

Georges Rey, Dept of Philosophy, Skinner Hall, Univ of Maryland College Park, MD 20742;  
(301)-405-5707; [georey@earthlink.net](mailto:georey@earthlink.net);

**Final Version**

**Tues 26 Sep 06;**

9.5 wds here w/out refs; 8.3 w/out refs or fns; 10K total

### **Conventions, Intuitions and Linguistic Inexistents: A Reply to Devitt**

In a number of earlier papers (Rey 2003a and b, 2005a and b), I have argued that standard theories of linguistic competence are committed to taking seriously their talk of "representations of" such "things" as NPs, VPs, morphemes, phonemes, syntactic and phonetic features (I refer to all such "things" as "Standard Linguistic Entities," or "SLE"s). I put "things" in quotes here, because I also go on to argue that these SLEs actually don't exist: it is very doubtful there are tokens of them in space and time, and, even if there turn out occasionally to be, their existence is completely inessential to the needs of either communication or serious linguistic theory. To be sure, we seem to *hear* ourselves and others regularly produce such tokens. But, I argue, this is an illusion: an extremely stable perceptual state we regularly enter as a result of being stimulated by the wave forms (and other physical phenomena) we regularly produce when we execute our intentions to utter such tokens.<sup>1</sup> As I like to put it, the whole process is a kind of *folie à deux* (or *à n*, for the *n* speakers of a "common language") along the following lines:

*Linguistic Folieism:* Communication between people standardly occurs without the existence of the SLEs that speakers and hearers take to have been produced.

A speaker intends to utter a certain SLE, and produces various representations of it in various sub-systems of her mind; this causes her to contract her articulatory system in certain ways that in turn cause certain wave forms to traverse the air, impinge upon the auditory systems of hearers and produce representations of the very SLEs the speaker intended to utter. This causal process is so stable and reliable, involving specific processes in production and perceptual modules, that everyone concerned seems actually to "hear" tokens of those SLEs. However, it's an illusion: examination of the acoustic events reveals no entities with the structures that linguists have reasonably argued that SLEs possess. The speaker has the illusion of uttering an SLE that the hearer has the illusion of hearing, with, however, the happy result that the hearer is usually able to determine precisely what the speaker intended to utter.

Indeed, were SLE tokens actually to exist, it would be something of an accident. Their existence is completely inessential to the success of normal communication and to the needs of theory.

---

1. For brevity, I shall throughout this discussion speak of intentions (and intending ) to utter SLEs in a very weak sense, entailing only the instigation of action, and not entailing anything to do with conscious deliberation of the like. Indeed, many of the intentions I have in mind may well be simply imperatives of a speech production module, insensitive to reflective thoughts of the very sort I am defending, viz., that, try as one might, one is very unlikely to produce an SLE.

And since, unlike the case of many other human artifacts, there are no other causal/explanatory roles for the supposed actual tokens of SLEs to play, there is no reason to posit them as real objects.

In his forthcoming book, *Ignorance of Language* (hereafter “IgL”), Michael Devitt objects to this view, arguing that, “On Rey’s view, communication seems to rest on miraculous guesses” (IgL:§10.6; ms:292). In the short space here, I want to show how my view is not prey to his objections, and actually affords a scientifically more plausible view than his “empiricist” alternative. In §1 I will briefly summarize the issues about representation that I presuppose in my argument, and which I take to common ground between Devitt and myself (readers familiar with my earlier papers could skip over this). In §2 I will consider Devitt’s various objections to my view: (i) that my view couldn’t explain the conventionality of language and success of communication (§2.1), (ii) that I am faced with intractable difficulties surrounding the identity of intentional inexistents (§2.2), and (iii) that, contrary to my view, SLEs can be relationally defined (§2.3). Not only can Folieism survive Devitt’s objections, but, I shall argue in §3, it also provides a more satisfactory account of the role of linguistic intuitions than the “empirical” account on which he insists (IgL:chap 7).

## 1. Representation

### 1.1 Why Linguistics Needs Intentional Contents

An important backdrop for my discussion –indeed, one of its primary motivations– is an insistence that we take the virtually ubiquitous use of “representation” in linguistics (and virtually all other areas of cognitive science) at face value. Linguists everywhere speak of “representations” of such things as sentences, NPs, VPs, IPs, PPs, words, morphemes, phonemes, phones, syntactic, phonetic features. Such talk seems to me patently intentional, the “of x” clause that standardly follows the use of “representation” specifying its intentional content: for example, a representation of the phonetic feature, fricative, is a representation with [fricative] as its content.<sup>2</sup>

What is intentional content? Although I’ll say something shortly to narrow things down, I don’t pretend to have any better theory than anyone else. Although there are certainly things to be said for theories that appeal to the conceptual role of a symbol or to the causal relations a symbol enjoys in relation to real phenomena in the world, I doubt few are under any illusion that any of them are yet remotely satisfactory.<sup>3</sup>

Why insist on a notion of intentional content so difficult to explain? Simply because no one has the faintest idea of how to explain manifest regularities regarding people and many

---

2. I refer to intentional contents by placing expressions that express them in corner brackets.

3. See Peacocke (1994) for a representative role theory, Fodor (1990, 1998) for an ingenious causal one (see my (1997 for discussion).

animals without it. The only serious theories of perception, intelligence, language and motor control are theories that posit computations over representations with intentional content –i.e. representations of, e.g., space, time, direction, shapes, colors, and I see no way of eliminating such talk, in the way that, for example, talk of light “seeking” a shortest path could easily be eliminated from popular expositions of physics.<sup>4</sup> We seem to be in the position of having excellent explanatory reasons for deploying a notion we don't fully understand, much as Newton and Leibniz employed notions of infinitesimals without fully understanding their talk of them either. Here I suppose I agree with the spirit (if not quite all of the letters) of Quine's methodology, of not letting philosophical scruple trump successful scientific explanation, which present cognitive science seems sometimes to be providing.

