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Frege's Choice: The Indefinability Argument, Truth, and the Fregean Conception of Judgment
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I develop a new reading of Frege's argument for the indefinability of truth. I concentrate on what Frege literally says in the passage that contains the argument. This literal reading of the passage establishes that the indefinability argument is an arguably sound argument to the following conclusion: provided that the Fregean conception of judgment—which has recently been countered by Hanks—is correct and that truth is a property of truth-bearers, a vicious infinite regress is produced. Given this vicious regress, Frege chooses to reject that truth is a property of truth-bearers. Frege's choice leads to a unique version of the Fregean conception of judgment. His unique conception of judgment can cope with Hanks's recent criticisms against the Fregean conception.

Frege's Choice: The Indefinability Argument, Truth, and the Fregean Conception of Judgment

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1. The Indefinability Argument and Frege's Conception of Judgment

This paper is about Frege's famous argument for the indefinability of truth he presents in 'Logic' (1897) and 'Thought' (1919a). It has been heavily discussed, and thus one might wonder what merits revisiting this argument can possibly have.[1] I sharpen the aim of this paper by responding to this skepticism.

The indefinability argument is cryptic. First, it is difficult to find out what the rationales are for the literal assertions Frege makes in the passages that contain the argument. Thus, secondly, it is also difficult to figure out what exactly its premises are. Facing these exegetical difficulties, an interpreter can choose either of the following two methods. One is to read Frege's points made in his other works into the passages that present the indefinability argument and reconstruct the argument through this projection.[2] The other way is to retrieve the premises of the argument by a line-by-line literal analysis of those passages and

then examine if what we have retrieved make sense or whether they are well connected to Frege's other points. Both methods are legitimate strategies for interpretative works that have their own strengths and weaknesses. In the case of the indefinability argument, nevertheless, there are few works that adopt the second strategy. What I would like to do in this paper is to develop an interpretation of the argument that adopts the second strategy.[3] In other words, I develop a literal analysis of the passages and then connect what is retrieved to Frege's other works.

We can determine the structure of the indefinability argument fairly uniquely by a line-by-line interpretation of the passage from 'Thought'. The literal analysis reveals that the argument presupposes the Fregean conception of judgment—a conception criticized by Hanks (2007, 2011, 2015, 2018).[4] Also, although the final conclusion of Frege's argument is that truth is indefinable, its premises lead to the secondary conclusion that truth cannot be a property.[5] In fact, he tries to establish that truth is not a property in his other works:

> ...truth (*Wahrheit*) is not a property of sentences or thoughts, as language might lead one to suppose...a thought is related to its truth-value as the sense of a sign is to its reference (Frege 1914, 234).[6]

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[1] For instance by Asay (2013); Carruthers (1982); Heck (2012); Kemp (1995); Kremer (2000); Künne (2003, 2008); Levin (1996); Pagin (2001); Ricketts (1996); Soames (1999); Stanley (1996), etc.

[2] For instance, a number of commentators (e.g., Carruthers 1982; Künne 2008; Soames 1999) take it to be one of the premises of the argument that the thought that p is identical with the thought that the thought that p is true. However, nowhere in Frege's presentation of the argument, the identity thesis is mentioned. In fact, the identity thesis is mentioned later in 'Thought' as if it is an idea that has not been introduced in the earlier part of the paper. There are other readings of the argument that fall under this category. For instance,

Greimann (2007) reads the argument based on the notion of *logical relations* he formulates out of Frege's other works. Levin (1996) interprets the argument by appealing to Frege's Begriffsschrift.

[3] My interpretation turns out to be quite close to Heck (2012) and Ricketts (1996).

[4] Hanks puts forward a non-Fregean conception of proposition based on a non-Fregean understanding of judgment. He claims that the Fregean conception of judgment posits the existence of propositions as abstract entities that have truth-conditions independently of any human acticity. According to Hanks, that is a fundamental mistake. I return to Hanks's conception of judgment and his criticism of the Fregean conception of judgment later.

[5] Ricketts (1996) understands the argument in the same way.

[6] For the translation of Frege's works cited here, I depend on Frege (1970, 1979, 1997, 2013).

Developing this interpretation of the indefinability argument constitutes Section 2.

If my suggested reading is correct, then Frege is urging us to retain the Fregean conception of judgment and abandon the common belief that truth is a property of truth-bearers. Because judging is acknowledging truth according to the Fregean conception, Frege ought to develop a version of the conception where truth is not a property. And that is exactly what Frege is doing in 'On Sense and Reference' when he provides the metaphorical elucidation of judging according to which judging is *taking a step from the level of sense to that of reference*. Thus, the indefinability argument plays a crucial role in the establishment of Frege's conception of judgment. Frege's own conception of judgment in which truth is not a property has theoretical merits: it avoids Hanks's criticisms of the general conception that takes judgment to be acknowledgment of truth. The interpretation and discussion of Frege's conception of judgment will constitute Section 3.

2. The Indefinability Argument

The indefinability argument in 'Thought' starts with the correspondence definition of truth:

> . . . Could we not maintain that there is truth when there is correspondence in a certain respect? But which respect? For in that case what ought we to do so as to decide whether something is true? We should have to inquire whether it is *true* that an idea and a reality, say, correspond in the specified respect. And then we should be confronted by a question of the same kind, and the game could begin again. So the attempted explanation of truth as correspondence breaks down (Frege 1919a, 325).

He generalizes this argument over other attempts to define truth:

> And any other attempt to define truth also breaks down. For in a definition certain characteristics would have to be specified. And in application to any particular case the question would always

arise whether it were *true* that the characteristics were present. So we should be going round in a circle. So it seems likely that the content of the word 'true' is *sui generis* and indefinable (Frege 1919a, 325).

Therefore, attempts to define truth fail in principle. This is Frege's indefinability argument.

Under my suggested reading, the conclusion of the argument is that there cannot be a truth definition of the following form:

(TD) x is true iff x is Δ.

The argument contained in the passage is the following *reductio*:

> Assumption: There is a definition of truth of the form (TD).

(T_{Pro}) If there is a definition of truth of the form (TD), truth is a property.

(J_{Pro}) If truth is a property, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of $\langle x$ is true$\rangle$. ('$\langle p \rangle$' means 'the thought that p'.)

(VIR) If one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of $\langle x$ is true$\rangle$, an absurd result is produced.

∴ There is no definition of truth of the form (TD).

Section 2.1 develops this reading. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 develop the rationales for (VIR) and (J_{Pro}) respectively. A few notes. First, 'an absurd result' in (VIR) refers to a vicious infinite regress. I explain this point when I develop a rationale for (VIR) in Section 2.2. Secondly, one might wonder why the notion of property has to be included in the interpretation of Frege's argument because the passage does not mention 'property'. Here is a quick reply: in the above presentation in 'Thought', what 'characteristic' means makes it clear that Frege is talking about such definitions of truth. Moreover, in the presentation of the *same* argument in 'Logic' (1897) Frege makes it explicit that this argument targets

at attempts to define truth as a property. These points will be explained further in Section 2.1. Lastly, the Fregean conception of judgment is related to (J$_{Pro}$). According to the conception, we perform judgment by way of grasping a thought and acknowledging its truth. Judgment as such is a fundamental activity through which other intellectual activities such as predicating a property of an object is explained. As I explain in Section 2.3, the truth of (J$_{Pro}$) hinges on that aspect of the Fregean conception of judgment. It is because Frege retains his conception of judgment that he takes truth to be indefinable.

2.1. The analysis of the passage from 'Thought'

Two preliminaries. First, note that the argument is woven in terms of the act of deciding whether something is true. Such an act is equivalent to answering the question whether something is true, which is in turn equivalent to making a judgment. In 'Logic' Frege writes:

> A scientist who makes a scientific discovery usually begins by gasping just a thought, and then he asks himself whether it is to be recognized as true; it is not until his investigation has turned out in favor of the hypothesis, that he ventures to put it forward as true... When we inwardly recognize that a thought is true, we are making a judgment (Frege 1897, 138–39).

Thus, the indefinability argument concerns the act of judgment.[7] This point helps us to understand the following question at the beginning of the passage:

> For in that case [i.e., if truth is defined as correspondence] what ought we to do so as to decide whether something is true? (Frege 1919a, 325)

This presupposes that what it takes to decide whether something is true partly depends on how truth is defined, i.e., what the

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[7]For the relationship between the indefinability argument and judgment, see Heck (2007, 2012), Kremer (2000), Pagin (2001), and Ricketts (1996).

nature of truth amounts to. It is misleading to ask what we ought to do in order to do A in case that p, if the truth of 'p' is irrelevant to A so that what we must perform to do A does not change regardless of whether it is the case that p. For Frege, to judge is to acknowledge the truth of a truth-bearer. Judging *qua* acknowledging the truth of a truth-bearer hinges on the nature of truth exactly in the way implied by the question: depending on the nature of truth, what it takes to acknowledge the truth of something must come to be different. Therefore, again, this passage concerns judgment. This means that we can paraphrase 'decide whether x is true' in the argument into 'acknowledge the truth of x'.

The second point is concerned with truth-bearers in Frege. Legitimate truth-bearers for Frege in his mature career are thoughts, i.e., the senses of sentences, and to acknowledge the truth of ⟨p⟩ is to judge that p. Nevertheless, Frege initially talks not about thoughts but about ideas in the argument, which means that the argument must not depend on whether thoughts alone are legitimate truth-bearers. As we will see, the argument only requires it to be true that thoughts are a kind of truth-bearers.

One might say that 'deciding whether x is true' ought to be paraphrased into 'acknowledging the *truth or falsity* of x'. As we can see in 'Negation' (1919b), however, Frege denies that there is the act of rejecting—acknowledging the falsity of a truth-bearer—that is not reduced to the act of judging. For him, rejecting a truth-bearer x is judging that x is not true, i.e., acknowledging the truth of ⟨x is not true⟩. Acknowledge the truth of ⟨x is not true⟩ is just a particular case of acknowledging the truth of a truth-bearer—where the truth-bearer whose truth is acknowledged is a particular kind of thought. Therefore, we can cover the act of rejecting by talking only about the act of acknowledging the truth of a truth-bearer, i.e., the act of judging.

