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Seminar on Presupposition
Heinrich Heine University
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Homework 3: Strawson's *On Referring*

1. What question does Strawson say that Russell's theory of descriptions was designed to answer?
2. **Optional:** Would Russell agree? Why or why not?
3. What is the conclusion of the two fallacious arguments that Strawson says that Russell rejects? Who is it that makes those arguments (see Russell 1905)?
4. Strawson says that Russell implies that there are two ways in which a sentence that appears to be about someone or something can be significant. What are they? What part(s) of this does Strawson disagree with?
5. What does Strawson mean by "an expression"? "a sentence"?
6. Consider the following utterances:
 - (a) The ruler of France is Louis XIV, who is wise, and Philippe says, "The King of France is wise".
 - (b) The ruler of France is Louis XV, who is not wise, and Jean says, "The King of France is wise".
 - (c) The ruler of France is Louis XVI, who is wise, and Philippe says, "The King of France is wise".
 - (d) The ruler of France is Louis XVI (wise), and Jean says, "The King of France is wise".
 - (e) The ruler of France is Louis XIV (wise), and Phillippe says, "The King of France is *not* wise."
 - (f) The ruler of France is Louis XIV (wise), and Jean says, "The King of France is *not* wise."

Questions:

- Is the sentence uttered in (a) the same as the sentence uttered in (b)? How about (a) and (e)? (e) and (f)?
 - Are Jean and Philippe making the same *use* of a sentence in (a) and (b)? How about (c) and (d)? (a) and (d)?
 - Are (c) and (d) the same utterance?
7. Can sentences be true or false, according to Strawson? What can be true or false?
 8. Can expressions refer to things, according to Strawson? What types of entities can refer?

9. How does Strawson give the meaning of the word “I”?
10. In general, how does one give the meaning of an expression, according to Strawson?
11. What does it mean for a sentence to be significant, according to Strawson?
12. How can something be significant without being true or false?
13. What is Strawson’s argument that “The King of France is wise” is neither true nor false in contexts where there is no king of France? What empirical “fact” does it rely on?
14. Strawson gives another example (besides definite descriptions) of an expression that is not a disguised description in Russell’s sense nor a logically proper name. What is that expression? Explain Strawson’s arguments showing that it is neither of those things.
15. Strawson suggests a solution to Russell’s identity puzzle. What is it?
16. **Optional:** In what respects is Strawson’s theory the same as Frege’s theory? In what respects is it different?