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Abstracts

Eduardo Castro, *Regularity, Necessity and the Induction Problem*

According to David Armstrong, the regularity theory, that laws of nature are only regularities, does not answer to the induction problem and, so, inductive scepticism is inevitable. On the contrary, Armstrong's nomic necessity view of laws gives a plausible answer to the induction problem. This view considers that laws of nature are explained by relations between universals. This explanation is an inference to the best explanation. So, the inductive inference is rational. Helen Beebe argues that if the regularity theory implies inductive scepticism, then the same goes for the nomic necessity theory. In this paper, I will defend the nomic necessity view of laws against Beebe's objections.

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Gonçalo Santos, *Ontological versus Ideological Hierarchies*

Abstract. It has been argued that Russell's Paradox shows absolutely general quantification to be impossible. The generality absolutist accuses this argument of being self-defeating but regardless of it, he still needs to provide an account for the paradox. We consider two such accounts. The first implies an expansion of the set-theoretical universe while the second involves the adoption of an hierarchy of ever higher-level languages. We argue that although the latter appears to be philosophically more satisfactory, it turns out to be incompatible with absolute generality.

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Célia Teixeira, *Conceptual Knowledge*

This paper criticizes the moderate empiricist's account according to which a priori knowledge is mere knowledge of analytic or conceptual truths. The questions that I will address are, thus, whether there is analytic or conceptual knowledge, and if so, how that could help us explain the possibility of a priori knowledge. I have two aims, a bold one and a modest one. The bold one is to show that we cannot explain the a priori with the analytic. The modest one is to show that the moderate empiricists end up appealing to the a priori in order to explain it away.

Pedro Santos, *Edgington and Block on indicative conditionals*

In this paper I will start by reviewing the main pitfalls of both Gricean and Jacksonian implementations of the truth-functional view on indicative conditionals. Then I discuss a well-known argument by D. Edgington based on the refusal of the truth-functional view, to the effect that indicative conditionals do not express propositions. Finally, I assess Eliza Block's recent criticism of Edgington's argument.

Fiora Salis, *Understanding Names*

For almost forty years since the origins of direct reference theories the debate on the semantics of names has been permeated by Russell's idea that fundamental differences in the ways in which we are able to think about particular objects determine fundamental differences in the ways in which referring expressions of ordinary language function. Russell thought that an agent can think about something either by acquaintance, namely by direct awareness of the object itself, or by description, namely by thinking about a particular object as the satisfier of a descriptive condition. He introduced the Principle of Acquaintance¹ (henceforth PA) as a strict condition on understanding stating that every proposition that an agent can understand must be composed of constituents with which the agent is acquainted. Russell's version of PA was very strong, holding that an agent can be acquainted only with universals and sense data, while all knowledge of the external world is mediated by descriptions. Contemporary acquaintance theorists² have advanced several weaker versions of PA. In particular, the causal historical theory of reference (independently promoted by Kripke, Putnam and Donnellan in the '70s) inspired one of the weakest and most common versions of PA as knowledge of the referent of a name by direct perception, memory or testimony.

Recently there has been an increasing debate on the coherence and plausibility of acquaintance theories of names. A first clear problem already noticed by Jeshion (2002; 2004; 2006) consists in the fact that PA creates deep instabilities when intermixed with acquaintance theorists' semantic commitments. Evans (1979), Recanati (1993) and Soames (2003) argue for a distinction between genuine names, i.e. those that an agent can understand through an acquaintance relation, and descriptive names, i.e. those that an agent can understand only through descriptive conditions. The arguments on the basis of which they draw this distinction presuppose an implausible epistemic

¹ The principle appears first in Russell (1905), but the fundamental idea is elaborated in Russell (1912).

² Contemporary acquaintance theorists include Burge (1977), Lewis (1979), Donnellan (1979), Evans (1982), Boer and Lycan (1986), Bach (1987), Salmon (1988), Kaplan (1989b), Recanati (1993), Soames (2003, 2005) and Pryor (2007).

scorekeeper that, if included in our total semantic theory, would impose a radical revision of its basic semantic categories.

A second problem consists in the fact that by imposing an acquaintance condition on the intelligibility of names we get the result that names without referents (from myth, false scientific theories and fictions) are unintelligible if interpreted in the framework of a Millian theory. And yet speakers seem to understand and to use them in a competent way both when they know that they do not refer and when they have the false belief that they do refer. Some, in particular Millians like Braun (2005) and Adams and Stecker (1994), accept the result and explain the apparent meaningfulness of names without referents through some non-semantic notion of content, i.e. cognitive (Braun (2005)) or pragmatic (Adams and Stecker (1994)). Others, paradigmatically Currie (1988, 1990), apply Russell's fundamental idea to the specific case of fiction to conclude that names without referents are not even genuine names but disguised definite descriptions.

