Kaplan vs. Frege on Demonstratives

Frege's Theory of Demonstrations

A demonstration is much like a description — it has both a sense and a denotation.

Denotation

The denotation of a demonstration is the *demonstratum* — the object demonstrated.

Sense

The sense of a demonstration is the *manner of presentation*.

Thus, two different demonstrations could have the same denotation but different senses. Cf. "Hes" and "Phos" on pp. 514-15.

Frege's Theory of Demonstratives

"An occurrence of a demonstrative expression functions rather like a place-holder for the associated demonstration" (p. 516).

So **demonstratives themselves have senses**, which are **constituents in the propositions** expressed by sentences containing demonstratives.

The Counter-Example
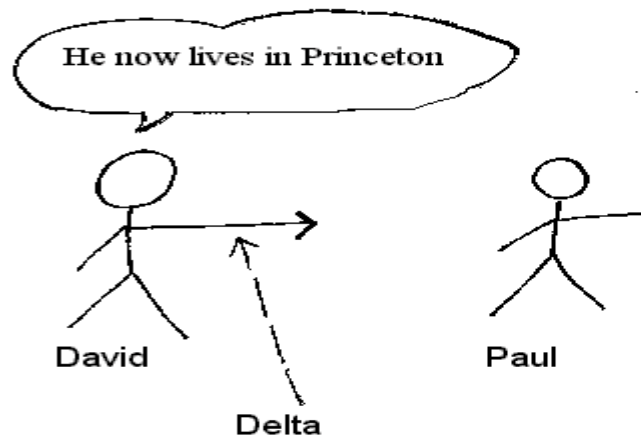
Pat = the content of David's utterance = the proposition expressed = <Paul, t_0, *living in*, Princeton>

- In the actual world, Pat is true.

- If Paul had moved to Santa Monica a week before t_0, Pat would have been false.

- What if Paul and Charles had switched places? Pat would **still be true**.

Why? Because Pat is not the proposition that **would have** been expressed if David had been pointing at Charles.

Compare these two sentences:

- "He [Delta] now lives in Princeton"
- "The male I am now pointing at [Delta] now lives in Princeton"

The proposition expressed by (1) is true in the actual world, and **true** in the case in which Paul and Charles switch places.

Reason: Paul is a constituent of Pat, the proposition expressed. Charles is a constituent of a different proposition, Mike, that (1) would have expressed in the case of the switch.

The proposition expressed by (2) is true in the actual world, but **false** in the case in which Paul and Charles switch places.

Reason: it is not Paul, but rather the sense of Delta, that is a constituent of the proposition expressed. And Delta has a different denotation in the two different circumstances: it denotes Paul in the actual world, and denotes Charles in the case of the switch.

Conclusions

- The only "sense" of an indexical is its **character**.
- The character of an indexical is a semantical rule—a function from context to content —that tells you how to **fix its denotation**.
- The character of an indexical is not **synonymous** with it. E.g., 'I' is not synonymous with 'the person who is speaking'.
- "In general, for indexicals, it is not possible to find synonyms" (p. 521).

Content and Character as Objects of Thought

The sentence "I am getting bored" has the same **character** no matter who utters it, but different **content** for different speakers.

- Principle 1: Objects of thought (Thoughts) = Contents
- Principle 2: Cognitive Significance of a Thought = Character

Corollaries

Corollary 1

Even two persons in exactly the same cognitive state will often **disagree** in their attitudes toward some object of thought (p. 531).

Clearer way to put it: Even two persons who **agree** in their attitudes toward some object of thought may be in different cognitive states.

Examples (Perry's bear, Kaplan's pants, pp. 532-3) show that it is not content but **character** that is cognitively significant (i.e., explains behavior).

Corollary 2

Ignorance of the referent does not defeat the directly referential character of indexicals (p. 536).

Corollary 3

The bearers of **logical truth** and of **contingency** are different entities. **Characters** are logically true (produce a true content in every context). **Contents** (propositions) are contingent or necessary (p. 539).