

ProtoSociology

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Language and Value

Edited by Yi Jiang and Ernest Lepore

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INTRODUCTION

Ernest Lepore and Yi Jiang

It is our great pleasure to introduce this volume of essays, which represent (in our modest opinion) the beginning of an era of Chinese and English language philosophical cooperation. The Chinese philosophical tradition and the Western philosophical tradition (starting with the Ancient Greeks) have often been considered orthogonal to each other—two ships passing in the night without much to say to each other. Whatever the merits of this thesis, we believe that recent developments in the Anglo-American philosophy and Chinese philosophy of language not only suggest a tableau of shared problems, but also a number of similar methods and goals. It is the goal of this volume to juxtapose these recent philosophical developments to illustrate the similarities between the traditions, but also to spur common dialogue and hopefully efforts to jointly engage shared philosophical problems.

The essays in this volume (by contributors from the United States, Great Britain, Australia and China) address issues about language and value from philosophical perspectives that overlap in surprising ways. The issues engaged range from the role of cultural and biological factors in linguistic competence and language use, to figurative speech in different languages, the comparative study of work in semantics and philosophy, and the role of language in establishing the legal and ethical norms and values.

This volume represents the first substantial collaborative work from Chinese and Western scholars on philosophy of language. Although there has previously been some collaboration between Chinese and English language academics, there has never been a contemporary philosophical collection of this design, where each essay appears in both Chinese and English, and the two versions are presented side by side. It is our hope that by this endeavor we will be able to encourage greater collaborations among scholars both in China and in the English-speaking world. Our mission is to provide a bridge between traditions, leading to mutual understanding, philosophical collaboration, and ultimately a level of philosophical progress that could not be achieved were we working separately. We believe there is much to be gained by our working together in such an enterprise.

To this end, in addition to assembling the essays in this volume, we paired each contributor from China with an English speaking philosopher; the paired philosophers read, edited and commented on each others work. The philoso-

phers were thus able to rewrite their papers with the help of advice from a fresh perspective. In some cases this led to the introduction of arguments and moves that had not previously been considered; in other cases it led to a better handle on how the ideas should be presented—it opened the ideas to a broader philosophical audience. We believe that this has made for a compelling, globally accessible, and yes revolutionary new body of philosophical work.

The Chinese philosophers who have contributed represent a broad spectrum of the current academic world in China.

CHEN Bo is a professor of Philosophy at Peking University. He is one of most distinguished scholars in logic and analytic philosophy in China. He has published several essays in top journals in A&HCI list. His interests are philosophy of logic, Quine's philosophy, and philosophy of language.

Professor JIANG Yi of the School of Philosophy and Sociology, at Beijing Normal University, is one of most distinguished scholars in analytic philosophy and philosophy of language in China. He has published several books in Chinese on Wittgenstein and analytic philosophy. His interests are analytic philosophy, philosophy of language and Wittgenstein.

Professor LIU Limin, of School of Foreign Languages, is at Sichuan University. His interests are philosophy of language and linguistics.

Professor QIAN Guanlian, of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, has for some time now been an important and distinguished scholars in pragmatics and the philosophy of language. He has published several books in Chinese on pragmatics.

YUGUO Fei, is a member of the Philosophy of Department at Yunnan University in Kunming. He received his PhD from Wuhan University, and his chief interests include logic and philosophy of language.

WANG Aihua is an Associate Professor of School of Foreign Language, at the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China in Chengdu. Her interests are also in pragmatics and philosophy of language.

ZHANG Ying, of Philosophy Department, at Huazhong University of Science and Technology, received her PhD from Sun Yat-sen University. She was a

visiting professor at Rutgers for two years, and her chief interests are the philosophy of language, logic and pragmatics.

Lastly, Professor ZHU Zhifang, of Philosophy Department, at Wuhan University. He is one of more distinguished scholars in analytic philosophy and logic in China. He has published several books and essays in logic and philosophy of language. His interests are logic, philosophy of language and semiotics. From the English speaking community our volume includes previously unpublished papers by a number of distinguished theorists of language.

Adam SENNET, an Associate Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, UC Davis, specializes in the philosophy of language and has published papers in *Mind and Language*, *Philosophical Studies*, and *the Journal of Philosophical Logic*.

