving’ is not merely of great interest — it is fully intelligible only in the light of the conception of quotation (and so of self-consciousness) that we have developed, and vice versa.

28. From this understanding of quotation, many consequences follow, for many of the fundamental ideas of philosophy — for the ideas of truth, language, meaning, and judgment, for example. Thinking through these consequences is a project that the present essay seeks to engender.¹⁵ But executing this project must be for a further occasion (or a further series of occasions). The outstanding task, for now, is to shed some light on the sense of ‘perceiving’ that we have presupposed throughout.

29. But just before we do, the following point is worthy of emphasis. Even though quoting is picturing, and as such not referring, it would be wrong to think that quoting an expression is a matter of articulating the expression with full understanding. Our discussion of the ‘self-reference’ suggestion brought out the distinction between the articulatory identification of a referring expression, and knowledge of what it refers to. And this distinction is crucial for seeing what to say about the sentence of concern to Anscombe’s problem, namely (1). The office of (1) is to equip its hearer with knowledge of the reference of ‘Smith’ that its speaker enjoys but its hearer lacks; it is a consequence of our understanding of quotation that (1) can perform this office only insofar as the hearer can articulate (1), and in so doing articulate, and so identify, the quoted expression; but it is clear that this identification cannot, as such, amount to the knowledge that it is the office of (1) to convey. One of the offices of quotation is to provide for the possibility of bringing an expression into view, either for someone who does not fully understand it, or without fully understanding it oneself — without knowing what it refers to, or (in the case of a sentence) what it is for it to be true, for example. But this does not mean that quoting is referring. The idea of articulating — of reading what is written, for example — is enough to provide for this possibility,¹⁶ whereas the idea of reference is destructive of the very idea of quotation. In quotation, language takes itself as its topic in a manner that is not objectifying, because it is not a matter of referring, *at all*.

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¹⁵ In this, it follows Kimhi (2018).

¹⁶ Compare the remarks on reading in Wittgenstein (1953), especially §156.

30. Let us now consider the sense of ‘perceiving’ that this essay has presupposed. Suppose that someone, A, sees someone who satisfies a certain definite description—let it be ‘the editor of *Soul*’. Then the following is a true sentence:

(18) A sees the editor of *Soul*.

It does not follow, however, that (18), and specifically what follows the verb, expresses how the editor of *Soul* is given to the perceiver, in the case of perception that it reports. Contrast the following sentence, as it occurs on the perceiver’s lips at the time he sees the editor:

(19) I see this person.

Suppose that this sentence, in this historical occurrence, and specifically the demonstrative after its verb, not merely refers to the seen person, but expresses the specifically sensory way in which he is given to the perceiver. By contrast, suppose that (18), and specifically the definite description after its verb, does not express this. Then whereas (18) is a report that is given from outside the sensory consciousness in which the object is perceived, the occurrence of (19) is a report that is given from within. And of these two kinds of report, the report from within is fundamental, insofar as the idea of perception, or sensory consciousness, that both reports employ just is that advanced by Anscombe in her essay ‘The Intentionality of Sensation’ (1965) — the idea of being given an object in a certain sensory way.

31. This idea cannot exhaust the idea of perception, however. The idea of perception is the idea of a certain kind of original manner of identification. And we have seen that there is an original manner of identifying a linguistic expression that is not a matter of referring to it, and as such not a matter of being given it in any way, but rather a matter of articulating it. We have taken for granted that this manner of identification is a kind of perception. And we can shed further light on it by reflecting on how cases of perception of these two different kinds are to be reported. Although the idea of perception advanced by Anscombe (1965) conceives of sensory consciousness, specifically, as a matter of being given an object in a sensory way, it equally conceives of it, generically, as that which is expressed, in some manner, in a

certain kind of report of a case of perception. If what follows the verb in such a report is a demonstrative that refers to what is perceived, then it expresses sensory consciousness in that it expresses the sensory way in which what is perceived is given to the perceiver. But if what follows the verb articulates what is perceived, then it does not express a way of being given what is perceived at all — rather, it *is* what is perceived. And this constrains the form of the report accordingly. If the name ‘Smith’ were perceived, for example, then this very name would follow the verb in the sentence that constitutes the report. The report could not be constituted by the following sentence:

(20) I see Smith.

An historical occurrence of (20) reports a case of perceiving, not the name of a man, but a man, just because the name ‘Smith’ figures in (20) as referring to its object.¹⁷ The name would rather need to be used inside quotation marks, as in:

(21) I see ‘Smith’.

And given the understanding of quotation at which we have arrived, this is just to say that the name would need to figure in (21) as a syncategorematic unit.

