

Abstract

On the Identity and Meaning of Names

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C. S. Peirce illustrates the distinction between types and their tokens by using words as an example (*Collected Papers*, paragraph 4.536):

A common mode of estimating the amount of matter in a MS. or a printed book is to count the number of words. There will ordinarily be about twenty *the*'s on a page, and of course they count as twenty words. In another sense of the word "word", however, there is but one word "the" in the English language; and it is impossible that this word should be visible on a page or be heard in any voice, for the reason that it is not a Single thing or Single event. It does not exist; it only determines things that exist. Such a definitely significant Form, I propose to term a *Type*. A Single event which happens once and whose identity is limited to that one happening or a Single object or thing which is in some single place at any one instant of time, such event or thing being only significant just when and where it does, such as this or that word on a single line of a single copy of a book, I will venture to call a *Token*.

According to Peirce, types are not existing objects; thus he seems to make here a distinction between the orthographic or phonemic character of a word and its individual occurrences (inscriptions or utterances). However, there is more to words than their character and their individual occurrences. This paper examines different ways of individuating name-words and discusses the relevance of the ontology of words to Frege's puzzles about the reference of names.