Samuel CUMMING, an Assistant Professor of Philosophy, UCLA, has interests in the philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, semantics and pragmatics.

Peter LUDLOW is Professor of Philosophy at Northwestern University. He has published on topics ranging from the philosophy of linguistics to the metaphysics of time. His current interests include the dynamics of communication (including the dynamics of the lexicon) and the optimization of group knowledge in adversarial environments.

Christopher HOM, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Texas Tech University. He earned his PhD from the University of California, Irvine (LPS). His research interests are in philosophy of language, metaethics, and philosophy of race. He has published articles on racial slurs and normative language generally.

Paul PIETROSKI, Professor of Linguistics and Professor of Philosophy, University of Maryland. His research interests are focused on how linguistic meaning is related to human psychology.

Robert MAY is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and Linguistics at the University of California, Davis. He is the author of *Logical Form: Its Structure and Derivation*, and with Robert Fiengo of *Anaphora and Identity and De Lingua Belief*. He is well-known for his work in the syntax and semantics of natural language, especially on natural language quantification, and has written extensively on Frege, along with other topics in philosophy of language and philosophy of logic.

William STARR, Assistant Professor at the Sage School of Philosophy, Cornell University. His research is on communication and cognition, drawing on ideas across philosophy, linguistics, logic, artificial intelligence and psychology. His published work explores these themes through various linguistic phenomena including conditionals, questions, imperatives, modality and speech acts.

Matthew STONE completed his Ph.D. in the Computer and Information Science Department at the University of Pennsylvania in 1998. Since then he has had an appointment in the Computer Science Department and Center for Cognitive Science at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Stone has had visiting positions at the University of Edinburgh and the Universität Potsdam. He works on problems of meaning in human-human and human-computer conversation.

Barry C SMITH is a Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Institute of Philosophy in the School of Advanced Study, University of London, where he co-directs the Centre for the Study of the Senses. He has written mostly on the philosophy of mind and language, on the topics of self-knowledge and our knowledge of language. He co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Language* (2006) with Ernest Lepore. Following his 2007 collection, *Questions of Taste—the philosophy of wine* (Oxford University Press), he began working with psychologists, neurologists and neuroscientists on flavour perception and is now the co-organiser of an international research project on the Nature of Taste. He has been a Visiting Professor at the University of California at Berkeley and at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, and was the writer and presenter of the BBC World Service radio series, *The Mysteries of the Brain*.

Ernest LEPORE is the Director of the Center for Cognitive Science at Rutgers University and a Professor of philosophy. His chief interests are philosophy of language and philosophy of mind.

THE RELATION OF LANGUAGE TO VALUE

Jiang Yi

Abstract

How does language relate to value? Why do we concern with the relation up to now? I will analyze the background of increasing interests in the relation of language to value in contemporary philosophy of language, provided with ideas that language has meaning with intention which determines the way of acts in relation with values in societies, and that, when we consider the value in language, we are searching for consequences of our speech acts for final goals of language.

In 1836 Alexander Bryan Johnson (1786–1867), so-called a philosophical banker, published his unrecognized book, *A Treatise on Language*, which was the continuity of his first writing, *Philosophy of Human Knowledge* in 1828. In the book he committed the meaning of words as reminder of human knowledge which seems to be seen to have anticipated the thrust of logical positivism, at least in arguing that misunderstandings of how language operates bedevil philosophical questions, and theories of modern linguistics. After a century of his death a conference on the life and works of Johnson was held in Utica in 1967. The proceedings of the conference was published in 1970, entitled *Language and Value*, in which he was interpreted as a generalist as a banker, businessman, essayist, satirist, and philosopher. The title of the proceedings hints his binary character of banker and philosopher. This might be the first time to relate language to value, though not in professional philosophy.

In 2002 Diana Mary Kilpert published her *Language and Value: The Place of Evaluation in Linguistic Theory*, in which she tries to address the evaluation in language studies. But it is just in linguistic sense that we can evaluate languages in our social activities. Much writings on languages of evaluation from different perspectives, such as sociological and political, appeared recently. Most of them are concerned with applications of the theory of evaluation in language rather than the theory itself. Philosophers of language would, in contrast, consider the relation of language to value, concentrating on value elements of language in use, not evaluation in language. Thus we should clarify firstly some distinctions among those concepts which are confused with in our discourse of the relation of language to value.

