THE MEANING OF OUCH AND OOPS

Explorations in the theory of Meaning as Use

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(Talk Length Version - Draft #2)

[PROLOGUE]

Today, I will not much discuss the general conceptions of Semantic Theory that are ultimately my target. Rather I will try to show through some examples, the fruitfulness of an attempt to combine formal methods with the approach to semantics of the Anti-Formalists. This approach is embodied in the slogan "Meaning is Use!" My methods, this morning, are primarily taxonomic.

There are words that have a meaning, or at least words for which we can give their meaning---words like "fortnight" and feral"—and words that don't seem to have a meaning—words like "goodbye" and "I" (the first person pronoun). If the latter have a meaning, they are, at the least, hard to define.

Still, they have a use, and those who know English, know how to use them. In fact, I venture to say that all English speakers know how to use "goodbye" and "I" whereas relatively few could define "fortnight" and "feral". (I myself didn't know the word "feral" until just a few years ago.)

Within Philosophy, and especially Twentieth Century Philosophy, there are two great traditions of Semantic Theory. One, a formalist tradition, in which the great figures are all logicians: Frege, Russell, Tarski, Carnap Church, and Kripke. And the other, an anti-formalist tradition in which the great figures are Wittgenstein, Strawson, Austin, and Grice.

{{Scholars may argue. I know my uncles, the formalists, better than I know my anti-s.}}

The formalists, for the most part, studied the idealized languages of science. The anti-formalists studied natural language, especially its context sensitivity. It is from Wittgenstein that the slogan "Meaning is Use" derives.

I was trained by Carnap, Church, and Montague, and came to believe that the slogan Meaning is Use, was simply a cop-out to keep the study of language humanistic and to avoid the rigors of logical theory. (This was a foolish and naïve view, but I was a graduate student. No offense!)

In his classic 1950 article "On Referring",[1] Strawson confronts Russell with the idea that Meaning is Use, and concludes with the bold assertion:

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[1] First published in Mind 1950, reprinted in A.P. Martinich (editor) The Philosophy of Language Third Edition (Oxford University Press l996).

> "Neither Aristotelian nor Russellian rules give the exact logic of <u>any</u> expression of ordinary language; for ordinary language has no exact logic."[2]

Strawson thought that where meaning is use, it lies beyond logic's domain (which is not far from the foolish and naïve view I held as a graduate student).

About 25 years ago, I had an idea about how to extend logic to account for a language containing the first person pronoun "I" as well as other indexicals like "now", "here", "today", "yesterday". This I thought scored a point for the formalists—and I still think that.

But now I also think that that work could well fly the banner "Meaning is Use."

So there really isn't any incompatibility between the view that, for at least certain expressions, meaning is use. OR to put it somewhat more exactly,

> For certain expressions of natural language, a correct Semantic Theory would state rules of use rather than something like a concept expressed.

Once I recognized that the work I had done in constructing a logic of indexicals was actually a <u>scientific realization</u> of the idea that (for certain expressions) meaning is use, I began to explore the extension of those methods to a range of other expressions that had seemed, or that I had been taught were, intractable to formal methods.

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In earlier work I attempted to show that the semantic rules governing indexicals produce a distinctive pattern of logical consequence. For example, "I am here now" may be regarded as a logical truth of a language containing indexicals, but "It is necessary that I am here now" would not be true, let alone be a logical truth. Thus the familiar modal principle of Necessity Generalization (to derive from the fact that Φ is a logical truth, that Necessarily Φ is a logical truth) seems to fail. I will, below, try to show the same for epithets, try, that is, to challenge the dictum:

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[2] (Emphasis added.) This is one of those claims that is almost surely true in some sense of exact, and almost surely false in some sense of logic. I think it is in the sense in which it is false that Strawson wished to assert it.

Logic (and perhaps even truth) is immune to epithetical color[3]

and hence challenge the dictum that epithets cannot invade the sacred precincts of logic. This is a more consequential project, raising questions not only about the semantics of epithets, but about the very nature of logic.[4]

[LOGIC: VALIDITY]

So here is my argument that the aspects of meaning under discussion can have consequences for the notion of logical validity.[5]

Consider Argument 1:

<u>That damn {{freaking?, bastard?}} Kaplan was promoted.</u>
Kaplan was promoted.

This seems like a logically valid argument to me. Your intuitions may differ, but it seems to me like a perfectly good argument.

However, what about Argument 2:

<u>Kaplan was promoted.</u>
That damn Kaplan was promoted.
{{Alas, Kaplan was promoted. Regrettably, Kaplan was promoted. ??}}

I am disinclined to accept this as a valid argument. Why? In order to give an analysis of the two arguments I need some more terminology.

A descriptive is an expression which describes something which either is or is not the case. Let us call an expression an expressive if it expresses or <u>displays</u> something which either is or is not the case.[6]

{{Here is a possibly critical point: Distinguish Ventilatives (a poor term for expressives in a narrow sense) and Situationals (like "goodbye") from those

[3] "Epithets" Frege and Carnap would have said "do not contribute to 'cognitive content', and thus the study of their use belongs not to semantics but to pragmatics." Much more on this below.
[4] One should approach such questions in an open minded way. In logic, we begin with pre-theoretical intuitions about logical consequence. Logical theory is not a purely stipulative science.
[5] It is not my view that all semantic information carried by expressives has consequences for logic. The semantic information in exclamatories such as "ouch" and "oops" does not. It is surprising enough that any form of information not incorporated in what is said should affect logic. Grice assumes that only what is said can affect logic. This, I think, is the common assumption.
[6] I will try to stay with displays, but I sometimes slip into expresses. This use of "express" is distinct from that in "express from below".

expressions that may have – in addition to or in place of an ventilative role -- a built-in Performative feature (Derogatives and Honorifics)}}

If what is displayed is to either be or not be the case, it must have sentential form. Thus instead of saying that my shriek displays fear, I shall say that it displays the fact (if sincere) that I am in fear.[7] [8] If you prefer, you can equivalently say that the shriek displays a state, here fear, that the agent either is or is not in (depending on whether the shriek was or was not sincere).

I say that an expression is descriptively correct if what it describes is the case, and I say that an expression is expressively correct if what it expresses or displays is the case (or, if we take what it expresses or displays to be a state, if the agent indeed is in that state). You need to take account of the context for most of the expressives, because they usually express something about the agent -- about the utterer, if you are an utterance-theory type. Your shriek may be expressively correct, while mine may be fakery. Usually, but <u>subject to exceptions noted below</u>, expressives display something about a state or attitude of the agent.