## 1.2 Some Constraints and Oddities

My claim that SLEs do not exist does, of course, involve considerations of *empty* representations, or representations that might be said to be “about nothing” (I shall use ‘representation’ generically, as it used in cognitive science, to include not only pictures, but also words). Empty representations have vexed philosophy since Plato's *Parmenides*, and I don't intend here to present a full theory of how to handle them, any more than any other intentional phenomena. I do want to insist, however, that any adequate theory needs to take them seriously. Despite the claims of a surprising number of recent writers,<sup>5</sup> empty thoughts often play as rich a role in our psychology as ones that refer to real things: people routinely think about gods, devils and angels; scientists once theorized in elaborate ways about phlogiston and the planet Vulcan; and, if I am right about crucial bits of vision and linguistic competence, much of our most basic psychology traffics in empty representations of standard geometric and linguistic entities. A semantic theory that denies such cases is a semantic theory that carries a serious burdening of explaining this portion of our psychology without appeal to intentional content. I see no reason to think this burden could be borne any more easily here than with regard to psychology in general.<sup>6</sup>

There is, however, an exasperating difficulty in even stating how representations can be empty, or “about nothing”: they could be *meaningless*, as in the case of nonsense expressions, like ‘brillig’; or they could be perfectly meaningful, but, as in the case of ‘Zeus’, there being no *real things in the world* that they represent. These two ways of being “about nothing” give rise

---

4. I argued this at length in my (2003a and 2003b), replying to Chomsky's (2000, 2003) recent claims to the contrary. (Jutronic (2005) replies to my reply, as I do to her my (2005b) in the same issue). Representative passages in Chomsky's and related linguistic work that seems to rely on serious use of “representation” and other intentional idioms are Chomsky and Halle (1968), Chomsky (1980), Chomsky (1955/75), Kenstowicz (1994), Bromberger and Halle (2000).

5. E.g., Evans (1982), Fodor (1990, 1998), Millikan (2000, 2005), Taylor (2003)

6. In particular, I am sceptical of efforts to retreat in such cases to purely “syntactic” characterizations of thought (as in Taylor 2003), or to deny that empty concepts are concepts at all (Millikan 2000:175-6, 2005). I don't see how either of these approaches could hope to account for merely the evidential relations into which empty thoughts manifestly enter (do they, *pace* Goodman (1956), hope for a purely syntactic theory of induction?).

to a crucial ambiguity in ways of talking about “what representations represent”:

(REP) (i) If we are talking about a representation,  $x$ , of some *real thing*  $y$ , then  $x$  represents that real thing  $y$ —thus ‘Nixon’ represents the actual man Nixon.

(ii) When there isn't, as in the case of ‘Zeus’, then we rely on talk about the *content* of the expression ‘ $y$ ’

I call the first usage the “existential,” the second the “(purely) intentional” usage of ‘represent’. For purposes here, I shall be confining myself to the latter, purely intentional use. That is, I shall not presume “representation of  $x$ ” entails the actual existence of  $x$ .

I was deliberately cagey in the way I phrased the second-clause of (REP): I said we “rely on talk about the content of the expression ‘ $y$ ’.” It would be tempting to say “so a purely intentional use of ‘representation of  $y$ ’, for lack of any  $y$ , is really about an intentional content.” This would however get the subject matter wrong: someone thinking about Zeus and his philandering ways is not thinking about the philandering ways of an intentional content. Speaking more carefully, we should rather say something like: when  $x$  represents a  $y$  that doesn’t exist, a person is standing in the thinking relation to the intentional content [ $y$ ]; but this doesn’t entail she is thinking *about* [ $y$ ]. Indeed, it seems to me that a useful, if provisional characterization of intentional content is that it is *whatever we take  $x$  to be in a purely intentional usage*, i.e. when we talk about “a representation of  $x$  when there is no  $x$ .”

But this does raise a difficulty for stating the second-clause of (REP): how can we represent something that isn’t there? Unlike many who’ve addressed this problem (e.g. Meinong (1904/82), Parsons (1980)), I am loathe to rely here on any special metaphysics. I agree with Cartwright’s (1960/87) nice quip: “unreality is just that: it is not another reality” (p30). So far as I can see, (REP) simply captures an odd way we have of talking and thinking about intentional content. Indeed, at least provisionally, I suspect that we can understand talk of intentional inexistents along the following, metaphysically deflated lines:

(DEF)  $y$  is an intentional inexistent for a representational system  $S$  iff<sub>df.</sub>  
there is a representation in  $S$  that has the content [ $y$ ] and  $y$  doesn’t exist.

where a system can be a community-shared work of fiction, a theological tradition, or --as in the cases that concern me here-- a system in a human or animal psychology, e.g. the visual system, or a language module. When the system is a perceptual system, I call the inexistences, *perceptual inexistents*; and where the perceptions involve SLEs I shall talk of *linguistic inexistents*. As this definition makes clear, the ontology remains purely an ontology of representations and their intentional contents, which are needed in any case for any adequate psychology.<sup>7</sup>

---

7. I don’t mean to underestimate the difficulties in providing a semantic theory of talk about intentional inexistents –or, for that matter, for natural language generally, which, n.b., seems to cheerfully include such talk (there is not even a suspicion of contradiction in such ordinary assertions as “There are some things that don’t exist).” A step in

### 1.3 SLEs as Intentional Inexistents

Briefly, my argument that (tokens of<sup>8</sup>) SLEs don't exist is that nothing in space-time seems to have the properties that, arguably, SLEs essentially possess. The simplest example is of any sentence of natural language: as inspection of virtually any linguistics text will reveal, sentences have an elaborate tree structure within which, for example, certain permissible relations are standardly defined. In "John hoped Bill would help himself", "himself" can't refer to "John", but must to "Bill" because of restrictions on "himself" within the sentence's tree-structure. But what thing in space and time possesses such a structure? Not, evidently, any *noises* anyone makes: none of the wave forms produced by people when they speak have a tree structure in the way that, for example, a real tree, or river, or network of neurons might, or (to take an example of artifact for which a type/token relation could be defined) in the way that parts of an automobile have the structure of an internal combustion engine. The structures of trees, rivers, neural nets and automobile engines play a real causal role in the world; but, I submit, the tree structures of sentences do not. All that need be true for the noises a speaker makes to have their intended effect is that they be *perceived* to have the tree structure that the speaker intended; and, as the Kanizsa figures illustrate, something can be *perceived* to have a structure without it actually *possessing* that structure.

