

**Abstract:** My belief that Beijing is north of Shanghai seems to be some sort of structure in my brain that has both *content properties* and *causal properties*. The belief has the content that Beijing is north of Shanghai; that is, it is true if and only if this is so. But this belief has causes and effects. It was caused by looking at a map, and in appropriate circumstances it will cause me to, say, answer “North” if asked where Beijing is relative to Shanghai, to expect the weather to be cooler in Beijing than in Shanghai, and many other things.

Similarly, utterances have both sorts of properties. Utterances are typically caused by beliefs with (roughly) the same contents, for example.

But the systematic study of meaning and content in language is standardly seen as constructing theories about abstract objects: expression-types, expression types in contexts (conceived of as sequences), and so forth. But abstract objects aren't causes or effects. So, I will argue, ultimately, we need to see meaning and contents a property of episodes and states — utterances and brain structures, in order to solve our philosophical problems.

I will also argue that theories of utterances provide resources for solving some bothersome puzzles in the philosophy of language.

References:

- (1) John Perry: *The Cognitive Contribution of Names*, *On Reference*, Edited by Andrea Bianchi, OUP 2015.
- (2) Wesley H. Holliday and John Perry. *Roles, Rigidity, and Quantification in Epistemic Logic*. In *Trends in Logic, Outstanding Contributions: Johan F. A. K. van Benthem on Logical and Informational Dynamics*, eds. A. Baltag and S. Smets (Springer).
- (3) John Perry: *Indexicals and Undexicals*. Draft. To be published somewhere or other.