

The *qua*-Problem, Meaning Scepticism, and the Life-World

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Abstract

Michael Devitt and Kim Sterelny (*Language and reality: An introduction to the philosophy of language*. MIT Press, Cambridge, 1999) argue that the pure causal theory of reference faces a problem, which they call *the qua-problem*. They propose to invoke intentional states to cope with it. Martin Kusch (*A sceptical guide to meaning and rules*. Acumen, Chesham, 2006), however, argues that, because Devitt and Sterelny invoke intentional states to solve the problem, their causal-hybrid theory of reference is susceptible to Kripke's sceptical attack. Kusch thinks that intentional states are what allows the sceptic to get a foothold and thus interpret words in a weird way. In his view, Kripke is therefore correct in not regarding a causal theory as a solution to the problem. I think, however, that there is room to defend a causal-hybrid theory of reference. Drawing on Husserl's notion of the life-world, I argue that this notion is helpful for overcoming some aspects of the *qua*-problem and the meaning scepticism which Devitt and Sterelny's causal-hybrid theory of reference faces.