Book Reviews

Theory and Typology of Proper Names. By WILLY VAN LANGENDONCK. Pp. xvi–378. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 2008. €98.00/US $132.30. ISBN 978 3 11 019086 1.

The fact that this volume is included in the publisher's series 'Trends in Linguistics' indicates that the author's fundamental approach to his topic regards onomastics as an integral part of linguistics, rather than as a separate discipline. By implication it also reveals his conviction that it is possible, indeed intellectually profitable, to abandon the notion of independence without doing irreparable damage to a systematic investigation of names, both as individual items and as components of networks or clusters. In addition, Van Langendonck's book provides a platform for the argument that, in theoretical terms, there is more to the relationship between the onomasticon and the lexicon than the embeddedness of the former in the latter. This reviewer makes this concession with considerable reluctance as he has, in research and publications, repeatedly stressed the necessity of concentrating on the investigation of names as names and not simply as words with perhaps additional properties, in order to create a satisfactory and viable theoretical basis for the establishment of a systematic account of matters onomastic. In contrast Van Langendonck has, over the last few decades, in his scholarly pursuits, both as a teacher at the Institute for Onomastics and Dialectology at the Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven in Belgium and as an influential member and administrator of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences, not least as editor of its journal *Onoma*, successfully combined, in happy personal and institutional symbiosis, linguistic interests with onomastic endeavours. The book under review is an outcome of that double vision, as well as a justification for it, and must be critically viewed in that light, for in his 'General Introduction' its author explicitly states that he does 'not agree with the standpoint that onomastics is an essentially different discipline from linguistics' and therefore pleads for its incorporation into 'linguistics in its widest sense' (11).

As is to be expected from its title, the book is divided into two major portions, one surveying in two chapters the 'normal and referential-semantic status of proper names' and its 'formal characteristics', respectively (6–182), and the other, in two further chapters, presenting an overview of a 'typology of proper names' and the 'dialinguistic aspects of Flemish personal names' (183–320). Didactically helpful are the brief *Conclusions* at the end of each chapter, subchapter, and sub-section, alerting the reader to the ground already covered before a new phase of the argument is entered into — especially when proceeding from various predominantly theoretical perspectives to their particular pragmatic applications in a descriptive series of name types, with special emphasis on Flemish personal names.

Throughout this substantial monograph, the author prefers to employ the classical term 'proper name', rather than the simpler and less confusing 'name' to which some of us have become accustomed in our investigation of the distinctive natures, both semantic and functional, of members of the lexicon and the onomasticon, whether visual synchronically or diachronically. Readers familiar with cognitive linguistics will also recognise his pervasive usage of the fundamental ideas associated with it, with special stress on William Croft's 'radical construction grammar', but in its extraordinarily wide awareness of interdisciplinary interplay Van Langendonck's study also includes, among others, neurological and psychological as well as anthropological evidence. Neither are philosophical theories neglected; for instance, those of John Stuart Mill, Gottlob Frege, Edmund Husserl, Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Searle, Saul Kripke, and Keith Donellan are included.

Such is the innovative breadth and intensity of the author's approaches to his topic that they preclude one single reviewer, even with the best of intentions, from appreciating and adequately assessing all aspects of his argumentation and presentation, without raising the risk of over-simplifying very sophisticated bundles of notions; it must therefore suffice to offer just a taste of a veritable feast in the hope of luring readers into more detailed enquiries into the ingredients of this complex undertaking. The author's own assessment of his diverse conclusions may serve as a handy, informed guide. An appropriate starting point is his own definition of a 'proper name' as 'a noun that denotes a unique entity at the level of established linguistic convention to make it psychosocially salient within a given basic level category (pragmatic)' (116). Some of us might like to substitute 'linguistic and onomastic' for 'linguistic', but otherwise this definition is not likely to invite quibbles from either linguists or name scholars.

