

One difficulty in this which Denyer would seem to ignore is that translated into non-diagrammatic terms (C) would seem merely to state that 'A proposition *Fnp* is true at any instant if and only if *Fnp* is true at that instant for any possible course of history thereafter.' That would seem to make his explanation of what it is for *Fnp* to be true circular. An alternative would be to translate the diagrammatic terms reductively into tenseless temporal terms, but he shows no inclination to do that.

Another difficulty pertains to Denyer's Prior-inspired logical notation which represents the future tense in terms of a kind of truth-operator (i.e. 'It will be the case that'). This seems to prevent him from distinguishing the law of bivalence from the law of the excluded middle. Thus in claiming that *KNFnp/NFnD* is *not* in breach of the former he seems to think it enough to show that it is not in breach of the latter (68-9). On the other hand, he is prepared to say (70) that a proposition of this symbolic form 'can be read in a romantic way thus: there are no facts yet about how *p* would be then, whether true or false.' In other words, if we purge the reading from the 'romantic' suggestion that some facts might be false, it claims that there are some propositions about what will happen that are neither true nor false, and hence, surely, in breach of the law of bivalence.

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MICHAEL DEVITT, *Designation*. New York: Columbia University Press
1981. Pp. xiii + 311. US\$26.00 ISBN 0-231-05126-3.

In this ambitious book, Michael Devitt attempts to construct a general semantic theory of reference that covers the major types of singular terms in natural language. His chief concern is with proper names, for which he proposes a causal theory along lines suggested by Kripke and Donnellan. But in the detail, thoroughness, and scope of his treatment, Devitt has gone far beyond his precursors. He applies the causal-theoretic approach not only to names but to other types of singular terms as well, and he attempts to use the same approach to account for the reference, or intentionality, of thoughts. He demonstrates how the causal theory can be applied to the classical problems concerning the behavior of singular terms in identity statements, fictional discourse, modal contexts, and propositional-attitude contexts. Perhaps most important, Devitt makes a genuine attempt to place his work on reference within a broader theoretical framework, and to relate his own approach to

other perspectives in the philosophy of language, such as those of Davidson and Grice. The amount of hard thought and honest toil that has gone into this book is truly impressive.

The title of the book also expresses its basic concept, that of *designation*. Devitt explains this concept in terms of a type of causal chain that he calls a 'd-chain.' The idea is that an utterance, or token, of a term designates an object if and only if the object 'grounds,' or is the ultimate source of, a d-chain that eventuates in the utterance. Devitt never defines his notion of a d-chain. Instead he relies on examples to give us a grasp of what he has in mind. The difficulty is that it defies credulity to suppose that there is a single type of causal chain that connects each of the wide variety of terms in these examples with the objects they are said by Devitt to designate. What, for instance, is there in common between (1) a causal link between me and an utterance of 'I that I produce and that designates me, and (2) a causal link between the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle and an utterance of mine of 'Aristotle' that designates him? It surely seems that these links (aside from their both being *causal* in some very broad sense) have nothing relevant in common at all. So when Devitt says that these links would both be 'd-chains,' it is not only difficult to grasp what he could possibly have in mind, but also difficult to believe that there is anything at all in reality that corresponds to his use of the expression 'd-chain.'

Leaving this difficulty aside, let us consider the more fundamental question of why Devitt thinks that his concept of designation is relevant to semantics. If it were true that any token semantically refers to an object if and only if the token designates that object, then the semantic relevance of designation would be clear. But this is not Devitt's view. He correctly notices that there are terms which can semantically refer to objects without designating them in the causal sense. An attributively used definite description, for instance, semantically refers to an object if and only if the description uniquely applies to that object (53). In the case of terms used this way, designation clearly has no semantic relevance. But if designation is not always semantically relevant, then the question arises of what makes it relevant, when it is.

At one point in his book, Devitt argues that there are two conventions in English for using definite descriptions. One is the convention that is followed in attributive uses. On the other convention, a description of the form 'the F' may be used demonstratively to mean, roughly, 'a designated F' (51). A token used this way semantically refers to an object if and only if the token both designates and applies to the object. Whether or not a token is used in one of these two different ways, Devitt says, depends on which of these two conventions is being followed by the speaker (53-4).

It is clear that on this view of definite descriptions (which I essentially agree with), a description's designating or failing to designate an object will be semantically relevant or not, depending on which convention is being followed by the speaker. The general lesson to be learned from this fact is that designation does not *automatically* have semantic relevance. It has semantic relevance only to the extent that there is a semantic convention or rule being

followed that *makes* it relevant. What is designated by a token corresponds for Devitt to what the speaker 'has in mind' or 'means' by the token (33). I would suggest that it also corresponds to what *the speaker refers to* with the token. But as Devitt seems to see at one point, what a speaker refers to, has in mind, or means by a token is semantically relevant only when the convention being followed by the speaker makes it so. Unfortunately, Devitt's actual practice throughout most of his book belies any awareness of this fundamental fact.