The Pragmatic are concerned mostly with terms which are full in evaluation and appraisal. Thus they discuss implications of those terms in use, not the

REFUTATION OF THE SEMANTIC ARGUMENT AGAINST DESCRIPTIVISM

Chen Bo

Abstract

There are two problematic assumptions in Kripke's semantic argument against descriptivism. Assumption 1 is that the referential relation between a name and its bearer is only a metaphysical relation between language and the world; it has nothing to do with our public linguistic practice. Assumption 2 is that if name N has its meaning and the meaning is given by one description or a cluster of descriptions, the description(s) should supply the necessary and sufficient condition for determining what N designates; it is possible for us to find out such a condition for fixing the referent of N. Emphasizing the sociality, conventionality and historicity of language and meaning, this paper criticizes Assumption 1 and Assumption 2, and concludes that Kripke's semantic argument fails.

I. Opening

To refute descriptivism, Kripke reformulates its cluster version refined by Wittgenstein and Searle. For him, cluster-descriptivism consists of six theses, in which theses (1), (3) and (4) are the targets of his semantic argument:

- (1) To every name or designating expression 'X', there corresponds a cluster of properties, namely the family of those properties ϕ such that [the speaker] A believes ' ϕX '.
- (3) If most, or a weighted most, of the ϕ 's are satisfied by one unique object γ , then γ is the referent of 'X'.
- (4) If the vote yields no unique object, 'X' does not refer.¹

In my view, Kripke's semantic argument can be summarized as follows.

If descriptivism is correct, that is, name N is exactly synonymous with one description or a cluster of descriptions, then, the meaning² of N should be the

1 Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980; paperback edition, Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1981), 71. Hereafter the book is abbreviated as *NN* in this paper.

2 The word 'meaning' has a wide sense and a narrow sense in bibliography about philosophy of language. In its wide sense, 'meaning' includes both the sense [*Sinn*] and reference

SEMANTICS FOR NOMINALISTS

Samuel Cumming

Abstract

Nominalists should give up on one of Frege's semantic tenets, and adopt an account on which the truth-value of a sentence depends on the senses, rather than the referents, of its syntactic constituents. That way, sentences like '2+2=4' and 'Hamlet did not exist' might be true, without components like '2' and 'Hamlet' having a referent.

The German philosopher Gottlob Frege set the agenda for the precise study of meaning in the twentieth century. Though many of his semantic claims are controversial, almost all of them are still taken seriously today. Most famously, Frege distinguished between the sense and the reference of an expression, and argued that the additional semantic layer of sense was indispensable. He also held a view about the context of attitude and speech reports (or as he termed them, indirect contexts) according to which an expression in the scope of a report verb referred to the sense it would normally express outside of such a context.

The latter view is supported by Frege's observation that expressions behave differently in indirect contexts. For instance, substituting 'The Morning Star' for 'The Evening Star' in a sentence only affects its truth-value if the substitution occurs in an indirect context. Frege was independently committed to the claim that the truth-value of a sentence depends solely on the reference (and arrangement) of its constituents, and hence that coreferring expressions could always be substituted for one another *salva veritate*. He was forced to conclude that in indirect contexts 'The Morning Star' and 'The Evening Star' did not refer to their customary referent, the planet Venus, and claimed instead that each referred to its customary sense.

However, if we eschew the latter commitment, and allow the truth-value of a sentence to depend, in indirect contexts, on the sense expressed by its constituents, we can accommodate his observation without altering the reference of expressions in such contexts—without, as Davidson put it, giving up our semantic innocence.

Indeed, the move from a semantics on which truth-value depends on reference to one on which it depends on sense (along with, where necessary, what

SEMANTIC MINIMALISM AND PRESUPPOSITION

Adam Sennet

Abstract

This paper is about the interface between two phenomena—context sensitivity and presupposition. I argue that favored competing treatments of context sensitivity are incompatible with the received view about presupposition triggering. In consequence, I will urge a reconsideration of a much-maligned view about how best to represent context sensitivity.

