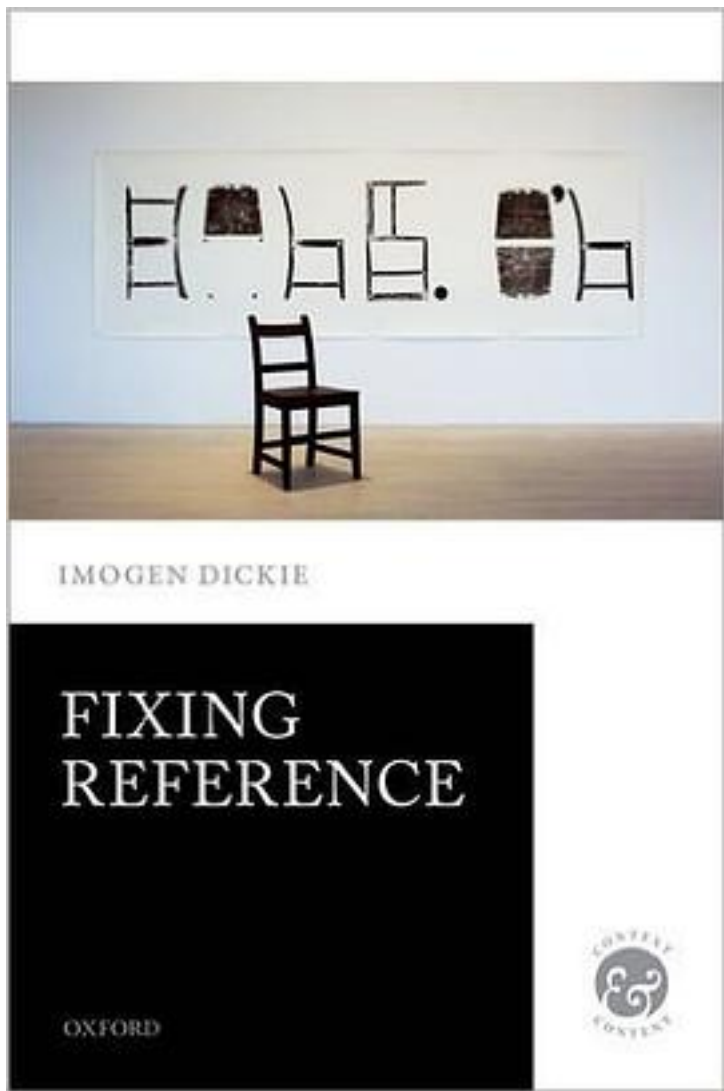# Fixing Reference

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出版者:Oxford University Press

出版时间:2016-2-3

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780198755616

Imogen Dickie develops an account of aboutness-fixing for thoughts about ordinary objects, and of reference-fixing for the singular terms we use to express them. Extant discussions of this topic tread a weary path through descriptivist proposals, causalist alternatives, and attempts to combine the most attractive elements of each. The account developed here is a new beginning. It starts with two basic principles. The first connects aboutness and truth: a belief is about the object upon whose properties its truth or falsity depends. The second connects truth and justification: justification is truth conducive; in general and allowing exceptions, a subject whose beliefs are justified will be unlucky if they are not true, and not merely lucky if they are. These principles--one connecting aboutness and truth; the other truth and justification--combine to yield a third principle connecting aboutness and justification: a body of beliefs is about the object upon which its associated means of justification converges; the object whose properties a subject justifying beliefs in this way will be unlucky to get wrong and not merely luck to get right. The first part of the book proves a precise version of this principle. Its remaining chapters use the principle to explain how the relations to objects that enable us to think about them--perceptual attention; understanding of proper names; grasp of descriptions--do their aboutness-fixing and thought-enabling work. The book includes discussions of the nature of singular thought and the relation between thought and consciousness.

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