Although admitting that, in such contexts, proper names, unlike common nouns, do not have asserted lexical meaning, he nevertheless ascribes to them 'presuppositional' meanings of several kinds, such as categorical (basic level), emotive, associative, and grammatical ones. It is, in fact, not contradictory that at the heart of his definitional discussion of proper names as the most prototypical nominal category there hovers the inescapable question of 'meaning', despite a strongly expressed belief that proper names do not always originate via a baptismal, i.e. an illocutionary act of 'declaration', and that the meaning of a name, if it has one, does not (or not any longer) determine its semantic denotation (182), and presumably not its functional one either. One of the most convincing building blocks in the author's argument for a close affiliation of onomastics with linguistics is the realisation that proper names 'can potentially display all types of grammatical features shown by personal pronouns', like number, gender, person, and even partitiveness. On the other hand, we might argue that this very versatility differentiates them significantly from non-prototypical common nouns.

In his general account of a typology of proper names (183–255), Van Langendonck distinguishes, apart from antonyms or metalinguistic names, count names, mass nouns, and clauses, in principle mainly prototypical and non-prototypical proper names. In the former category, he lists and analyses personal names (including bynames, animal names, names of hurricanes, placenames, astronomic objects, birthdays, ships, organisations, and associations), whereas to the latter he assigns countable proper names, such as temporal names, works of art, books, journals, films, brand names, currencies, numbers and letters, and so on, and uncountable proper names, such as those of languages, colors, and diseases.

Since trade and brand names are a category popular and potentially controversial in current international onomastic scholarship, it is perhaps not inappropriate to single them out for special scrutiny. Van Langendonck groups them together with names of languages and diseases. Scholars are divided as to their status and sometimes call them 'appellative proper names', and Van Langendonck terms their dictionary entries 'proprio-appellative lemmas', expressing his hesitation about where, in his taxonomic system of gradation from prototypical to non-prototypical to marginal names, they belong. His terminological choice addresses the uncertainty or even confusion regarding the linguistic/onomastic status of such names with sensitivity although it does not, of course, solve the problems of their primary function as proper names or common nouns (names or words). To this reviewer there is a significant difference between the statements 'He drove a Ford' and 'He called his car/Ford George', even if the brand name is derived from the founder of the company that produces Ford cars. In a wider sense, the case of brand names and their affiliations opens up the problematic area of what constitutes a proprial lemma.

The ambiguity surrounding the status of trade names and the like does, of course, not apply to most types of names, but it highlights the fact that, when it comes to typological considerations, criteria other than those applied in the first part of the book play possible roles: for instance, more practical, tangential, or even personal ones. This becomes even clearer in the chapter 'Dialinguistic Aspects of Flemish Personal Names' (256–320), towards which the author's explanation has developed in a structural arrangement beginning with highly abstract

concepts and gradually requiring more focused, concrete thinking. It also provides good reasons for separating typology from theory in his presentation and in the title of the book — under other circumstances, a case might have been made for the inclusion of the former in the latter. This section looks like an author's homecoming, especially because of its concentration on historio-geographic issues and its thorough preparation in the author's previous publications, as listed in his bibliographical references. It covers, in its dialinguistic approach, diachronic, diatopic, socio-linguistic, and, notably, socio-onomastic matters pertaining to the Dutch dialects of Flanders (Flemish), benefiting from analyses of distributional patterns, in both time and space, with less clear-cut distinctions between proper names and proprial lemmas than in the previous chapters. Synchronically, the chapter demonstrates how Flemish byname patterns are in gradual transition, with the sequence 'byname + first name' being replaced by the reverse model 'first name + byname'. In his extensive coverage of age-grading, gender, and register characteristics, the author even alludes to Flemish nicknames used in internet chatting. All aspects are richly illustrated; particularly gratifying is the inclusion of the socio-onomastic characteristics of juvenile Flemish byname-giving, in contrast to the features of adult name-giving (317–320).

This reviewer is only too conscious of his inability to do full justice to Van Langendonck's opus, for it is heavy fare drawing on an impressive mix of sources including important previous studies by other scholars, and there is ample proof everywhere that the author himself has been actively concerned, for well over thirty years, with the themes and minutiae touched on in this work. From beginning to end, his conviction regarding the incorporation of onomastics in linguistics, or at least its roots in it, is a nourishing, never-wavering methodological foundation and diagnostic tool-kit. Once this basic supposition has been transferred to a persuasive text (supported by 164 often substantial footnotes, a twenty-seven-page bibliography, and a useful subject index), the rest follows without fail. The book now before us is a somewhat conservative but nevertheless refreshing undertaking well worth reading more closely than has been possible for this review. Its publication makes us wonder how we have managed without it.

