Foundational Semantics II: Normative Accounts

Manuel García-Carpintero*
University of Barcelona

Abstract
Descriptive semantic theories purport to characterize the meanings of the expressions of languages in whatever complexity they might have. Foundational semantics purports to identify the kind of considerations relevant to establish that a given descriptive semantics accurately characterizes the language used by a given individual or community. Foundational Semantics I presents three contrasting approaches to the foundational matters, and the main considerations relevant to appraise their merits. These approaches contend that we should look at the contents of speakers' intuitions; at the deep psychology of users and its evolutionary history, as revealed by our best empirical theories; or at the personal-level rational psychology of those subjects. Foundational Semantics II examines a fourth view, according to which we should look instead at norms enforced among speakers. The two papers aim to determine in addition the extent to which the approaches are really rival, or rather complementary.

1. Introduction

Given a language actually used by a population (perhaps the idiolect of a single individual at a time), its (descriptive) semantics consists of the attribution to it of semantic features effected in the abstract language that correctly characterizes it; its foundational semantics (metasemantics), of the facts determining that the language has that particular (descriptive) semantics. In a companion piece, ''Foundational Semantics I: Descriptive Account'', I have critically examined four accounts of the sort of facts that a foundational semantics should envisage: the contents of those of our intuitions about truth-conditions, validity, etc., acknowledged by an elegant, simple and explanatorily powerful system (vis-à-vis questions about similarities and differences among languages, etc.) encompassing them, on the Platonist account put forward by Katz, Soames and others; a selected portion of the communicative intentions of speakers expressed by means of devices conventionally designed for that purpose, on the Gricean view; the communicative behavior that would count as evidence for the interpretive recursive specification of truth-conditions to be provided by an ideal radical interpreter, on the Davidsonian proposal; and whatever neuroscientific data (about the acquisition of language, experimental results, the generation of creoles out of pidgins, and so on) counts as manifestation of the internalized competence of a speaker, on the Chomskyan proposal. My presentation highlighted the strength of the latter suggestion.

The Platonist view is a no-reasons proposal, in that psychological states of speakers are irrelevant to the nature of languages, and thereby to their proper descriptive semantics and the foundational facts determining them: it is only the *content* of semantic intuitions that is relevant, not the intuitions themselves. The Chomskyan account is on the other hand psychologistic, but it is also a no-reasons view because among the states providing foundational facts the most distinctive ones are not consciously available and do not

constitute reasons − even if, in fact, linguists mostly appeal just to the intuitions that their own competence and that of fellow speakers make available.[1] Both the Gricean and the Davidsonian approach, on the other hand, emphasize *motivating* reasons, that is, contents of psychological states that play a causal role in folk-psychological explanations of behavior.[2]

In this paper, I will present alternative *normative reasons* approaches to foundational semantics. *Normative* reasons are, like motivating reasons, propositions, states of affairs or facts; but, while motivating reasons are straightforwardly contents of psychological states that play a causal role in behavior, the relation of normative reasons with the psychological states of agents, if any exists, is more complex and indirect than in the case of motivating reasons. For it is uncontroversial that agents may have normative reasons that, because of ignorance or error on their part, do not move them to act. *Internalists* − defenders of the *Humean Theory of Reasons*, the view that, for someone to have a normative reason for doing something, he must actually have some desire that would have been served by his doing it − insist that there must be a substantive relation between normative and motivating reasons. Thus, for instance, on a dispositionalist, ''secondary-property'' account inspired by Lewis ('Dispositional Theories of Value') which, properly elaborated, I like, normative reasons result from values, which are in their turn objects of second-order desires: things we would desire to desire under specific circumstances. We cannot go into this debate here; cf. Sinhababu and Wedgwood for recent defenses.

It is not possible to be a full-fledged syncretist in this area, because some of the views constitutively reject the relevance of the factors that the others posit. I will suggest, however, that normative reasons approach should in fact encompass the sort of facts mentioned in some of the non-normative accounts, and are compatible with them.

2. *Kripkensteinian Developments*

Famously, Wittgenstein's later philosophy establishes a constitutive connection between *language* and *norms* or *rules*; Kripke's widely debated interpretation has further encouraged discussion about the role of normative reasons in characterizing languages. Kripke's presentation appeals to rules or norms such as these:

(Plus) If one means *addition* by '+', one ought (to answer '125' if asked '68 + 57?').
(Circ) If one means *being circular* by 'circular', then one ought not (to apply 'circular' to
   o if *o* is not circular) and one is permitted (to apply 'circular' to *o* if *o* is circular).