Now, I turn to retrieving (J$_{Pro}$) from the passage. First, we need to look into Frege's argument against the definition of truth as

correspondence. Given that Frege is talking about judgment, the question in the passage, 'In that case what ought we to do so as to decide whether something is true?', is asking what must go into the place of 'ϕ' in the following:

(J$_{Cor}$) If truth consists in correspondence, one acknowledges the truth of a truth-bearer x iff ϕ.

Frege immediately answers:

> We should have to inquire whether it is *true* that an idea and a reality, say, correspond in the specified respect (Frege 1919a, 325).

If we translate 'inquire (i.e., decide) whether. . . is true' into 'acknowledge the truth of. . . ', the that-clause remains. To see what it refers to, we need to take it into account that truth is defined as correspondence to reality, which implies that truth is defined as a property of truth-bearers. Hence, in 'It is true that an idea and a reality correspond in the specified respect', 'It is true' must denote the property *truth*. Then, the that-clause must refer to a truth-bearer that has the property: a sort of propositional content Frege calls 'thought'. Hence, Frege's above statement can be paraphrased as follows: 'One should have to acknowledge the truth of ⟨x corresponds to reality⟩'. That is, we have the following:

(J$_{Cor}$*) If truth consists in correspondence, one acknowledges the truth of a truth-bearer x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x corresponds to reality⟩.

In the generalized indefinability argument, (J$_{Cor}$*) is generalized into (J$_{Pro}$). The key idea of this generalization consists in the following:

> For in a definition certain characteristics would have to be specified (Frege 1919a, 325).

We need to note the term 'characteristic (mark)'. In *Grundgesetze* Frege says:

> If one says: 'a square is a rectangle in which adjacent sides are equal', one defines the concept *square* by stating what properties something must have in order to fall under it. I call these properties characteristic marks of the concept (Frege 1893, XIV).[8]

What I call 'property' corresponds to what Frege calls 'concept' here. A concept is a function whose value for a given argument is always a truth-value, the True or the False. For instance, the predicate '$\cdots$ is prime' refers to a concept such that it yields the True if a given argument is a prime number and the False otherwise. What I call 'property' is a property *of* objects, and so it corresponds to a first-level concept that maps an object to truth-values. But it is not relevant to our discussion that a property corresponds to a first-level concept *qua* such a function. The only assumption we need for the notion of property is that a property P is what we relate to an object o when we judge that o is P. We certainly relate a Fregean first-level concept to an object by such a judgment. Further, Frege himself is using 'property' and 'concept' interchangeably. He calls a characteristic of a concept 'property'. The property *being rectangular*, i.e., a characteristic of the concept *being a square*, is a concept such that it yields the True iff a rectangle is given as an argument. So, it is fine to use 'property' and 'concept' interchangeably if doing so does not cause any confusion. Hence, I do so in the remainder. Then, the characteristics of a property P are properties an object ought to have in order to have P. Among characteristics of P, some are constitutive of P so that they show up in the analytic definition of P.[9] Hereafter, what I call 'characteristic of P' refers to such a *constitutive characteristic* of P. Now, 'characteristics' in the passage from 'Thought' should mean 'characteristics of truth'. So, the indefinability argument targets at truth definitions which specify such characteristics, i.e., those of the form (TD):

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[8]Note that characteristics of a property are 'not its properties' (Frege 1893, XIV). A characteristic of a property P is a property of an object that has P.

[9]A primitive property PP that is not constituted by other properties still has its characteristic, i.e., PP itself. All properties are their own characteristics.

(TD) x is true iff x is Δ

where Δ specifies the characteristics of truth. This point is clear by the indefinability argument presented in 'Logic' where Frege identifies the target of his argument as follows:

> The same [point that an absurd result is produced] would hold of any definition of the form 'A is true if and only if it has such-and-such properties'... (Frege 1897, 128)

Now, how does this lead to the generalization of (J_{Cor}*) to (J_{Pro})? Frege writes:

> For in a definition certain characteristics would have to be specified. And in application to any particular case the question would always arise whether it were *true* that the characteristics were present (Frege 1919a, 325).

The first statement means that if we have a truth definition of the form (TD), truth has characteristics. The second statement must be the answer to the question as to what we ought to do to decide whether something is true if truth has specified characteristics. So the following seems to capture the given passage:

(J_{Gen}) If truth has characteristics, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨those characteristics obtain for x⟩.

Note that (J_{Cor}*) is a particular example of (J_{Gen}):

(J_{Cor}*) If truth consists in correspondence, one acknowledges the truth of a truth-bearer x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x corresponds to reality⟩.

'Truth consists in correspondence' is equivalent to 'Truth has correspondence as its characteristic', and 'x corresponds to reality' is equivalent to 'correspondence as the characteristic of truth obtains for x'. At the same time, (J_{Gen}) is equivalent to (J_{Pro}). 'Those characteristics obtain' must mean 'x has the properties constitutive of truth, i.e., has the property *truth*' or simply 'x is true'.

Moreover, truth having characteristics is equivalent to truth being a property.[10] Hence, (J_{Gen}) comes down to the following:

(J_{Pro}) If truth is a property, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x has the property *truth*⟩, i.e., the truth of ⟨x is true⟩.

Given that (J_{Cor}*) is an instance of (J_{Gen}) and (J_{Gen}) is equivalent to (J_{Pro}), (J_{Cor}*) is an instance of (J_{Pro}) and (J_{Pro}) is a generalization of (J_{Cor}*). (J_{Pro}) is indeed what the indefinability argument depends on.

We need to note that 'iff' in the consequent (J_{Pro}) is to be understood in terms of *constitutivity*: the action described on the left side is constituted by the action described on the right side. This constitutivity claim implies that it is *by and only by* acknowledging the truth of ⟨x is true⟩ that one acknowledges the truth of x. The point of (J_{Pro}) is that *if* truth is a property, then acknowledging the truth of x is constituted by acknowledging the truth of ⟨x is true⟩.

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[10]Künne (2001) would disagree. He says a characteristic mark M of a property P must satisfy the following condition: 'M is a property, M is ⋯ a component of an analytic definition [of P], and nothing can [have P] without [having M]' (2008, 13). If he is right, a primitive property cannot have a characteristic. However, the second condition Künne assigns on characteristics is groundless. All Frege says about characteristics and definitions is that we come to have a definition of a property by specifying its characteristics; that does not imply that only a property that shows up in a definition of P can be a P's characteristic. Any property 'that an object must have in order to have P' (1903, §150) is a characteristic of P. If we look at Künne (2001), we can see why he takes the second condition to be necessary. Given only what Frege says, a characteristic of P is just a necessary condition for P. Then, properties like *not both Q and not Q* or *Q or not Q* are characteristics of P. Künne claims that 'the content of any concept would be so rich that nobody could have one concept expressible in English without having all of them' (2001, 276). But this claim presupposes that all characteristics of P must show up in its definition. However, all Frege says is that only characteristics of P can show up in its definition, which does not imply the presupposition at all. As I said in footnote 6, a primitive property PP can have a characteristic, i.e., PP itself according to Frege's definition of characteristic.

Given (J_Pro), we can easily see that (VIR) is also a part of the indefinability argument:

(VIR) If one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x is true⟩, an absurd result is produced.

Recall Frege's argument against the correspondence definition:

> We should have to inquire whether it is *true* that an idea and a reality, say, correspond in the specified respect. And then we should be confronted by a question of the same kind, and the game could begin again. So the attempted explanation of truth as correspondence breaks down (Frege 1919a, 325; numbering mine).

The first claim is the consequent of (J_Cor*). It is followed by the claim that an absurd result, which breaks down the correspondence definition, would be produced. So we have the following:

(VIR*) If one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x corresponds to reality⟩, an absurd result is produced.

The same reading is applied to the part for the generalized indefinability argument. Hence, we have (VIR). As I said, I explain why the absurd result (VIR) points to is a vicious infinite regress in the next section. We need to note that Frege takes it that the antecedent of (VIR) by itself leads to an absurd result. Hence, the absurd result Frege is pointing to must be something the antecedent of (VIR) alone can produce.

Let us take stock of what we have so far:

(J_Pro) If truth is a property, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x is true⟩.

(VIR) If one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x is true⟩, an absurd result is produced.

To have the absurd result under the assumption that we have a definition of truth of the form (TD), we need the following:

(T_Pro) If there is a definition of truth of the form (TD), truth is a property.

Frege endorses (T_Pro) when he says that 'in a definition certain characteristics would have to be specified'. The kind of truth definition he has in mind is what makes truth have characteristics, i.e., makes truth a property. Such a definition should have the form (TD). Indeed, the consequent of (T_Pro) is obviously entailed by the logical form (TD). Hence, the *reductio* that depends on (T_Pro), (J_Pro), and (VIR) is the actual argument contained in the passage from 'Thought'.

Now, I turn to motivating (J_Pro) and (VIR). In this discussion, we will see that the argument forces us to choose either the Fregean conception of judgment or the intuitive idea that truth is a property of truth-bearers.

2.2. The motivation for (VIR)

Recall (VIR):

(VIR) If one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x is true⟩, an absurd result is produced.

The absurd result is a vicious infinite regress. Consider the antecedent of (VIR):

(AA) One acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x is true⟩.