My aim in this chapter is twofold. By distinguishing between genuine names, descriptive names and empty names, acquaintance theorists do not allow for a uniform theory of their intelligibility, and hence do not allow for a unified semantic theory. The result is a dissatisfactory explanation of how speakers really understand names on one side and a puzzling and fragmented semantic theory on the other. I will argue against PA in Sections one and two. I believe that a systematic theory of how we understand names (with or without referents) does not necessarily appeal to an acquaintance condition but rather to the notion of participation in a name-using practice. Arguing against PA is not the same as arguing against the widely shared view that to know the meaning of an expression is to know its truth-conditional content. In Section three and four I will develop my own positive account. In Section five I will discuss some objections and replies.

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Marta Campdelacreu, *An endurantist answer to the (temporal) grounding problem*

In the current debate on the nature of middle-sized material objects it is usually assumed that the temporal grounding problem can be easily explained or dissolved by those versions of perdurantism that are affected by it, but that it is a real difficulty for those versions of endurantism for which it can be posed.

What, then, is the temporal grounding problem? Let me briefly present the typical story. Let us imagine that an artist creates out of an amorphous amount of clay, at the same time (let us say at t_1), a piece of clay, Piece, and a statue that we suppose is the statue Goliath. Let us imagine, as well, that later (let us say at t_2), the dissatisfied artist remoulds her work into a ball and Goliath ceases to exist. Piece is still there, but now it is not coincident with the statue.

The versions of perdurantism and endurantism affected by the temporal grounding problem are the following. Perdurantism claims that objects persist through time by having a temporal part at every time they exist. Endurantism claims that objects are wholly present whenever they exist. The versions of these theories for which the

temporal grounding problem can be posed add that in cases like the one above there are two different objects that coincide for a period of time.

The temporal grounding problem is the following. It should be said before progressing that different philosophers offer slightly different lists of basic/non-basic properties, but that this does not affect the key aspects of the problem's formulation.

- (1) At the time of coincidence Goliath and Piece share their basic properties — examples of shared basic properties that are often mentioned are: their material components (at least at some basic level of composition), their mass, size, shape, at least some of their extrinsic properties (such as being placed at a certain spatial region, standing in certain specific relations to this or that object...), etc.
- (2) The basic properties of objects determine their non-basic properties — examples of non-basic properties that are often mentioned are: modal, sortal, aesthetic, futural properties, etc.
- (3) Therefore (by (1) and (2)), Goliath and Piece share their non-basic properties. However,
- (4) Goliath and Piece do not share their non-basic properties. For instance, they do not share their sortal properties.

My main objective in the paper is to argue that endurantism has an answer to the temporal grounding problem that is as effective as the answer perdurantism offers — as a welcome consequence of the proposed endurantist answer we will see that the very same answer can be used to solve the non-temporal version of the grounding problem affecting this framework (imagine that Goliath and Piece are created and destroyed at the same time).

JL Prades, *How to be a good quietist*

The most well known descriptions of Wittgenstein's arguments on rule-following that are present in recent exegetical literature can be classified in two different types: those that can be described as "deflationist", and those that can be described as "quietist". A paradigmatic instance of the first kind is the work of C. Wright on the issue. The second kind of accounts is exemplified by McDowell's. In this paper, I am going to offer a defence of quietism that is also critical to McDowell's account. If I am right, he misidentifies both the kinds of proto-phenomena below which we cannot dig, and also the reasons for this impossibility.

It is true, for example, that normally we do not feel we have alternative options in our way of understanding an instruction in our native language. In a normal context, we can only perceive a certain determined meaning in a certain sequence of phonemes, not some other, different and incompatible meanings. The problem is the modal status of "can", in the last sentence. Perhaps we can only perceive a certain determined content in a certain verbal or written expression, after a process of training. But, if this were only a mere factual impossibility, an impossibility that would not exist if certain contingent facts were different, I doubt that McDowell's description of the role of human practices could be enough to totally dispel the illusion of infra-determination. In order to avoid the challenge of deflationary accounts of meaning, we must show that certain abilities that are grounded on contingent facts of human nature set the limits of what is conceptually possible. And I do not think that McDowell manages to show this. The fact that we have been led by our nature and the processes of socialization to understand some linguistic expression in a certain way without the need of interpretation, does not seem to entail that we cannot conceive of people who, for instance, tomorrow would

start reacting in a completely different, bizarre, and deviant way. Of course, we can always say that those strange, deviant people would be giving different meanings to our words. This might be true, but the problem would still be that those alternative meanings would be equally rooted and determined –if our meanings are supposed to be determined- in the common past practice of using language. So it could be possible to legitimately provide incompatible descriptions of the meanings that are determined in our actual practices, our institutions, and our customs. This looks like a *reductio* of the idea of a determinate meaning.