But how is this denial of the reality of SLEs compatible with the success of communication? Consider Fodor, Bever and Garrett's (1974) classic discussion of speech perception (hereafter "FBG"). They call attention to a number of peculiarities of the relation between the acoustic stream and the intended phonemic sequence that render the identification of SLEs with physical phenomena at least extremely awkward. Most telling for our purposes is "displacement," whereby the "cues" for a particular phoneme are often presented not at the place at which the phoneme is "heard," but at the place of some earlier phoneme. Thus, "writer" is heard as different from "rider" not because the /t/ is pronounced differently from the /d/ in the way that speaker typically hears it to be, but because of a difference in the pronunciation of the preceding vowel (FBG:292-3). The general reason for these displacements is that:

Instructions to the vocal apparatus are not programmed in the order in which they occur in the phonetic distinctive matrix. Rather, they are often temporally re-ordered and the result is a further complication of the correspondence between the phonetic and the acoustic representation of an utterance. --(FGB:304)

Thus, not only will the acoustic stream lack the appropriate acoustic sound for a given phoneme, but even when the appropriate sounds do occur, their occurrence in the stream will not correspond to the intended sequencing of the phones. On the face of it, the acoustic stream does

---

the right direction seems to me to have been taken recently by Colin McGinn (2000:ch 2), who urges toleration of such talk by removing existential import from the so-called "existential" (what he prefers to call a "partial") quantifier, *some*.

8. I shall confine myself here to discussion of tokens, since it is my denial of them that concerns Devitt. I believe my argument applies to types as well, but the discussion involves a number of further issues that there is not space to discuss here.

not *seem* to present itself as affording serious tokenings of SLEs.

In a useful analogy, FBG compare the acoustic stream to clues left by a criminal: the hearer is in the position of a detective, inferring the identity of the criminal from the clues:<sup>9</sup>

[T]he detective may be able uniquely to determine the identity of the criminal from the clues, but it does not follow that there is a characteristic clue for every criminal. ... The acoustic representative of a phone turns out to be quite unlike a fingerprint. It is more like the array of disparate data from which Sherlock Holmes deduces the identity of the criminal. --(FBG:301)

Note also that what “clues” and “signals” a speaker provides a hearer will vary according to the speaker’s estimation of what the hearer in a particular context will need: articulating slowly and distinctly for children, foreigners and noisy telephones; speeding up and employing copious contractions with familiar friends and colleagues; and proceeding to a breakneck pace in the highly stylized speech of a sports announcer or auctioneer. A particularly striking example of reliance on mere cues is the tactile “Tadoma” language developed for the deaf and blind, whereby SLEs are detected, to an amazing degree of accuracy, merely by touching the face and neck of a speaker!.<sup>10</sup>

What this analogy seem to me to imply is that there is no reason to believe there actually are SLEs in addition to merely all those acoustic clues.<sup>11</sup> For consider what in communication is analogous to the crime itself. The clues to a crime are the things that were *caused* by it and related worldly events: the blood and fingerprints are evidence by virtue of their having been produced by the criminal executing the deed. So what caused the noises produced by the speaker? Certainly not the SLEs themselves! At best these are what *emerged from* the noises. What *produced* the noises themselves were the speaker’s *intentions* to utter the SLEs, and the *representations* of them occasioned by those intentions at various levels of the speaker’s articulatory system. So the clues are clues to those intentions and representations, not to the SLEs.

---

9. The view of acoustics as providing “clues” is common in the literature. Thus, Laver (1993) writes:

It is important to bear constantly in mind here that clues to the identification of an individual segment often lie not only in the properties of the segment itself, but also in properties of adjacent (and sometimes more remote) segments. --(p106)

10. Or consider script handwriting. However much the relatively rigid fonts of printed English may tempt us to think that there are well-defined tokens of at least “words” and “sentences,” it would be pretty hard to insist upon this in the case of, say, a doctor’s script. Another way to put my point would be to say that speech is more like handwriting than printed font.

11. Something like this is often the conclusion drawn by linguists themselves, see e.g. Sapir (1933/63), Jackendoff (1987), and Chomsky (2000), except that it’s usually couched not in terms of non-existence, but rather in terms of SLEs being “psychologically real” (I am told that Sapir’s article was actually the first use of this troublesome expression). In a way my only emendation to these linguists’ claims is to insist that *this* sort of “psychological reality” is not any sort of reality at all. What are psychologically real are the *representations* of SLEs, not the SLEs themselves.

Communication is successful so long, and just so long, as the clues are good enough for the hearer to recover the SLE representations that were their cause. Whether or not we want to insist that *actual* SLEs also emerge from such transactions is quite irrelevant to the explanation of that success. Since the only plausible explanatory role SLEs could play in the world would be in such communication –they’re not needed to do any work independently of human cognition– I conclude that there’s no reason to suppose they exist.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Devitt’s Objections

Devitt, of course, disagrees: “contrary to Rey’s claim, linguistic properties do play a causal role” (IgL:10.6; ms.293). However, I don’t see any evidence or argument for this claim. What he needs to provide is an account of, e.g., the above “clue displacement” story which can be understood as nevertheless involving tokenings of SLEs, and, indeed, *must* be understood in this way if communication is to succeed. Devitt doesn’t address this story in detail, but he does provide something of transcendental argument for SLEs: without them, we are told, communication would be impossible. His argument consists of four points:

- (i) The identity conditions on intentional inexistents are notoriously obscure.
- (ii) Linguistic communication requires conventions regarding both actual, identifiable SLEs and their physical cues;
- (iii) Conventions regarding real existents eliminate the need of the “guesswork” posited by Folieism;
- (iv) The appropriate existing objects for the conventions of language are existent SLEs, which are spatio-temporal phenomena, relationally defined.

I’ll address each in turn.

### 2.1 Identity of Linguistic Inexistents?

Devitt writes:

---

12. Jonathan Adler has reminded me of a qualification that would need to be introduced into the comparison of SLEs with Kanizsa figures. The latter are virtually hallucinations: there is by and large *nothing* where we take, e.g., the Kanizsa triangle to be: the pacman figures are not part of the triangle, but are seen as more distant objects occluded by it. But in the case of most (although not all) SLEs, there is in fact a substantial acoustic phenomenon that we *take* to be an SLE. So there is at least an attenuated sense in which SLEs might loosely be said to exist but in which Kanizsa figures don’t. The situation is analogous to the difference between “witches” and “elves”: there are women who are mistakenly taken to be witches, but there are no things at all that are taken to be elves. Perhaps this difference might go some way towards explaining the relatively greater reluctance we feel in denying SLEs than in denying Kanizsa figures. But I don’t think it changes the conclusion: there still are in fact no SLEs, any more than there are in fact any witches.

On [Rey's] *folie* view, [an] "extremely good guess" is made by a hearer who shares "a common language" with the speaker. This raises a number of questions.