We need to recall that 'iff' in (AA) is to be understood in terms of *constitutivity*: the action described on the left side is constituted by the action described on the right side, i.e., we perform the former by and only by performing the latter. Now, suppose that (AA) is true. Say that one attempts to acknowledge the truth of a truth-bearer b. By (AA), one can do so by and only by acknowledging the truth of ⟨b is true⟩. This is where the argument depends on the assumption that thoughts are at least a kind of

truth-bearers. ⟨*b* is true⟩ is a truth-bearer because it is a thought. By (AA), one can acknowledge its truth by and only by acknowledging the truth of ⟨⟨*b* is true⟩ is true⟩. By (AA) again, one can perform the latter by and only by acknowledging the truth of ⟨⟨⟨*b* is true⟩ is true⟩ is true⟩. This regress will continue endlessly. This infinite regress appears to be what Frege is getting at when he says the following:

> And then we should be confronted by a question of the same kind, and the game could begin again (Frege 1919a, 325).

We can also put this result in terms of constitutivity of the act of acknowledging the truth of *x*. By (AA), this act is constituted by the act of acknowledging of ⟨*x* is true⟩. However, by (AA) again, it is constituted by the act of acknowledging the truth of ⟨⟨*x* is true⟩ is true⟩, which is again constituted by acknowledging the truth of ⟨⟨⟨*x* is true⟩ is true⟩ is true⟩. Thus, we cannot fix what constitutes the act of acknowledging the truth of *x*.

It might be objected that the infinite regress is vicious only if acknowledging the truth of ⟨*p*⟩ is not identical with acknowledge the truth of ⟨⟨*p*⟩ is true⟩. Indeed, it is tempting to think that the former is identical with the latter for Frege. First of all, judgment is thought-sensitive:

(Tht) Acknowledging the truth of ⟨*p*⟩ is identical with acknowledging the truth of ⟨*q*⟩ iff ⟨*p*⟩ is identical with ⟨*q*⟩.

In 'On Sense and Reference' (1892a), Frege elucidates judging that *p* as taking a step from ⟨*p*⟩ to the reference of '*p*', i.e., one of the truth-values, the True and the False. We will see later what this metaphorical elucidation means. However, it already appears clear that it implies (Tht): taking a step from ⟨*p*⟩ is identical with taking a step from ⟨*q*⟩ iff ⟨*p*⟩ is identical with ⟨*q*⟩. Secondly, Frege does claim that ⟨*p*⟩ is identical with ⟨⟨*p*⟩ is true⟩. He writes:

> One can, indeed, say: 'The thought, that 5 is a prime number, is true.' But. . . nothing more has been said than in the simple sentence '5 is a prime number' (Frege 1892a, 64).

By (Tht), it follows that acknowledging the truth of ⟨*p*⟩ is identical with acknowledging the truth of ⟨⟨*p*⟩ is true⟩. Then, it seems that the infinite regress produced by (AA) is not vicious. If the infinite regress produced by (AA) is not vicious, it cannot be the absurd result Frege is pointing to in this argument.

But this objection misses the point that while accepting the *identity thesis* that ⟨*p*⟩ is identical with ⟨⟨*p*⟩ is true⟩, Frege also accepts the following:

(Diff) If '· · · is true' denotes a property, ⟨*p*⟩ is different from ⟨⟨*p*⟩ is true⟩.

In fact, Frege puts forward (Diff) in the same passage from 'On Sense and Reference'.

> [a] One might be tempted to regard the relation of the thought to the True not as that of sense to reference, but rather as that of subject to predicate. [b] One can, indeed, say: 'The thought, that 5 is a prime number, is true.' But [c]. . . nothing more has been said than in the simple sentence '5 is a prime number.' [d] The truth claim arises in each case from the form of the declarative sentence, and [e] when the latter lacks its usual force, e.g., in the mouth of an actor upon the stage, even the sentence 'The thought that 5 is a prime number is true' contains only a thought, and indeed the same thought as the simple '5 is a prime number.' It follows that [f] the relationship of the thought to the True may not be compared with that of subject to predicate (Frege 1892a, 64).

Through 'the relationship of subject to predicate', Frege refers to the relationship of an object to a property (Frege 1892b).

> The words 'relation of a subject to a predicate' designate two quite different relations, according as the subject is an object or is itself a concept (Frege 1892b, 120).

Frege says that when the subject is an object, 'the relationship of a subject to a predicate' refers to the relationship of an object to a concept, i.e., a property in our terminology.[11] 'The thought that

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[11]In particular, it refers to the relationship of an object falling under a concept, i.e., an object having a property (Frege 1892b, 120).

p' is saturated—i.e., has no argument place—so that it refers to an object; a thought is an object. Therefore, 'the relationship of subject to predicate' here refers to the relationship of an object to a property. Frege is arguing that the truth-value True is not a property of thoughts but a reference attached to thoughts. By [a], he is taking into consideration theorists who regard the True as a property thoughts have. Here is how the argument runs:

(P1) If the True is a property, then '$\cdots$ is true' denotes the property.

(P2) If '$\cdots$ is true' denotes a property, $\langle p \rangle$ is different from $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$.

(P3) $\langle p \rangle$ is identical with $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$.

(C1) $\therefore$ '$\cdots$ is true' does not denote a property.

(C2) $\therefore$ The True is not a property.

(P3) can be read off from [c]–[e]. [c] is just (P3). [d] and the first half of [e] are dealing with our misconception of 'true' such that, in '$\langle p \rangle$ is true', 'true' adds to $\langle p \rangle$ the assertoric force as a sense added to $\langle p \rangle$. According to Frege, this misconception is a main reason that hinders people from realizing that $\langle p \rangle$ is identical with $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$ (compare Frege 1915). Establishing that the assertoric force is not attached to 'true' at all, Frege repeats (P3) in the second half of [e]. Then, he directly proceeds to the conclusion in [f]. This confirms that Frege is committed to (P2), which is also strongly suggested by 'but' between [b] and [c]. Without (P1), Frege cannot proceed from (C1) to (C2). Also, (P1) seems to explain Frege's move from [a] to [b].

If this reformulation of the argument is acceptable, then it shows that Frege is committed to (Diff), i.e., (P2). By our assumption that there is a true definition of truth of the form (TD), truth is a property. By (Diff) and (Tht), acknowledging the truth of $\langle p \rangle$ differs from acknowledging the truth of $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$. Hence, the objection to (VIR) does not obtain.

(Diff) is arguably plausible; saying that snow is white certainly seems to be radically different from saying that a thought has a certain property. Presumably, this is why, in the literature, it is hard to find out a theory of truth that takes truth to be a property *and* takes $\langle p \rangle$ to be identical with $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$. For instance, Horwich (1998), who takes truth to be a property in a minimal sense—i.e, in the sense that 'true' is a legitimate predicate—still takes $\langle p \rangle$ to be different from $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$ *because* truth is a property.

A number of readings of the indefinability argument takes the identity thesis to be a part of the argument (compare Künne 2008 or Soames 1999). But Frege's commitment to (Diff) provides a reason to doubt this claim. In Frege's own understanding, the identity thesis would not obtain if truth were a property. However, the argument assumes that truth is a property. Under that assumption, Frege cannot put forward the identity thesis. Doing so goes against (Diff).

Note that the argument from 'On Sense and Reference' concludes that truth is not a property of thoughts. The indefinability argument can lead to the same conclusion. Given (J_Pro) and (VIR):

(J_Pro) If truth is a property, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of $\langle x$ has the property *truth*$\rangle$, i.e., $\langle x$ is true$\rangle$;

(VIR) If one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of $\langle x$ is true$\rangle$, an absurd result is produced;

the assumption that truth is a property will lead to the same infinite regress. Hence, we should deny the assumption that truth is a property of truth-bearers, which implies that truth is not a property of thoughts. Therefore, the argument in 'On Sense and Reference' and the indefinability argument are different arguments to the conclusion that truth is not a property. The difference is that while the former depends on the identity between $\langle p \rangle$ and $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$, the latter does not.

One might argue that regarding the indefinability argument as an argument that truth is not a property is implausible because the conclusion Frege draws at the end of the argument is that 'the content of the word is *sui generis* and indefinable' (1919a, 327). But the final conclusion of the argument in our reading is also the indefinability of truth—that there is no definition of the form 'x is true iff x is Δ'. Surely, the conclusion we have under the suggested reading is, precisely speaking, the indefinability of truth *as a property*. However, Frege makes it clear that his targets are attempts to define truth as a property. If so, it is only natural to interpret the argument as an argument to the indefinability of truth as a property. Hence, my suggested reading properly captures the final conclusion Frege puts at the end of the argument.

Still, is it reasonable to think that it is an intermediate conclusion of the argument that truth is not a property? The answer is, I believe, 'Yes' according to the passage from 'Thought'. In a nutshell, what Frege *literally* says there is that if truth has characteristics, an absurd result—which we have identified as a vicious infinite regress—is produced with respect to the act of deciding whether something is true. As we have seen, truth has characteristics just in case it is a property. Thus, it is directly from the assumption that truth is a property that Frege draws the infinite regress. My suggested reading captures this point.

One might still argue Frege's other remarks in 'Thought' show that he takes truth to be a property and 'true' a predicate. For instance, he writes:

> We cannot recognize a property of a thing without at the same time finding the thought *this thing has this property* to be true. So with every property of a thing, there is tied up a property of a thought, namely truth (Frege 1919a, 328).[12]

In reply, what Frege is pointing to here is simply the identity thesis that $\langle p \rangle$ is always identical with $\langle \langle p \rangle$ is true$\rangle$. To recognize

a property P of an object o is to judge that o is P. Then, Frege's point is that when we judge that o is P, we also judge that $\langle o$ is $P \rangle$ is true. This point is completely explained by his commitment to the identity thesis. The fact that what Frege has in his mind here is the identity thesis is also shown by the fact that the above point is reinforced by the following:

> It is also worth noticing that the sentence 'I smell the scent of violets' has just the same content as the sentence 'It is true that I smell the scent of violets'. So, it seems, then, that nothing is added to the thought by my ascribing to it the property of truth (Frege 1919a, 328).