One of the notable features of language as a system for conveying information is that you can lie with it. A correct semantics for expressives must provide for the ability to use expressives in this dishonest way (even if one cannot exactly lie with them) by separating the semantic information associated with the expressive, i.e. what is expressed, from the question whether what is expressed is or is not the case. (Here the use of display is a bit infelicitous because of the factive connotation of "display")

Assume that the epithet "damn" in "That damn Kaplan" expresses derogation, and has no descriptive content -- allow me this in order to make my point.[9] (The point could be made equally well with "frigging" or "freaking", which, while 'richer', also serves the function of a completely general, denigrating expressive perfectly well. So, if you prefer, just read "That frigging Kaplan" whenever I use the paler, though less felicitous, "That damn Kaplan". {{Could also talk about "that bastard Kaplan" here, but probably not worth the

[7] A shriek is not generally part of the language, but you get the idea.
[8] Note also the importance of the availability of the first person in transforming what is displayed into sentential form.
[9] Maybe it isn't a perfect analysis of this particular epithet, but I would be surprised if there were not rich, completely general, denigrating expressives, of the kind I assume "damn" to be. Vulgar expressions like "frigging" come to mind. I could also make my point by reconstruction the arguments using an ethnic slur term and an expressively neutral term for the same ethnicity (though if one wished to derive the conclusion, a meaning postulate connecting the terms would be required).

time}}) I will come back to the epithet. Assuming that the epithet “damn” is an expressive and that it expresses a derogatory attitude on the part of the speaker, then: “That damn Kaplan was promoted” is going to be expressively correct just in case the speaker has a derogatory attitude toward Kaplan, and descriptively correct just in case Kaplan was promoted.

{{It may be the case that the epithet does more than express (i.e. ‘display’ or ‘ventilate’) an attitude. It may also belittle, thus carrying a performative role in addition to its expressive role. Because I am still uncertain as to how this fits together with Semantics, Pragmatics, Logic, and the other subjects on which I wish to focus, and because I do believe that the performative function is over and above the semantic expressive function (some may have thought wrongly that language could not perform, express, and describe at the same time), I shall not take up this aspect of derogatory expressions.}}

Now, the vexed question of truth.

If one were inclined to call a sentence true, if it were merely descriptively correct, independently of its expressive correctness, then one would regard both Arguments as truth preserving, since the descriptive contents of premise and conclusion are the same. Because I do not regard Argument 2 as a logically valid argument, I would come to the conclusion that logical validity is not about truth-preservation but rather about what I might call information delimitation:[10]

> There must be no semantic information in the conclusion that is not already contained in the premises.

For me, the problem with Argument 2 is that it violates this constraint. Although nothing is said in the conclusion that is not said in the premises, there is an intrusion of information displayed in the conclusion that is not available from the premises. And, I should probably add, this information flows from the semantics, the literal semantics, of the <u>sentence</u>, not from some vile gesture made while uttering it. (More on this later)

[TRUTH WITH AN ATTITUDE]

There is alternative way of talking that one might adopt. One might decide to use “truth” in a broader way, so that in the case of an expression that has both descriptive and expressive elements, we would say that the sentence is true only if it is both descriptively correct and expressively correct. We would

[10] I wouldn’t call it this if I could come up with a more graceful phrase.

then say that the sentence “That damn Kaplan was promoted”, when taken with respect to a particular context of utterance, is true in the wider sense, call it true-plus, only if Kaplan was promoted and the agent has a derogatory attitude toward him. If you were to use this notion of truth, truth with an attitude, then you could say that logical validity is indeed truth preserving, or, more precisely, truth-plus preserving. (At the moment I regard this as a nominal question, I originally had a slight preference for the narrower notion of truth, but I am coming to prefer the wider sense. In any case, I have no objection to a stipulation in favor of either notion.)

The important point is that although we may have differing, even shaky, intuitions about truth, we – or at least, I – have more stable intuitions about logical consequence. These have been ignored because of the nearly universal, and according to me, fallacious, assumption that the notion of logical consequence is derivative from the more secure notion of truth.

{{Compare, Frege’s treatment of the relative clause construction in

> Napoleon, who recognized the danger to his right flank, personally led his troops against the enemy’s position.

Frege claims that two propositions are expressed:

(1) Napoleon recognized the danger to his right flank.

(2) Napoleon personally led his troops against the enemy’s position.

and that both must be true for the original to be true. But my intuitions are less certain regarding the question whether the truth of propositions expressed by relative or appositive clauses is always required for the truth of the whole.

Frege also appears to claims that “although” has no sense (perhaps other than that of “and”), “but only illuminates [its clause] in a peculiar fashion”.[11]}}

[LOGIC: SCOPE]

Before I leave “That damn Kaplan was promoted”, I want to say a few more things about it. There are some interesting features of the logic of expressives that show that something more than mere description is going on.

[11] The Frege material was called to my attention by Ben Caplan. It appears at the end of “Sinn und Bedeutung”.

As I said, I think that Argument 1 is logically valid. On the other hand, I certainly hope that my friends will not think that they are required to assent to the corresponding conditional,

(3) If that damn Kaplan was promoted, then Kaplan was promoted.

because it is a logical truth, and I hope the same for,

> Either that damn Kaplan was promoted or it is not the case that that damn Kaplan was promoted.

I don't want to be a victim of logic.

These questions go beyond what I'm about to describe to you, a basic, model theoretic approach to the semantics of expressive lexical items. These questions turn on syntactically based issues of compositionality. In particular, the questions of how to compute the descriptive and expressive content of compound expressions from the descriptive and expressive content of their components. At this time, I only want to make the point that the answers may not be the familiar ones. For example, the conditional does not conditionalize away the expressive content of its antecedent, nor does negation yield the complement of the expressive (to speak loosely). It is little consolation to me if you aim to refute my enemies by declaring, "Wrong! It is not the case that that damn Kaplan was promoted." Similarly, if I confront you about the derogation in (3), you wouldn't reply, "I said <u>IF</u>".

If the semantic information in logical compounds is not derivable in the standard way from that in the components, then the standard logical rules of inference are jeopardized. The failure of the conditional to conditionalize away expressive content accounts directly for the intuitive failure of the inference:

> <u>The Regents acted foolishly.</u>
> If that damn Kaplan was promoted, then the Regents acted foolishly.

Other cases of non-standard compositional rules have been noted,[12] and it may turn out that the form of logical heresy is already well known. But a deviant logic should be expected on compositional grounds alone.[13]

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[12] I have myself suggested that apposition is such a case.

[13] We might try to account for these compositional phenomena by claiming that expressive content takes 'primary scope'. This seems an initially plausible, though imprecise, diagnosis. Another possibility, is that expressive content is presupposed. But, as Saul Kripke commented in conversation, it lacks certain earmarks of presupposition. Usually, presupposition is cancelable by conditionalization. Both "John has stopped beating his wife." and its negation presuppose that he once beat her, but "John has stopped beating his wife, if he ever did

[OUCH]

Consider now the case of "ouch". In English we have the interjection "ouch", and we have the sentence "I am in pain". As noted, expressives tend to display something about the agent of the context. Hence, if the object language contains indexicals and is sufficiently rich, it will often be the case that there is a way of saying (descriptively) what is only displayed by the expressive "ouch". The connection between these two: "ouch" and "I am in pain" is actually quite famous and controversial, and I plan to join the controversy. But before I do, I will want to get to "oops". So let me say a little more about the general situation regarding both "ouch" and "oops".

