Talking Heads: Language, Metalanguage and the Semiotics of Subjectivity. BENJAMIN LEE. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997. Pp. ix + 376. $54.95 (cloth), $18.95 (paper).

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The phrase "talking heads" in the title of Benjamin Lee's book refers to any model of discourse based one or more of the following assumptions: that communication involves the transmission of ideas between two autonomous subjectivities; that the activity of formulating such ideas is, in principle, independent of the activity of speaking; that utterances are neutral vehicles carrying (already formed) ideas from one mind to another. Such "talking heads" models of language and subjectivity flourished in the work of nineteenth-century thinkers such as Frege and Saussure, and, through their work, came to influence many twentieth-century theories of language as well. Lee's book is concerned with the origins of such models: What motivates such ideas about subjectivity? What makes them persuasive?

The main thesis of the book is that folk theories about abstractions such as subjectivity do not emerge ex nihilo but are formulated as Boasian "secondary rationalizations" about linguistic patterns representing mental states and activities. The preeminence of language in this process lies not in its capacity to express mental contents (since these can be expressed nonlinguistically as well) but in the existence in natural languages of specific metalinguistic patterns that appear to fix or specify the linguistically expressed contents of a mind in a highly transparent way. Particularly crucial, Lee argues, are cases where the linguistic pattern consists of a two-part structure in which the first element typifies the second. For example, in constructions where metalinguistic predicates of reported speech, reported thought, or performativity are syntactically linked to embedded clauses, the matrix clause appears to frame the embedded clause as the "contents of a mind" (sometimes called its "propositional attitudes"). Lee argues that such structures have played an important and recurrent role in the formulation of models of subjectivity in Western culture.

The models that Lee discusses include some of the most influential accounts of subjectivity in modern times: Descartes's "Cogito"; Frege's views of the nature of "thought"; the intentional agent of speech-act theory; the "stream of consciousness" of modernist literature; and models of political subjectivity such as the "voice of the people" and "public opinion," understood as the collective will of the modern nation-state. Throughout, Lee is interested in the relationship between ideas of subjectivity and the metalinguistic devices used to grapple with and articulate these ideas. Lee's treatment of these materials reflects a firm grasp of major developments in several fields, including linguistics, philosophy of language, literature, and political theory.

An important thread that runs through the first two-thirds of the book is a critique of mentalist theories of semantics deriving from the philosophical work of Frege (and, to a lesser extent, Russell). These theories have proved influential in many versions of linguistic semantics, a fact that is not without irony since Frege's own energies were directed not at the study of natural language but at problems in logic and the philosophy of mathematics. But a deeper irony is that once borrowed into linguistics, these ideas acquired a kind of received authority among linguists even though they face serious challenges within philosophy itself.

One such doctrine is the Fregean view that sense determines reference, or the broadly analogous Russellian view that a term's descriptive content determines its reference. Before the critique of descriptivism matured some thirty years ago, various forms of this doctrine (e.g., that concepts determine reference independently of context; that intensions determine extensions) were widely accepted by philosophers of different

stripes. But since the 1970s some of the most influential work in the philosophy of language argues that such doctrines are based on incorrect analogies between mathematics and natural language. For example, Frege observed that the expressions 2^4 and 4^2 refer to the same number (i.e., sixteen), but have different senses (or "present" the referent differently, as the quotient of different computations). He then formulated an analogy for the case of proper names, arguing that the names "Morning Star" and "Evening Star" both refer to the planet Venus, but differ in sense (or "present" the referent differently, by appealing to different times of day). But recent work by philosophers such as Kripke and Putnam has shown that the analogy between mathematics and natural language is not plausible here, that the reference of proper names and related expressions depends upon sociohistorical principles that *fix the indexical values* of natural language expressions (see below), and that such principles are not reducible to the property that Frege called "sense."

The underlying analogy to mathematics led Frege to a second conclusion about natural language, namely, that the "sense" of natural language expressions is timeless. By eliminating imperatives, requests and other indexically specific utterance types from theoretical consideration, and by employing the term "thought" for "sense of a sentence," Frege formulated the doctrine that sentences express indexically unanchored—hence "timeless"—thoughts, reflected most transparently in third-person present indicative statements. Since Frege had little to say about the rest of language, Frege-inspired theories such as Austin's doctrine of performativity sought to formulate accounts of indexicality on sense-based models. Such accounts fail to distinguish performativity from indexicality in general, and hence fail, as Austin himself recognized, to provide a clear foundation for the doctrine of performativity itself.