What Frege argues for based on the identity thesis, as we have seen in 'On Sense and Reference', is that truth is not a property. Frege is more explicit about this point in 'Logic in Mathematics' written in 1914. It is right after repeating the same argument we have seen in 'On Sense and Reference' that he writes:

> Showing. . . that truth (*Wahrheit*) is not a property of sentences or thoughts, as language might lead one to suppose, this consideration confirms that a thought is related to its truth-value as the sense of a sign is to its reference (Frege 1914, 234).

What Frege is trying to establish in 'Thought' is, in the end, also that truth is not a property. Right after the above passages, he remarks:

> The reference of the word 'true' seems to be altogether *sui generis*. May we not be dealing here with something which cannot be called a property in the ordinary sense at all? In spite of this doubt I will begin by expressing myself in accordance with ordinary usage, until some more appropriate way of speaking is found (Frege 1914, 234).

'Thought' is an article written for readers who are unfamiliar with, and even potentially against, Frege's logical framework, specifically, German Idealists.[13] Although the article is for such

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[12]Indeed, Frege repeats the same point in 'Logic' (1897, 129).

[13]'Thought' is published in *Beiträge zur Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus* I.

non-logicians and Frege does not provide a new way of talking about truth in the remainder, he still expresses his discomfort with the ordinary usage in which 'true' is a predicate and truth is a property. This shows Frege's strong commitment to the claim that truth is not a property.

Scholars like Heck (2007, 2012) and Künne (2008) maintain that Frege cannot avoid being committed to the property of truth. In Frege's mature framework, all true sentences have the True as their reference. Thoughts are modes of presentation of sentential references. Thus, true thoughts—i.e., the senses of true sentences—share the property *being a mode of presentation of the True*. These commentators' point is that because there are such properties shared by all true thoughts, Frege ought to admit that truth is such a property of thoughts insofar as he retains his framework. But this inference is invalid. To admit the existence of the properties shared by true thoughts is one thing, and to identify truth with one of such properties is another. Accepting such properties does not immediately commit one to the claim that one of such properties is truth. One can deny that truth is a property while accepting the existence of properties shared by thoughts that refer to the True. Frege does deny that truth is a property.

The real question, one might say, is why we should accept (AA) just because we accept that truth is a property. Most of theorists in the literature on truth accept that truth is a property; but that does not seem to automatically make them committed to (AA). Why does Frege think that we have to accept (AA) if we accept that truth is a property? In other words, why does he think that we have to accept (J$_{Pro}$):

(J$_{Pro}$) If truth is a property, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of $\langle x$ is true$\rangle$?

Let us turn to this question.

2.3. The motivation for (J$_{Pro}$) and what the argument really shows

Heck (2012) and Pagin (2001) also take (J$_{Pro}$) to be a premise of the indefinability argument. For instance, Heck writes:

[Say] we do think of truth as a property of thoughts. Then, the idea that judgment is admission of a thought's truth becomes the idea that judging is a form of predication: judging is predicating truth of a thought. . . Predication in this sense is itself a sort of judgment: To predicate truth of the thought that p is just to judge that the thought that p is true. . . (Heck 2012, 47)

Heck is inferring (J$_{Pro}$) by the following two propositions:

(Q1) If truth is a property, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one predicates the property *truth* of x.

(Q2) One predicates a property P of an object o iff one acknowledges the truth of $\langle o$ is $P \rangle$.

Pagin (2001, 5) presents the same inference to (J$_{Pro}$). I believe that an inference similar to this is going on when Frege is putting forward (J$_{Pro}$). But one might doubt that this is the inference underlying (J$_{Pro}$) because (Q2) is easily challengeable. First, note that the verb 'predicate' in (Q1) and (Q2) indicates the *committal* act of predication—the act of predication that is committed to the correctness of predication.[14] Recall that (AA)—the consequent of (J$_{Pro}$)—is the constitutivity claim that one acknowledges the truth of x by and only by acknowledging the truth of $\langle x$ is true$\rangle$. We can have such a constitutivity claim only if (Q2) is also understood as such a claim, i.e., the claim that one predicates P of x by and

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[14]One problem is that Frege does not endorse such a committal conception of predication. For him, predicating a property P of an object o is grasping $\langle o$ is $P \rangle$ (e.g., Frege 1892a, 1897, 1906b, etc). Predicating as grasping a thought does not include a commitment to the correctness of predication. Of course, we can still define committal predication in the framework. Basically, (Q2) is just such a definition.

only by acknowledging the truth of ⟨*o* is *P*⟩. However, why do we have to accept (Q2) as such? One can deny (Q2), arguing that we acknowledge the truth of ⟨*o* is *P*⟩ by and only by predicating *P* of *o*. Hence, one might insist that Frege would not take such an easily challengeable claim to be true, and so that the above inference is not what underlies (J_Pro).

However, I still believe that the above inference suggested by Heck and Pagin is what Frege has in his mind. We should first note that we can find a rational for (Q2) in Frege's conception of judgment: (Q2) turns out to be true in the Fregean conception. Let *o* be an object and *P* be a property objects can have. Consider the following descriptions of act-types:

(A₁) Predicating *P* of *o*,

(A₂) Judging that *o* is *P*, and

(A₃) Acknowledging the truth of ⟨*o* is *P*⟩.

Two preliminary points. First, as we have seen, (A₃) constitutes (A₂) in the Fregean conception: it is by and only by performing (A₃) that we perform (A₂). Secondly, it seems reasonable to say that (A₁) is equivalent to (A₂): to committally predicate *P* of *o* is to judge that *o* is *P*.[15] Now, the question is which of (A₁) and (A₂) is more fundamental. There are several reasons to believe that (A₂) is more fundamental than (A₁) in Frege. In 'Boole's Logical Calculus and Begriffsschrift' written in his early career, Frege says that unlike theorists like Boole who take concept-formation and predication to the 'logically primitive activity' (1880, 15), he takes judgment to be such an activity.[16] Thus, judgment is conceptually prior to predication:

So instead of putting a judgment together out of individual as subject and an already previously formed concept as predicate, we

do the opposite and arrive at a concept [i.e., predicate] by splitting up the content of possible judgment (Frege 1880, 17).

Thus, judgment is not to be understood in terms of a combination of a subject and a predicate, i.e., in terms of an act of predication.[17] In Frege's mature career, predication is still to be sharply distinguished from judgment:

. . . Even in logical works, predicating is confused with judging (Frege 1906b, 185).

In 'On Sense and Reference', Frege elucidates judging as taking a step from a thought to its truth-value. Then, he writes:

By combining subject and predicate, one reaches only a thought, never passes. . . from a thought to its truth value (Frege 1892a, 64).

Here, we need to be a little bit careful because what Frege means by 'predicating' or 'combining subject and predicate' is not committal predication like (A₁), but grasping a thought without being committed to its truth. What should be noted in addition is that, for Frege in his mature career, 'predication' in his elucidations of logical notions consistently refers to the act of grasping a thought. The notion of committal predication never shows up in his elucidation of judgment, or even in his philosophical elucidations of other logical notions. Moreover, Frege criticizes the attempt to understand judgment in terms of committal predication—most notably in 'Negation' (1919b). So, committal predication like (A₁) does not play any explanatory role in Frege's mature framework. Thus, (A₁) ought to be understood in terms of (A₂), but not the other way around. We will revisit this point shortly.

In conclusion, the Fregean conception of judgment thus entails (Q2), i.e., that (A₁) is constituted by (A₃). Again, from (Q1) and (Q2), (J_Pro) follows.

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[15]We will discuss this point in Section 3.1.

[16]To say that a notion is primitive is not to say that we cannot say anything about it. According to Frege, we can still provide an *elucidation* for a primitive notion like judgment. Acknowledgment of the truth of a thought is his elucidation of judgment.

[17]For the motivation of this view, see Textor (2010, §2).

Then, the question is whether this rationale is what underlies (J_Pro). One might answer 'No'. If the above rationale underlies (J_Pro), the indefinability argument immediately encounters the following challenge. If the Fregean conception of judgment were the only plausible conception, (Q2) is justified. But there is an arguable alternative to the Fregean conception of judgment as we have described at the beginning of Section 2.3. Such a non-Fregean conception of judgment has recently been championed by Peter Hanks (2011, 2015, 2018). For Hanks, predicating is the fundamental activity. Specifically, in Hanks's framework, (A₂) is reduced to (A₁).[18] There is no constitutivity relationship between (A₂) and (A₃). The latter is predicating truth of ⟨o is P⟩, which is an act-type different from (A₁) and thus (A₂). So (Q2) does not obtain for Hanks; (A₁) is not achieved by and only by doing (A₃). Thus, theorists such as Hanks who go against the Fregean conception of judgment would not accept (Q2). To put it in a different way, what we can reasonably regard as *obviously* true is not (Q2), but only the following:

(Q₂*) If the Fregean conception of judgment is correct, (Q2) is true.

Therefore, Frege needs to show, at least, that the Fregean conception of judgment constitutes a better theory of judgment than other conceptions. However, he does not even mention this alternative. This might raise a doubt against the above rationale for (J_Pro).

However, I believe, the suggested rationale for (J_Pro) is what Frege has in mind. As we have seen, Frege basically refuses to understand judgment in terms of predication. There are at least three reasons why he does so.[19] First, Frege maintains that if we understand judging in terms of connecting subject and predicate, i.e., predicating, we cannot make sense of the distinction between grasping a thought and acknowledging a thought's truth (Frege 1919b, 354). Secondly, he believes that understanding judging in terms of predicating leads to unnecessary difficulties with understanding the nature of rejecting (1919b, 354–57). Lastly, he maintains that analyzing contents of judgments in terms of subject and predicate leads to constant misunderstanding of the logical structures of those contents (1892b, 119–20).[20] All these reasons are certainly disputable and have details that need thorough examination. But what matters for us is that if Frege were to regard these reasons as sufficient for rejecting the predication view of judgment, then he would take (J_Pro) to be justified. If so, Frege does not need to hesitate to put it forward in the paper where he introduces his logical insights to people who are new to them.