32. It follows that the report constituted by (21) is itself an expression, not of consciousness, but of self-consciousness. But this does not mean that it is not an expression of sensory consciousness. On the contrary: as it involves quotation, it expresses self-consciousness; but as a report of a case of perception, it equally expresses sensory consciousness. It expresses *sensory self-consciousness*. Only through the idea of this kind of perception is the idea of sentences that involve quotation intelligible; and only through the idea of sentences that involve quotation is the idea of this kind of perception intelligible in turn. These sentences may be said to report cases of this kind of perception ‘from within’, in that they express the sensory consciousness in which what is perceived is perceived, in these cases. But as these

¹⁷ This could not report the case of perception from within, because — unlike the ways of being given objects that are expressed by historical occurrences of demonstratives — the ways of being given objects expressed by names are not sensory in character.

cases are not cases of being given an object in any way, the contrast between reports from within and reports from outside — which holds when perception is conceived as the givenness of an object in a certain way — has lapsed.

33. It is not only the idea of sentences involving quotation that depends for its intelligibility on the idea of this kind of perception, however. The ‘I perceive’ must be able to accompany all my linguistic expressions. That echoes Kant’s way of formulating the idea of self-consciousness: ‘the *I think* must be able to accompany all my representations’ (Kant 1998 [1787], B131). And in each of these formulations the use of the first person — in the phrases ‘my linguistic expressions’, and ‘my representations’ — is critical. To focus on the first formulation: it does not propound a generalization that ranges over all language speakers, and ascribes to each speaker (*inter alia*) the capacity to perceive the language they employ; instead, it conveys an insight that anyone who reads the formulation needs to grasp for himself, in the first person: an insight in which the reader understands the expressions he articulates as (as he would put it) ‘the expressions I articulate’, and in so doing understands them as capable of being articulated inside the quotation marks in the context ‘I perceive “...”’.¹⁸ But it is not merely explicit reports of cases of the perception of language, such as (21), which express sensory self-consciousness. If an expression is quoted in a sentence, then it is perceived in the sensory self-consciousness that the sentence expresses. Unlike an historical occurrence of (19), which expresses sensory consciousness through an element of its content — specifically, through the demonstrative — a quoting sentence expresses sensory consciousness as the expression of self-consciousness that it is.

34. The idea of sensory self-consciousness is evidently Kantian in resonance. But it goes beyond Kant in an important respect. As an idea of sensory consciousness, it is an idea of the presence of a sensible manifold that is spread out in space (on a page, say) or time (on someone’s lips, say) — the manifold of linguistic expressions; but as an idea of self-consciousness, this manifold is not a manifold of *objects* at all — in that its elements are not given in any way.

¹⁸ Compare the discussion of the nexus between the objectification of the *I* and the objectification of language in Sullivan (1996), esp. p. 211.

35. I do not think that Kant can acknowledge this idea of sensory self-consciousness. And I would like to end by tracing this idea — somewhat ironically, given its post-Kantian character, but also, I think, significantly — to a pair of pre-Kantian sources: first, to Ancient Greece¹⁹; and then, finally, to Merrie England.

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36. At one point in the *Sophist* (244c-d), Plato argues against the Parmenidian idea that being is not a manifold of beings, on the ground that insofar as being has a name — such as ‘being’, or ‘the one’ — then there is such a manifold, for there is both being, and its names. But when Parmenides said that being is not a manifold of beings, and ‘all else is mere names’, he did not think that he was contradicting himself (Anscombe 1966, p. 25). And in a late essay, Anscombe argues that he was not, on the ground that the difference of names is a ‘difference in ways of thinking of [an] object [and] not a difference in what is thought of’ (Anscombe 1981a, p. ix):²⁰ only if the difference of names were a difference in what is thought of would it make sense to say that there *is* a manifold of names. Names are not things that there are — they are not beings — in that they are not objects of reference; and, as such, their manifoldness is no threat to the oneness of being.

37. There is an insight here that is detachable from Parmenidian monism. Let it be granted that being is a manifold of beings. There remains something right in the idea that the manifold of names is not *such* a manifold. Considered as present to consciousness in the manner that has concerned us in this essay, names are not objects of reference, but elements of consciousness, in that they are not given in any way, but are rather the ways in which objects are given. And yet, even though they are not given, *we see them* (or, more generally, we perceive them, in the sense of ‘perceiving’ that has been operative in this essay). That is the wonder of signs. And it is what the phrase ‘sensory self-consciousness’ is intended to capture.

¹⁹ For the idea that to go beyond Kant is to return to the Greeks, see (amongst many other post-Kantian texts), Mure (1940).

²⁰ We might equally say, of course: a difference in ways of being given an object, and not a difference in what is given.

38. But we might prefer, as a way of capturing this idea, the more sublime formulation that figures in the epigraph. Speculation turning to itself, or self-consciousness, rests on an element of the visible that not merely is present to consciousness, but is consciousness. And there is nothing strange about this element. We traffic in it everyday, and we are doing so right now. It is nothing other than language. And in its mirror, consciousness sees itself. Philosophical reflection, as this essay has sought to practice it, just is an expression of sensory self-consciousness. And for this reason, when this essay comments on its own quoted expressions, it takes these expressions as its topic without objectifying them. As the essay is a philosophical reflection, it perforce employs the very non-objectifying discourse that it seeks to bring into focus.²¹

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