

Title: Possible Worlds, Events and Attributive Adjectives

Abstract:

One problem for those engaged in formal semantics is posed by attributive adjectives. One may think that a sentence like "Thomas is a red tank-engine" can be given a truth condition like: Thomas is red and Thomas is a tank engine. But this is not possible with attributive adjectives. One cannot give to "Bardot is a good actress" the truth condition Bardot is good and Bardot is an actress. The availability of certain machinery makes it possible to solve this problem. The general question that this raises is this: which machinery can and cannot be used in the construction of truth conditional theories? For instance Davidsonians and Neo-Davidsonians have been quite content to use events, but hostile to possible worlds.

In this paper I propose to discuss some reasons that we might rule certain machinery acceptable or not and to draw out the consequences for one proposed treatment of attributive adjectives.