This debate is intricate; in the following pages I will limit myself to developing without much justification a line of thought that I find compelling.[3] I have chosen the illustrative examples above, phrasing them and explicitly providing scope indications with this idea in mind. Note that the obligation in (Plus) mentions a speech act, *answering*, which presumably involves *asserting*, and so does the one in (Circ) under the interpretation I intend for *applying* − which I also take to be a form of assertion. I agree that, in an alternative interpretation on which 'to apply' just means *predicating* − cf. Glüer and Wikforss 'The Normativity of Meaning and Content', 2.1.1; 'Against Content Normativity', 35–6 − we do not have here genuine rules giving normative reasons for agents to act. Let me elaborate.

Most speech acts have representational contents, which can be shared by acts of different illocutionary types. Representational contents, or *propositions*, encode correctness conditions with respect to different possible worlds: conditions that (putting aside necessarily true or necessarily false contents) obtain with respect to some worlds, perhaps the actual world among them, and not with respect to others. But the notion of

''correctness'' here at stake is an etiolated one for present purposes. I can assert p, deny p, order p, or (in fiction-making mood) propose that you imagine p. Arguably, that p is not the case in the actual world (not just *now*, but speaking atemporally *sub specie æternitate*) does not by itself make the order incorrect, and certainly does not make either the denial or the act of fiction-making incorrect; while it makes the assertion so. Similarly, that p is the case in the actual world does not make the order correct – it might have been a stupid one, or given without any proper authority, thus providing no genuinely normative reason for the recipient to act; nor, again, does it thereby make the act of fiction-making correct: p might well be a totally uninteresting thing for anybody to imagine. Arguably, however, it might be enough for making the assertion correct.

Hence, the correctness conditions encoded by propositions do not constitute in themselves *normative reasons*. They effect *a division* of representational contents into two classes (with respect to any possible world): those obtaining with respect to – correctly representing – the world, and those not obtaining with respect to it.[4] That a representational act represents an obtaining proposition does not, by itself, furnish any agent with a normative reason; in order to discern such a reason we need to know, in addition to the content, what the illocutionary act is – what is its ''point''.[5]

I take it that rules like (Plus) and (Circ) are intuitively ''primitively compelling'', to use Peacocke's ('Understanding Logical Constants: A Realist's Account') terminology.[6] In fundamental cases of following norms such as the one we are considering here, our primitive normative impressions concern particular cases; nonetheless, we can try to articulate a general pattern to which they conform which explains them.[7] Is there such an explanation for the normative sensitivity illustrated by (Plus) and (Circ), and particularly by our feelings concerning violations thereof? I will offer one that appeals on the one hand to accounts of speech acts in terms of constitutive rules, along the lines of Austin's, Searle's, Alston's, or Williamson's for the specific case of assertion; on the other, to a view of meanings of natural language sentences as *speech act potentials*, as developed by Alston and others. I will now briefly outline both ideas.

Williamson claims that the following norm or rule (the *knowledge rule*) is constitutive of assertion, and individuates it:

(KR) One must ((assert p) only if one knows p).

The obligation (KR) imposes is not *all things considered*, but *prima facie*; in any particular case, it can be overruled by stronger obligations imposed by other norms.[8] In the course of the ensuing debate, other writers have accepted Williamson's view that assertion is defined by constitutive rules, proposing alternative norms; thus, Weiner ('Must We Know What We Say?') proposes a *truth* rule, TR, and Lackey a *reasonableness* rule, RBR:

(TR) One must ((assert p) only if p).
(RBR) One must ((assert p) only if it is reasonable for one to believe p).

As a first motivation for his account, Williamson (252) mentions intuitive conversational patterns: we challenge assertions politely by asking ''How do you know?'' or, more aggressively, ''Do you know that?'' (252). Austin(138) already pointed out these patterns:

> [I]t is important to notice also that statements too are liable to infelicity of this kind in other ways also parallel to contracts, promises, warnings, &c. Just as we often say, for example, 'You cannot order me', in the sense 'You have not the right to order me', which is equivalent to

saying that you are not in the appropriate position to do so: so often there are things you can-not state – have no right to state – are in no position to state. You *cannot* now state how many people there are in the next room; if you say 'There are fifty people in the next room', I can only regard you as guessing or conjecturing.

As Hindriks notes, these facts about our practices of appraising assertions are by them-selves insufficient to justify normative accounts. For we also evaluate assertions relative to (invoking Rawls' well-known distinction) merely *regulative* norms, norms that regulate, relative to certain purposes, acts in themselves *constitutively* non-normative – for instance, as witty, polite or well-phrased. Hindriks shows that norms for assertion could be merely regulative of a constitutively non-normative practice, definable in the motivating reasons Gricean account that Bach and Harnish proposed, GA below ('R-intending' there is to be explicated in terms of Gricean *communicative intentions*). The regulative norms in ques-tion would then be derived from an ultimately *moral* sincerity rule such as SR:

(GA) To assert *p* is to utter a sentence that means *p* thereby R-intending the hearer to take the utterance as a reason to think that the speaker believes *p*.
(SR) In situations of normal trust, one ought to be sincere.