Semantic Minimalists, here represented by Capellen and Lepore (2004), endorse two controversial theses:

- T1) The semantic value of any sentence that lacks obvious indexicals or demonstratives (other than tense) is the same in all contexts of utterance.
- T2) The semantic value of an indicative sentence relative to a context is a proposition.¹

C & L give tests and considerations to determine whether a term is context sensitive, but the guiding idea is that the context sensitivity relevant to semantics is highly constrained to a conservative list of indexicals. As a test case, they argue that quantifier phrases are *not* context sensitive. This runs against the grain: most theorists are sympathetic to the idea that quantifier phrases such as ‘every table’ are *context sensitive*.² To illustrate, consider a man who walks into a room with four tables covered with books and says:

- 1) Every table is covered with books.

- 1 Many minimalists reject (2) for certain constructions preferring to think of the semantic value of some sentences that lack obvious indexicals as sub-propositional. The only minimalists we will be concerned with are ones who think that sentences with quantifiers that aren’t explicitly restricted express propositions. See Borg (2012, 2004) for other approaches to defending and articulating semantic minimalism.
- 2 ‘Context sensitive’ is being used loosely here to include hidden indexical theorists such as Stanley and Szabo (2000). The distinction doesn’t matter for our purposes.

COMPOSITIONALITY AND UNDERSTANDING

Fei YuGuo

Abstract

Contemporary debates on the principle of compositionality provoke a perplexing problem about its import on natural language. Whether the principle of compositionality makes any substantial constraints on the meaningfulness of natural language has an indeterminate answer. In this paper, I try to argue against the principle of compositionality for natural language by considering its significance for understanding. Part one is a general survey of the principle of compositionality pertaining to the meaning of a complex expression; and in part two, I will focus on the issue of understanding a sentence or more complex expression, pointing out that principle of compositionality is neither sufficient nor necessary for understanding, even though compositionality is true for natural language, it is trivial and useless; the final part aims to criticize the principle of compositionality from its underspecification of meaning, which is at odds with our general idea of the representational feature of natural language and the hypothesis of isomorphism among mind, language and reality.

1. Compositionality and Meaning

Nowadays, throughout many literature in philosophy of language, when someone tries to discuss the meaning of a sentence or a complex expression, it is not an easy job for her to get rid of the idea of compositionality without hesitation, because the principle of compositionality seems to be ubiquitously applicable and in compliance with our commonsense regarding natural language. However, it is not evident that we take the basic meaningful linguistic constituents as sub-sentential parts and then with them “build” the meaning of complex expression.¹ We should note further that current debate on the principle of compositionality helps in shedding some light on the question as to whether the principle of compositionality sets any substantial restrictions on the process of explaining the meaningfulness of sub-sentential semantic elements. I think the starter to the principle of compositionality’s place in explaining the meaning of complex expression runs as follows:

- 1 It is negotiable whether we should take the basic meaningful unit to be a sentence or sub-sentential constitutive, since after Frege and Russell, most philosophers will not talk about the meaning of sub-sentential constitutive in isolation, but will bear in mind sorts of Context Principle more or less.

VALUES REDUCED TO FACTS: NATURALISM WITHOUT FALLACY

Zhu Zhifang

Abstract

Grammatically, “good” is a one-place predicate. Many authors were misled by the surface grammar and thus mistook good as a simple property. Pragmatically good is a relational property if it is somehow a property. As a term for relational property, “good” captures a particular type of relations between events and the needs of persons. Therefore, all statements in which “good” occurs are statements of facts. Moral terms such as “morally right”, “morally good”, “ought to do” can be adequately defined in terms of “good” and thus all statements of values are at final analysis statements of facts. There is no dichotomy between fact and value, and the question of derivation of an ought from an is is nonsensical. Moore misunderstood the property good or the predicate “good” and thus his objection to naturalistic approach to goodness is pointless. Naturalism concerning goodness commits no fallacy.

