

McDowell's "On the sense and reference of a proper name" was notable for two striking claims. One is that we can devise a minimal Fregean view, according to which names which refer to the same may differ semantically, without committing to objectionable descriptivism. The other is that there cannot be intelligible empty names. I argue that one can, and should, hold the first of these but not the second, and that no damage is thereby done to the openness of the mind to the world. There's a reply by McDowell in the Macdonald volume (he is not convinced!).