



Reference and Description: The Case against Two-Dimensionalism

Scott Soames

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In this book, Scott Soames defends the revolution in philosophy led by Saul Kripke, Hilary Putnam, and David Kaplan against attack from those wishing to revive descriptivism in the philosophy of language, internalism in the philosophy of mind, and conceptualism in the foundations of modality. Soames explains how, in the last twenty-five years, this attack on the anti-descriptivist revolution has coalesced around a technical development called two-dimensional modal logic that seeks to reinterpret the Kripkean categories of the necessary a posteriori and the contingent a priori in ways that drain them of their far-reaching philosophical significance.

Arguing against this reinterpretation, Soames shows how the descriptivist revival has been aided by puzzles and problems ushered in by the anti-descriptivist revolution, as well as by certain errors and missteps in the anti-descriptivist classics themselves. *Reference and Description* sorts through all this, assesses and consolidates the genuine legacy of Kripke and Kaplan, and launches a thorough and devastating critique of the two-dimensionalist revival of descriptivism. Through it all, Soames attempts to provide the outlines of a lasting, nondescriptivist perspective on meaning, and a nonconceptualist understanding of modality.

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