I. Introduction

We usually owe the dichotomy between fact and value to David Hume (Hume, 1739). There are mainly three types of responses to the dichotomy. (1) strictly sticking to the dichotomy and attempting to offer further support to it: G. E. Moore argues that goodness is a non-natural property (Moore, 1903) and an recent example is John T. Goldthwait who claims that “we can find it and explain it, rather than explain it away.” (Goldthwait, 2006: 105). (2) attempts being made to construct inferences from *an is* to *an ought* (Guevara, 2008). (3) attempts being also made to argue that all statements of fact are implicit statements of value, mainly by classical and new pragmatists (Putnam 1981, 2002). All the three types of approaches to fact-value dichotomy are misleading for they are based on misunderstanding of the grammar of the predicate “good” if we take “good” as a primary term in the discourse of values. Grammatically, “good” is a one-place predicate. Many authors were misled by the surface grammar and thus mistook *good* as a simple property. Pragmatically *good* is a relational property if it is somehow a property. As a term for relational property, “good” captures a particular type of relations between events and the needs of persons. Therefore, all statements in which “good” occurs are statements of facts. Moral terms such as “morally right”, “morally good”, “ought to do” can be adequately defined in terms of “good” and thus all statements of values are at

PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS INTO FIGURATIVE SPEECH METAPHOR AND IRONY

Ernie Lepore and Matthew Stone

Abstract

This paper surveys rich and important phenomena in language use that theorists study from a wide range of perspectives. And according to us, there is no unique and general mechanism behind our practices of metaphor and irony. Metaphor works in a particular way, by prompting the specific kind of analogical thinking. And, irony works in its own particular way, by prompting new appreciation of the apparent contribution, speaker or perspective of an utterance exhibited for effect. Or so we will argue.

We can understand a metaphor even when it's fresh and unfamiliar; even when there is no convention or pre-established meanings for any of its words or constructions. When we think of this creativity, we like to cite this metaphor from the comedian Matt Groening.

Love is a snow mobile racing across the tundra; it flips over pinning you underneath. At night the ice weasels come.

A snow mobile is a sport vehicle like a car on skis that you drive through the snow.

It's fun; it's exhilarating, and it gives a sense of adventure. A tundra is a frozen landscape with no trees, a place of relative safety. Weasels are small predatory animals known for their fierceness and trickery. When you put this all together you imagine a prototypical course for a love affair, where it starts with a sense of adventure and excitement and then goes horribly wrong leaving you with a gnawing feelings of torture and pain. What seems to be doing the work here is our ability to understand the sentence as described; and then to draw an analogy between the experience of being in love and a certain kind of history that could happen.

But if metaphors aren't conventional, how is it we can get a special meaning from them? After all, love isn't *really* a snow mobile. The tradition developed by the philosopher H.P. Grice provides one way to explain how metaphors work:

NORMS OF WORD MEANING LITIGATION

Peter Ludlow

Abstract

In this paper I examine cases in which we attach different meanings to words and in which we litigate or argue about the best way of defining the term in dispute. I reject the idea that this is just a matter of imposing our will on our interlocutors – I think that the process of litigation is normative. To some extent recent work in the theory of argumentation has shed considerable light on this process, but we will need to retrofit that work for the kinds of considerations we are engaged with here.

I'll begin in Section 1, with some important terminological preliminaries. Then in Section 2, I will offer a general description of how we come to notice that there are disputes about meaning and how we engage the meaning variance once it is recognized. In section 3 I'll then take up a case that is relatively less controversial – the definition of 'planet' – and use it to construct a model for our meaning litigation works. Finally, in section 4 I'll then turn to more contentious and substantial issues – the definition of 'rape' and the definition of 'person' and begin exploring how disputes about the meanings of those terms can be normative and fail to be normative.

Introduction

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THE INCONSISTENCY OF THE IDENTITY THESIS

Christopher Hom and Robert May

Abstract

In theorizing about racial pejoratives, an initially attractive view is that pejoratives have the same reference as their “neutral counterparts”. Call this the identity thesis. According to this thesis, the terms “kike” and “Jew”, for instance, pick out the same set of people. To be a Jew just is to be a kike, and so to make claims about Jews just is to make claims about kikes. In this way, the two words are synonymous, and so make the same contribution to the truth-conditions of sentences containing them. While the fundamental claim for the identity thesis that Jews are kikes sounds anti-semitic, it need not be actually anti-semitic. The identity thesis is usually bolstered with the further claim that the pejorative aspect of “kike” and other such terms is located elsewhere than in truth-conditional content, so what makes “kike” a bad word is a non-truth-conditional association with anti-semitism that is not shared with the word “Jew”. The exact nature and location of the negative moral content of pejoratives is a matter of some dispute among identity theorists. But whatever the intuitive appeal of the identity theory for those persuaded by such views, it is nevertheless inconsistent.