Both in *Philosophical Remarks* and in the *Philosophical Grammar*, we can find remarks that can be paraphrased in terms of the thesis that the intentional object can only be fixed by expressive behaviour: “Tell me how you are searching, and I will tell you what you are looking for”.³ Those types of considerations antecede the considerations that form the nucleus of the reflections on following a rule in *Philosophical Investigations*. It is determined now that I am looking for something that could, or could not, be found in the future. That I am looking for it, now, is independent of my finding it, even independent of its existence. But my way of behaving now depicts what I am looking for. By themselves, those are considerations about what could be called “proto-phenomenon”: those basic cases in which our possession of intentional concepts is manifested. It is by reference to those cases that the meaning of intentional terms is learned. But they give us a clue about why it is conceptually impossible to dig below this proto-phenomenon. Expressive behaviour is not only our epistemic door to intentionality; it is not only our way of detecting the presence of intentional content. It is the original locus of intentionality itself.

We are able to perceive the intentional content of action when we observe what could be described as certain physical changes. I am not suggesting that those merely physical movements are necessarily part of our perceptual content when we perceive action; I am only saying that there is a way of describing the world we face with open eyes that does not make use of intentional concepts. And, of course, the intentional description of a situation cannot be reduced to physical or merely behavioural language. But still, someone who, when witnessing those situations in which we naturally perceive content, did not share a substantial part of our epistemic reactions, did not normally see the content we see, would be blind to content. There is no mystery here. It is not that this being would be blind to some magical pictorial powers that certain physical movements have –some magical pictorial powers that, for instance, the printed marks in a book do not have. On the contrary, it is because of the fact that nothing could have those magical pictorial powers that basic cases of content are determined by our epistemic reaction to them. This is why Wittgenstein was so insisting in attacking the illusion that content could derive from the putative representational powers of particulars. This is why intentionality does not have a hidden essence. And there are two fallacies that should be carefully avoided. The first one is to think that the world itself does not have intentional aspects. The second one is to think that, if our epistemic reactions had been completely different, then we would have had completely different perceptions of content. Just because intentional types depend on our epistemic reaction when we face certain forms of animal behaviour, a completely different epistemic reaction would not count as a perception of intentionality. Our actual epistemic reaction in front of basic expressions of intentionality determines the content of intentional concepts. Without insisting on this crucial connection, no form of quietism can properly answer the deflationist challenge on meaning-determination, because without determinate intentional content you cannot get determinate linguistic meaning.

³ *Philosophical Remarks*, 27.

Miguel Ángel Sebastián, *Phenomenal Properties, Representation and Vagueness*

Some philosophers have considered phenomenal properties to be vague due to the seeming non-transitivity of appearances. My aim in this paper is twofold: I first try to defend strong representationalism from certain objections, derived from the premise that phenomenal properties are vague. In order to do so, I deny that it follows, from the non-transitivity of perceptual indiscriminability, that phenomenal properties are vague. Second, I object, to those proponents of representationalism that appeal to teleological theories of mental content, that these teleological theories would require phenomenal properties to be vague in a way in which they cannot be.

I will start this paper by introducing phenomenal characters and clarifying two senses in which a phenomenal property can be said to be vague (horizontal and vertical vagueness).

In section 2 I introduce certain problems that derive from considering that phenomenal characters are horizontally vague; among them a refutation of strong representationalism. I first present strong representationalism and then argue that phenomenal characters are not vague and that those who defend these ideas misunderstand the notion of discernibility that should be used for individuating phenomenal characters. I argue that a contrastive notion of discernibility is to be preferred and show that contrastive discernibility is transitive.

My concern in section 3 is arguing that the notion of vertical vagueness makes no sense beyond that of horizontal vagueness. I defend that representationalists that embrace teleological theories of mental content are committed to phenomenal properties being vertically vague and that they are therefore wrong. Section 4 deals with some objections that the teleosemanticist can raise against my argument.

I conclude that phenomenal properties are not vague properties and that if phenomenal characters are to be explained in representational terms, the theory of mental content to be chosen must be a functionalist one.

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