Recall that the indefinability argument leads to the conclusion that truth is not a property. Also, recall that this is not Frege's only argument that truth is not a property. He provides another argument that truth is not a property—putting its conclusion explicitly. The soundness of that argument hinges on the identity thesis that ⟨p⟩ is identical with ⟨⟨p⟩ is true⟩. Frege would probably notice that such an argument cannot convince people who simply deny the identity thesis. Then, he has a reason to come up with an argument that does not depend on the identity thesis. If my suggested exegesis is along the right lines, the indefinability argument is the result of Frege's attempt to discover such an argument; he thinks that his conception of judgment to which he is firmly committed provides a sufficient reason to deny that truth is a property.

Frege's indefinability argument under my suggested reading provides an important lesson. The Fregean conception of judgment, under which judging is making a commitment to the truth of a proposition as an abstract entity that represents things in a

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[18]For Hanks, predication is inherently committal. See ch.3 of Hanks (2015).

[19]For the further discussion about why Frege refuses to understand judgment in terms of predication, see Textor (2010, §4).

[20]Thus, Frege says that 'it would be best to banish the words 'subject' and 'predicate' from logic entirely' (1892b, 120).

way, is a popular point of view.[21] Frege's argument establishes that the Fregean conception is incompatible with the ordinary view that truth is a property of truth-bearers. That is, the following is arguably true:

(J_Pro*) If the Fregean conception of judgment is true and truth is a property, one acknowledges the truth of x iff one acknowledges the truth of ⟨x is true⟩.

If we assume that the Fregean conception is true and that truth is a property, we come to have the vicious infinite regress. We ought to abandon at least one of the assumptions.

Frege's choice is to abandon the ordinary thought that truth is a property. Hence, he ought to provide an alternative conception of judgment *qua* acknowledgment of truth in which truth is an object. He does provide such an alternative in 'On Sense and Reference' and other mature works. This reversely suggests that Frege is attempting to justify his search for an alternative understanding of the Fregean conception of judgment when he builds up his arguments against the idea that truth is a property. I turn to this alternative provided by Frege.

3. Judgment as Non-Judgmental Identification

In a nutshell, I argue, Frege takes judging that p *qua* acknowledging the truth of ⟨p⟩ as identifying the truth-value True, which is an object, with the truth-value of ⟨p⟩. In 'Comments on Sense and Reference', Frege writes:

In the cases we first encounter the argument [of a concept] is an object, it is to these cases that we shall mainly confine ourselves here... If we complete the name of an concept with a proper name, we obtain a sentence whose sense is a thought; and this sentence has a truth-value as its reference. To *acknowledge this reference as that of the True* (as the True) is to judge that the object which is taken

as the argument falls under the concept (Frege 1892b, 119; italics mine).

There is a further rationale beneath this elucidation. We can find it in 'On Sense and Reference' where Frege elucidates judging as 'taking a step from a thought to its reference'. I analyze this elucidation in Section 3.1. This analysis provides a reason to think that the notion of identification in terms of which Frege elucidates judgment is that of *non-judgmental identification*. In Section 3.2, I show the theoretical merits of taking judgments to be such non-judgmental identifications.

3.1. Frege's own conception of judgment

One of the important themes in 'On Sense and Reference', which has attracted less attention than others themes in it, is his elucidation of judgment in terms of the sense-reference distinction. As we have said, in this paper, Frege elucidates that to judge that p is to take a step from ⟨p⟩ to its truth-value:

But so much should already be clear, that in every judgment, no matter how trivial, the step from the level of thoughts to the level of reference (the objective) has already been taken (Frege 1892a, 64). Judgments can be regarded as advances from a thought to [its] truth value (Frege 1892a, 65).

Giving this metaphorical elucidation, Frege does not even briefly explain how we must understand this elucidation as if he believes that he has already done so in the previous parts of the paper. Indeed, he leaves hints for this metaphor in the earlier passages.

Preliminary comments on truth-values. Frege takes saturated terms, i.e., terms without an empty place for an argument term such as 'the author of *Grundgesetze*' or 'Frege', to denote an object. Objects are saturated, i.e., have no empty place for an argument. Unsaturated terms, i.e., terms with empty places for argument terms such as '··· is prime' or 'the sum of ··· and ···', denote

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²¹See ch.1 of Hanks (2015).

functions.[22] Functions are unsaturated, i.e., have empty places for arguments. Now, sentences do not have any empty place; they are saturated. Thus, what they refer to are objects. Truth-values are objects, and sentences are proper names of truth-values, so to speak.[23]

A hint to Frege's elucidation of judging as taking a step from a thought to its truth-value is that we can take the same kind of step with a non-sentential name like 'Odysseus'. Frege writes:

> . . . It is doubtful whether the name 'Odysseus,' . . . has reference. . . Whoever does not admit the name has reference can neither apply nor withhold the predicate. But in that case it would be superfluous to *advance to the reference of the name* (Frege 1892a, 62; italics mine).
> It is the striving for truth that drives us always to *advance from the sense to the reference* [of a name such as 'Odysseus'] (Frege 1892a, 63; italics mine).

Thus, we can take a step from the sense of 'Odysseus' to its reference. In addition to this, we can acquire one more hint about the act of taking a step from a proper name's sense to its reference: there is no point in taking a step from the sense of a name to its reference if we do not recognize the existence of the name's reference.

Frege provides further hints in his solution to 'Frege's puzzle'—the difference in cognitive value between '*a* = *a*' and '*a* = *b*'. A part of his solution is the famous distinction between senses and references. However, there is something more to Frege's solution. He writes:

> (α) The sense of a proper name is grasped by everybody who is sufficiently familiar with the language or totality of designations to which it belongs; but this serves to illuminate only a single aspect of the reference. . . (β) Comprehensive knowledge of the reference [of

a name] would require us to be able to say immediately whether any given sense belongs to it. (γ) To such knowledge we never attain (Frege 1892a, 57–58).

The reference of a proper name is an object. Its sense illuminates a single aspect of the name's reference if the name indeed has a reference. Many different senses can belong to one object, i.e., there can be many different names with different senses that refer to the object. That is what the second half of (α) says. Now, given (β), Frege appears to say by (γ) that

(SbO) We can never have the ability to immediately decide whether any *given* sense belongs to an object.

Say that I already grasp the sense of a name 'N$_1$' and know that the name has a reference. Say 'N$_2$' is an arbitrary name the sense of which I do not grasp yet. Now, (SbO) entails that I cannot know whether the sense of 'N$_2$' belongs to N$_1$ only by grasping the sense. If my grasping the sense of 'N$_2$' immediately lets me know whether it belongs to N$_1$, then (SbO) is false because in that case we do have the ability to immediately decide whether any *given* sense belongs to an object. This is Frege's explanation of why we cannot know that the Morning Star is the Evening Star even when we do grasp the senses of both names. We cannot decide whether the sense of 'Morning Star' ('Evening Star') belongs to the Evening Star (the Morning Star) only by grasping the sense. But we know whether N$_x$ is N$_y$ if and only if we know whether $\langle N_x \rangle$ ($\langle N_y \rangle$) belongs to N$_y$ (N$_x$). Thus, grasping the sense of a proper name 'N$_x$' or 'N$_y$' alone does not let us achieve the knowledge of identity 'N$_x$ = N$_y$'.

What is to be noted is that there is one more thing we cannot know merely by grasping the sense of a proper name, i.e., whether the name has a reference:

> In grasping a sense, one is not certainly assured of a reference (Frege 1892a, 58).

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[22]Properties are first-level functions referred to by predicates like '⋯ is prime'. Their value for given arguments is always a truth-value.

[23]For Frege's elucidation of saturation, objects, and concepts, see, e.g., Frege (1891, 1892a,c,b, 1906b,a, 1914).

Consider the name 'the celestial body most distant from the Earth' (Frege 1892a, 58). We appear to satisfy the condition for grasping the sense of a name specified in (α). However, we do not know whether it has a reference.

Let us take stock. Now I use the sign '⟨···⟩', which we used to mean 'the thought that ···', to mean 'the sense of the name "···"'. Let 'N' be any proper name. Only by grasping ⟨N⟩ we cannot tell whether

(SR$_1$) 'N' has a reference.

Let 'N$_a$' be an arbitrary name such that i) its sense is different from ⟨N⟩, ii) it sense is already grasped by us, and iii) its reference is acknowledged by us. Only by grasping⟨N⟩ we cannot tell whether

(SR$_2$) N is identical with N$_a$.[24]

Note that trying to decide whether (SR$_2$) is the case has no point if we deny (SR$_1$)—just as taking a step from the sense of a name to its reference has no point if we deny (SR$_1$). So, a tempting hypothesis is that to take a step from a name's sense to its reference is to decide whether (SR$_2$) is the case.

We already have a reason to think that taking a step from the sense of 'N' to its reference is deciding *that* N is identical with N$_a$, i.e., to *identify* N with N$_a$. For, as we have seen, judging that p is identifying the True with p. Frege writes in 'Comments on Sense and Reference':

> To acknowledge this reference [of a sentence] as that of the True (as the True) is to judge. . . (Frege 1892b, 119).

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[24]In Frege the only exceptions to this would be the cases where both names express logical laws of *Begriffsschrift*. This is because his elucidations of those laws in *Grundgesetze*, which *show*—not prove—that they are true, can be arguably taken to appeal entirely to senses of component expressions. Commentators like Heck (2012) claim that Frege is trying to provide metalinguistic justifications for those laws that entirely depend on the senses of expressions.

The same point is discovered in *Begriffsschrift*. *Begriffsschrift* endorses '⊢' as a device for making an assertion—the verbal counterpart of judgment. In *Begriffsschrift*, asserting that 2+3 equals 5 is equivalent to writing down the following:

$$\vdash 2 + 3 = 5$$

In 'Function and Concept', Frege writes:

> To this end [of asserting] I make use of a vertical stroke at the left end of the horizontal, so that, e.g., by writing
>
> $$\vdash 2 + 3 = 5$$
>
> we assert that 2+3 equals 5. Thus here we are not just writing down a truth-value, as in
>
> $$2 + 3 = 5,$$
>
> but also at the same time *saying that it is the True* (Frege 1891, 34; italics mine).