I The Identity Thesis for Pejoratives

In theorizing about racial pejoratives, an initially attractive view is that pejoratives have the same reference as their “neutral counterparts”. Call this the *identity thesis*. According to this thesis, the terms “kike” and “Jew”, for instance, pick out the same set of people. To be a Jew *just is* to be a kike, and so to make claims about Jews *just is* to make claims about kikes. In this way, the two words are synonymous, and so make the same contribution to the truth-conditions of sentences containing them. In other words, the proposition expressed by any sentence of the form $\Phi(\text{kike})$ is identical to that expressed by the corresponding sentence of the form $\Phi(\text{Jew})$.

While the fundamental claim for the identity thesis that Jews are kikes *sounds* anti-semitic, it need not be *actually* anti-semitic. The identity thesis is usually bolstered with the further claim that the pejorative aspect of “kike” and other such terms is located elsewhere than in truth-conditional content, so what makes “kike” a bad word is a non-truth-conditional association with anti-

DESCRIBING I-JUNCTION

Paul M. Pietroski

Abstract

The meaning of a noun phrase like ‘brown cow’, or ‘cow that ate grass’, is somehow conjunctive. But conjunctive in what sense? Are the meanings of other phrases—e.g. ‘ate quickly’, ‘ate grass’, and ‘at noon’—similarly conjunctive? I suggest a possible answer, in the context of a broader conception of natural language semantics. But my main aim is to highlight some underdiscussed questions and some implications of our ignorance.

1. Varieties of Conjunction

The ampersand of a propositional calculus, as in (1), can be characterized via *truth* tables.

$$(1) \quad P \ \& \ Q$$

In a first-order predicate calculus that includes open sentences like (2–5),

- (2) $Bx \ \& \ Cx$
- (3) $Bx \ \& \ Cy$
- (4) $Axy \ \& \ Gx$
- (5) $Fxy \ \& \ Uzw$

the ampersand can be characterized in terms of Tarski’s notion of *satisfaction* by sequences (assignments of values to variables), with sentences like (1) as special cases. One can also imagine a more restricted language that does not generate open sentences like (3–5), yet does generate predicates like (6), with each open “slot” linked to the other.

$$(6) \quad B(_) \ \& \ C(_)$$

The ampersand of such a language might be characterized in terms of intersection. Another familiar option involves appeal to functions, types, and truth *values* as in (7);

PREDICATES OF TASTE AND RELATIVISM ABOUT TRUTH

Barry C. Smith

Abstract

Is relativism about truth ever a coherent doctrine? Some people have argued that an answer to this question depends on whether there can be cases of genuine disagreement where those who disagree hold conflicting beliefs towards the same proposition and yet are each entitled to say that what they believe is true. These have been called cases of faultless disagreement and are often explored by considering the case of disagreements about taste. However, this is not the right way to formulate the relativist's doctrine, and the discussions of taste are often based on a faulty view about the nature of taste and about the workings of predicates of taste. I examine the taste case in more detail and consider the prospects for a genuine form of truth relativism.

I. Relativism and Disagreement

In philosophy, disagreements about what is morally right or wrong have long been used to motivate certain forms of relativism. The idea is that when intractable moral disputes arise between different groups there may be no neutral grounds on which to decide who is right. According to the relativist, there is no single standard or moral code to appeal to, and each side is equally entitled to the judgements they make in accordance with their own moral codes. So when two parties have considered all the relevant facts about a given issue and arrived at opposing verdicts, the correct thing to say might be that they are both right. Similar reasoning about disputes involving what is beautiful or ugly are used to motivate relativism about aesthetic values.