First, a bit of technology. Imagine your standard model theoretic semantics for a language with indexicals in it. You're going to have possible worlds and possible circumstances and so on. And you're going to have possible contexts. These possible contexts are contexts in which one can situate a sentence that contains indexicals, and you can then ask, with the context filling in the parameters that are left open by the indexicals, whether the given sentence is or is not true. Within such a development, we can verify the intuition, mentioned earlier, that "I am here now" is true in every context, but It is necessary that I am here now" is not.

Think of this model theoretic system. Now how do we need to extend it to deal with expressives? Well, we need certain information about each expressive we desire to treat. First of all, we need some information that I think of as being syntactical rather than semantical. We need to know that the expression is an expressive rather than a descriptive. And then, if it is an expressive, we need to know what it expresses. That is, we need to know <u>what must be the case in order for the expressive to be expressively correct</u>, in order for what it expresses or displays to be the case.

I take it that the rule for "ouch" is reasonably simple: that the agent of the context has just experienced a sudden {{and sharp}} pain. "Ouch" does not

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beat her." carries no such presupposition. On the other hand, in "That bastard Kaplan was promoted, if I do despise him." the antecedent seems to cancel none of the expressive content of the epithet.

One might try certain variants: "That bastard Kaplan was promoted, if I do hold him to be mean and disagreeable." (drawn from the American Heritage Dictionary's definition of "bastard as 'vulgar slang'),. or "That bastard Kaplan was promoted, if those who so-regard him are correct." (this last is modeled on a suggestion considered by Kripke), but neither seems to cancel the epithet. "That bastard Kaplan was promoted, if he is a bastard" comes closer to cancellation, but even that strategy does not seem to work for our standard, "That damn Kaplan was promoted." Also, I don't see how to cancel the expressive content if we substitute an ethnic slur for "bastard".

{{A further possibility worth exploring is that it is a performative role that resists cancellability.}}

combine with other expressions to form complex sentences, but some expressives do ("That damn Kaplan was promoted."). So we will need rules to compute the expressive correctness of complex expressions from that of their parts. The point of the preceding discussion of scope is that these rules may not be obvious, and a deviant logic should be expected.

Now let me return to my favored idiom, semantic information. Can we understand the model theoretic framework as representing such information. Well, there's a way in which one can represent the information that is in a purely descriptive sentence by simply looking at all the possible states of affairs at which the descriptive sentence is true. (Let me put aside worries about logically equivalent sentences containing different information.) This idea can be generalized to descriptive expressions other than sentences to yield Carnap's idea of intension as a representation of what we grasp when we grasp meaning. In providing for indexicals, which are important for our purposes, we must refocus on possible contexts of use, rather than possible states of affairs. This has considerable consequences in terms of the resulting logic, but as a representation of semantic information, it is still basically Carnap's good idea. It is this idea that I exploited in my work on indexicals, representing Character, which was meant to capture the notion of linguistic meaning for expressions containing indexicals, by a function from contexts.[14]

{{It was, by the way, reflections on my notion of Character that set off the present train of thought about a Semantics of Use.}}

My claim, a soft claim and an old one, is that we get a useful representation of the information in a descriptive sentence simply by looking at all the contexts at which it is descriptively correct.[15] For logic, this form of representation has been invaluable. Now here is the new idea: We can get an equally useful measure of the expressive information that is in a sentence -- or, in the case of exclamatories like "ouch" and "oops", in an expressive standing alone -- by looking at all the contexts at which it, the sentence containing the expressive or the expressive standing alone, is expressively correct. So we have the two explicanda: descriptive information and expressive information

[14] "Because character is what is set by linguistic conventions, it is natural to think of it as meaning in the sense of what is known by the competent language user." From "Demonstratives" p. 505.

[15] This notion, equivalent to a function from contexts to truth values, is not quite the notion of character, which is a function from contexts to contents. But it will do for present purposes. In "Demonstratives" I was especially interested in the surprising interaction between indexicals and modalities, and for that the notion of character as a function to contents rather than truth values is indispensable.

explicated in terms of the two notions: descriptive correctness and expressive correctness.

We can now return to the two expressions "ouch" and "I am in pain". (Please allow me the shorthand, "am in pain" for the more accurate "just experienced a sudden pain"). I claim that "ouch" is an expressive that is used to express the fact that the agent is in pain. What is the semantic information in the word "ouch" on this analysis? The semantic information in the word "ouch" <u>is</u> -- more accurately, is represented by -- the set of those contexts at which the word "ouch" is expressively correct (since it contains no descriptive information), namely, the set of those contexts at which the agent is in pain. That set of contexts represents the semantic information contained in the word "ouch".

What is the information that is in the sentence "I am in pain"? Well, the information that is in the sentence "I am in pain", a sentence that is purely descriptive, is the set of all contexts at which the sentence is descriptively correct, namely, true. That again, is the set of all contexts at which the agent is in pain. So by this representation of semantic information, the semantic information in "ouch" is the same as the semantic information in "I am in pain".

Mind you, I am <u>not</u> saying that, therefore, there is no linguistic difference between "ouch", and "I am in pain". The former is a single word, an interjection, an expressive; it lacks a truth value, and does not syntactical combine with other expressions in ways in which sentences do. (Does the modern idiom allow us to tease the dentist with, "Ouch, NOT!"?) The latter is a sentence. It has a truth value, and does combine in all the old familiar ways (with negation, conditionalization, and so on). But at least according to the present representation, the information, the semantic information in "ouch" is identical with the semantic information in "I am in pain". So we may come to the conclusion that "ouch" and "I am in pain" are informationally equivalent.

{{There is a delicate point here about the informational equivalence between "ouch" and "I am in pain", vs. the sort of equivalence in the model theoretic structure between "ouch" and "It is not the case that I am not in pain." (I don't want to call the latter logical equivalence because I want to restrict that term to a relation between declarative sentences.)}}

Some may conclude that this is a reductio ad absurdum of the model theoretic representation I propose. But I find it in accord with intuition. On this analysis so far (but there is more to say), the linguistic differences between the interjection and the sentence seem more syntactical than semantic. The information they convey is the same, but they convey it through different modes of expression.

Note, however, that differing hierarchies of tropes are be generated by the two expressions. There is, for example, the empathetic use of "ouch" when we see another person hurt. I know of no corresponding empathetic use of "I am in pain".[16] This may suggest that there are semantic differences between the two modes of expression, differences not captured by the model theoretic representation. I would hope that these differences need not be the concern of logic, which is grounded in the literal use of language.

{{At some point I need to make it clear that I am not giving a model theory, only pointing toward an outline of one. I am not even giving a formal language.}}

Please note that it is the semantic information in the expressions that we are talking about, not what can be derived from the fact that someone has used one of them. From the fact that someone has used "I am in pain" we can conclude that the user has mastered a certain portion of English, but this is no part of the semantic information in the sentence.

If I am correct, it is easy to see why somebody might mistake this simple semantic fact, the informational equivalence of the two expressions, for some kind of profound epistemological insight into the functioning of language and come to the conclusion, a conclusion that, to me, is simply perverse, that the sentence "I am in pain" is actually synonymous with the word "ouch", and that since "ouch" is so plainly an expressive, "I am in pain" must likewise be an expressive, and must therefore attribute no property to any subject. I will come back to this, but first let me turn to "oops".

