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Indexikalität und Infallibilität

in: Audun Øfsti, Peter Ulrich und Truls Wyller (Eds.), *Indexicality and Idealism. The Self in Philosophical Perspective*, Paderborn (mentis) 2000, 25-52.

Abstract

Some, if not all statements containing the word “I” seem to be “immune to error through misidentification relative to the first-person pronoun” (Shoemaker). This immunity, however, is due to the fact that the pronoun “I” plays no identifying role in the first place. Since no identification takes place here, the alleged immunity to misidentification should come as no surprise. But there is a second immunity thesis, which captures the peculiarity of “I” better: The first-person pronoun is immune to reference-failure. Some philosophers claim that this kind of immunity applies to the indexicals “here” and “now” as well.

Which epistemic significance does such guaranteed reference have? Does it constitute infallible knowledge? No, the alleged immunity calls for a deflationary interpretation. It has grammatical reasons, in the Wittgensteinian sense. Therefore, the epistemic notions “infallible knowledge” and “immunity to error” are misleading here.

Descriptors: INDEXICALS, INFALLIBILITY, KNOWLEDGE, REFERENCE

Named People: EVANS, SHOEMAKER, TUGENDHAT, WITTGENSTEIN