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An Essay on Names and Truth. By WOLFRAM HINZEN. Pp. 244. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN 978-019-922652-9 PB

Imagine, if you will, a high mountain. For a veteran mountain-climbing enthusiast in tip-top physical condition and possessing all of the necessary equipment, climbing the mountain can be an exhilarating, satisfying experience. But for the out-of-shape, ill-equipped novice, attempting to climb that same mountain can result in a frustrating, agonizing experience. Wolfram Hinzen's book is a proverbial mountain. For experts in the area of linguistics or the philosophy of language, reading this text will provide many moments of high-level intellectual stimulation and insight. Those lacking a strong background in these areas will probably find the book difficult with its liberal use of technical terminology and discipline-specific argumentation.

Of course, there is a third sort of mountain-climber or reader: one who is more than a novice, yet not an expert. This is the area where I locate myself. In reviewing Hinzen's text, I hope to provide enough incentive for experts and some encouragement for not-quite-experts to give appropriate consideration to Hinzen's fine work. In addition, I will show how his text provides a philosophical grounding for the study of names, particularly for the way names function within language. This aspect of the review will emerge with the consideration of Chapter 5, which focuses on names.

In a nutshell, Hinzen's project involves the simultaneous argument *against* an externalist explanation of the relation between things and the words that name them, and *for* an internalist one. As such, this project puts Hinzen at odds with the traditional philosophical position that the notion of truth involves the correspondence between things out there (externals) and

our words and sentences that describe them. Hinzen argues that this theory is inadequate. Instead, he embarks upon an extended argument that the human ability to use language indicates that the human mind has universal structures which explain how we arrive at meaning. He intends to show that "truth is intrinsically linked to the generative structures underlying human language" (6). For Hinzen, "meaning begins from concepts" (7), not from reference to external objects.

Hinzen's argument for internalism unfolds in five chapters. Beginning with "The Roots of the Intentional," Hinzen describes his notion of a concept as "the meaning of a word, whatever that meaning is" (8). He distinguishes this understanding of concept from the *use* of a concept in intentional reference. He engages the analysis of a concept before it is used to refer to something. A concept is not a judgment. Rather, judgments presuppose concepts. For Hinzen, "meaning begins within, from a concept, not without, from a referent" (21).

This claim leads Hinzen to a wider discussion of language as an unfinished, ever-evolving *energeia*, rather than as a completed material product (*ergon*). Insightfully, Hinzen displays an important parallel between language and arithmetic. Language has the ability to *merge*, which allows for "infinite combinatorics" (32). Similarly, arithmetic has the availability of *successor*, the ability always to count "one more" than we already have. Thus, both language and arithmetic are recursive realities. Hinzen sees recursion as not merely where adaptability begins, but as the location of the origin of thought itself (33).

In Chapter 2, "Where Meaning Begins: The Atoms of Thought," Hinzen argues that our concepts are the atomic building-blocks of our construction of meaning. The recursive ability to combine concepts functions in an integrative way. "Write a letter" integrates the two concepts of writing and letter. A key question for Hinzen here is how to describe the essence of the concept "atom." Can the atom be split? Hinzen thinks not: "A concept we have of a thing allows that thing to undergo the most various physical and geometrical transformations, while remaining the same thing all the way through" (82–83). The concept is the foundation: "It is the concept that stabilizes human reference, not reference . . . that stabilizes human concepts" (82).

But where do concepts come from? Hinzen's response is blunt: "The origin of concepts remains *radically* unclear today, to the extent even that constructive suggestions are missing" (89). What he can say, however, is that our concepts *are* our thinking. Our concepts are. Hinzen concludes that "[m]eaning begins, not from relations of reference between words and things, but atomic concepts" (113).

Hinzen's argument progresses in Chapter 3 to an analysis of "Structures for Concepts." He speaks of analytic knowledge, which is "knowledge that follows from the laws and combinatorial principles of language, which are . . . equally laws of meaning" (115). Acknowledging that analytic knowledge is *a priori*, Hinzen agrees with Kant's insight that there is synthetic *a priori* knowledge as well. He makes a special point of the act of naming: "In naming, then, it is again as if the object of reference is frozen, moved out of space, time, and context, being much more abstract, as if we had a condensation of an enormous (in fact, in principle limitless) complexity into a single point with no internal complexity at all: just *John*" (124).

