Philosophy Paper 108: The Philosophy of Logic and Language

4. Propositional Attitudes

READING


An introductory book that gives a useful overview, relating the problem of psychological contexts to Frege.


This is an extract from Quine’s book Word and Object, usefully and economically bringing together some of the famous key points of his seminal discussions. If you want to read more on Quine, the recommendation would be:


A classic paper by Quine, pointing out the problems of “quantifying in” to propositional attitude contexts. If you have time, it would also be worth reading the first two sections of his earlier paper “Reference and Modality” in the same collection (pp. 17-26), and perhaps Kaplan’s response to the second paper, called “Quantifying In” (pp. 112-44 in Linsky).


Davidson’s “paratactic” analysis is a classic and you need to know what it is, but not necessarily to consider it in detail. For a critique, see:


* Nathan Salmon and Scott Soames (eds), Propositions and Attitudes (OUP, 1988).

Although this collection is not as useful as some others in the series, its introduction is worth reading in itself, giving the editors’ perspective on the issues. Salmon is very keen on a “direct reference” account of these matters.


Slightly off on a tangent is another influential paper by Perry:


This gives a rather summary statement of some of my own views, and makes reference to various other items that might be of interest (e.g. Stich’s account of belief ascription, or the Dennett paper below).


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