There are, however, serious considerations against non-normative accounts such as GA, and in favor of normative accounts such as TR or RBR. Firstly, there are well-known objections to Gricean accounts of speaker-meaning in general, of which GA is a special case for assertoric meaning, which strongly suggest that normative accounts are preferable (Vlach; Alston, ch. 2; Green, ch. 3). Thus, the clerk in the information booth uttering ''The flight will depart on time'', or the victim saying to his torturer ''I did not do it'', or any of us uttering to our neighbor in the lift ''nice weather, isn't it?'', may well lack the Gricean intentions that (GA) requires for them to assert, but they are asserting all right; normative accounts capture this, for, no matter their intentions, those speakers are still committed to knowing what they say (or having justification for it, or being truth-ful). In the second place, there are situations in which we may have overwhelming prudential or moral reasons to violate (SR), that is, not to be sincere. If the ''regulative rules'' account were correct, any sense that we are violating a *prima facie* norm – even if *all things considered* we are doing the right thing – should vanish in those cases; but it does not, or at least it does not according to intuitions many of us share – exactly as it happens in analogous cases involving promises, as Rawls (1955) pointed out in his influential argu-ment against ''regulative rules'' accounts of them.

Williamson provides additional justification for his specific normative proposal: first, the account explains what is wrong in a version of Moore's paradox with 'know' instead of 'believe': *A, and I do not know that A* (253–4). Second, mathematics provides for formal situations where the speaker's sensitivity to the norms of assertion is highlighted; in those situations, being warranted to assert *p* appears to go hand in hand with knowing *p*. Third, an account based on TR seems at first sight preferable: given that the truth rule is satis-fied whenever the knowledge rule is, but not the other way around, it provides for a practice with fewer violations of its governing rule; some evidential rule could then be explained as derived from TR, and considerations not specific to assertion. However, the truth rule does not individuate assertion; alternative speech acts like conjecturing, remind-ing or swearing also involve a truth rule (244–5). Moreover, reflection on lotteries (cases in which, knowing that you hold a ticket in a very large lottery, I assert ''your ticket did not win'' only on the basis of the high probability of the utterance's truth) question the

validity of any such alleged derivation (246–52). Finally, intuitions about cases in which we assert without knowing but are not being subject to blame can be accounted for. In some cases, it is reasonable for us to think that we know, even if we do not; what we do is not permissible, but it is exculpable. In other cases, additional values (saving someone from danger, enjoying a relaxed conversation) prevail, allowing again for exculpation based on their contextual relative strength (256–9).[9]

Speech acts like assertion are thus normative; they are constituted by rules such as (KR). This applies both to those done by resorting to purely conventional means, such as uttering sentences in the declarative mood in default contexts, but also to those done in an indirect way, having recourse to the sort of pragmatic mechanism that Grice famously characterized in 'Logic and Conversation' as *conversational implicature*, as for instance when we "ask", 'who the hell would want to see a film with that plot?' thereby asserting that nobody wants to see a film with that plot.[10] But a full general explanation of our intuitive feeling concerning the appropriateness of (Plus) or (Circ) can be provided given a view of what natural languages are for such as Alston's, according to which the literal, primary meanings of sentences in natural language are *speech act potentials*.

Why "potentials"? Consider utterances of 'he is hungry'. This is a declarative sentence, and it is reasonable to argue that such sentences are used by default to make assertions. If so, and according to rules such as (KR) or (TR), in uttering it with its default meaning, a speaker commits himself to knowing (or to the truth of) a certain proposition. Intuitively, to identify such a proposition we need information about the context in which the utterance is made; knowledge of English tells us that the referent of 'he' should be some male made salient ("demonstrated") by the speaker; but we need further information about how such salience is established in the context, in order to identify it. Recent debates in linguistics and the philosophy of language about the semantics/pragmatics distinction suggests that this point is widespread in natural languages. Literal and direct utterances of 'it is raining' in a context commit their utterers to propositions concerning specific times and places; of 'no one showed up at the party', to propositions concerning specific domains of discourse; of 'Peter is tall', to propositions concerning specific tallness-standards.

Kaplan famously articulated in 'Demonstratives' a distinction between *character* and *content* to properly account for indexicals such as 'he'; character is the semantic property common to different uses of 'he', content its contribution to what is asserted in well-behaved particular uses. I have argued (Recanati on the Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction) that additional examples such as those provided before should be accounted for by generalizing the idea: semantics for natural languages is "character-semantics". The semantics of a language as such does not identify the concrete speech acts that can be made with its sentences, but merely constrains it; full determination of specific speech acts goes well beyond what is provided by the language as such.[11] In fact, this point applies also to the identification of the specific type of speech act that is made. The declarative mood of the whole sentence conventionally indicates that a speech act in the *saying* family is made; but whether it is one of *guessing*, *conjecturing*, *predicting*, or a default one of *asserting*, this depends on contextual considerations of "saliency"; the same applies to the other conventional indicators of speech act type such as the interrogative or the imperative moods.