Between the realm of spatiotemporal material referents and timeless Platonic senses lay a third Fregean realm, that of ideas in the minds of particular individuals, the realm of mental states whose bearer is the referent of "I." This inner realm, once defined, was of little interest to Frege himself. Yet this vacant space of private subjectivity would draw the interest of several philosophers, from "reformed" Fregeans such as the later Wittgenstein (who sought to deconstruct Fregean and Cartesian models of subjectivity) to neo-Fregeans such as Searle (who sought a new foundation for performativity in a theory of intentionality).

Frege and Russell both believed that the activity of language use was largely irrelevant to the connection between language and reality, and that the connection itself depended on the fit between concepts (senses, descriptions) and referents. The view that reference can be explained in activity- and context-independent terms has been proven incorrect for even paradigmatic referring expressions such as proper names (Kripke 1972) and definite descriptions (Donellan 1966); the argument has been extended to common nouns of certain kinds as well (Putnam 1975). In the case of proper names, Kripke argues that the referring properties of names depend upon sociohistorical processes through which knowledge of a name-referent link spreads across, and becomes established for, a population of speakers. Putnam argues that, in the case of some common nouns, the criterion of identity by which the referent is fixed depends upon the fixing of indexical values through discursive practices backed by structures of expertise, the latter serving to confer social authority upon the values thus fixed. Donellan has shown that many uses of definite descriptions achieve reference even if the description is incorrect (e.g., the use of "the man drinking the martini" to refer to a person whose glass actually contains water). In such a use, the definite description serves as a context-dependent tool for doing a certain job, succeeding in context despite the lack of fit between concept and referent.

Since Kripke, Donellan, and Putnam employ entirely different methods of argumentation, their results are relatively independent of each other. Yet all three agree that

no set of properties inherent to a referring expression (i.e., its conceptual range, syntactico-semantic properties, descriptive content, etc.) is sufficient to establish the reference of the term. They argue that the relation of an expression to its referent is determined instead by a socio-historical chain of usages that "fixes the referent" in a way independent of its descriptive or conceptual content. All of this suggests that the semantic properties of language are much more dependent on social processes than the "talking heads" view of language would predict.

This book has much to offer linguists. It provides a good discussion of contemporary work on indexicality in linguistics and the philosophy of language, and of the relationship of this work to debates in the first half of the twentieth century. It also offers a detailed discussion of the discovery of indexicality by Peirce and its application to linguistic analysis in the work of Jakobson and Silverstein. The discussion of forms of literary and political subjectivity in the last two chapters is likely to be of particular interest to anthropologists, since it situates the discussion of theories of subjectivity in overtly cultural and historical terms.

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Modern Georgian Morphosyntax: A Grammatico-Categorial Hierarchy-Based Analysis with Special Reference to *Indirect Verbs* and *Passives of State.* MARCELLO CHERCHI. Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997. Pp. xiii + 350. DM 128.00 (hardcover).

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Most recent descriptions of Georgian grammar group verbs into four classes or conjugations. While classification varies from author to author, the criteria most commonly invoked are lexical aspect (atelic vs. telic), or the morphology of the future-tense form, which is strongly correlated with this distinction and the phenomenon of case-shift. The latter criterion refers to the morphosyntactic properties of transitive and many intransitive verbs, which assign ergative case to their subjects in the so-called series II paradigms (aorist and optative) and dative case in the series III paradigms (perfect, pluperfect). By means of these two cross-cutting parameters, the following four classes are defined:

- Class 1 (case-shifting, future = present + preverb). These are mostly transitive, e.g., *v-a-šiv-eb* 'I make someone or something go hungry'; future: *m=v-a-šiv-eb.*
- Class 2 (non-case-shifting, future = present + preverb). This category includes telic intransitives (passive, inchoative, etc.), e.g., *m-šiv-d-eb-a* 'I become hungry'; future: *mo=m-šiv-d-eb-a.*