Since sentences are proper names, they can appear on one side of an identity sign. Frege is saying that to assert that 2+3 equals 5 is to say that (2+3 equals 5) is identical with the True, i.e., to identify (2+3 equals 5) with the True. So, both judging and its verbal counterpart asserting are making such an identification. Recall that to judge that p is to take a step from ⟨p⟩ to the truth-value—the reference—of 'p'. Therefore, to take a step from ⟨p⟩ to the truth-value of 'p' is to identify (2+3=5) with the True. More generally, we can say, to take a step from the sense of 'N' to its reference is to identity N with the reference of a name such that its sense and the existence of its reference are already known to us. In the case of judging that p, it is always the True that one identifies p with.

Two related points. First, is the True an object whose existence is known to us? According to Frege, truth-values are the first two *logical objects* known to us—where a logical object is an object that can be known to us by our logical faculty (Frege 1980,

191).[25] 'The True' and 'the False' are the names Frege coins for these two logical objects. Hence, in a judgment, we identify one of those known objects, i.e., the True, with the reference of a sentence. Secondly, why does Frege all of sudden mention the act of advancing from the sense of 'Odysseus' to its reference, which is identifying Odysseus with an object, where he is considering a subject who does not admit that 'Odysseus' has a reference? If a subject thinks it is possible for the name to have a reference and attempts to find out whether it does, a natural way such a subject can pursue is to attempt to identify Odysseus with an object whose existence is already known by way of the reference of a different name, e.g., 'the ancient Greek general mentioned in such-and-such historical records'. Such an attempt, of course, is pointless for a subject who clearly denies that 'Odysseus' has reference. If Frege associates the act of accepting the existence of the reference of 'Odysseus' with that of identifying Odysseus with such a known object, it is natural for him to point out that such an identification is pointless for a subject who denies the existence of its reference in the context where he considers such a subject.

If my interpretation is along the right lines, then to judge that p is identifying p with the True. This interpretation, however, will raise an immediate objection given our discussion about the indefinability argument. For one can contend that to identify an object o_1 with o_2 is in the end to judge that o_1 is identical with o_2. If so, we can judge that p, i.e., identify p with the True, only by judging that p is the True. Then, the vicious infinite regress to which the indefinability argument appeals to is produced. It is a case of the infinite regress that we would have if truth were to be reduced down to the property *being identical with the True*.

But it is not a given fact at all that all acts of identification are those of identity judgment. Say I mishear the name of Jane as 'Jean' when she introduces herself as a virtue ethicist. Now, in

my conversation with my other colleague, I say 'Jean is a virtue ethicist'. My intention is obviously to talk about Jane. Thus, it seems to be plausible to say that I am (mistakenly) speaker-referring to Jane by 'Jean'. However, to say so does not fully capture what is going on. In my assertion, I am using the sentence in its literal sense. Hence, my intention is partly to talk about the reference of 'Jean'. In short, my assertion is about both Jane and the reference of 'Jean'. What is going on seems to be captured well by the following:

(SR) my speaker-referring to Jane by 'Jean' is an act of identifying Jane with the reference of 'Jean'.

(SR) explains why my assertion concerns both Jane and the reference of 'Jean': that is because my speaker-reference is an act of identification. Nevertheless, my act of speaker-reference is by no means an act of identity judgment, i.e., an acknowledgment of the truth of ⟨Jane is Jean⟩.

It is not my intention to develop a general explanation about speaker-reference. I am merely exploring the possibility of non-judgmental identification. In fact, the idea of non-judgmental identification has already been explored by theorists like Millikan (1998, 2000) and Camp (2002). For instance, Millikan (2000) writes:

> You don't make claims when you stand up to walk just because it's possible you could trip and fall. Similarly, you don't make claims when you develop substance concepts or when you mark identities in thought. Erroneous identification is not failure on the level of know-that but failure on the level of know-how... There is no such thing as an identity judgment... Grasping an identity is not remotely like harboring an intentional attitude [i.e., making a judgment]. Similarly, mistaking an identity is not harboring a false belief [i.e., making a false judgment] (Millikan 2000, §12.7).

When we say or think that O_1 is O_2, Millikan argues, what we do is rather to realize the 'overlap' (Millikan 2000, 144) of two representational vehicles over a single object. The parallel between

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[25]For this point, see Shramko and Wansing (2018, §1.3).

Millikan and Frege is remarkable given that Frege describes the act of identifying O_1 with O_2 as that of deciding whether the sense of 'O_1' ('O_2'), i.e., *the content, belongs* to O_2 (O_1).

Again it is not my intention to be committed to the interpretation of Millikan's framework or the comparison of Frege to Millikan.[26] What is important to us is that Frege ought to depend on the notion of non-judgmental identification when he characterizes judgment as identification. Otherwise, Frege's elucidation of judgment as identification produces the vicious infinite regress he is warning in the indefinability argument. For, in order to judge that p, now we have to judge that p is the True. One might object that Frege is committing a plain mistake here. But saying so is too uncharitable to be accepted. It is more so given that Frege is appealing to a metaphor in order to elucidate the act of judgment—what he simply takes to be identification with the True elsewhere.[27] If he intended to characterize judging that p as judging that p is the True, then he would not provide such a cryptic metaphorical elucidation of it. Furthermore, there is no reason to consider judgment as 'peculiar and incomparable' (1892a, 65). But if Frege takes judgment to consist in non-judgmental identification, and believes that there is no further way to explain the nature of non-judgmental identification other than providing such a metaphorical elucidation, he has a reason to regard judgment as peculiar and incomparable.

Given that Frege takes judgment to be identification of the True, the most charitable reading is to take the kind of identification constitutive of judgment to be non-judgmental identification. The passages from 'On Sense and Reference' provide some reasons to go for this reading.

Before wrapping up this section, I would like to address an objection to my reading.[28] The objection starts with the claim that if Frege recognizes non-judgmental identification, he should also recognize non-judgmental (committal) predication, i.e., the act of predicating without making any judgment. For instance, to (committally) predicate P of o non-judgmentally is to make the predication without making the judgment that o is P. If one recognizes such a non-judgmental conception of predication, then one can apply it to judgment *qua* acknowledgment. Specifically, one can maintain that to judge that p, i.e., to acknowledge the truth of $\langle p \rangle$, is to predicate the property *truth* of $\langle p \rangle$ non-judgmentally. If judgment is elucidated in terms of non-judgmental predication, then we can avoid the vicious infinite regress. Therefore, the objection argues, Frege makes the indefinability argument collapse if he recognizes non-judgmental identification. This raises a doubt against my interpretation of judgment in Frege as non-judgmental identification, and further against my interpretation of the indefinability argument as an argument from his conception of judgment to the conclusion that truth is not a property.

However, it is not the case that if one recognizes non-judgmental identification, one should also recognize non-judgmental predication. The claim obtains only in the case that to identifying o_1 with o_2 non-judgmentally is predicating *being o_1* (or o_2) of o_2 (or o_1). However, if one accepts that predicating P of o is equivalent to judging that o is P—without saying which constitutes which—then one can simply say that non-judgmental identification is *also non-predicative* identification. Hence, one

[26]Frege differs from Millikan in that unlike Millikan, he accepts that there are judgmental identifications. However, both of them still seem to agree that non-judgmental identification is recognition of the convergence of two different contents on a single object. On top of that, Millikan further claims that there is nothing like the relation of identity or identity propositions. Thus, for her, there cannot be identity judgments. On the contrary, Frege accepts the existence of identity, identity thoughts, and identity judgments. Thus, Frege can still accept judgmental identification. I come back to this point at the end of this section.

[27]'Comments on Sense and Reference' (1892b) where Frege takes judgment to be identification of the True is written around the time when 'On Sense and Reference' (1892a) is published.

[28]I thank the anonymous reviewer who has informed me of this objection.

who recognizes non-judgmental identification does not have to recognize non-judgmental predication. To take non-judgmental identification to be non-judgmental predication additionally requires one to reject the equivalence between predication and judgment.

Frege seems to be committed to the claim that predicating P of o is equivalent to judging that o is P. He sharply distinguishes judgment from predication, and takes the former to be conceptually prior to the latter. So, if there is such a thing like (committal) predication, it must be understood as constituted by judgment for Frege. If so, he must be committed to the point that predicating P of o is equivalent to judging that o is P. This equivalence seems plausible. It rather appears implausible to say that one can *perform the act of predicating P* of o without *thereby* judging that o is P. One might object that it is equally implausible to say that one can identify o_1 with o_2 without thereby judging that o_1 is o_2. However, that is controversial. The case of my speaker-reference to Jane by 'Jean' shows that it is arguably possible to identify Jane with the reference of 'Jean' without thereby asserting—verbal counterpart of judging—that Jane is the reference of 'Jean'. Similar ideas have been advocated by theorists like Millikan. But the notion of non-judgmental predication does not have such support in the current literature.

In any event, Frege never develops the notion of non-judgmental predication. It is not evident that Frege rejects non-judgmental predication for certain reasons or he simply does not see the possibility of such predication because he takes the equivalence between judgment and predication to be obvious. What is important to us is that given Frege's commitment to the equivalence, he does not have to recognize non-judgmental predication just because he recognizes non-judgmental identification. Then, the basis of the current objection is undermined. Furthermore, given that the equivalence between judgment and predication is a part of Frege's conception of judgment, the gist of the indefinability argument—the point that if Frege's conception

of judgment is correct, then truth is not a property—still obtains because the conception blocks the possibility of non-judgmental predication.