Speech acts such as assertion are thus on the outlined view essentially normative, and the meanings of natural language lexical items consist of their contributions to speech act potentials; on the suggested view, it is the fact that we are tacitly sensitive to these two points that our intuitive acceptance of claims such as (Plus) and (Circ) – in particular, our

feelings about violations thereof – manifests.[12] We expect agreement with our fellow speakers concerning normative judgments like those; our subscribing them reflects at its core the ''normative-teleological'' ordinary conception of what a language is – and thus of what foundational semantics should be concerned with – that Chomsky disparages in the quotation cited at the end of 'Foundational Semantics I', Section 3. On this proposal, then, foundational semantics consists primarily in the specification of the norms to which speakers subject their acts to, by literally uttering sentences; speech–acts potentials are assigned by the semantics to the sentences of the language so as to provide a crucial part of the explanation of how this come to be so. The next two sections elaborate on some problematic aspects of this account.

3. Compatibilism

There is already a measure of syncretism with Gricean views in the normative reasons proposal I am outlining. As indicated in the previous section, normative facts such as (Plus) and (Circ) constituting the foundational undertaking in semantics cannot be explained only as resulting from the meaning of the relevant expressions in the languages to which they belong. The meanings of sentences are merely speech-act potentials; a full determination of which specific speech act, and hence which specific norms, a speaker is subjecting his act to requires ''pragmatics'', that is, appeal to the communicative intentions of the speaker – to assign referents, a domain, even the specific speech act itself. I take it that there is nothing incoherent in assuming that the normative reasons view of foundational semantics helps itself in this way to features of the Gricean motivating reasons view, even if Gricean themselves purport to provide a purely descriptive, non-normative account.

Now, in the companion piece I invoked at crucial points in the critical discussion of alternative views the importance of the considerations motivating the Principle of Compositionality, and the need to take into consideration purely empirical evidence in a proper account of whether or not the natural languages we speak honor them, and, if so, exactly how. Which grammar properly determines the meanings of sentences we never use and with respect to which we lack significant intuitions, I in effect granted to Chomskyans, may depend on subpersonal facts about language processing and their evolutionary history well beyond the ken of the ordinary intuitions motivating normative-teleological views. There is a tension here, in fact the tension that Kripke (1982) famously brings out between the normativity of meaning manifested by judgments such as (Plus) and (Circ), and the ''dispositionalist'' accounts. I have suggested that languages essentially provide normative reasons to their users – reasons with a social backing; but I have also emphasized the main considerations supporting what in Kripke's narrative are purely dispositionalist accounts of foundational matters in linguistics and semantics that Chomskyans emphasize. Is this not an unstable, ultimately inconsistent position?

Following Martin Davies and other writers in the ''tacit knowledge'' tradition such as Evans and Peacocke('When Is a Grammar Psychologically Real?'), I do not think it is. In the first place, as Wright argues in 'Kripke's Account of the Argument against Private Language', the considerations of Kripke's Wittgenstein establish at most that the constitutive character of judgments such as (Plus) and (Circ) is *conceptually primitive*; *a priori*, they cannot be reduced to non-normative features, whether they are facts about previous use, phenomenal states, inclinations or dispositions. However, as Soames points out in 'Skepticism about Meaning: Indeterminacy, Normativity, and the Rule-Following Paradox', this leaves open whether, *a posteriori*, those judgments must supervene on a linguistic competence or system

of tacit knowledge, whose precise nature can only be known by taking into account concerns such as the Chomskyan one outlined above. Soames has in mind here the Kripkean distinction between metaphysical and epistemological determination.

Miller (following Wright's 'The Rule-following Arguments and the Central Project of Theoretical Linguistics') suggests an alternative – to think of natural languages as response-dependent kinds. If we adapt to the present case the proposal I have made to understand such response-dependent kinds in 'A Non-Modal Conception of Secondary Properties', while only normative judgments such as (Plus) and (Circ) would be *constitutive* or *essential* to languages, the subvenient structures of tacit knowledge unveiled by empirical theorizing might still be necessary for their individuation – not just causally/physically, but even metaphysically.