[OOPS]

"Oops" is extremely interesting, and importantly different from "ouch", as I'm sure you're all already aware.

I take it that "oops" is an expressive and that it expresses the fact that the agent has just observed a minor mishap. In the present terminology, "oops" is expressively correct in exactly those contexts in which "I just observed a minor mishap" is descriptively correct. So here again we have informational

[16] There seem to be both interested and disinterested empathetic uses.

equivalence between an expressive interjection and a purely descriptive sentence. Again, I beg your forbearance regarding small imperfections in my analysis of the expressive content of “oops”, since, as is obvious, the merit of the analyses I propose does not depend on whether they apply exactly to the examples I have chosen, but rather on whether English could contain expressions that conform with my analyses, and on whether the tools of analysis are of value in thinking about philosophical issues of meaning. I am a theoretician of language, not an experimentalist.

So allow me “I have just observed a minor mishap” for “oops”.

Now I want you to think about the following situation. You are in a glassware store, and there is a small pyramid of glasses set up on a table. There is a small pyramid of, say, a dozen glasses that are on display. You observe someone walk down the aisle, bump into the pyramid causing it to collapse and causing all the glasses to break. As an observer, you say, “oops”. Completely appropriate, it seems. You have just become aware of a minor mishap.

Now, notice that if...IF...the bump had caused the whole building to collapse, killing hundreds of people, you wouldn't have said “oops” unless, by characterizing the disaster as a <u>minor</u> mishap, you were intending a macabre joke. An utterance of “oops” in the face of a true disaster is expressively <u>in</u>correct. The main point I want to make at this stage of the discussion is that for “oops” to be expressively <u>correct</u>, the observed event must be <u>correctly</u> characterized.

Note, on the side, that in spite of the building collapse, in spite of the incorrectness (and even the vileness) of the speech act, I would understand it. I would get what the person was doing, making a macabre joke by playing on the literal meaning of “oops”.

Now let me continue the original story of broken glasses, putting aside the fantastic alternative in which the building collapses. You saw this person bump into the pyramid, the glasses broke, and you said, “oops”. They sweep away the broken glass, build up the pyramid again, and the person who bumped into it backs away, waits a few seconds, walks forward again on exactly the same path, bumps again, and the glasses come down again. You can't figure out what's going on. They sweep up the glass, rebuild the pyramid, the same person walks away, waits a few second, walks down the aisle, bumps the pyramid for a third time, and again the glasses come down. Well at some point, more quickly if you are living in Los Angeles, you will realized that they are making a movie, and the man, an actor, is supposed to bump the glasses and knock them down and break them. We may imagine a continuation of the story in which the fourth time he bumps into the pyramid, the glasses do not fall down, at which point the actor stops and says "oops!".

Now here we have a case in which you sincerely thought it was a minor mishap. But it wasn't. It wasn't a mishap at all. It was something that was done deliberately and intentionally. You were mistaken in the thought you expressed. Although it is perfectly understandable how you made that mistake, still what you expressed -- that you had just observed a minor mishap -- was incorrect.

The moral of this story, in contrast to that of "ouch", is that in this case you, the "oops"er, do not have privileged access to the state of affairs which must obtain in order for the expressive to be expressively correct. In saying "oops" you made an error. I am inclined to call it a factual error. You didn't make an error by saying something false, because "oops" is not a sentence. It does, however, contain semantic information. The semantic information was: that you had just observed a minor mishap, but you had not just observed a minor mishap.

I call expressives that express no more than a state of the speaker (the agent of the context), subjective. I call expressives that express more than that, objective. "Ouch" is a subjective expressive; "oops" is an objective one.

It may be that when we are in pain, we have privileged access to that fact, and cannot fail to know that we are in pain. But when we believe we have observed a minor mishap, we certainly do not have privileged access to that fact, to whether what we observed is minor or not, and even to whether it was a mishap or something done intentionally. So an expressive can express a state to which the utterer does not have any special access. More importantly, and this is the main lesson of "oops", an expressive can express a state that isn't attitudinal at all.

I wish to note briefly that the subjective/objective distinction among expressives does not articulate with any epistemological distinction. I could have defined subjective as applying to the speaker's state of mind or to the speaker's affective state, but I didn't. Even this wouldn't make the notion articulate with any epistemological idea of privileged access, but it would come closer. Better to keep one's distance and avoid confusion.

There is an interesting issue regarding honorific and derogatory expressions that can be put using this terminology. Are such expressives objective or subjective. In a word, does an honorific express the speaker's respect or the subject's respectability (worthiness of respect).[17] The fact that rationality commands us to bring these two into line – i.e. to respect those, and only those, who merit it – makes it more difficult to mount a decisive case. Still, I believe that the correct semantics for these expressives is subjective. This may make me sound like an emotivist of the old style. I am not. I regard worthiness of respect as a perfectly acceptable objective notion, not be reduced to some subjective notion. And I don't regard "good" as an expressive.[18]

There is an important, though obscure, point here for our project of constructing a scientific theory of use. The conventions that determine whether an expression has descriptive content and especially what that content is, must not be subjected to external scientific or philosophical scrutiny. The fact that we conclude that what those people think they are saying is so inchoate, so unfounded, that we can't even describe it in our scientific metalanguage, does not establish that the expressions of their language are all 'merely' expressive. In fact, if they think the expression is descriptive, it almost surely is (in this special classificatory sense of "descriptive") since it is their conventions we aim to represent. [I know; I said it was obscure.]

I believe that the linguistic (i.e. syntactic and semantic) relationship between "oops" and "I have just observed a minor mishap" is exactly the same as that between "ouch" and "I am in pain". They are informationally equivalent. They are not logically equivalent, because you can't derive "oops" and you can't derive "ouch". Syntax alone blocks that move because neither is a sentence. And one should not get confused about that. But by the same token, one should not get confused by the syntax, and deny the fact that they are informationally equivalent.

[NON-TRANSLATIONAL METALANGUAGE]

Having undertaken the analysis of some particular expressions for which Rules of Use provide the semantical information they carry, I want to call attention to a features of my earlier work on indexicals that I feel I did not sufficiently stress. It is this: The meta-language in which the semantics is

[17] I will shortly mention a third possibility for certain honorifics, that they are situationals. But even if the third possibility were correct for honorifics, the derogatory expressions would remain.

[18] Of course, the emotivists probably also didn't regard "good" as an expressive (in my prima facie classificatory way), when they weren't worrying about what its descriptive meaning might be.

given for a language containing indexicals is non-translational. That is, we use no indexicals, and we need use no indexicals, in describing the semantics of a language that contains indexicals.

This is actually a rather surprising fact, if you think about it. Since many say that what has to be done in providing a semantic theory is to give a translational theory - that is, an adequate semantic theory must allow you to derive, or in some appropriate way obtain, all sentences of the form:

S is true if and only and if P

where S is any sentence of the object language, and P is its translation into the metalanguage.