One might still object that it is a more charitable reading than mine to say that Frege recognizes non-judgmental predication and takes judgment to be non-judgmental predication of the property *truth*, and to read the indefinability argument in a different way. But I disagree. As we have seen, Frege goes against any attempt to understand judgment in terms of predication. Also, he never develops the non-judgmental conception of predication. On the contrary, Frege certainly attempts to understand judgment in terms of identification of the True and to try to elucidate identification constitutive of judgment by the metaphor 'taking a step'. More importantly, Frege explicitly denies that truth is a property. One might retort that if Frege indeed accepts that judgment is constituted by non-judgmental predication of truth, my interpretation of the indefinability argument collapses, and so that there is no reason to believe that he denies that truth is a property. But we should not forget that the indefinability argument is not the only argument that truth is not a property. Frege has a different argument for the same conclusion—the one in 'On Sense and Reference' that depends on the identity thesis—that he still retains in 'Logic in Mathematics' (1914) long after the first appearance of the indefinability argument. He makes the conclusion of this independent argument quite explicit:

> Showing... that truth (*Wahrheit*) is not a property of sentences or thoughts, as language might lead one to suppose, this consideration confirms that a thought is related to its truth-value as the sense of a sign is to its reference (Frege 1914, 234).

Thus, the reading suggested by this objection is much more uncharitable than my interpretation.

If my suggested reading is indeed the most charitable reading, we can say that Frege accepts the following:

(FJ) To judge that p is to identify the True as p non-judgmentally.

That is how Frege understands the act of acknowledging the 'truth' of a thought. His conception of judgment is unique in that it takes truth to be an object and denies that acknowledgment of truth is acknowledgment of the property *truth*. The fact that Frege comes up with this unique conception of judgment shows that he is well aware of the result of his indefinability argument, i.e., that he cannot hold both his conception of judgment as truth acknowledgment and the view that takes truth as a property.

One point to be noted is that Frege—unlike Millikan—still accepts judgmental identification. Begriffsschrift is full of judgments with equations. What I have said is perfectly compatible with Frege's acceptance of judgmental identification. To make a judgmental identification of o_1 with o_2 is simply to judge that o_1 is o_2, i.e., acknowledging the truth of the identity thought $\langle o_1$ is $o_2 \rangle$. The judgmental identification of o_1 and o_2 consists in *non-judgmental identification of the True*, i.e., the act of non-judgmentally identifying the True with the truth-value of $\langle o_1$ is $o_2 \rangle$. That is how judgmental identification in Frege can be understood under my interpretation.

The remainder of the paper will be dedicated to demonstrating the theoretical benefits of Frege's unique conception by showing how it copes with Peter Hanks's recent criticisms against the Fregean conception in general.

3.2. Frege's own conception and Hanks's criticisms of the Fregean conception

The Fregean conception in general considers propositions, i.e., thoughts in Frege, as primary bearers of truth-conditions.[29] Hanks claims that, under the Fregean conception, judgments come to have truth-conditions *only* because they are related to

thoughts in a certain way. Therefore, Hanks (2015, 42) argues, the Fregean conception ought to answer the question of propositional unity, i.e., the question as to how an abstract entity like a thought can have a truth-condition independently of any human activity.[30] Hanks's point is that the question of propositional unity is perhaps too difficult (Hanks 2007, §2; Hanks 2015, ch.2; Hanks 2018, §3); it has never been answered satisfactorily. According to him, it is a fundamental mistake to explain the truth-condition of a judgment by appealing to that of a thought; it is to put the cart before the horse. Hanks maintains that we ought to explain the truth-condition of a thought by that of a judgment. The act of judging is representing the world in a particular way, and so it has a correctness condition. Its correctness is its truth. Therefore, judgments are primary and independent bearers of truth-conditions (2015, 66). Thoughts inherit their truth-conditions from the truth-conditions of judgments.[31]

It is controversial whether Hanks's criticisms against attempted explanations of propositional unity are fair and satisfactory. But the issue I would like to address is something different: why can't Fregeans accept that a judgment has its truth-condition by its own nature, i.e., independently of thoughts? For Fregeans, to judge that p is to acknowledge the truth of $\langle p \rangle$. Say to acknowledge the truth of $\langle p \rangle$ is to take $\langle p \rangle$ to be true. Then, judging that p is correct iff $\langle p \rangle$ is true. It seems as though Fregeans can insist that, whether or not $\langle p \rangle$ is actually a truth-bearer, judging that p has a correctness condition equivalent to the truth-condition of $\langle p \rangle$ solely because it is acknowledging the truth of $\langle p \rangle$. Even

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[29]Fregean propositions are force-free contents. According to the Fregean conception, content is sharply distinguished from force. Hanks denies the content-force distinction. Hanks's propositions include force as their parts. See Hanks (2007), Hanks (2011), ch.4 of Hanks (2015).

[30]Frege's answer to the question of propositional unity appeals to the metaphorical notion of saturation. See, e.g., Frege (1891, 1892c,b, 1906a). Hanks (2015, §2.1) criticizes it by saying that Frege's answer leaves propositional unity primitive and impenetrable and it does not help us to understand how we represent the world in our mental acts.

[31]According to Hanks, (assertoric) propositions are not contents but act-types, namely, types of judgments as mental acts. See Hanks (2011) and ch.3 of Hanks (2015).

if thoughts turn out not to be bearers of truth-conditions, that only means that $\langle p \rangle$ cannot be true because it cannot be a truth-candidate, and so judging that p is incorrect. This shows that even if Fregeans fail to explain propositional unity, they can still explain why judgments have correctness conditions equivalent to truth-conditions.

One might wonder why Fregeans would retain the notion of thought if thoughts do not play the role of providing truth-conditions for judgments. In reply, there is still an important role to be played by thoughts, specifically, the role of securing the objectivity of judgment. A thought is objective so that its truth-condition and truth-value are determined independently of us. Hence, if the correctness condition of a judgment consists in a thought being true, the correctness of a judgment is determined objectively.

According to Hanks, however, Fregeans cannot make the suggested move. He writes:

> Judgment, on the Fregean view, is an act of endorsing [or acknowledging] a proposition... We cannot say that to endorse a proposition is to accept is as true. To accept a proposition p as true is either to judge that p is true or it is a neutral, non-committal act of attributing truth to p. If accepting p as true is to judge that p is true then we've analyzed one judgment, judging that p, in terms of another, judging that p is true. This leads to a regress... So, the act of endorsing a proposition cannot be analyzed as accepting a proposition as true... It looks as though the Fregean is going to have to view judgment as a primitive attitude one can bear to a proposition (Hanks 2015, 45).

The second horn of the dilemma obviously cannot work as an analysis of judgment. The major reason why Hanks believes that the Fregeans ought to leave judgment *qua* acknowledgment primitive consists in the vicious infinite regress Frege is appealing to in the indefinability argument. According to Hanks (2015, 16), this is why Frege seems to leave judgment a 'peculiar and incomparable', i.e., primitive, notion. If Fregeans have to leave

judgment primitive and thus cannot explain the relationship between judgment and truth by appealing to the nature of judgment, the only way Fregeans can explain the correctness condition of judgment is to appeal to thoughts *qua* bearers of truth-conditions. Or so argues Hanks.

But Hanks is not entirely correct in saying that Frege leaves judgment a primitive notion. As we have seen, Frege attempts to elucidate judgment as identification of the True where the latter is to be understood as a non-judgmental/non-predicational act of identification. The vicious infinite regress is produced if truth is a property of thoughts and thus judging *qua* acknowledging the truth of a thought comes down to predicating the property *truth* of a thought. Hanks's own vicious regress argument implicitly presupposes that truth is a property and thus that judging *qua* acknowledging truth is predicating truth. However, for Frege, truth is not a property of thoughts and judging is not predicating truth. He can avoid the infinite regress.

One might object that what it takes to stop the vicious regress is in the end to make judgment a primitive and unanalyzable action, because even in my reading judgment *qua* non-judgmental identification is primitive and unanalyzable. If Frege were also to end up making the notion of judgment merely primitive under my interpretation, then Hanks's objection would still stand. Nevertheless, this objection is misleading. The primitiveness of a notion is decided by its place in the explanatory hierarchy. In Frege's framework, judgment is elucidated by non-judgmental identification. Thus, judgment is not entirely primitive. If my discussion is along the lines, the fact that Frege takes judgment to be primitive ought to be read in a different way. Frege fails to come up with a proper way to analyze the notion of non-judgmental identification. Therefore, he should have to leave his elucidation of judgment incomplete, saying that judgment is primitive. That does not mean that, as the objection argues, what it takes to stop the vicious infinite regress is to make judgment primitive. Even if Frege had been equipped with the Millikanian

analysis of non-judgmental identification and applied it to the analysis of judgment, the vicious infinite regress would not have returned.

Frege would be able to elucidate why judgments can have truth-conditions by appealing to (FJ): to judge that p is to identify p with the True non-judgmentally. It is correct to identify p with the True non-judgmentally just in case p is the True. Hence, judging that p is correct just in case p is the True. Now, p is the True iff p. Thus, judging that p is correct iff p. This inference shows that judging that p has its correctness condition where correctness is just truth not because it derives its correctness condition from the truth-condition of a thought but because it is an act of identification. In this case, the independence of judgments' truth-conditions from thoughts' truth-conditions is clearer. The correctness condition of identification obtains whether or not thoughts have truth-conditions. Of course, Frege does look upon thoughts as legitimate bearers of truth and truth-conditions—not because they have the property *truth* but because sentences refer to the True by virtue of their thoughts. Therefore, he still needs to answer the question of propositional unity in one way or another. Nevertheless, Frege does not need to be committed to the claim that the truth-condition of judgment is derived from that of thoughts.

One might still object that the above elucidation of the truth-condition of a judgment implicitly depends on the truth-condition of a thought. There are two ways of developing this objection. One is to argue that $\langle p$ is the True$\rangle$ is identical with $\langle\langle p\rangle$ is true$\rangle$. However, Frege would never accept this claim. $\langle\langle p\rangle$ is true$\rangle$ is identical with $\langle p\rangle$. However, $\langle p$ is the True$\rangle$ cannot be identical with $\langle p\rangle$ just as the sense of '2' cannot be identical with $\langle 2 = 1 + 1\rangle$. Therefore, $\langle\langle p\rangle$ is true$\rangle$ is not identical with $\langle p$ is the True$\rangle$. The other way to develop this objection is to say that p is the True because $\langle p\rangle$ is true. However, Frege would not accept this claim, either. He does not recognize the existence of the property *truth* at all.

