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Critical Notices

Beyond Formalism. JAY F. ROSENBERG. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994. Pp. xvi, 241.

As Rosenberg tells us, this is a book that grew out of his disagreement with many of the ideas and arguments found in Kripke's (1972) "Naming and Necessity." The reasons for this disagreement are recorded in Chapters 1, 2, and 3. The book also contains Rosenberg's own interesting and original theory of reference and the semantics of proper names (Chapters 4 and 5), an attempt to solve Kripke's famous puzzle about belief (Chapter 6), and a very abstract discussion of the epistemology of logical theory and the nature of logical form (Chapters 7 and 8). In this review, I will concentrate on Chapters 1–5.

In Chapter 1, Rosenberg criticizes Kripke's important modal arguments for the thesis that there are necessary *a posteriori* truths. To defend this thesis, Kripke discusses several examples, and appeals to our intuitions about what we would say about various counterfactual situations. In one of these discussions (1972, p. 314), Kripke defends the thesis that

(1) If this table is made from a certain block of wood, then necessarily, this table is made from that block of wood.

Kripke asks us to assume that the table in question is in fact made from a certain block of wood. Then he asks us to consider possible worlds in which we are confronted by a table exactly similar in appearance but where (a) the table is made from a different block of wood, or (b) the table is made from a block of ice. Would we say that in circumstances (a) or (b) we are confronted with the *actual* table (in Kripke's lecture hall)? Kripke claims, plausibly I think, that in both situations we would be confronted with another table that externally *resembles* the actual table but is distinct from it.

Rosenberg's objection asks how Kripke could respond to an opponent who insists that there is a possible world in which the actual table is made of ice. Apparently, he says (p. 15), Kripke would have to appeal to some general principle, like

(I.0) For any object, x, and for any "kind of stuff" (material) S, if x is made (composed) of S, then x is *necessarily* made of S.

But, Rosenberg objects, Kripke gives us no reason whatever for believing (I.0). Rather, he says (p. 16), it is a "prior conviction" *from* which Kripke argues for (1). Thus, Rosenberg seems to be saying, Kripke has given us no good reason at all for believing (1). (He makes the same point about Kripke's example concerning the necessity of Queen Elizabeth's parentage, pp. 16–19.)

I think that Rosenberg is wrong to claim that Kripke is relying on some assumed general principle like (I.0). Rather, he is relying solely on his intuitions about the counterfactual situations he's described. Given these intuitions, it is reasonable to conclude that no counterfactual situation can be described in which the actual table is not made from the block of wood it is in fact made from. Thus (1) is true. Given many such examples and intuitions, it is reasonable to conclude

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further that the truth of some general principle like (I.0) is the best explanation of our intuitions about these examples, and so no doubt Kripke would *end* by endorsing such a principle. (See Kripke (1972), pp. 350–351, note 56.) But it is wrong (and uncharitable) to claim that he assumes such a principle from the outset. Rosenberg's question about a hypothetical opponent of Kripke merely raises the possibility that someone might have intuitions contrary to Kripke's. But this raises only a possible, not an actual, objection to Kripke, and so it does not require a response. An actual objection would marshal real intuitions contrary to Kripke's, or it would at least give reasons why Kripke's intuitions are wrong. Rosenberg does neither of these things.

Chapter 2 is concerned solely with Kripke's argument that true identity sentences containing proper names, such as 'Hesperus is Phosphorus', express necessary truths. Although the argument in Kripke's lectures (1972, p. 308) is somewhat infelicitously expressed, it is, I think, meant to be a simple and straightforward application of Kripke's thesis that ordinary proper names are rigid designators, that is, terms that refer to the same object with respect to every possible world. Given that 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' is in fact true, the names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' as meant in this sentence both refer to the same object (with respect to the actual world), namely, the planet Venus. And given that these names are both rigid designators, it follows that they must both refer to Venus with respect to every possible world. But then, at every possible world, 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' have the same referent, so that 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' comes out true at each possible world and thus expresses a necessary truth.

I think most readers of Chapter 2 will be puzzled as to how Rosenberg could have such difficulty in finding a clear rendering of Kripke's fairly straightforward argument. Part of the problem is that Rosenberg insists on sticking as close as possible to a literal rendering of Kripke's infelicitously expressed argument. Thus he makes much heavy weather out of Kripke's unfortunate sentence "We use them ['Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus'] as names of those bodies [i.e., the bodies to which they actually refer] in all possible worlds." This wording suggests the falsehood that there are objects x and y such that in every possible world w, it is true in w that we use 'Hesperus' as a name of x and 'Phosphorus' as a name of y. But of course Kripke does not intend to assert this falsehood. Rather, he means that the names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus', as we *actually* use them, are rigid designators. Thus he means that it is true (hence true in the actual world) that our uses of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' refer to the same object with respect to every possible world.