I will outline the idea by means of an analogy with a more familiar case. There are good reasons to consider colors as response-dependent kinds; I suggested some in the just mentioned work.[13] In addition, we have conceptual reasons (those supporting the view that perception is, to a good extent, a causal process) to consider the relevant responses in this case – color experiences and their phenomenal properties – to be *causally produced* in concrete situations by color instances in the environment. Together with the relevant empirical facts, the causal requirements distilled from these sets of *a priori* considerations might require the diverse categorical bases for chromatic properties to be metaphysically necessary for their instantiation. This will be so on the kind of view that Shoemaker has defended about the individuation of causally efficacious properties.[14]

In order to transfer the example to the case of language, something should play the role that the causal account of perception plays there. What would that be? We need to distinguish, among entities defined by systems of constitutive rules such as games and, on the present view, languages, those that are ''in force'', in fact providing normative reasons to actual beings, from those that are – as it were – mere abstract possibilities.[15] Given a system of rules that correctly characterize a game actually played by people (and thus ''in force'' among them), by making variations on the rules we can easily construct alternative games that nobody has ever played or will play.

In fact, the case of assertion already illustrates this point. Even if Williamson is right and it is KR the rule to which we subject our act when we paradigmatically assert (i.e., when we utter sentences in the declarative mood in their default use, Williamson 258), rules like TR and RBR at least define abstract entities, abstract types of acts that might have been actually ''in place'', governing the behavior of groups of individuals. We can think of these types Platonistically, as abstract entities existing in all possible worlds, but there might be alternatives and the metaphysical issues are not our concern here. To avoid confusions, we may call 't-assertion' and 'rb-assertion', respectively, the acts defined by TR and RBR, so as not to prejudice the issue which one of the two, if either, is assertion, in the alternative, causal-intentional sense I am about to distinguish. Similarly, we would call 'k-assertion' the one defined by KR. In these terms, the debate confronting Williamson, Weiner and Lackey, is whether assertion *is* k-assertion, t-assertion or rb-assertion, if it is any of them at all (as opposed to lending itself instead to a descriptive characterization, along the lines suggested by GA). In presenting the debate in this way, we are of course appealing to a different notion of assertion, independent of what its best philosophical characterization is. This is the causal-historical–intentional sense in which assertion is whatever in fact we do, however it is theoretically characterized, when we utter declarative sentences in their default use.

What is it that enforces a system of rules in a given population, as opposed to others we can envisage – KR as opposed to TR, say? On the framework outlined in the

previous section, the question here is, what makes it the case that the speech act potential associated with the declarative mood in English invokes KR, as opposed to TR, say? It is at this point that the psychological states, including in particular those underwriting Lewisian conventions regarding natural language expressions, have a role to play: for a system of rules to be in force is for members of a community to have the requisite attitudes and psychological states. As I mentioned in Section 4 of the companion piece, to deal with the ''meaning without use'' problem these should include the subpersonal mechanisms of linguistic competence required to provide an explanatorily adequate account of compositionality, properly taking into account cases beyond the constructions that have in fact been used in that population. In this way, those subpersonal mechanisms contribute to fix which specific abstract language is spoken by a population, and, on the Shoemakerian view about the individuation of properties (and the kinds they constitute), they are metaphysically necessary features of their identity.

4. Problems and Criticisms

This is, of course, the merest outline, a proper philosophical elaboration of which would have to confront the thorniest issues in the contemporary debate about meaning normativity: In the present case, as we emphasized in the second section, what we have at the conscious level is at most normative impressions of what would constitute rule-breakings in fundamental cases such as those encompassed by (Plus) and (Circ). What justifies the claim that, in having those impressions, we are in fact following the complex rule in terms of the speech-act potentials codified in our natural languages that we have posited as their proper full explanations? To properly answer this, we should show how to circumvent the ''dilemma of regress or idleness'' posed by Glüer and Wikforss ('Against Content Normativity', 52 ff.). We have to distinguish genuinely following rules from merely conforming to regularities. Intuitively, the former requires some kind of mental attitude of *acceptance* by the subjects involved; but the considerations motivating normative accounts of foundational matters in the case of the meanings of natural language expressions extend to the case of the ''expressions'' in the ''mental language'' in which we think. Does not this lead to a vicious regress?

It certainly points to the need to encompass a sensitivity to norms that is natural to characterize (invoking the Wittgensteinian metaphor) as ''blind'', as the best recent work on the rule-following considerations has shown (cf. Boghossian's 'Epistemic Rules', Wright's 'Rule-Following without Reasons'). Glüer & Wikforss are right that this is a problem – in fact one of the most difficult philosophical issues unveiled by the debate about the ''rule-following considerations'' after Kripke. Note that this appears to be a problem for everybody (except perhaps those who put aside norms altogether, but this is in itself highly problematic): the ''dilemma of regress or idleness'' still has a bite for those who take the norms for speech and mental acts to be merely regulative, to the extent that the intentional states accounting for our being guided by rules in primitive cases of rule-following are equally subject to such (merely regulative) norms – as I assume they must be.