First, what makes the languages of the speaker and hearer a common, or the same, language? For Rey, the answer is that the linguistic objects of thought for speaker and hearer are the same *intentional* objects. We wonder, then, what makes them the same in the absence of any *actual* objects that are the same. This is, of course, another example of the old problem of "intentional identity," the problem of explaining a common focus of thought where there is nothing at the focus; see the delightful Geach 1967 for a discussion. But it would seem to be a particularly difficult example. –(IgL:§10.6; ms:292)

Now, to be sure, there are nice logical problems surrounding the identity of intentional inexistents in general. I don't want to take on the general problem here, but, along the lines of the deflationary proposal, (DEF), I made earlier (§1.2), I think it can be handled fairly easily in the case of SLEs by simply relying upon *the identity of the intentional content* of internal representations of SLEs. For the most part, all that will be important in communication is that the representations of the hearer be representations *with the same content*: for example, it will usually be enough that, when the speaker produces noises by virtue of intending to say and so representing, "Do you actually know any solicitors?," the hearer produces a representation of that very sentence in her perceptual system. When two people represent "the same SLE" is on a par with the question of when they represent "the same color" or "the same shape", or same species of animal –whether it be real or imaginary. Of course, this raises the question of when different representations in different people's heads have *the same intentional content*; and that's a perfectly good question. But it's important to note that it's *a very different, much more general question from the question raised by Geach of the identity of intentional inexistents themselves*. The former is a question that will have to be answered by cognitive scientists across the board insofar as they traffic in intentional explanation, and it will have to be answered in at least *some* cases of empty representations, such as those of god, angels and (perhaps) circles and squares *whatever one thinks of the identity conditions for such inexistents*.

Sometimes, of course, we want to speak of SLE "tokens," as when we are concerned with ambiguity between two tokens of the same type, say, two tokens of "bank." But, again, there seems to be no problem in relying here simply on the content of the specific representations issued by speakers on specific occasions. "Bank" is presumably an ambiguous phonological form, since for a typical English speaker, representations of different (type) *morphemes* are mapped to representations of the same the same (type) *phonemes* (where the "of" here, of course, prefixes a specification of merely the intentional contents of the representations). Which morpheme a speaker intended on a particular occasion depends entirely on which morphemic representation was being deployed; and the hearer will have properly understood the speaker iff she recovers the same morphemic representation in her perceptual system.

Occasionally, it may also be important for, say, legal purposes to establish whether someone actually did "say" something, i.e. "produce a token of a given phonological type." But, as with ordinary talk generally, such claims don't need to be read with serious ontology in mind. It would be enough that the speaker produced sufficient cues for his intended audience, a

question whose answer will vary among social contexts: you're supposed to "speak up" in court in a way that you needn't over a drink afterwards. And whether two people heard "the same token" would depend upon whether they were each provided sufficient cues for each of them on the same spatio-temporal occasion. What makes it "the same token"? Merely that the cues were the very same token physical events.

## 2.2 Conventions and Existence

Devitt thinks the problem of intentional nonexistent identity is crucial to the case of language because of the role of convention in linguistic communication:

[H]ow did speaker and hearer come to speak the same language? Some of a person's language may well be innate but she learns a good deal of it. On my view, this learning is a matter of acquiring conventions of a language as a causal result of experiencing the regular exercise of the conventions in a community. Once again linguistic properties have a causal role. A consequence of this learning process is that a person, more or less, shares a language with others in the community. *But this story depends on what Rey denies, the existence of linguistic entities with conventional meanings.* Without those entities, language learning becomes a mystery. (Dev:§10.6, emph mine)

However, nothing in my view precludes SLEs having conventional meanings, since nothing in my view precludes intentional inexistents from having them. After all, *conventions can attach as much to intentional inexistents as to real objects*: Santa Claus is a conventional symbol of Xmas; Aphrodite a symbol of love; Hermes a symbol of efficient messaging. Again, working out a satisfactory general theory of these "objects" may be tricky. But for the cases at hand we can limit ourselves to the more manageable, special case of *perceptual* inexistents such as *SLEs*: these are the "inexistents" that, in a quite clear sense, we can "see" and "hear," as when we "see" Kanizsa triangles, or, on my view, when we "hear" SLEs. In these cases, talk of the inexistents is encouraged and heavily constrained by the remarkable stability of these perceptual illusions both across people, and across a single person over time. It's a stability that's easily exploited for conventional purposes. We could, for example, regularly deploy Kanizsa triangles to conventionally mean, say, "Let's drink!" Indeed, advertising agencies regularly use Kanizsa lettering to advertise their products, so that a "word" might be appear to be presented on a billboard Kanizsa style, without there being an actual token of the word anywhere to be found.

## 2.3 Guessing

Devitt also objects to my saying that the hearer makes a "good guess" as to the SLEs the speaker intended to utter:

On my view, there is only a small need for guesswork in communication because, normally, the conventional meaning of an expression in the linguistic community

of the speaker and hearer provides a rich clue to the speaker's thought. That clue is often not sufficient, of course: the hearer has to determine the reference of indexicals and remove ambiguities. These pragmatic skills...require insight into other minds but seldom anything that is appropriately called "guesswork" because the conventional meaning gives the hearer such a big start in understanding.  
--(IgL:§10.6, ms:292; emph orig)

But Devitt is taking my purely rhetorical use of "guess" far too seriously. I used it only as a way of contrasting a kind of naive and literalistic view of perception, whereby one's perception is caused by the actual object one sees, with a more complex view, which allows that one can "indirectly" "see" e.g., Kanizsa triangles, even though they don't exist. But I certainly don't mean to disrupt ordinary talk. The illusions of Kanizsa figures and SLEs are so stable across time and people that it would be silly to insist in ordinary talk that "no one ever says anything," or that people don't "directly hear" and "know full well" what speakers have said, without a trace of conscious "guessing." Indeed, this account explicitly explains how they are in a lot better epistemic position than they would be in a "primitive" situation without language modules that produce such nice illusions, and conventions that exploit them. But, as I stressed in my original article, I am not particularly concerned one way or the other with ordinary talk.