At one point (p. 36) Rosenberg explicitly notes that by the expression 'N rigidly designates X' Kripke does *not* mean 'In every possible world w, it is true in w that N designates X'. Yet, as far as I can tell, every problem that Rosenberg raises in the course of trying to interpret Kripke's argument, derives from his not keeping this fact in mind. Thus he says (p. 39) that Kripke's argument would go through if we could just derive

(f*) 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' designate the same object in every other possible world.

But then, strangely, he objects that (f*) is false, since it is not true in every possible world w that 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' designate the same object in w (p.

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40). However, this objection simply ignores the obvious interpretation on which (f*) means

(2) There is an object x such that 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' both rigidly designate x,

which in turn means

(3) There is an object x such that 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' both (in fact, in the actual world) refer to x with respect to every possible world.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are the most clearly written, interesting, and valuable in the book. The main question addressed in these chapters is that of how the referents of proper names are determined. Rosenberg agrees with Kripke's objections to description theories of names, but finds difficulties in the causal pictures of name-reference suggested by Kripke and Michael Devitt (1981). He uses cases of confusion and misidentification to raise a serious problem for causal theories (pp. 78–85). A person who has confused Moritz Schlick and Otto Neurath might use the name 'Schlick' to communicate information he has in fact learned about Neurath, and 'Neurath' to communicate information he has learned about Schlick. Cases like this do in fact undermine Devitt's view, since on that view, the speaker's use of each name will be connected by appropriate causal chains to both Schlick and Neurath. Devitt must say that each name use "partially designates" both Schlick and Neurath, and Rosenberg correctly points out the absurdity of this consequence. (I myself used these same considerations to argue against Devitt's view in my (1976).) Rosenberg also uses this case against Kripke, saying that the confused speaker would be using 'Schlick' to refer to Neurath, while on Kripke's view the speaker's general intention to refer to whomever was referred to by the speaker from whom he got the name, should result in the speaker's referring to Schlick (p. 80). But this is not a problem for Kripke, since his view, unlike Devitt's, can allow that the *speaker* is referring to Neurath with 'Schlick', even though the *semantic* referent of the speaker's use would be Schlick. (Kripke's causal theory, unlike Devitt's, is explicitly concerned with semantic reference only.)

Rosenberg's own theory of names is motivated primarily by the problem of accounting for apparent reference to fictional characters. Like many others, Devitt proposed that names occurring in sentences about fiction do not occur referentially, since such sentences should be understood as prefixed by an implicit operator, meaning 'in fiction'. Rosenberg correctly criticizes Devitt's view, pointing out that it provides no basis for an account of how there can be inferential relationships between sentences about fiction (p. 103). But this problem is not difficult to overcome. In fact, three years before Devitt, David Lewis (1978) had presented a much more detailed and sophisticated version of the "fictional operator" theory, and Lewis's view nicely accounts for the existence of inferential relations between sentences about fiction.

In Chapter 5, Rosenberg proposes a view that treats reference to fictional characters on a par with reference to real objects. However, he doesn't do this by proposing that reference is a relation that is borne to both fictional and real things. Rather, he proposes a view on which reference is not a relation at all! Taking his cue from some ideas of Sellars and Quine about meaning, Rosenberg sug-

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gests that the basis of the notion of reference is the concept of two terms being used to refer to the same item, where reference to the same item is understood to be a relation that can hold between two terms without there being any object to which the two terms both refer. He suggests an explication of this relation in terms of his notion of two terms being used *confluently*. And finally, he suggests, an apparently relational use of 'refers' like '"Hesperus" refers to Venus' should be understood as a purely metalinguistic assertion, not about Venus, but about the *name* 'Venus', an assertion that means (in effect) '"Hesperus" and "Venus" are used confluently'.