I gestured at the end of the previous section to the line of thought that I like to deal with this problem. It departs from the observation that we take norms to apply to entities with a function or *telos* (cf. Jarvis, and Thomson, ch. 12),[16] even when relevant subjects are not aware of it (e.g., norms for proper talking distance); and uses this to elaborate on a version of the ''dispositionalist'' reply to the Kripkenstein's skeptical challenge. Norms such as the norm of assertion guide us in that particular cases of application that we are aware of ''make salient for us'' (to use Pettit's convenient locution) the norm we intend

to subject our acts to[17]; even if at the level of what we are consciously aware of we can only envisage particular applications of the rule, an adequate subpersonal explanation would uphold ascribing to the relevant states the goal of complying with the general rule, accounting also for "exceptions" – such as occasions in which we break it, even when being unaware of it.

I chose the example in (Circ) – a paradigm example of primary property – to conclude with this note: even if languages are in themselves response-dependent kinds, this does in no way imply that only secondary properties can be signified by their lexical items. The preceding considerations are, I think, fully compatible with the assumption that the norm (Circ) invokes a fully objective property. Properly developed, then, those considerations should provide a fully straight answer to Kripkenstein's skeptic – one capable of salvaging what McDowell (325) correctly considers the most worrying casualty of those skeptical considerations, what Wright had called "the contractual model":

> The idea at risk is the idea of things being thus and so anyway, whether or not we choose to investigate the matter in question, and whatever the outcome of any such investigation. That idea requires the conception of how things could correctly be said to be anyway – whatever, if anything, we in fact go on to say about the matter; and this notion of correctness can only be the notion of how the pattern of application that we grasp, when we come to understand the concept in question, extends, independently of the actual outcome of any investigation, to the relevant case.

In these two papers I have presented what I take to be the best suggestions in the contemporary literature to understand the kind of considerations we should appeal to in order to identify an actual, used language with a specific Lewisian abstract language: to select those that allow for good answers to some "leading questions"; to look at the deep psychology of users and its evolutionary history, as revealed by our best empirical theories; to look at the personal-level rational psychology of those subjects; to look at the norms enforced among them. I have outlined a catholic, syncretistic perspective, on which most of these considerations have a role to play; but I have been at pains to set in relief the need for much more work on these issues, crucial for our understanding of meaning, and also what a burgeoning theoretical field their research contemporarily is.

Short Biography

Manuel García-Carpintero works in the Philosophy of Language and the Philosophy of Mind. He has published a monograph, *Las palabras, las ideas y las cosas* (Ariel, 1996) and co-edited *Two-Dimensional Semantics* (OUP, 2006) and *Relative Truth* (OUP, 2008). He has published more than 50 research papers, most of them on the nature of truth, reference, logical consequence and mental and speech acts, in journals such as *Journal of Philosophy*, *Mind*, *Notre-Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, *Noûs*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* or *Synthese*. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at the Department of Logic, History and Philosophy of Science, University of Barcelona, and a member of the LOGOS group.

Notes

* Correspondence: Montalegre, 6, Barcelona, 08001, Spain. Email: m.garciacarpintero@ub.edu

[1] Note that, as just pointed out, on the Platonist view it is *the content* of semantic intuitions (as in the case of mathematical intuitions vis-à-vis mathematical theories) that provide foundational facts, while on the Chomskyan picture

it is rather *the intuitions* (the psychological states) themselves – a causal product of the competence to be disentangled from linguistically irrelevant causal factors and theoretically articulated by the linguist.

[2] Cf. Davis for a good account of the distinction between *motivating* and *normative* reasons.

[3] Glüer and Wikforss' 'The Normativity of Meaning and Content' is a good introduction that gives an accurate idea of the different controversies.

[4] I think that ordinary speakers would find the likes of (Circ) intuitively compelling under the *assertion* interpretation, while the alternative *predication* interpretation would not even come to their minds. It is difficult to focus on the alternative etiolated ''obligation'' of ''applying'' 'circular' to N. Note that it is no good to consider only atomic sentences, as when we say 'N is circular', which is what writers usually do; because this does not allow us to distinguish the two interpretations, given that here we are also applying 'circular' to N *in the speech-act sense*. We have to think also of an ''obligation'' of applying the predicate just in case N is circular, *also in place* when we say 'it is not the case that N is circular', 'N is circular or it is not', 'Peter said that N is circular' or 'N is circular, I imagine'; for in all these cases we are equally *predicating* 'circular' of N, and the condition for a ''correct'' predication is still that N is circular also in those cases. Given this, the fact that we may also find (Circ) correct under the predication interpretation when we fully grasp the theoretical notion of representational content (which I of course grant) is I think irrelevant for purposes of philosophical theorizing, and thus I do not think that such an interpretation of meaning-normativity is adequate to play the role it has in Kripkenstein's rule-following considerations.