## 2.4 SLEs Relationally Specified?

Given that Devitt thinks real SLEs are in fact necessary to communication, it does behoove him to reply to my (and many linguists') claims about what seems to be the empirical evidence against their existence. He alludes to a standard philosophical move to relational, rather than "brute-physical" intrinsic properties:

[Rey's] argument shows that no naïve brute-physical account of the relation between sounds and phonemes is possible. Phonology shows that there are many complicated ways in which sounds can instantiate a phoneme, including relations to other sounds; and that a sound may be able to instantiate more than one phoneme. Similarly, there are many complicated ways in which inscriptions can instantiate a letter; and so on for other linguistic media. But this does not show that the sounds, inscriptions, etc. do not instantiate SLEs. Quite the contrary. The property of being Australian is instantiated by a vast variety of physical forms; for example, the forms of the capitalist Rupert Murdoch, the runner Cathy Freeman, the horse Phar Lap, the city of Sydney, a bottle of Penfolds Grange, and the many forms of the saying "No worries, mate." --(IgL:§10.6; ms:289)

Of course, Devitt is perfectly right to point out that many phenomena in the world are relationally identified. It would have helped, however, if he had supplied some suggestions about exactly how a relational story of SLEs might go. In the longer (as yet unpublished) version of my defense of my view, I explore a number of relational proposals that have been or could be made - -dispositional, aetiological, statistical- and discuss a number of difficulties that have been encountered in trying to work them out. Two problems in particular deserve mention: (i)

variability, and (ii) circularity.

## 2.41 Variability

The problem of variability is the obvious variability of context of people's perceptions and executions of their intentions within contexts, a variability that is much greater and more arbitrary than can serve the interests of linguistic theory. Speech seems to be almost necessarily contextualized, given that pronunciation of phones in isolation does not correspond to what is pronounced in normal speech: the phones /k/, /a/, and /t/ produced separately and spliced together are not readily recognized as the word "cat" (FBG:296). And efficient "top-down" processes "fill in" phones that are demonstrably absent, as when mere silence between the "s" and the "l" in "slit" is heard as "split" (FBG:295).<sup>13</sup>

The variability in speech perception and production is obvious from ordinary experience: there are plenty of people whose speech plenty of people can't understand, even when they speak "the same language," however one reasonably defines it. In addition to dialectal and regional differences, there are differences merely in pronunciation between people due to, e.g., age, gender, anatomy, speech impediments, personality, social class, and, even within a single person at certain stage of life, differences due to, e.g., social style (auctioneers, sports announcers, advertisers cramming in qualifications on the radio), auditory circumstances (singing, whispering in a small room, bellowing to a crowd), emotional intensity and relative inebriation. And, of course, people's abilities to "correct" for all this variability itself varies widely, with the consequence that one would be very hard put indeed to specify a "normal" listener, delivery and social context that would suffice for all speakers of "the same language" or even dialect.

To be sure, one shouldn't infer underlying from mere superficial chaos: as Chomskyans are the first to insist, there are *systems* of syntax, semantics and phonology constituting a linguistic competence that underlies the diversity of dialects and pronunciations. But the difficult question is to say precisely what that system is, at what level it is to be described, and, in particular, *whether there's any reason to suppose that it is tied to type identities among external stimuli*. Obviously, one would want to abstract from inebriation, and maybe emotional intensity. But what of the other "interferences"? Should linguistics be grounded by BBC newscasters, *l'Academic Française* or how sufficiently well educated lawyers entone in court? Phoneticians do not await such analyses any more than vision theory waits upon a dispositional analysis of worldly color (adjudicating the blue/green differences over which men and women regularly contend). To press Jespersen's famous quip, a relationally defined phonology would seem at best an idiolect with a gun-boat --and an obsessive, *a priori* philosopher at the helm!

## 2.42 Circularity

A second difficulty of relational analyses is the risk of falling into circularity in spelling

---

13. I assume we shouldn't count silence in certain contexts as tokens of /p/, any more than we should count Kanizsa figures without sides as tokens of triangles.

out the relations. Even if we could decide what to count as the right speech produced and heard in the right circumstances, we would still need to delineate the SLEs without relying on the very characterization of them a dispositional or aetiological theory is trying to supply. Leading theories in phonology seem driven to characterize SLEs in terms of either a hearer's "categorical" *perception of a noise as an SLE*, or on a speaker's *intention to produce one* (see, e.g., Liberman and Mattingly (1985) and Bromberger and Halle (2000:pp24-5). But how are these perceptions or intentions to be understood on a relational analysis? As an intention to produce a sound that will be produced by just such an intention? To avoid vicious circularity, a dispositional theory would seem to need a characterization of the content of SLE representations (perceptions, intentions) that is independent of the objects dispositionally specified.

As I argue in my earlier papers, this independence would not appear to be satisfiable by currently fashionable Strong Externalist theories of content, which identify the content of a (primitive) representation with the external phenomena to which it bears some specific causal relation (as in Fodor 1990, Millikan 1998, 2004).<sup>14</sup> To his credit, Devitt is not a Strong Externalist, since he allows for "internal," "conceptual role" definitions of at least some primitive expressions (see Devitt 1996). Consequently, he might be able to characterize the content of a representation of an SLE in terms of some internally specified condition, for example, playing a certain role in the language system. But if such an internal role is sufficient to provide the content of a linguistic intention, then what's the point of additionally collecting together the noises some arbitrarily normalized execution of that intention might happen to bring about, especially if, as I've argued, those noises rarely if ever satisfy that original content?

### 2.43 Why Bother?

Perhaps there is some ingenious combination of dispositional and aetiological approach that could circumvent these two difficulties and provide a relational analyses. But, given these difficulties, one might wonder why it's so important to provide one. As Chomsky remarks:

Suppose we postulate that corresponding to an element "a" of phonetic form there is an external object "\*a" that "a" selects as its *phonetic value*; thus, the element [ba] in Jones's I-language picks out some entity \*[ba], "shared" with Smith if there is a counterpart in his I-language. Communication could then be described in terms of such (partially) shared entities, which are easy enough to construct: take "\*a" to be the singleton set {a}, or {3, a}; or, if one wants a more realistic feel, some construct based on motions of molecules. With sufficient heroism, one could defend such a view, though no one does, because it's clear we are just spinning wheels. –(2000:129)

---

14. What I call "Strong Externalism" is the insistence that content is constituted by a real phenomenon to which primitive internal representations bear some causal relation. "Weak Externalism" is the much less problematic view that the content of *some* representations depends in part upon *some or other* relations those representations bear to the external world. I think it's important to notice that the standard examples marshalled by Kripke, Putnam and Burge invite Externalism only of this weaker sort. Strong Externalist theories are, I think, rash conjectures about how to explain such examples.