The question is whether the relativist's response to these disputes is coherent. Many think it isn't.¹ If we suppose an individual's judgement about a moral issue to be correct, then we usually take anyone who disagrees with that judgement to be wrong. However, if the relativist wants to say that two people can arrive at conflicting views about a given moral issue and both be right, the correct thing to say will be that each person's judgement is right according to his

1 Paul Boghossian is a leading opponent. See his 2006 and 2011

MOOD, FORCE AND TRUTH

William B. Starr

Abstract

There is a big difference between saying Maya is singing, Is Maya singing? and Sing Maya! This paper examines and criticizes two attempts to rigorously explain this difference: Searle's speech act theory and the truth-conditional reductionism advocated by Davidson and Lewis. On the speech act analysis, each utterance contains a marker which says what kind of speech act the utterance counts as performing. The truth-conditional reductionists try to reanalyze the non-declaratives (Is Maya singing? and Sing Maya!) as complex declarative forms. The former analysis fails to recognize the indirect relationship between sentence (or clause) type and utterance force. The latter analysis fails to recognize the distinctive and thoroughly compositional contribution that the imperative, interrogative and declarative mood make to sentences containing them.

1 Introduction

These three *sentences* are clearly different.

- (1) Maya is singing.
- (2) Is Maya singing?
- (3) Maya, sing!

They differ in their respective moods: *declarative*, *interrogative* and *imperative*. Echoing Hare (1970: 7), I wish to insist that “any complete explanation of the meaning of ... a sentence must explain the meaning of its mood.” Yet I wish to deny that this must be done by “specifying the kind of speech act to which that mood is assigned by the conventions that constitute our language” (Hare 1970: 7) or, as (Searle 1969: 30) puts it: “[by having the mood indicate] what illocutionary act the speaker is performing in the utterance of the sentence.” I will therefore be concerned with defending two related theses. First, a sentence's mood contributes to its compositional semantic meaning in the same way that its tense and other constituents do. Second, a sentence's mood does *not* directly encode the kind of speech act that is performed by uttering

A SEMIOTIC UNDERSTANDING OF THICK TERMS

Aihua Wang

Abstract

Thick terms, which express value concepts with significant descriptive content, have aroused a lot of controversial issues, among which the contextual variability of evaluation is the most disputed one. This paper argues that the semiotic notion of verbal medium and its workings can explain away this variability problem. We will first present this variability problem. Second, we will argue that thick terms should be regarded as verbal medium that is both a meaning-carrying substance and a meaning carrier. Third, we will discuss the conventional evaluation of thick terms as a meaning carrier. Special attention is given to the semiotic analysis of evaluative variability of thick terms. Finally, we will diagnose the mistakes of some philosophical views about the variability argument concerning thick terms.

I. Introduction

Value concepts with significant descriptive content are generally regarded as thick concepts. Terms that express that kind of concepts are correspondingly called thick terms. For example, the word *cruel*, while having a negative evaluation of *x*, also describes *x*. In other words, things that involve causing someone much pain just for fun count as both cruel and wrong. There are several controversial issues around thick concepts and terms, such as how to explain the distinction between thick concepts and thin ones (i.e., pure value concepts without descriptive force, such as *good* and *wrong*); whether thick value concepts presupposes the denial of the fact-value distinction; and the most interesting issue is how thick concepts and words are related to the evaluation they convey and how we can account for the evaluative-valence variability of thick concepts and words. This paper will deal with the last two issues from a semiotic perspective, specifically employing the semiotic notion of *verbal medium*.

2. The issue of the location of evaluation of thick terms

As we mentioned earlier, thick concepts are descriptive and evaluative as well. The former, Williams (1985: 129; 140–41) argues, has a world-guided character

AN ECHO OF THE CLASSICAL ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE FROM CHINA: THE POST-ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Guanlian Qian

Abstract:

It is necessary for us to know a methodological shift from Chinese philosophy to western A(nalytic) P(hilosophy).

There is a unique pattern for some being partial to AP but others, to P(hilosophy) of L(anguage) in China. Simply, this unique pattern arises from different professional perspectives or preferences, namely, people from philosopher background see the same thing ("PL is nearly synonymous with AP", Nicholas Bunnin and Jiyuan Yu 2001:755) with an analytic preference, while people from F(oreign) L(anguage) S(tudies) teacher background see, with a linguistic preference.

The focus of this paper is on a narrow scrutiny of 5 case studies, which are regarded by the author as an explanation of the basic elements of the Post-A(nalytic) P(hilosophy) of L(anguage) in China. The epitome of the PAPL is mainly the heavy dependence upon the Chinese language, the strict insistence on the analysis of language and the hot pursuit of some new problems on the basis of western AP.