Devitt claims to give in his book 'a causal theory of names.' But the only features of names that Devitt mentions or describes are features of the d-chains that determine what names *designate*. In effect, Devitt gives a theory of designation in terms of d-chains and then applies this theory to names to show the various ways in which names can designate objects via d-chains. But applying a theory of designation to names is not at all the same thing as giving a theory of *names*. After all, on Devitt's own view, *many* semantically different kinds of terms can designate objects. Thus to be told that names sometimes designate objects via d-chains is not to be told anything that enables one to distinguish names from other kinds of terms in any semantically interesting way. To give a theory of proper names, one must state the sort of semantic convention or rule that people follow when they use words as names, and this statement must suffice to distinguish names semantically from other types of singular terms. But I can find no place in Devitt's book where he explicitly gives, or even suggests, such a statement.

Devitt assumes throughout his book that a name-token's designation is automatically a relevant semantic feature of that token. But since he fails to explain how designation figures in the conventions for using names, he fails to give us any good reason for thinking that a name's designation is ever semantically relevant. In fact Devitt describes cases in which (he says) the conventional referent of a name-token *fails* to be designated by the token (144). This certainly suggests that the conventions for using names do not require that names must designate their semantic referents. But if this is not required, then we have a good reason for thinking that designation is *not* a semantically relevant feature of names.

Devitt might well deny my charge that he has failed to describe the sort of convention that people follow in using proper names. For at various points in his book, he seems to (at least implicitly) *identify* the convention a speaker follows in using a name with the causal network of d-chains in which his utterance is imbedded (see p. 155, for instance). Since he has described such networks at some length, Devitt might say, he has also described the relevant type of convention. But this identification of conventions with causal networks seems wildly implausible to me. Indeed, it seems to rest on a confusion of two sorts of facts: (1) the fact that one's utterance of a term is imbedded in a causal network of a certain sort, and (2) the fact that in uttering the term, one is following a convention that *requires* one's utterance to be so imbedded. It seems to me that this confusion pervades Devitt's book and vitiates much of what he says.

The two sorts of facts (1) and (2) are obviously quite different. For instance, suppose that I, believing that Kurt Gödel was the sole discoverer of incompleteness, always use the description 'the discoverer of incompleteness' to refer to Gödel. Thus my uses of this description all designate Gödel, and we can suppose that these uses are all causally connected in a general network with others' uses of the same description that all similarly designate Gödel. Does this mean that whenever I utter the description 'the discoverer of incompleteness' I am always following a convention which *requires* that my uses of this description must designate Gödel? Not at all. In every use of this description I (and everyone else for that matter) might be following the attributive convention according to which a description semantically refers to whichever object uniquely satisfies it. Thus if incompleteness was not discovered by Gödel but by someone named Schmidt, then my uses of 'the discoverer of incompleteness' have all semantically referred to Schmidt, even though I have all along been (mistakenly) referring to Gödel with these same uses.

Since Devitt's (apparent) identification of conventions with causal networks is false, the fact that he describes such networks does not absolve him of my charge that he has failed to describe the sort of convention that people follow in using names.

Devitt would also deny my charge that, having failed to explain how designation figures in the convention for using names, he has also failed to give any reason for thinking that designation is a semantically relevant feature of names. For he apparently believes that what a name-token designates is always a semantic referent of the token, *whether or not the object designated is the token's conventional referent*. He in turn appears to believe this because he thinks that, regardless of what conventions a speaker is following in uttering a sentence containing a name, the name-token's designation is at any rate always relevant to determining the truth-value of *what the speaker meant* by the sentence (see pp. 86 and 144).

But this line of reasoning is seriously defective. I take it that an object is a semantic referent of a name-token only if the object is relevant to determining the *actual* truth-value of the sentence containing the token in question. But the actual truth-value of a sentence is always determined by its *actual* meaning, and not merely by what its speaker happens to mean by it. For instance, a speaker might mean something by a sentence, even though the sentence he utters is complete nonsense. What the speaker means by his utterance could well be true, but his utterance has no meaning at all, and therefore it has no truth-value either. Of course, if the sentence *had* meant what its speaker meant by it, then the sentence *would* have been true. But this does not imply that the sentence actually was true in any sense.