Why does he think it would be wheel spinning? Because if one looks at the theoretical work SLEs are supposed to perform in a theory, their definition in terms of acoustic phenomena –indeed, their very existence– is entirely *needless* and extraneous to linguistic theory. For recall how linguistics discusses SLEs. Outside of acoustic phonetics of the sort that we have quoted, linguists almost never discuss formants. Rather, they discuss how SLEs enter into complex sequences: phones into phonemes, phonemes into morphemes, morphemes into words and syllables, words into phrases, sentences, and sentences into discourse. Along the way, the sequences may actually be structured trees, involving additional “null” elements, posited to round out certain structures, record “movement” or co-indexing, and so forth. There are abundant theories and disputes about the specific structures, rules, principles and parameters for these structures –i.e., the substance of linguistics, whose details do not wait upon relational analyses of the sort Devitt expects (in the way that details of, for example, biology, might wait upon an analysis of what constitutes a species or a trait).

## 2.5 Intuitions

Besides avoiding wheel-spinning, another advantage of Folieism is that it provides a much more plausible account than Devitt’s of the special status of “intuitions” in linguistics. If Folieism is correct, then intuitions needn’t be taken as judgments about any real objects in the external world, in the way that Devitt (IgL:§13) insists. Rather, they may be taken as evidence about the linguistic inexistents projected by the language faculty, which, by (DEF), would simply be evidence about the contents of the representations produced by that faculty. Linguistic intuitions would enjoy precisely the same status as perceptual ones, for example, the perceptual judgments people make about “how things look” that are the evidence for the structure and content of the visual system. Thus, subjects’ reports that “himself” can’t be (co-indexed with) “he” in *He hopes Bob will help himself* have the same status as their visual reports that the Kanizsa triangle looks as though it’s on top of the pacmen, or the interior of the triangle looks brighter than its surrounds.

Of course, no one yet has a good account of how we have such knowledge. Presumably it has to do with people’s relatively immediate access to the outputs of their perceptual or other cognitive modules. It certainly doesn’t appear to be on a par with the usual empirical knowledge of the *external world* in the way that Devitt suggests. People’s reports of how the Kanizsa triangle *looks* to them are not refuted on the basis of facts about what they’re actually seeing. Similarly, one would be hard put to refute the above speaker’s intuitions about “himself” not being “He” merely on the basis of theory of (the E-language) English. If the speaker’s intuitions don’t agree with those of others –or of the BBC– then, fine, perhaps she doesn’t speak exactly the same language as they do. Who --besides the BBC– cares? At best it’s an issue of sociological interest. It is explicitly not the interest of the Chomskyan linguist whose appeal to intuitions Devitt is challenging. The Chomskyan is explicitly interested in characterizing a speaker/hearer’s internal linguistic competence, just as a vision theorist is interested in characterizing the visual system; and *for those purposes* the spontaneous reports of “appear-

ances” provide not only excellent evidence, but, by and large, the only serious evidence we have.

Devitt objects to this perceptual analogy, claiming that, just as it’s the “task” of the visual system to deliver information about what is seen, so is it “task” of the language system to deliver information about what is said:

Perceptual judgments are not good analogues of linguistic intuitions. Consider the visual module. Its task is to deliver information to the central processor of what is seen, information that is indeed the immediate and main basis for judging what is seen; ...“That grass is brown,” “That person is angry,” “This is an echidna but that isn’t” and “a pig’s jawbone” are examples of such judgments. Sometimes what is delivered is misinformation; for example, “There is water on the road” when experiencing a mirage. Locutions like ‘looks like’ enable us to allow for the possibility of misinformation in reporting these deliverances... The language module has the tasks of language production and comprehension. The task of production is clearly not analogous to the task of the visual module but the task of comprehension is: it is to deliver information to the central processor of what is said, information that is the immediate and main basis for judging what is said, for judging “the message.” So, intuitions about what the message is are analogous to intuitions about what is seen. But the former intuitions are not the ones that concern us: for, they are not intuitions about the syntactic and semantic properties of expressions. If the objection is to be effective, it would have to be the case that the language module also delivers information of those syntactic and semantic properties, information that would be the immediate basis for the intuitions that concern us. But the view that the module does deliver this information is, of course, precisely what is at issue and so it needs an independent argument. -- (IgL:§7.6; ms.:173)

However, all of this seriously misconstrues the projects of both the vision theorist and the Chomskyan linguist. I’m not sure precisely what Devitt has in mind in allocating “tasks” to vision and language perception –does he mean that these are the (teleo-?) “functions” of these systems? What’s the evidence for that?– but, putting aside the truism that vision and language certainly help with these tasks, surely neither the vision theorist nor the linguist confine the levels of representation deployed by those systems to merely those tasks; nor are they committed to the *output* of these systems being couched as reports about the external world.

Precisely what the output is of perceptual modules is, not surprisingly, an issue of subtle empirical detail, not likely to be settled by speculations about their teleology, nor by ordinary reflection and introspection. For notorious example, it remains a vexing methodological problem with regard to both language and vision how to disconfound central from module-internal top-down processing, as in the case of understanding the phoneme restoration effect (Fodor 1983:76ff) and in trying to characterize the output of the visual system generally (Pylyshyn 2003:73-6). The presumption of modularity theorists is that the output is fairly “shallow,” not requiring access to categories stored in central memory. Thus, in passages just a page before the

passage on this topic that Devitt (IgL:§7.6 ms:176) himself quotes, Fodor (1983:93) insists that the visual module “should not categorize visual stimuli in such terms as proton trace” (1983:93). And, more recently, Pylyshyn (2003) writes:

The perceptual classes induced by early vision...do not, for example, correspond to meaningful categories in terms of which objects are identified when we talk about “perceiving as,” e.g., perceiving something as a face or as Mary’s face, and so on. To a first approximation, the classes provided by the visual system are shape classes, expressible in something like the vocabulary of geometry. --(p134)

Thus, the outputs of vision are unlikely to be the centrally informed “This is an echidna” or “That’s a pig’s jawbone.”

Moreover, as is evident in Pylyshyn’s (but really any) discussion of the topic, a main source of evidence of the output of “encapsulated” modules are the persistent visual illusions –illusions, such as the Müller-Lyer, that persist even after the subject “centrally” knows better. The output, that is, is not a description of *what is seen*, but rather *how things look* –where the “things” may manifestly *not exist in the external world*, as in the case of Kanizsa figures, or, for that matter, in the case of the pure geometric forms such as circles, triangles, cones (as Plato pointed out, it would be impossible to encounter a genuine circle or square in the spatio-temporal world –especially, one might add, any that were *Euclidean*). And, at least at this point in our knowledge, it’s hard to think of better evidence for such illusory appearances than the perceptual judgments, or “intuitions,” that people spontaneously produce about “how things look.”