[5] This is also, I take it, Dummett's main reason in 'Truth' why ''deflationary'' definitions of truth constrained only to generate all true instances of (T) above (be they for linguistic items, as in that schema, or directly for propositions) do not suffice to (and perhaps are then unnecessary) to characterize truth, understood not as a property of representational contents, but of assertions themselves – which arguably are the intuitively primary truth-bearers, for the sort of consideration invoked in the previous footnote.

[6] Peacocke's paper focuses on logical constants: negation, implication, quantification, predication, and so on. In such cases, in order to state corresponding rules we would consider instead fundamental *argumentative transitions* (*modus ponens* in the case of implication) instead of acts such as *answering* or *applying*.

[7] We will come back in the last section to the philosophical worries (ultimately, the thorniest issues about rule-following) that this strategy raises.

[8] In their criticism of normative accounts of acts such as assertion, Judith Thomson (*Normativity*, ch. VI) and Boghossian ('The Normativity of Content', 39) decisively ignore this. Thomson also relies on the notion of correctness ('external correctness', in her terms) for contents of representational acts that was shown before not to be properly normative.

[9] Weiner's 'Norms of Assertion' provides a good introduction to recent debates in this area. I have argued ('Assertion and the Semantics of Force-Markers') that the rules we have considered here are good candidates to the norm for the mental act of *judging*, but not for the social act of *asserting*, which should have instead a communicative norm requiring uptake (the way we intuitively think of the norm for *promising*), but for present purposes it suffices to have some sufficiently developed examples of normative accounts.

[10] Grice's apparatus applies to discourses involving utterances conventionally expressing putative assertions, where another assertion is conveyed; to deal with cases like the one in the example, where the derivation of the implicature departs from an utterance putatively expressing a question, we need to modify it. See Braun for an interesting proposal.

[11] This might be in agreement with the difficult-to-interpret, disparaging remarks that Chomsky usually makes about truth and reference, cf. Pietroski ('The Character of Natural Language Semantics' and 'Character before Content'). I put 'character' inside scare quotes to acknowledge Pietroski's claim that perhaps the meanings of natural language lexical items are not appropriately thought of as, strictly speaking, functions from context to semantic values; the term is merely used here to give a quick indication of the sort of conception of semantics I am gesturing towards.

[12] In the initial presentation of the Kaplanian/Stalnakerian distinction between (descriptive) semantics and foundational semantics/metasemantics at the beginning of the companion piece, I mentioned for illustration debates about where to place descriptive information associated with indexicals (e.g., that the referent of a token of 'he' is male in gender) and proper names (that the referent of a token of *N* ''is called'' *N*, that is, at the starting point of a chain leading to this use). In the terms we have introduced here, the debate concerns whether a proper characterization of the speech-act potentials to which those expressions contribute would include such descriptive information. I myself ('A Presuppositional Account of Reference-Fixing') have defended this descriptivist view, by arguing in fact that such information belongs in a lexically triggered presuppositional component of the relevant speech-act potentials, hence in the (descriptive) semantics of natural languages.

[13] Cf. also the reasons that Cohen provides for a ''relationalist'' account of colors.

[14] Cf. Hawthorne for a good critical presentation.

[15] Glüer and Pagin point out the need for the requirement that constitutive norms be in force, and then they use it to question normative accounts of meaning; Glüer's and Wikforss's 'Against Content Normativity' further develop the criticism. I discuss this in the next section.

[16] Thomson would discourage any such application of her views; cf. fn. 8 above.

[17] Pettit would not describe such an account as *dispositional*, but I think the issues here are merely terminological. Cf. also Schlosser.

Works Cited

Alston, William P. *Illocutionary Acts & Sentence Meaning*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000.

Austin, John. *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962. (Second edition issued as an Oxford UP paperback, 1989, to which page references are made.)

Bach, Kent and Robert M. Harnish. *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979.

Boghossian, Paul. 'The Normativity of Content.' *Philosophical Issues* 13 (2003): 31–45.

——. 'Epistemic Rules.' *Journal of Philosophy* CV (2008): 472–500.

Braun, David. 'Implicating Questions.' *Mind and Language* 26 (2011): 574–95.

Cohen, Jonathan. *The Red and the Real*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Davies, Martin. 'Persons and their Underpinnings.' *Philosophical Explorations* 3 (2000): 43–62.

Davis, Wayne. 'Reasons and Psychological Causes.' *Philosophical Studies* 122 (2005): 51–101.

Dummett, Michael. 'Truth.' *Truth and Other Enigmas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978. 1–24.

Evans, Gareth. 'Semantic Theory and Tacit Knowledge.' *In his Collected Papers*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

García-Carpintero, Manuel. 'A Presuppositional Account of Reference-Fixing.' *Journal of Philosophy* xcvii (2000): 109–47.

——. 'Assertion and the Semantics of Force-Markers.' The Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction. Ed. C. Bianchi. CSLI Lecture Notes, Chicago: Chicago UP, 2004. 133–66.