Now how are you going to do that if the object language contains indexicals, but the metalanguage doesn't? You can't. You're going to have to come up with some other mechanism whereby the semantics is given. It is here that the distinction between terms like "fortnight" and "feral" and those like "Goodbye" and "I" has bite.

When we move to epithets, derogatory terms, and expressives, it is even more obvious that it must be possible to describe the semantics of swear-words without swearing, of obscene words without becoming obscene, and of derogatory words without insulting your audience. It must be possible to describe the semantics of these expressions from an abstract theoretical point of view. And of course it is obvious, if you think about it, that there is no special reason to use indexicals in describing their use.

For example, for the first person pronoun we would say that it is used by a speaker to refer to him or her self. Compare this to how you would describe the use of "fortnight". You would say, "To refer to a period of fourteen days".

So the task for a semantic theory is to give a scientific description of the semantics of the object language. Not to reproduce it, not to give synonyms, not to provide equivalent means of expression, but to describe it from above.[19] This we certainly can do for indexicals, and we can do it without constantly referring to ourselves by using the first person or even referring to any particular time and place. We should be able to use as our semantical meta-

[19] Synonyms may be useful in this project, but they cannot be the goal of the project.

language what Quine calls "the austere language of science", a language without indexicals, tense, epithets, euphemisms, etc.[20]

But whereas the availability of a translation of object language expressions into the metalanguage is, at least, useful for classical object languages, it is useless for the expressions here under consideration. This suggests that the semantic relation between these expressions and what they mean is, in some fundamental way, different from the semantic relation – as we have conceived it – between words like "feral" and "fortnight" and what they mean.

[DESCRIPTION FROM ABOVE VS. EXPRESSION FROM BELOW]

Translational semantic theories involve what I call expression from below in contrast to description from above. Such theories presuppose a kind of synonymy between expressions of the object language and their metalinguistic translations.[21] To the degree that such translations are available, they allow the metalinguist to experience what it is like to live within the language.

As I hope I have made clear, the requirement that the metalanguage be able to express whatever the object language can is a much stronger, and less well motivated, requirement than the mere requirement that the metalanguage provide an accurate description of the meanings of expressions of the object language.

One must therefore be cautious in accepting Quine's formulation of the field linguist's task as being that of producing a translation manual, though his notion of translation may be broader than that highlighted here.[22] [23]

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[20] Note that we could use description from above in a non-translational metalanguage even for classical languages of the form of first order logic,

a satisfies "x is human" if and only if a has the property discussed in the previous lecture.

It may be that

a satisfies "x is human" if and only if a has the property of being human

is also description from above, since the italicized expression seems more like a name (rather like a quotation name, in fact) than a description which uses the adjective "human". If it is analytic that a has the property of being human if and only if a is human, then such a clause yields a translational semantics (if the metalanguage already contains the adjective "human").

[21] It may be for this reason that those who assumes a translational semantics can claim that a theory of truth suffices to replace a Semantics of Meanings. If I am correct in thinking that our language has semantic features that are not truth-affecting (as exemplified by the semantics of "Goodbye.", "Ouch!" and "Oops!", and perhaps also by the semantics of sentences containing epithets, honorifics, and derogatives) then not all of semantics can be captured in a theory of truth.

[22] Needs ref.

[23] And just as Quine generalizes from the case of the field linguist to that of our interpretation of one another within our own language community, so would I generalize the distinction between expression from below and

If I am correct that certain expressions have a non-translational semantics, and if I am also correct in linking translational semantics with indirect discourse (the arguments for which I have skipped over), we should encounter difficulties in making indirect discourse reports of speech (or thought) that involves indexicals, epithets, or other translation resistant expressions. We do.

[PRAGMATICS]

A second feature of my earlier work on indexicals that became salient from the perspective of a Semantics of Use was the implicit distinction between semantics and pragmatics. (This distinction is among the less accepted features of that work.) It is a primary target of the present work. I aim to rescue downtrodden semantic features from the clutches of pragmatics, and to show how they thrive in their proper environment.

Many people have said that because indexicals essentially involve a speaker, a context, an utterance -- although I thought I had carefully explained how the semantics of indexicals need not involve utterances -- that the study of indexicals belongs to pragmatics and not semantics, formalized pragmatics perhaps, but pragmatics still. I have always thought that this was wrong. I have always thought that the kind of model theoretic and logical developments in my earlier work doesn't (for the most part) belong to pragmatics, it belongs to semantics. So there is a question about how to draw the line between semantics and pragmatics.

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description from above to apply to our reporting of another's sayings and thoughts. In particular, the difference between direct discourse, "Fred says [thinks] 'I am a fool'." and indirect discourse, "Fred says [thinks] that I am a fool." is just the difference between using description from above or requiring expression from below. In indirect discourse, the reporter takes on the task of expressing in his own language that which the person reported upon expressed in his language. Thus the reporter takes on the task of finding an expression in his own language that is synonymous with that used by the person reported upon. As in the charge to the field linguist, the prior discussion should make us cautious about always accepting as legitimate the demand for a report in indirect discourse.

I believe that it is exactly this issue -- the legitimacy of the demand for a report in indirect discourse – that arises in the case of Kripke's puzzle about belief. Recall that, while challenging us to express from below what Pierre believes, Kripke says "I am fully aware that complete and straightforward descriptions of the situation are possible and that in this sense there is no paradox. ... No doubt some of these are, in a certain sense, complete descriptions of the situation."{{p. 369 in Harnish}} Kripke then reiterates that the original puzzle asks us to express what Pierre believes using, what Kripke correctly calls, "our normal practice of reporting beliefs", {{p. 368 in Harnish}} i.e. in indirect discourse. More exactly, he states that the original question is, "Does Pierre, or does he not, believe that London is pretty?" (emphasis added), and concludes, "It is no answer to protest that in some other terminology, one can state 'all the relevant facts.'" {{p. 369 in Harnish}} I join Kripke both in saluting the power of description from above and in acknowledging the limitations of expression from below.

A Semantics of Use can accommodate, in a natural way, some things a Semantics of Meanings, i.e. a classical semantics, cannot, e.g. the semantics of "Goodbye." The simple rule of use for "goodbye" -- that it is an expression used upon parting -- is a rule which I claim we all know (in the sense of having the kind of competence that grounds our dispositions). The rule of use gives us certain information about how to interpret utterances of the word. It is this information, I call it Semantic Information, that grounds our own utterances of the word and our interpretation of the utterances of others. In particular, it grounds our very different reactions, after telling of our plan for a perilous journey, to hearing our auditor say "Well, God be with you." versus "Well, goodbye." In the latter case we may well conclude that our auditor desires us to end the interview and leave. (This, for those of you who might have thought that "goodbye" is synonymous with "God be with you".)

If we do conclude that our auditor desires us to end the interview and leave, it is not because "Goodbye." means "I desire you to leave.", nor because "Goodbye." expresses the speaker's desire that person addressed leave. Many a reluctant "Goodbye" has been uttered. Rather, our conclusion draws upon the information that the expression is conventionally used at parting, and then asks the non-linguistic, <u>psychological</u> question: Why would he <u>say</u> that? If he kept glancing at his watch we might well ask ourselves an exactly analogous question: -- "Why is he doing that?" -- and conclude, he is worried about how late it is getting and desires us to leave.