Central to Hinzen's argument here is his conviction that concepts have analytic entailments which are both asymmetric and hierarchical. "The higher in the hierarchy we are, the richer the entailments," he asserts (120). Thus, a purely abstract space entails nothing because it has no structure. On the other hand, a given concrete person entails animation, individuality, countability, and mass. However, "analytic entailment has nothing to do with truth. It is not a truth about the world, but our concepts . . . if an activity entails a state, for example" (159).

Chapter 4 analyzes the "Structure for Truth." For Hinzen, "[t]ruth is wholly abstract" (164). He explores "[w]hat is added to a meaning, when a judgment of truth that involves this meaning is made" (164). Hinzen pursues his internalist argument here as well: "What we rate correct or incorrect, or as capable of truth, is clearly not the *world* or what is out there, but what

judgements we make about it . . . . Truth is a question, not of the facts, but of what we *judge these to be*" (169). And, of course, these judgments always incur some risk of error.

Hinzen furthers his analysis of truth by distinguishing it as a formal concept, rather than as a substantive one. In addition, "truth has no *explicit definition* . . . and lacks a substantive nature of which there can be a *theory*, in the way that there are theories of planets or chemical molecules" (172). Consistent with his internalist approach, Hinzen argues that truth is not an externalist notion. He suggests that "in the case of truth judgements the way *the mind relates a given proposition to truth is much the same as the way in which it relates a whole to a part or a substance to its constitution*" (181). This whole-to-part paradigm is an inherent structure of the human mind. Pushing further, Hinzen argues that formal ontological notions such as part and whole derive from syntax (188). "[I]f we ask how humans cognitively structure the relation between a sentence and the truth we may judge it to have, integral syntax holds the key," he reasons (195).

Hinzen is insistent that he is exploring cognition, not metaphysics or ontology. So, when he speaks of truth, he is more specifically speaking about a sentence having truth integrally. For Hinzen, when we make a truth-judgment, "[t]he truth that it predicates of the sentence is not an object in its own right, it is the truth — *of* a particular sentence" (199).

The fifth and concluding chapter explores a "Structure for Names." Hinzen begins here with the notion of nominals being conceptually rigid, that is, referring to only one person/object. Hinzen sees rigid concepts as being simple and atomic. In the process of nominal description, "[d]eterminers have a 'singularizing' or 'individualizing' function . . . ." (211). Yet, there exists the paradox of names: "Proper names are bare NPs [Noun Phrases], and they are paradigmatically referential. But bare NPs are paradigmatically not referential" (212).

In focusing more specifically on proper names, Hinzen points out that "[p]roper names are the creatures of the syntax, which . . . can rule what to make a proper name and what not" (216). For example, in German, "the noun *Wolf* (meaning *wolf*) is also a personal proper name, while the noun *Hund* (meaning *dog*) is not" (216). Thus, as Hinzen suggests, there is "only a conventional difference between names and nouns" (216). When exploring names, "existence makes *no* difference" (220). The name *King Lear* does not entail existence. Hinzen concludes with a "Copernican turn" regarding the theory of names: "[I]t is not our names that revolve around the world and change together with it, but the world that changes according to what our names suggest" (228). Even the specific interpretation of names has a viable internalist explanation. This internalist argument is aptly summarized in the book's final sentence: "What stabilizes, fixes, and rigidifies reference is not the world, but the mind: the concepts in terms of which we think" (230).

Climbing the mountain of Hinzen's book can be a very worthwhile adventure, given the reader's background. Whenever a philosopher challenges the traditional way we have thought about something, it is usually intriguing to consider things in a new and different way. Hinzen's project turns things around in proposing an internalist explanation of cognition. Whether one agrees with him or not, one must applaud the depth of insight and analysis that Hinzen brings to his work. He has challenged me personally to rethink my own way of understanding human cognition, and in that regard he has done me a great service. His text offers that same challenge to all mountain-climber readers!

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