

## REFERENTIAL OCCURRENCE

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In his recent book *Meaning and Modality* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), Casimir Lewy presents an objection to Quine's criterion for referential occurrence, and offers a criterion of his own. First I shall argue that Lewy's own criterion cannot be correct, and second, that the counterexample on which his objection to Quine rests is illegitimate.

Quine's criterion is as follows:

'*a*' has referential occurrence in *Fa* iff  $(e) (e \text{ COREF } a \supset ! Fa/e)$ ;

which is to be read as:

'*a*' has referential occurrence in *Fa* iff, for the substitution of any expression coreferential with '*a*' for '*a*', the truth-value of *Fa* is preserved.

Hence, 'cat' occurs referentially in "This cat is brown", but not in "'cat' is an English word". (Actually Quine sometimes says that, in a sentence like the second, it is not 'cat' which occurs, but "'cat'". Following Lewy, however, "I shall talk. . . as if it were correct to speak of the occurrence of the interior of a quotation in a sentence which contains that quotation" (p. 24)).

Lewy proposes the following counterexample to Quine's criterion: it is possible that all expressions coreferential with 'cat' should have three letters, in which case the sentence "'cat' has three letters" would remain true whichever of these expressions replaced 'cat'. Hence, by Quine's criterion, 'cat' would be occurring referentially in that sentence. But clearly it would not. As Lewy says, that sentence "still wouldn't be about cats" (p. 25).

Lewy's own proposal is that for an occurrence to be referential it is required that "substitution (of coreferentials) be *necessarily* truth-preserving—that it be *logically impossible* for it to lead from truth to falsehood" (p. 27). Since it would be a merely contingent fact that substitution of any expression coreferential with 'cat' should preserve the truth of "'cat' has three letters", then by Lewy's criterion, 'cat' would not be occurring referentially in that sentence. Formally, Lewy's criterion is:

*Received March 9, 1977*