This sort of analogy between inferences drawn from conversational exchanges and inferences drawn from non-linguistic behavior is a mark of what Paul Grice called "conversational implicature". Such inferences, depending as they do on features of conversational contexts that go far beyond literal meaning, beyond what I call "Semantic Information", truly belong within the domain of pragmatics.[24]

In the case at issue, what was most important was not what our auditor did (i.e., utter an expression conventionally used at parting) but why he did it. We didn't care whether or not he used the conventional expression used at parting. What we wanted to know was why he uttered an expression conventionally used at parting <u>at that point</u> in the conversation.

[24] Grice himself linked conversational implicatures with what he called "conventional implicatures", which derive from the non-descriptive side of literal meaning. This linkage seems to me unfortunate given Grice's aims in "Logic and Conversation".

Semantic Information – what an utterance <u>means</u>—is often only the first step in resolving a different question – "Why did the speaker say that?" When one bank robber says to another "The police are coming." he says it to warn, when one hostage says it to another, he says it to encourage. We may come to quite different conclusions about the state and intentions of the two speakers, but the semantic information contained in the two utterances is the same. This suggests that warning and encouraging belong to pragmatics not semantics. They are things done with words not entirely derivable from syntactic and semantic information.

One might think the same of derogating or insulting. But here there are words for which, in my view, derogation is part of semantics![25]

<u>{{I expect to cut some or all of the discussion of the Machers}}</u>

<u>The Case of the Machers</u>: It was noted that within a certain isolated culture, the people -- call them the Machers -- have two different names for their tools. One name they use on certain days, the other on other days.

The difference in the 'distribution' of the use of the words is plainly a difference in use. Wittgenstein cites such a case in claiming that although meaning is use, not every difference in use is a difference in meaning. Certainly this view, exactly as put, seems correct. There are often dialectal variations in use between somewhat isolated communities. The British use "lift" and "lorry" where we would use "elevator" and "truck". I see no immediate reason to conclude that there is a semantic difference between these words.

But the strange usage patterns of the Machers seemed to me to call for an explanation. Further study quickly revealed that of their two words for hammer -- "sab-hammer" and "sec-hammer" -- they used "sab-hammer" on their holy days, and "sec-hammer" on all other days. A much more delicate investigation led to the conclusion that although both words seemed to apply to exactly the

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[25] This puts me in mind of "Look out!" for which warning seems semantic, and "Be of good cheer!" for which encouragement may be semantic. If correct, such examples only add warning and encouraging to the range of features under discussion. My general background views suggest that communicational activities as ancient and fundamental as warning <u>should</u> be encoded in some linguistic forms, i.e. <u>some</u> linguistic form should contain warning as part of the encoded semantic information. It does not follow, of course, that warning is part of the semantic information in every expression that can be used to warn. It is not part of the semantic information in "The police are coming".

{{Note that the Rule of Use/Semantic Information here does not seem to be of propositional form (i.e. "something which either is or is not the case"). This raises a question about how it interacts with logic. Are these cases that require a performative analysis? Or have I just not found the right propositional information as in my early struggles with "goodbye"? Perhaps, You are in a dangerous situation would work.}}

same objects, hammers, "sab-hammer" had an expressive side in that it expressed the user's reverence for the Gods. It was a sacred word. The Macher theology required no ritual, but demanded consciousness of the Gods on holy days (and, surprisingly, commanded reverential abstinence on other days). Thus, the Machers discharged their theological obligations through the use of the sacred terminology, though it was admitted that many of the young had fallen into insincere use of these terms.

Note that the semantics of "sab-hammer", even the full semantics including its expressive meaning, does not, by itself, explain the 'distribution' of the word (i.e. that it is used every seventh day and only on the seventh day). It is their theology, their social practices, that explains why their use of this word follows the pattern noted by the anthropologist, Wittgenstein.

To really explain the distribution of the words, we must put two things together: the 'meanings' of the words, what I call the semantic information they carry, and, given the semantic information, the reason why users utter them on certain occasions and not on others.

These two questions involve investigations of quite different kinds. The first requires an inquiry into specifically linguistic conventions. The second could have nothing to do with convention, as when we asked the psychological question about why our auditor said "Goodbye." at that point in the conversation. For this second kind of inquiry the semantic fact that "goodbye" is the conventional expression used at parting is a given. Or, the second kind of inquiry might turn on social conventions, what I call social practices[26], as they do in the "sab-hammer" case. Something as abstract as Quinean inscrutability, or as practical as Macheran diffidence, might make it difficult or even impossible for the field linguist to tease apart the two kinds of convention that interact to produce the observed behavior. This is a problem for the experimentalists. It need not threaten the theoretical distinction between the two kinds of inquiry, which is easily seen in the "goodbye" case, wherein social practice, as a different kind of convention, does not figure.[27]

{{End cut of the case of the Machers}}

[26] The terminology is just to maintain the contrastive linguistic convention versus social practice. I am not claiming that social practices are not conventional; quite the opposite.

[27] Note that even in a community in which the prevailing social practice was to say "Toodle-oo." upon parting, the intrusion of "Goodbye." into the described conversation would raise the same questions, so long as "goodbye" retains the semantic information presently associated with it by linguistic convention.

What I call semantic information flows from specifically linguistic conventions. There are also social practices, perhaps another kind of convention that may 'govern' linguistic behavior, that interact with semantic information. Here I include questions to the Queen, use of sacred language in certain settings, etc. Both sorts of convention may be required to fully explain certain speech acts.

Conventions change. Both the linguistic conventions that determine semantic information and the social practices that govern other aspects of linguistic propriety are subject to change. Thus the worry about the insincerity of the young Machers {{requires background that may be cut}}, and the possibility that widespread insincerity might result in a change in the expressive content of the word. This is a conjecture about the etiology of linguistic change, a fascinating and difficult subject, in which little is known and much is speculated. In this causal, dynamic realm, there is surely a vigorous interaction between social and linguistic norms. That social forces influence linguistic usage is a truism. George Bernard Shaw's somewhat counterintuitive thesis in Pygmalion that linguistic usage is the main determinant of social class certainly has more than a grain of truth in it. <u>But the fact that that there is fluidity in the two sets of norms, and the fact that there is a dynamic interaction between them, does not imply that they are not distinguishable. Nor does it imply that the distinction is not illuminating in quest to understand the role of language in human action.</u>

So here is how I draw the line. Regarding semantics: There are the linguistic conventions that determine the semantic information encoded in words and phrases. Semantic theory studies such conventions. There are also certain social practices, which are a different kind of convention, that are specific to linguistic behavior: days on which to pray, the prohibition on asking questions of the Queen, and the like. The latter assume the conventions that determine the semantic information. Insofar as Pragmatics is concerned with convention, it is in the study of specifically linguistic social practices.[28]