So the fact that a term's designation is always relevant to the truth-value of what its speaker means does not imply that a term's designation is always relevant to the actual truth-value of the sentence uttered. Thus it also does not imply that a term's designation is always a semantic referent of the term. To suppose otherwise, as Devitt apparently does, one must accept the obviously

false view that what a speaker means by a sentence is always one of that sentence's actual meanings.

It still seems to me, then, that Devitt has failed to give us any good reason for thinking that what a name designates is ever a semantically relevant feature of the name.

The objections I have raised to Devitt's book concern some very fundamental and difficult issues in the philosophy of language. Such questions as those of the nature of linguistic conventions and of the relevance of such conventions to the semantic properties of expressions, lie at the very heart of semantics. The fact that Devitt has raised such fundamental questions and squarely faced them is an indication of the depth and seriousness of his thought on these matters. Certainly, Devitt's views on these and many other important issues that he discusses in his book deserve a much more extended treatment than I have been able to give here.

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B. FRYER, A. HUNT, D. McBARNET, and B. MOOREHOUSE, eds., *Law, State and Society*. Totowa, NJ: Biblio Distribution Center 1981 (for Groom Helm Ltd.). Pp. 234. US\$36.50. ISBN 0-7099-1004-5.

Eight of this series of nine essays published by the British Sociological Association were originally papers read at the Association's 1979 Conference on Law. The first essay, written by the editors, introduces the others.

It is unusual for conference papers published together to have a tight focus; these do, even while ranging from highly abstract sociological theory to concrete investigations of the relations between law, state and society. Their authors' common interest is legal sociology; their general topic is the 'effectivity of law' (18), more specifically the facilitating and legitimizing of industrial capitalism by the law and legal institutions (87), itself subdivided into (i) the coercion-consent dichotomy, (ii) the ideological dimension of law, (iii) legality and the form of law, and (iv) law and the state (10).

Granting the volume's coherence, the question arises, is the book worth reading? From a grammatical or stylistic standpoint the answer is no. Sociologists are accustomed to talking funny (British academics other than sociologists insist they usually think funny too), but I doubt even many of

them could get a handle on the following, meant to be descriptive of John Austin's definition of law as 'the command of the sovereign': after reading that 'it appears that the ascription of legal norms to an alleged absolute subject as their author is what constitutes their specific lawness,' the reader is told that if, then, 'the alleged absolute subject is an independent alien form of the self, the legal norm may be seen as an alien form of a suggestion or demand made by that self. This will be a dependently alien form, since it depends on the alleged absolute subject. On this view, just as the alien form of the self can be distinguished from the unalien form of the self, so the alien form can be distinguished from the unalien form of that self's suggestion or demand' (118).

If it be asked whether philosophers will find this book worthwhile even assuming their mastery of Hegel and Marx, the answer is, to a very limited extent. For, in the few places the essays do touch on philosophical matters, the treatments accorded them are frustrating. Thus in their essay, 'How the Law Rules: Variations on Some Themes in Karl Marx,' Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer argue that 'Workers movements have *had* to take the law very seriously indeed, because law — and its absence — has very material effects on workers' lives. Minimally, it is a defensive matter: rights, because they are not natural, have to be fought for and need to be *guarded*. Anyone inclined to doubt this might look ... at a number of recent pieces on picking juries and suspects' rights' (36-7). As it stands that set of statements is both confused and unphilosophical. It is unphilosophical because it is set forth without any hint of support; it is confused because the issue is not whether natural rights have to be guarded — of course they do. The issue is whether there are any.

David Sugarman in his 'Theory and Practice in Law and History: A Prologue to the Study of the Relationship Between Law and Economy from a Socio-Historical Perspective' gives the jurisprudentially-inclined reader more to chew on. He remarks (98) that the 'recent work of Thompson and Hirst ... raises questions as to what it is that makes something distinctively "Marxist"'. Thompson's view that the rule of law is "an unqualified human good" ... and the controversy it has engendered, has posed important political questions such as the desirability ... of regarding law as a focus of political struggle.' Marxist philosophers will be interested in this debate; non-Marxists interested in legal philosophy will be interested in the thesis that law is 'an unqualified human good' and, even, might be led to see what the Marxists have to say about the matter. Sugarman gives his readers bibliographical help here.

Finally, and to return to Corrigan's and Sayer's 'How the Law Rules,' the jurisprudentially important assertion is made that the 'law, *per se* codes — and codes violently ... [T]he terms and rituals of law do violence to the majority [of people] in exactly the way ... "Standard" English [does]: they force people to express themselves in codes that rule out the core of what constitutes their lives. For individuality is not pure (or equal); it is their material differences that make people who they are ... [and] ... the paradigm of individuality which law sanctifies as the universal human essence (with its timeless "common sense") is in reality an idealisation of a (bourgeois) state of