

Philosophy of Logic and Language
Definite Descriptions

Readings

- (1) Russell, B. (1905), 'On Denoting', *Mind* **14**, pp. 479-93. Reprinted in Martinich (ed.), *The Philosophy of Language*.
- (2) Strawson, P. (1950), 'On Referring', *Mind* **59** (1950), pp. 320-44. Reprinted in Martinich and in Moore (ed.) *Meaning and Reference*.
- (3) Donnellan, K. (1966), 'Reference and Definite Descriptions', *Philosophical Review* **75**, pp. 281-304. Reprinted in Martinich.
- (4) Kripke, S. (1979), 'Speaker's Reference and Semantic Reference', in French, Uehling, and Wettstein (eds.), *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* **2**, pp. 255-76. Reprinted in Martinich.

Questions (choose *one*)

- (1) Is Russell's theory of definite descriptions adequate for analysing all definite descriptions in natural language?
- (2) Are definite descriptions quantifier expressions, or referring expressions? Or are they lexically ambiguous?
- (3) Does Russell's theory of definite descriptions give correct necessary and sufficient conditions for an utterance containing a definite description to express a truth?
- (4) Does the distinction between referential and attributive uses of definite descriptions show that definite descriptions are ambiguous?
- (5) 'Fred has just become the best paid philosopher in Britain'. Describe the logical form of this sentence.
- (6) 'The tallest man in England is ill'. 'The five tallest men in England are ill'. How would you describe what is common to the meaning of these occurrences of the definite article?

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October 2006.