Thus Pragmatics is not to be characterized as that part of semiotic in which "explicit reference is made to the … user of a language" [Carnap, Introduction to Semantics 1942 § 4], because we need to know whether the reference to the user occurs in presenting semantic information, as it plainly

[28] Grice, in discussing conversational implicatures (as opposed to conventional implicatures) explicitly adduces the social practices associated with collaborative behavior, and applies these practices to conversation, regarded as a specifically linguistic form of collaborative behavior, in order to derive as a ground for his conversational maxims (though he expresses the hope, ultimately to justify such practices on grounds of rationality).

would for any conceivably plausible way of giving the semantics for the first person pronoun, or whether it occurs in describing a specifically linguistic social practice, such as the practice of not asking questions of the Queen.[29]

[ELIMINABILITY]

Some of the expressions in which I am interested have been regarded as frivolous, dispensable (i.e. eliminable), immoral, or, worst of all, vulgar. Interestingly, there were some who regarded indexicals in much the same way. I think the well-spring of that attitude is the idea that philosophy of science is philosophy enough, that philosophy of the language of science is philosophy of language enough, and that the language of science is a desert landscape. All these ideas are wrong, I believe. Some for reasons I have given elsewhere, but none for reasons I will give here.

I have already tried to connect the themes I have presented to logic, and other rigors, in the hope that this will cause the critics to flock to my banner. Now, some brief speculations on eliminability.

Perhaps I needn't try to prove here that indexicals are neither frivolous nor eliminable. I do have arguments to show that we cannot avoid the use of indexicals and demonstratives simply by taking greater care to speak precisely. But there are some subtleties to the arguments.

It seemed to be Quine's view, that all that there was of a serious nature to be done with words <u>could</u> be done, and is <u>best</u> done within what he called 'the austere language of science'. Thus the idea that the expressions under review are at best frivolous. Quine certainly encourages the view that what is worth saying is worth saying in the language of First Order Predicate Logic. It may be that if one attends carefully to his exact words, this is unfair to him. It may be that the only sort of language that <u>ought</u> to be expressed in first order predicate logic is the sort of language that might conceivably be expressed in first order predicate logic, leaving open the technical question, "What sort of language might conceivably be expressed in first order predicate logic?" as well as the normative question, "What sort of thing is worth saying?"

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[29] I believe, but without careful investigation, that a similar distinction -- between the linguistic conventions that determine what a language is, and the social practices that govern pragmatic aspects of its use -- can be made for syntax and phonology. I have in mind, roughly, the analysis of frequency and distributional patterns of phonological and syntactical features. Some such features, like the rising intonation used to encode questions seem to me to belong to linguistic convention; some, like the rising intonation that characterizes Valley-style 'up-talk' seem to belong to social practice in the way that other local dialectal variants do. This is very speculative.

It seems obvious that "goodbye" cannot be so expressed, and I would also think it obvious that "goodbye" is often worth saying. What about words with an expressive function: the paradigms "ouch" and "oops", derogatory terms, respectful and familiar forms of address. Are these part of a frivolous, self-indulgent superstructure of language? Or are they in some way fundamental?

We are told by ethologists that conventionalized behaviors for expressing submissiveness and dominance are familiar features among animals, as they surely were among our animal ancestors. That such features as deference (a form of respect) and derogation should be semantically marked in language, seems a natural evolutionary outcome. If there are semantic universals common to all human languages, as some think there are syntactic universals, these features seem to be among the most likely candidates.

As in non-linguistic conventionalized behavior, language often encodes such features through display rather than through description. By this I mean that our lexicon contains items whose function, or a part of whose function, is to display deference or derogation, as opposed to asserting that the agent holds the attitude (if attitude it is).

Here again, expressibility within the Austere Language Of Science (henceforth, ALOS) surely seems impossible. It is, in part, such display that the austerity of the language is designed to exclude. We can, of course, describe a deferential or derogatory attitude in the ALOS. It does not follow that we can display it.

Although it may seem too obvious to argue, there is, I believe, a quite interesting inquiry to pursue into why, and in what sense, expressives cannot be replaced by descriptives.[30] Why, for example, can we not replace "ouch" with the informationally equivalent "I feel a sudden pain"? Why can we not replace "hooray" with "I am in a state of joyful elation"? Such an inquiry would be analogous to a detailed discussion regarding the exact sense in which indexicals are ineliminable.[31] A preliminary suggestion which I reject is that the semantic information in an expressive (that which is displayed by the expressive) is indescribable.

[30] I here use "expressive" for any item whose semantical information is carried, at least in part, in the display mode.

[31] {{See remarks on footnote 93 of "Opacity". I thought I began such a study in something I published, but I can't find it.}}

A preliminary suggestion which I am inclined to accept is that in the case of respect and disrespect (and perhaps many other of these relational 'attitudes'), we respond to respectful and disrespectful behavior independently of its evidential value regarding inner attitudes. Thus, we respond positively to displays of respect, even if we suspect them to be false or insincere, and negatively to displays of disrespect, even if we know them to be due to cross-cultural misunderstandings (and thus evidentially worthless). Whereas avowals of respect are of little value, and when suspected to be insincere, of no value. If I am correct about parts of language being marked to display respect (or disrespect), then the use of such language, even if thought to be insincere, is respectful behavior, and should produce an affective response in its own right. <u>This provides a role for the use of expressives that is over and above that of conveying semantic information. In sum, in addition to the desire to be held in respect, people desire to be paid respect, and honorifics can be the coin of that payment.</u>[32]

It is hardly controversial that our affective responses can be set off by experiences that we know to be 'false', for example, watching a dramatic performance, or even reading fiction. It would be controversial to claim an evolutionary basis in animal responses to behavior.

[FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON SEMANTICS VS. PRAGMATICS]

I wish now to return to my distinction between semantic information and social practice, and take up a few additional issues related. A feature that may be semantically encoded in one expression (i.e. may be a part of semantic information) may appear in connection with the use of a different expression only as a result of social practice. For example, one form of address may be demeaning in itself, while another form of address, not demeaning in itself, may be used to demean by the deliberate avoidance of a more respectful form of address that is called for by social practice. We are all familiar with conventionally demeaning forms of address; I suppose that the use of a diminutive to refer to a judge in court would exemplify a case of the second sort.[33]

Many languages contain a distinction between 'formal' and 'familiar' second person pronouns, a distinction that once existed in the English of "thou"

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[32] Here, the performative role clearly appears, and perhaps with it, a commitment to utterance theory.
[33] It goes without saying that one can demean without relying on either semantic information or social practice. Good old fashioned individual psychology provides an ample target.

and "you", but does no longer. It can hardly be doubted that this distinction belongs to the semantics of the pronoun, and within semantics, not to the semantics of reference, but to the expressive side of meaning. So a linguistic convention determines that the French "tu" expresses intimacy.[34] But a different set of conventions, the kind of conventions that I call social practices may determine, or at least influence, the category of persons whom one can appropriately address with the intimate pronoun. In a recent report, a French woman complains that the younger generation flings "tu" around too indiscriminately (not unlike local complaints about the indiscriminate use of "Dear" as a form of address in commercial transactions[35]). I want to be very clear about my view on this matter. It is a part of the semantic information encoded in "tu", loosely, part of the meaning of "tu", that it expresses intimacy. I do <u>not</u> believe that the alleged changes in the use of "tu" reflect any change in the meaning. What has changed are the social relations, or at least the specifically linguistic social practices that, in part, constitute and, in part, reflect social relations. A presumption of intimacy, or at least of informality, has come into being where once there was a presumption of formality. The younger generation has been Americanized; but the French language has not.