However, the other colorful styles of doing the classic APL are keeping pace actively and effectively with the PAPL in the world of FLS at home.

I Theoretical surroundings

1.1 A methodological shift from Chinese philosophy to analytic philosophy (AP, hence)

AP began its own dissemination in China in the 1930s. The latest decade years witnessed radical developments and even prosperity of AP.

It is necessary, in retrospect, for us to briefly review the traditional methods in researches in Chinese philosophy applied by Chinese philosophers, for the past methods deeply influenced present ones towards AP. The first kind of the traditional methods could be labeled as the formula of *introduction-and-clear-up*, which was often applied by HuShi, the late famous philosopher. Actually, the program of action of the philosophers of this first kind was reflected in the remark that "I make explanatory notes on six

THE CHINESE LANGUAGE AND THE VALUE OF TRUTH-SEEKING: UNIVERSALITY OF METAPHYSICAL THOUGHT AND PRE-QIN MINGJIA'S PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Limin Liu

Abstract

This paper argues that philosophy in the sense of metaphysical speculation is universal and not at all language-specific. At the beginning of traditional Chinese philosophy, the ancient Chinese thinkers were concerned with social morality, raising questions which differed greatly from those of ancient Greeks and the language they used was typologically different from the western languages, but in the end the thinking and debating over their questions gave rise to speculations on language names which were unmistakably metaphysical in nature and oriented toward the establishment of conditions of truth in language. This shows that truth-seeking is a universal predisposition.

1 Philosophy and the Chinese Language

Since the Chinese language differs typologically from the western languages, some believe that they can attribute the fundamental difference between Chinese and western philosophies, or rather the absence of metaphysics in Chinese tradition, to the properties of the Chinese language. Of its properties, those that are significant philosophically include: 1) the absence of copula “*to be*” in the Chinese language with its veridical and existential uses as those in the western languages; 2) the lack of inflectional changes in Chinese, which makes it impossible to distinguish formally parts of speech, abstract and concrete nouns and so on; and 3) a loose syntax structure in which the subject and the predicate are not clear enough to represent unmistakably the entity talked about and the comment on it, two major elements of a proposition.

Zhang Dongsun has long before noted that metaphysics is absent in the tradition of thought in China, primarily because the properties of the Chinese language could not lead to speculations on issues such as “being as being”, and the truth values of propositions.^{[1]pp.338-339} The absence of copula “*to be*” kept the ancient Chinese thinkers out of the area of “*being qua being*”, the kernel issue

METAPHOR AND METAPHOR OF LOVE IN CLASSICAL CHINESE POETRY

Ying Zhang

Abstract:

This paper has two interconnected themes. First, it is a study of metaphor of love in classical Chinese poetry. Second, Josef Stern's semantic account on metaphor interpretation will be explored. By analyzing the common grounds and remaining differences in Chinese and English, I will try to challenge the view that metaphor is simply a function of semantics, specifically the analogy between metaphors and demonstratives. I will argue that metaphorical interpretation is not solely a semantic matter. With regard to metaphor in classical Chinese poetry, one of the pragmatic factors, Yi Xiang (the cultural image) should also be taken into consideration.

I. Introduction

Ever since Aristotle offers us the first theory on metaphor in *The Poetics*, it has attracted considerable attention by philosophers, linguists, psychologists and cognitive scientists. Metaphor works implicitly according to the formula 'say one thing in terms of another', that is, it can be understood as a conceptual mapping operating from a source domain to a target domain.¹ Consider the following metaphorical utterance:

(1) Juliet is the sun.

Romeo expressed his deep love to Juliet through the utterance of (1). The target domain 'Juliet' was mapped to the source domain 'sun', where 'sun' was used metaphorically to evoke some perspectives that could not be literally ascribed to 'Juliet'.

Various accounts of metaphor interpretation have been discussed.² Take for instance, Black (1955) would call 'sun' the *focus* and the remainder of the

¹ See Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

² See Black (1955, 1979); Grice (1975); Cohen (1975); Davidson (1978); Searle (1979, 1993); Lakoff & Johnson (1980); Carston (1991); White (1996); Hills (1997); Stern (2000); Bezuidenhout (2001); Camp (2003); Recanati (2004), among others.