A whole book – albeit a short one – on the proper noun (PN) may come as a surprise, since the topic occupies little space in most grammars, probably because it does not seem to present too many problems at the production level. S. Leroy demonstrates, however, that there is much more to the PN than meets the eye. To do so she examines the PN from every possible angle (lexical, morphological, syntactical and semantic), referring both to previous research and to her own. The result is a clear and up-to-date account of the subject, and a conclusion outlining where further research is needed.

She starts by showing the inadequacy of current definitions. For example, they do not take into account the unclear status of many PNs. Thus the PN *Pont-Neuf* was, once upon a time a common noun (CN), and what is the status of *Bonne-Maman* in *les confitures Bonne-Maman?* Nor do they take into account the possibility that, just like CNs, they may be preceded by a determiner, and modified in various ways as in *c'est un vrai Don Juan*. Hence the need to further refine the concept.

To do so, S. Leroy develops an interesting typology, in which she distinguishes between anthroponyms, toponyms, ergonyms (referring to human material realisations such as Kleenex or Microsoft), praxonyms (referring to non-material realisations such as the Hundred Years War) and phenonyms (referring to natural

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phenomenons such as El Niño). She then accounts for all the ways in which a PN may become a CN and vice versa. To do so, she starts by breaking down various PNs into smaller categories, according to whether or not they may take a determiner (contrast *je pense au Tréport/*à Le Tréport* and *je pense à Le Clézio/*au Clézio*). She then examines how they may take suffixes as in *moliéresque,* or be modified post-nominally by a noun phrase as in *Elisabeth la discrète*. Finally, from a syntactic point of view, she shows how PNs, which are supposed to have a purely referential function, may in some cases become predicative.

From a semantic point of view, neither the onomastic approach nor the approaches adopted in logic are satisfactory to analyse statements such as *Montand était devenu Montand*. S. Leroy hails G. Kleiber's 1981 approach as the first step in the right direction, at least from a linguistic point of view. The suggested solution is an interpretive one, based on the PN having fewer inherent semes than the CN, but being capable of taking on extra ones in given contexts. Such an approach is complicated, however, since it takes account not only of the links PNs may have with other lexical items, but the need to include both textual and situational approaches. She concludes that it is in this area that further research is required. For those not wishing to go down this path, this book offers a nice overview of the subject, alerting the reader to some of the unexpected subtleties of the PN.

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