Similarly, linguistics is at least partly concerned with “how language sounds.” Thus, Chomsky and Halle (1968) write with regard to phonology:

We do not doubt that the stress contours and other phonetic facts...constitute some sort of perceptual reality for those who know the language in question. In fact we are suggesting a principled explanation for this conclusion. A person who knows the language should “hear” the predicted phonetic shapes... We take for granted, then, that *phonetic representations describe a perceptual reality*.  
--(Chomsky and Halle 1968:p25, italics mine)

And, more generally (and, again, in the same discussion of *modularity* that Devitt cites), Fodor presses the very claim Devitt is denying, viz., that the language module “deliver[s] representations which specify, for example, morphemic constituency, syntactic structure and logical form” (Fodor 1983:93). Devitt thinks this is implausible:

Indeed if the language module did deliver this information it would be *disanalogous* to a perceptual module. ... According to the standard explanation, the language module delivers syntactic and semantic information about expressions to the central processor. If it did this it would be *disanalogous* to perceptual modules... For, if it did, the central processor would have direct access to information that the language module allegedly uses to fulfil its task of

processing language. But nobody supposes that the central processor has direct access to analogous information used by perceptual modules to fulfill their processing tasks. Thus, the visual module simply tells the central processor what is seen: something along the lines of brown grass, angry person, an echidna, a pig's jawbone, water on the road, and so on. It does not deliver whatever information the module may use to arrive at such conclusions; it does not deliver "Marr's 'primal', '2.5 D', and '3 D' sketch" (Fodor 1983:94).

–(IgL:§7.6 ms:176)

But, of course, certainly for *Fodor*, the fact that constituent structure may be the output of the language module doesn't at all entail that the central processor has access to the processes or information *inside* the module that give rise to these representations. But it does need to look at the *results* of the processes, and Fodor argues that those results include representations of, e.g, phonetic and syntactic structure.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, despite the passing remark of Fodor's that Devitt notes, a common suggestion about the output of vision is that it *does* consist of Marr's 2-1/2D sketch (see Jackendoff 1987, Pylyshyn 2003:136)!

Thus, contrary to Devitt's characterization of them, the "tasks" of both vision and the language system seem to involve computing idiosyncratic information that may well not correspond to genuine external phenomena. The visual system seems to represent all manner of non-existent forms, and the language system is manifestly sensitive to a plethora of distinctions, such as case, gender, agreement, that we have no reason to believe are properties of acoustic signals, or are even relevant to recovering the "message" the speaker intended. We seem to have a visual system that represents *internally generated* contents (probably determined by the character of internal computations), and a language systems that processes *internally generated* facts about the sentences that speakers (or their sub-systems) intend to use to communicate their messages, along with the messages themselves. That, at any rate, is the moral that appears to emerge from current work in vision and grammar, which is why theorists of vision and language like Pylyshyn and Chomsky take the domain of their inquiry to be primarily psychological.

So, Devitt's characterization of the "task" of the language system, "to deliver information

---

15. Devitt dismisses some of the typical evidence in this regard:

The outputs of the language module do indeed throw an interesting light on the nature of that module; consider, for example, the significance of garden-path phenomena in comprehension and slips of the tongue in production. But these phenomena are examples of language usage; they are not intuitions about the linguistic properties of the expressions that result from that usage.

--(IgL:§7.5; ms:174).

But I simply can't see why he thinks the evidential role of garden-path phenomena is confined to "language use" –I would have thought it was paradigmatically a phenomenon of linguistic *perception*, indeed, one that revealed its (in this case over-hasty) computation of syntactic structure. Subjects stumble with "The horse raced past the barn fell" precisely because of their (mis-)perceiving "raced" as the main verb of the sentence. Even if they don't consciously know about "main verbs," the output of their parser had better have provided them enough representation of the syntactic structure to be able to determine that category, as well as others to which they are demonstrably sensitive (as, for example, in the famous "click" experiments, see FBG:252-3).

to the central processor of what is said, information that is the immediate and main basis for judging what is said," is at odds with Chomskyan and other modularist characterizations of that task, and this, of course, is what is largely responsible for his insistence that "syntactic investigations ... are not psychological," and for his claim, at variance with my own, that "a linguistic symbol... objectively exists with its linguistic properties apart from its mental representation" (IgL:39).

Now, perhaps, contrary to Chomsky's and my claims, Devitt could make a case for the existence of language apart from our internal representations of it. If he could, and if that theory turned out to have as substantial explanatory power as Chomsky's, then more power to him. He would then be right that people's "intuitions" about these objective issues would be on a par with their beliefs about the external world generally. But I don't see that he has remotely made any such case.

It's instructive to consider the analogy Devitt makes with the "bee language" discussed by von Frisch and others (Igl:pp20ff). In the case of the bees Devitt is quite right to point out that the regularities can be studied independently of the bee's psychology. That's because the regularities that interest von Frisch are by large semantic, and, moreover, fairly simply so, involving correlations between certain motions of the bees and the actual position of nectar and the sun. In order for the analogy between people and bees to work there would have to be similarly good correlations between human language and reality that could also be studied in this way. Perhaps there are here and there. But my claim, which I take to echoing the claim of many linguists, is that there aren't even clear enough external phenomena to identify as the "symbols," much less establish correlations with the plethora of phenomena, real and unreal, that they symbolize. Again, the burden would be on Devitt to show otherwise. He'd have to show that SLEs could be characterized as independently of psychology as the bee dance apparently can be, and that these SLEs, so characterized, covary regularly enough with external phenomena. The only effort ever to show any such thing was Skinner's, an effort I trust Devitt does not think we need rehearse. Thus, unlike the case of the bees, we are left with the an investigation of the internal psychology of the symbol producers alone; and, for that project, unlike Devitt's, intuitions –sometimes about intentional inexistents– may well be the breath of evidential life.