I intend that these claims be empirical. Words do change in meaning, and it is conceivable that the change in use is a change in meaning not in social relations, but I think not.

Forms of address that express either social distance or social intimacy are actually quite prevalent, and along with such forms come the practices of use that vary over time and from person to person. Here I have in mind practices concerning the use of first names, titles ("Professor", "Doctor", "Ms."), terms of endearment, terms of distaste, general honorifics ("sir"), etc. These practices belong to Pragmatics. Just as the practice of not asking questions of the Queen

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[34] My current view is that "tu" is more exactly characterized with "goodbye" as situational (see below), but I am not yet completely clear on the matter. As I presently see it, the fundamental question is something like this: Does the word express an attitude or a standing. Terms of endearment, like "sweetheart", seem to express an attitude. An enlisted soldier's use of "Sir" in addressing an officer seems to express a standing (a relation between the office of enlisted person and the office of officer). Does the characteristically American use of first names, even shortened names (see below), on first acquaintance, express friendliness (an attitude, and an innocent one) or does it presume an informal relationship (a standing to which the speaker has no right). In sum, are we friendly or presumptuous? My own tentative answer is the latter, though with the explanation that American social practices reflect an ideology of equality, and so tend to blind us to distinctions in standing that are salient in other cultures. [There may be some tension between the tentative views expressed in this footnote and views expressed elsewhere in this paper.]

[35] But note that addressing is different, even syntactically different, from the nominative second person pronoun. "How much do you want, Dear?" is acceptable, "How much does Dear want, You?" is weird. Aside from weirdness, the latter does not imply that the referent of "Dear" is the addressee.

has no effect on the semantics of interrogatives, so the disuse of "Mrs. Philip Mountbatten" signals no change in the semantic information carried by that form of address. In general, I believe that the semantic information in a form of address is much more stable over time than are the relevant social practices and more stable across individuals than are the relevant individual differences in psychology.

[A QUICK GOODBYE]

I have taken "goodbye" as a paradigm of expressions requiring a Semantics of Use. It is also a paradigm of useful expressions that do not seem to represent anything, thus challenging the widely held view that language is a system of representations. For these reasons it is important to my project to be able to give a correct analysis of "goodbye" within the framework of my central notions: semantic information and mode of expression, and the correlative notions: information content (descriptive content, expressive content) and informational correctness (descriptive correctness, expressive correctness).

For "goodbye", I believe we need the notion of a situational term, one which expresses something like what I have called a standing (in footnote Fejl! Bogmærke er ikke defineret.). This yields the notions of situational content (i.e. the semantic information in a situational expression) and situational correctness, along with a resulting notion of sincere use. Initially, I found the problem of generating insincere uses of "goodbye" quite puzzling. But when I reached an analysis in terms of situational content, I immediately thought of the case in which I drop you off at the door of your surprise party, and say "goodbye" insincerely.

I take it that the situational content of "goodbye" is something like you and I are now parting from one another. It is important to note that the insincerity of the example is derivable in the standard way from the situational content of the situational. Insincerity is always the failure to believe that the expression used is informationally correct. For me, the generation of insincere uses of "goodbye" provides partial confirmation of my approach.

The notion of situational content can also be used to restore confidence in the view that language is a system of representations. For we can regard expressives and situationals as representing their information content, though not, of course, in the descriptive mode. As in all other cases, the semantic information in a situational could be expressed in another mode. (This is a central idea of my project.) Thus, I regard "goodbye" and "you and I are now parting from one another" as informationally equivalent.

[SOME CONCLUSIONS]

The distinctions I have tried to make, between descriptives and expressives, and between descriptive content and expressive content, is not that between characterizations of the world and expressions of emotion – an echo of the old distinction between cognitive meaning and emotive meaning. The mode of expression – descriptive vs. expressive – does not correlate with the nature of the semantic information – objective vs. subjective. This is the important lesson of "oops". The information is objective, but the word is an expressive. Similarly, the information in "I am in a state of joyful elation" is presented in a descriptive mode, although the semantic information itself is as subjective as can be. I would contend that the very same semantic information is contained in the expressive, "Hooray!". ("Ouch" and "I am in pain" were given as an analogous pair.)

I recognize that more detailed argument may be required to account for differences in our responses to expressions that I regard as informationally equivalent, and thus to build the case for my central notion, semantic information. Part of such argument involves getting clear on the fact that to the degree that information is encoded semantically, to that degree there is exists the possibility of insincere use. For some obscure reason, when people think about expressives, they forget about the craft of actors, and imagine that utterances of "Ouch!", "Oops!", "Hooray!" and the like are generated by the autonomic nervous system. If such utterances were generated by the autonomic nervous system (and could not be consciously simulated), they would carry no semantic information, for they would not be a part of the system of conventional 'representation' that constitutes language.[36]

Some of the morals of the story are these:

First, it seems to me quite possible to extend semantic methods, even formal, model theoretic semantics, to a range of expressions that have been regarded as falling outside semantics, and perhaps even as being insusceptible to formalization. This allows those of us of a logical turn of mind, those of us who think of language as a formal system (in the manner of Richard Montague),

[36] Instead they would have what Grice calls natural meaning (as in "Smoke means fire"), a purely evidential rather than intentional role. [I don't favor Grice's analysis, but the terminology is useful at a preliminary level.]

to use our familiar techniques. To me, it is illuminating to do so. I think it allows us to see more clearly the relationship between expressives and descriptives (and especially expressions of mixed kind), and to treat expressives in a serious scientific way.

Second, by clarifying the relation between speaker intention and linguistic convention in regard to the expressive use of language, we strengthen the argument that there are non-descriptive features of language that are associated with certain expressions by linguistic convention, and thus that belong to semantics, and not to a separable discipline, pragmatics, in which attitudes and intentions of language users that go beyond what is conventionally associated with the expressions they use come into play.

Third, in acknowledging the conventionalized significance of the expressive side of language, the concept of semantic information may turn out to be useful in combating the excesses of those who feel that there is no limit to the amount of ideology and belief that is embedded in the words and phrases of our language. Surely this latter view is a council of despair that threatens the very concept of precise communication between parties in disagreement. It is one thing to enlarge our view of meaning; it is another to give way to metaphysical monism.

Fourth, as a philosophical bonus, I hope that my analysis will help us to see that although there may be profound epistemological insights that relate to the connection between the descriptive “I am in pain” and the expressive “ouch”, there is also a purely semantical explanation of the connection, an explanation that makes it exactly analogous to the connection between “oops” and “I have observed a minor mishap”, a case that is free of epistemological considerations. Here I continue my long term project of unmasking semantical truths in epistemological clothing.