There is Hanks's other main complaint against the Fregean conception that can be answered by Frege. The Fregean conception requires there to be an act of grasping—or entertaining—the thought whose truth we are about to acknowledge. To grasp a thought is to identify and single out a thought among many others. As such, grasping a thought is not making a commitment to the truth of the thought. It is a neutral, non-committal, mental act that is commonly found not just in the act of judging but also in the act of asking, hypothesizing, etc. About the act of grasping a thought, Hanks writes:

> . . . Prior to judging that p, we do things like ask whether p, or hypothesize that p, . . . These are the kinds of actions that Frege points to when he wants to illustrate entertainment. The error comes in making these actions preconditions for judgments. In some cases acts of judgment are preceded by entertainment-like preliminaries, but they do not have to be. Entertainment has some intuitive appeal, but only because sometimes we do things that look like Fregean entertainment (Hanks 2015, 35–36).

His criticism is that though sometimes an entertainment-like stage precedes a judgment, it is a mistake to suppose that every judgment is preceded by such a stage. In Hanks's conception of judgment, there is no stage that corresponds to entertainment in the Fregean conception; there is no thought to be entertained in his framework. We rather assert that, say, Frege is a German by directly predicating the property *being a German* of the object Frege. When we are (sometimes) in an entertainment-like stage, we are *in a cancellation context* where assertoric force is canceled, i.e., our predication is canceled.

The point of this criticism is not that if the Fregean conception is correct, then we should be able to *empirically* identify the exact moment of grasping a thought before making a judgment in all the actual occurrences of judging, which we often cannot. The requirement of the empirical identifiability of the precedence of entertainment in each and every episode of judgment seems unfairly strong. For, as Hanks concedes, the Fregean's

two-stage decomposition of judgment into grasping a thought and acknowledging its truth is based on 'abstractions from the overall act of forming a judgment. . . which we can distinguish *as theorists*' (2018, §2; italics mine). Shortly, the Fregean conception only assumes that there must be *in principle* the moment of entertainment that precedes the act of judgment. Hanks's objection is that such an assumption—leaving aside the empirical identifiability of the moment of entertainment—is unnecessary if the assumption is only for explaining entertainment-like moments.

Given Hanks's alternative, the existence of entertainment-like moments alone does not make us committed to the theoretical assumption that such a moment always precedes a judgment. However, I think that we can say something stronger than that against the assumption. Specifically, there seems to be a reason to take such an assumption to be false. To explain this reason, let me first point out that Frege does seem to say that entertaining $\langle p \rangle$ is a precondition for judging that p in that sense:

> Whenever anyone recognizes something to be true, he makes a judgment. What he recognizes to be true is a thought. It is impossible to recognize a thought as true before it has been grasped (Frege 1915, 251).

Frege makes this point, I believe, because he is considering the notion of judgment in the scientific context where grasping a thought—coming up with a hypothesis—and acknowledging the truth of the thought—justifying the hypothesis—often come separately. In 'Sources of knowledge of Mathematics and the Mathematical Natural Sciences' (1924, 267) he considers 'judgment proper' to be knowledge. This shows that Frege is considering the act of judging in the context where it is combined with the act of justifying scientifically. If judging is an act loaded with an act of justifying scientifically, it appears plausible to say that grasping a thought is a precondition for judging as such.

However, if we consider judging *qua* acknowledging the truth of a thought to be independent of that of justifying, then grasping a thought does not appear to be a precondition for judging in all cases. Suppose that I know Olga Tokarczuk's *The Last Stories*. I see my friend who studies Polish literature having a conversation with her colleague. My friend utters 'Olga Tokarczuk's *Ostatnie historie* explores death'. I gently intervene and ask 'Just like *The Last Stories*?' My friend says '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*'. Since I trust her knowledge in Polish literature, I accept her assertion. My acceptance of my friend's assertion that *Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories* is my judgment that *Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*. Notice that I cannot grasp ⟨*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*⟩ before my acceptance of the assertion. Before my acceptance, I do not even realize that '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*' contains such a thought because I do not know that '*Ostatnie historie*' has a sense. One might argue that because ⟨*Ostatnie historie*⟩ is identical with ⟨*The Last Stories*⟩, I grasp ⟨*Ostatnie historie*⟩ in the sense that I grasp ⟨*The Last Stories*⟩. But the fact that I grasp ⟨*The Last Stories*⟩ appears to be irrelevant because I do not know that ⟨*Ostatnie historie*⟩ is identical with ⟨*The Last Stories*⟩. In this case, my act of judging that *Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories* comes earlier than my grasping the relevant thought.

The question is then whether Frege's conception of judgment can provide a proper explanation for this kind of situation where judging comes earlier than grasping a thought. I believe that it can. My acceptance of my friend's assertion, i.e., my judgment that *Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories* is non-judgmental identification of the True with the reference of '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*'. I can perform this non-judgmental identification without already grasping ⟨*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*⟩ because all I achieve by it is to assign a referent to '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*'.[32] What I achieve can be compared to baptizing an

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[32]This point is related to a main thesis of neo-logicism in philosophy of mathematics. Neo-logicism that inherits its main ideas from Frege holds the 'syntactic priority' thesis: the claim that 'if we speak truly, the structure of reality inevitably mirrors the contours of our speech' (MacBride 2003, 108). If we accept it, the fact that we take a certain syntactic structure with a singular

object with a name, which does not require one to antecedently grasp the sense of the name. Now, if I am *further* committed to the claim that an expression has its referent by virtue of its sense, I come to be committed to the existence of the sense of '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*', ⟨*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*⟩, by my non-judgmental identification. This commitment makes me grasp the thought *qua* the sense of '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*'. Therefore, my grasping the thought is not a precondition for my making the relevant judgment. This establishes that Frege's conception of judgment does not have to be committed to the strong claim that grasping a thought is always a precondition for making a judgment—though Frege himself is committed to it because he only focuses on scientific contexts where we attempt to make judgments only with strict and precise justifications given.

One might object that since multiple different senses belong to a single reference, one cannot backtrack the sense of an expression from its reference as I suggest in the above explanation. However, this objection overlooks the fact that I am backtracking the relevant thought not from the True alone, but from the True *and* the expression '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*'. I can definitely single out the relevant thought *qua* the reference of 'the sense of "*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*"' if I acknowledge the reference of '*Ostatnie historie* is *The Last Stories*'.

One might wonder why we need to identify the act of grasping a thought as a part of judging if judging is such an act of identification that does not antecedently require the act of grasping a thought. Hanks (2015, 34–35) claims that the notion of grasping a thought is just a fancy that results from accepting thoughts

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term '*s*' to be true provides a sufficient reason to think that there is an item in the world that can be identified as *s*. What I am arguing here is that Frege can say the same thing about sense: the fact that we take '*a* = *b*' (where *b*' is not a name known to use antecedently) to be true provides a sufficient reason to think that '*b*' has a sense. If so, we can backtrack the sense of '*b*' after we take the identity sentence to be true.

as abstract entities and the only sources of truth-conditions. But I disagree. The gap between a name's sense and its reference pointed out in the last section has epistemic reality. We know *something* about the name 'Odysseus', e.g., that it would be a name of a person if there were Odysseus. We can also use the name as such in a number of different sentences. Nevertheless, whatever we know about it does not let us decide whether the name has a reference or whether Odysseus is identical with the reference of a name whose sense and reference are known to us. If we call whatever it is that we understand about 'Odysseus' its sense, we are in a position where we grasp ⟨Odysseus⟩ but fail to accomplish reference-level knowledge such as knowledge of existence or identity. In this way, Frege's notion of grasping a name's sense is grounded in the epistemic reality concerning our knowledge of names. Now, exactly the same elucidation of grasping can be applied to the act of grasping a thought *if* we accept that sentences are names. The act of asking, hypothesizing, etc., can be taken to show that there can be a gap between a thought and its truth-value just like the gap between ⟨Odysseus⟩ and Odysseus.[33]

One can ask whether we have reasons to accept that sentences are names. For theorists like Frege who hold onto the Fregean conception of judgment, the indefinability argument provides a sufficient reason. It establishes that if we hold onto the Fregean conception of judgment, we ought to deny that truth is a property of truth-bearers. To take truth to be an object sentences refer to seems to be arguably the only alternative for the Fregean.

Here I can't fully address whether there are other reasons to take sentences as names. But I first indicate the discussions of commentators like Burge (1986) and Ricketts (2007) that show the benefits of taking sentences as names. Secondly, Frege's own conception of judgment has theoretical benefits that deserve thorough examination. In addition to the point that it provides ar-

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[33]If so, those acts are not presented as preliminary stages for judgments.

guably defensible responses to Hanks's criticisms, it brings our attention to a largely neglected subject: non-judgmental identification of an object. It also points to the possibility of a unified explanation of our cognitive activity by showing a way to reduce propositional activity like judgment to *objectual* recognition.

4. Concluding Remarks

I mentioned the skepticism against revisiting the indefinability argument. But our literal reading of the argument pays off. It shows that the indefinability argument is tightly bound to Frege's conception of judgment *qua* acknowledgment of truth. He maintains that truth is an object—the True—because he realizes that he cannot hold both his conception of judgment and the common belief that truth is a property. The indefinability argument is an expression of this insight. Now, Frege has to come up with a way to cash out the notion of truth acknowledgment that goes along with this insight. His elucidation of it in 'On Sense and Reference' and other works according to which truth acknowledgment is non-judgmental identification of the True is his reaction to this request. Frege's unique conception of judgment we retrieved has theoretical results that call for further examination.

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