### **3. Conclusion**

Devitt summarizes his objections to Folieism thus:

In sum, in response to Rey's argument, I would argue that linguistic entities really exist even though they are relational and even though the one expression can appear in a variety of physical forms. In response to his conclusions, I have argued that it is in virtue of the conventional meanings of linguistic entities that the entities play their extraordinarily important role in communicating messages. It is in virtue of those meanings that a language is acquired. Linguistic properties do play causal roles. If there really weren't any linguistic entities, communication

would be miraculous and language learning a mystery. Our theoretical interest in language is in conventional meanings. –(IgL:§10.6; ms:294)

I hope I've said enough here to allay his fears about miracles and mysteries. Indeed, even Devitt has to allow that perception of language is a complex affair, proceeding on the basis of often fragmentary auditory cues. The only difference is that Devitt wants to lasoo these cues into actual tokens of SLEs. So far as I can see, this serves no role other than saving the ordinary intuition that SLEs actually get uttered; and it has the unfortunate effect of also distracting Devitt into thinking that linguistic intuitions are then about the tokens so lasooed. But that would be like insisting that Kanizsa triangles really do exist on the page, and that vision theory is about *them*. But why burden either vision theory or linguistics in this way? To make a pretentious analogy, it would seem as pointless as burdening physics with a notion of absolute space: we could, of course, take the earth as "at rest" along the lines of much ordinary thought; but Einstein's point is that such a stipulation would make absolutely no difference to the laws of physics. Just so, we might find a way of defining SLEs as classes of certain acoustic cues; but this would make no difference to linguistic explanation.

Over the years, Devitt has been an admirable champion of the realist cause against the degradations of relativists and idealists, who often make arguments disturbingly similar to the argument I have made here. Discovering that we often impose concepts on a messy world like that presented by acoustics has led many to suppose that nothing in the world could correspond to them. That would be a mistake, and it isn't my argument. I'm perfectly prepared to think that sometimes the concepts we impose do succeed in picking out real things. I argued in my (2005a) that this was manifestly true in the case of my concept [car] and many other ordinary and scientific concepts. I just want to insist that, if a concept does apply, then the things to which it applies need to earn their explanatory keep. There had better be some reason to believe in those things, other than merely that they ordinarily *appear* to exist. Cars, with their elaborate internal structure, do earn their keep: it's by virtue of their actual structure that they move as they do. SLEs, I've argued, do not. "Their" apparent efficacy is nothing more the efficacy of our *representations* of them. Good Quinean that Devitt often takes himself to be, I should think he would be interested in positing only entities that are needed by good theory, not, as a bad old Moorean, positing entities merely because they accord with ordinary thought and talk.

\*\*\*\*\*

*References:*

- Bromberger, S. and Halle, M. (2000), "The Ontology of Phonology (Revised)," in Burton-Roberts, N., Carr, P., and Docherty, G., *Phonological Knowledge: Conceptual and Empirical Approaches*, Oxford University Press
- Cartwright, R. (1960/87), "Negative Existentials," in his *Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge: MIT Press
- Chomsky, N. (1955/75), *Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory*, New York: Plenum
- , (1980), *Rules and Representations*, New York: Columbia University Press

- , (2000), *New Horizons in the Study of Language*, Cambridge University Press
- , (2003), "Reply to Rey," in L. Antony and N. Hornstein, *Chomsky and His Critics*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Chomsky, N. and Halle, M. (1968), *The Sound Pattern of English*, New York: Harper and Row
- Devitt, M. (1996), *Coming to Out Senses*, Cambridge University Press
- Devitt, M. (forthcoming), *Ignorance of Language*, Oxford UP
- Evans, G. (1982), *Varieties of Reference*, Oxford University Press
- Fodor, J., (1975), *The Language of Thought*, New York: Crowell
- , (1990), *A Theory of Content*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press
- , (1998), *Concepts: Where Cognitive Science Went Wrong*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press
- Fodor, J. , Bever, T., and Garrett, M. (1974), *The Psychology of Language*, New York: McGraw Hill
- Goodman, N. (1956), *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill
- Hale, M. and Reis, C. (2000), "Phonology as Cognition," in *Phonological Knowledge: Conceptual and Empirical Issues*, Oxford University Press
- Jackendoff, R. (1987), *Consciousness and the Computational Mind*, MIT
- Jutronic, D. (2005), "Chomsky Amongst the Philosophers," *Croatian Journal of Philosophy*, V(15):423-32
- Kenstowicz, M. (1994), *Phonology in Generative Grammar*, Cambridge (MA): Blackwell's
- Laver, J. (1993), *Principles of Phonetics*, Cambridge UP
- Lieberman, A., Borman, M. and Rafael, L. (1996), "Some Experiments on the Sound of Silence in Phonetic Perception," in Lieberman (1996), *Speech: an Internal Code*, Cambridge: MIT Press
- Lieberman, A. and Mattingly, I. (1985), "The Motor Theory of Speech Revised," *Cognition* 21:1-36
- McGinn, C. (2000), *Logical Properties: Identity, Existence, Predication, Necessity, Truth*, Oxford University Press.
- Meinong, A. (1904/82), "The Theory of Objects," translated and ed by Chisholm, R. in his *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*, Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview, pp76-117 (originally published as "Uber Gegenstandstheorie," in Meinong's *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*, Leipzig: Barth, 1904, pp1-50)
- Millikan, R. (2000), *On Clear and Confused Ideas*, Cambridge University Press
- Millikan, R. (2005), "Comments on `Millikan's (Un?)Compromised Externalism,'" in Schantz, R., *The Externalist Challenge: New Studies on Cognition and Intentionality*, New York: de Gruyter, pp361-5.
- Parsons, T. (1980), *Nonexistent Objects*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980
- Peacocke, C. (1994), *Concepts: A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press
- Pylyshyn, Z. (2003), *Seeing and Visualizing: It's Not What You Think*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press

Rey, G. (1997), *Contemporary Philosophy of Mind: a Contentiously Classical Approach*, Oxford: Blackwell

Rey, G. (2003a), "Chomsky, Intentionality and a CRTT" in *Chomsky and His Critics*, ed. by L. Antony and N. Hornstein, Oxford: Blackwell

— (2003b), "Representational Content and a Chomskyan Linguistics," for *Epistemology of Language*, ed. by Alex Barber, Oxford University Press

— (2005a), "The Intentional Inexistence of Language –But Not Cars," *Debates in Cognitive Science*, ed. by R. Stainton, Oxford: Blackwell

— (2005b), "Mind, Intentionality and Inexistence: an Overview of My Work," with "Replies to Commentators," *Croatian Journal of Philosophy*, V(15), pp389-416.

Sapir, E. (1933/63), "The Psychological Reality of the Phoneme," in D. Mandelbaum (ed.), *The Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Taylor, K. (2003), *Reference and the Rational Mind*, Stanford: CSLI Publications