——. 'Recanati on the Semantics/Pragmatics Distinction.' *Crítica* 38 (2006): 35–68.

——. 'A Non-Modal Conception of Secondary Properties.' *Philosophical Papers 36* 1 (2007): 1–36.

Glüer, Kathrin and Peter Pagin. 'Rules of Meaning and Practical Reasoning.' *Synthese* 117 (1999): 207–27.

—— and Åsa Wikforss. 'The Normativity of Meaning and Content.' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2009 Edition)*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2009a. [Online]. Retrieved on 21 October 2011 from: http://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=meaning-normativity.

—— and ——. 'Against Content Normativity.' *Mind* 118 (2009b): 31–70.

Green, Mitchell. *Self-Expression*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Grice, H. Paul. 'Logic and Conversation.' *Syntax and Semantics*. 3 vols, Eds. P. Cole, J. Morgan. New York: Academic Press, 1975. 41–58.

Hawthorne, John. 'Causal Structuralism.' *Philosophical Perspectives* 15 (2001): 361–78 Metaphysics.

Hindriks, Frank. 'The Status of the Knowledge Account of Assertion.' *Linguistics and Philosophy* 30 (2007): 393–406.

Jarvis, Benjamin. 'Norms of Intentionality: Norms that Don't Guide.' *Philosophical Studies* 157 (2012): 1–25.

Kaplan, David. 'Demonstratives.' *Themes from Kaplan*. Eds. J. Almog, J. Perry, H. Wettstein. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989a. 481–563.

——. 'Afterthoughts.' *Themes from Kaplan*. Eds. J. Almog, J. Perry, H. Wettstein. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989b. 565–614.

Kripke, Saul. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Languages*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Lackey, Jennifer. 'Norms of Assertion.' *Noûs* 41.4 (2007): 594–626.

Lewis, David. 'Dispositional Theories of Value.' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 63.suppl. (1989): 113–37.

Miller, Alex. 'Critical notice of Crispin Wright, *Rails to Infinity*.' *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 15.1 (2001): 125–40.

Peacocke, Christopher. 'Understanding Logical Constants: A Realist's Account.' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 73 (1987): 153–200.

——. 'When Is a Grammar Psychologically Real?' *Reflexions on Chomsky*. Ed. A. George. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989: 111–30.

Pettit, Philip. 'Realism and Response-Dependence.' *Mind* C (1991): 587–626.

Pietroski, Paul. 'The Character of Natural Language Semantics.' *Epistemology of Language*. Ed. A. Barber. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. 217–56.

——. 'Character before Content.' *Content and Modality: Themes from the Philosophy of Robert Stalnaker*. Eds. J. Thomson, A. Byrne. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006. 34–60.

Rawls, John. 'Two Concepts of Rules.' *The Philosophical Review* 64 (1955): 3–32.

Searle, John. *Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969.

Sinhababu, N. 'The Humean Theory of Motivation Reformulated and Defended.' *Philosophical Review* 118.4 (2009): 465–500.

Schlosser, Markus. 'The Metaphysics of Rule-Following.' *Philosophical Studies* 155 (2011): 345–69.

Soames, Scott. 'Linguistics and Psychology.' *Linguistics and Philosophy* 7 (1984): 155–79.

——. 'Semantics and Psychology.' *The Philosophy of Linguistics*. Ed. J. Katz. Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1985. 204–26.

——. 'Skepticism about Meaning: Indeterminacy, Normativity, and the Rule-Following Paradox.' *Meaning and Reference, The Canadian Journal of Philosophy*. Ed. Ali A. Kazmi. Sup. vol. 23 (1998): 211–49.

Thomson, Judith J. *Normativity*. Chicago: Open Court, 2008.

Vlach, Frank. 'Speaker's Meaning.' *Linguistics & Philosophy* 4 (1981): 359–91.

Wedgwood, Ralph. *Normativity*. Oxford: Oxford U.P, 2007.

Weiner, Matthew. 'Must We Know What We Say?' *Philosophical Review* 114 (2005): 227–51.

——. 'Norms of Assertion.' *Philosophy Compass* 2.2 (2007): 187–95.

Williamson, Timothy. 'Knowing and Asserting.' *Philosophical Review* 105 (1996): 489–523; included with some revisions as chapter 11 of his *Knowledge and Its Limits*, New York: Oxford UP, 2000, from which I quote.

Wright, Crispin. 'Kripke's Account of the Argument against Private Language.' *Journal of Philosophy* 81 (1984): 759–78.

——. 'The Rule-following Arguments and the Central Project of Theoretical Linguistics.' *Reflexions on Chomsky*. Ed. A. George. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989. 233–64.

——. 'Rule-Following without Reasons: Wittgenstein's Quietism and the Constitutive Question.' *Ratio* 20.4 (2007): 481–502.