I think Rosenberg's intriguing idea faces several serious problems. One is that of whether his notion of "confluence" can really be understood or applied without presupposing the notion it is supposed to explicate, namely, that of reference to the same object. His explanation of confluence uses Kripke's 'Paderewski' example, wherein two persons both use 'Paderewski' to "refer to the same man," but one has beliefs solely about Paderewski the Polish politician, while the other has beliefs solely about Paderewski the Polish pianist and composer. If both persons undertook to "find out more about Paderewski" each could discover that she was warranted in adding the other's 'Paderewski' beliefs to her own. Rosenberg says:

> When fully *commensurated* according to their shared epistemics of historical inquiry, in other words, [their] initially different idiolectic senses for 'Jan Paderewski' would *converge*. In such a case, I shall say, [they] use the name 'Jan Paderewski' *confluently*. (p. 111)

Suppose that initially, speaker A believes 'Paderewski is the F' while speaker B believes 'Paderewski is the G'. Suppose also that at the end of inquiry, A is warranted in believing that the F is the G. Then A will be warranted in adding 'Paderewski is the G' to her set of 'Paderewski' beliefs, *provided* that she remains (or has become) warranted in believing that 'Paderewski is the F' *is true*. But surely, this last step requires that A be warranted in believing that her uses of 'Paderewski' *refer* to the F. Consequently, I cannot see how confluence can occur unless we presuppose that the speakers in question have obtained a lot of information about which objects their name uses *refer* to. So Rosenberg's account looks viciously circular to me.

A related difficulty is that semantic theory, because of certain facts about natural language, seems to *require* that there be a real relation of semantic reference that holds between uses of singular terms and ordinary objects. As Kripke (1972) and many others have pointed out, a simple sentence containing a proper name, such as 'Aristotle was wise', is true at a possible world w just in case a certain *object* (Aristotle in this case) has in w the property ascribed by the sentence (wisdom in this case). In order to adequately state the truth conditions of such a sentence, therefore, we must assume that there is some semantic relation that holds between the name use in question and the unique object whose properties (or lack thereof) make the sentence in question true or false. It of course doesn't matter what we *call* this relation. We could call it 'denotation', 'semantic reference', or 'shreference'. But whatever we call it, we can't do semantics without it, and so Rosenberg's proposal to do so seems doomed to failure.

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Rights, Welfare, and Mill's Moral Theory. DAVID LYONS. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. vii, 185.

This book collects together some of David Lyons's most important essays on the nature of rights, their relation to the general welfare, and their role in the utilitarian tradition, especially the work of John Stuart Mill. There are six essays, which appear in the order in which they were originally published: (1) "Rights, Claimants, and Beneficiaries," (2) "Mill's Theory of Morality," (3) "Mill's Theory of Justice," (4) "Liberty and Harm to Others," (5) "Benevolence and Justice in Mill," and (6) "Utility and Rights". At least three essays that might have been included in the collection—"The Correlativity of Rights and Duties," "Human Rights and the General Welfare," and "Utility as a Possible Ground of Rights"—are not included, apparently in order to minimize overlap and repetition among the essays (for instance, parts of "Utility as a Possible Ground of Rights" are incorporated into essay 6). The essays in the collection are preceded by a short but helpful introductory chapter in which Lyons provides philosophical background to and overview of the essays and generously acknowledges subsequent developments in the philosophical literature on the systematic and interpretive themes of the essays.

Though the essays blend interpretive and systematic issues in different ratios—essays 1 and 6 are more systematic and 2–5 are more interpretive—they all have both interpretive and systematic dimensions and do a wonderful job of integrating the two. The impetus for Lyons's work on utility and rights was the conviction that the obituaries for utilitarianism that followed in the wake of rights-based views about justice by Rawls, Nozick, Dworkin and others were premature (pp. 12, 67).[1] The possibility and structure of a utilitarian theory of rights and justice, Lyons thought, had yet to be explored properly. Lyons's explorations begin with Bentham (essay 1) but proceed to Mill's less skeptical and more subtle views (essays 2–5).[2] However, by the last of the essays (essay 6), Lyons finds himself adding his own nail to the coffin of utilitarianism; he too concludes that the utilitarian cannot accommodate rights.

In essay 1, Lyons discusses Bentham's beneficiary theory of legal rights and defends a qualified version of the beneficiary theory against objections made by H. L. A. Hart. Despite the interest of this essay, I will concentrate on what I see

1 This conviction was also expressed in Lyons's review of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*; see David Lyons, "Rawls versus Utilitarianism" *Journal of Philosophy* 69 (1972), pp. 535–45.

2 Lyons examines Bentham's moral and legal philosophy at greater length in *In the Interest of the Governed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

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