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FROM THE ISSUE EDITORS

In June 2018, the second *Context, Cognition and Communication* conference was held in Warsaw. Philosophers and linguists from over twenty countries presented more than eighty papers on the broadly understood philosophy of language and mind. After the conference, we announced the call for papers for the special issue of “Semiotic Studies” under the general title *Meaning, Content and Reference*. The call was addressed both to conference participants and the philosophical community in general. The current issue of “Semiotic Studies” contains the best articles submitted in response to that call.

The issue opens with the paper by Mirco Sambrotta *Transparent Contents and Trivial Inferences*. In his paper, the author defends the view that we may, at least to some extent and in some cases, reconcile externalism with the thesis of transparency of mental content if we assume the inferentialist views on attitude’s contents. According to that view in cases where there is a name-component in the content and the component is associated with *a priori* accessible application conditions we can say that the appropriate content is transparent. The application conditions in such cases are trivial but ontologically ampliative, that is they enable us to arrive at conclusions that are ontologically committed to the existence of certain kinds of objects.

Maria Dolores Garcia-Arnaldos’s paper, *Content and Meaning Constitutive Inferences*, concerns the challenge of circularity which often emerges when we try to provide justification of logic referring to the meaning of logical terms. The best known example of this is the attempt to establish the rule of MPP adhering to inferences of the user. Even if we follow Boghossian and assume that infer-

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ences can be accepted in a blind (pre-logical) way and that this acceptance is sufficient to establish MPP, the move from particular inferences to MPP is possible only thanks to MPP. Needless to say, this results in circularity. Another well-known problem of inferential theories (or the conceptual role semantics in general) stems from their holistic nature. If the meaning of an expression depends on the inferential structure of the beliefs of its user, then every user ends up having their own meaning (as it is fairly improbable for them to have the same sets of beliefs). As pointed out by the author, many authors (Boghossian included) have tried to solve this issue using a revamped version of the analytic/synthetic distinction. But deriving meaning from understanding of the rules is not the only route inferential theories can follow. As pointed out by Maria Dolores Garcia-Arnaldos, some of the authors prefer to make the starting point the rules themselves.

In *The Liar, Contextualism, and the Stalnakerian View of Context*, Jakub Rudnicki analyzes attempts to deal with (at least some versions of) the Liar Paradox by stressing the context-sensitivity of the liar sentence and the truth predicate. Rudnicki discusses briefly the proposal laid out by Michael Glanzberg who argues that we cannot reconcile the idea of representing contexts as context sets and basic observations about the liar without giving up on the idea of modifying a single set of possible worlds during the successive stages of conversation. Rudnicki questions this diagnosis and offers his own analysis based on the notion of semantic dissonance which enables him to describe the reasoning leading to the Liar as enforcing the retraction of contextual update.

İskender Taşdelen tries to evaluate theories of meaning in the light of their compliance with Dewey's empirical requirements towards scientific theories. As pointed out by the author, most of the traditional theories of meaning struggle with this requirement as they tend to posit metaphysical entities, such as "meanings" or "ideas". One way out of this problem is to lean towards inferential theories of meaning (in the vein of Sellars, Brandom or Peregrin). Problem is, even though theories of this sort do not sin against empiricism, they are prone to the charge of circularity as it is difficult to explain inferences without resorting to the notion of meaning. The solution to this problem proposed by Taşdelen comes in two stages. In the first stage we have to disconnect the theory of meaning from the parallel theory of reference. This step is hardly controversial at this point as it can be seen as following on from the well-known considerations of Quine and Kripke. Where Taşdelen's proposition becomes very interesting is the second step in which the author proposes to treat meaning rules not as constitutive (or defining) rules of language but rather as auxiliary rules similar to strategic rules in games. The difference (as explained by Hintikka and Sandu) boils down to a difference between the rules employed by all players of the game (constitutive rules) and the rules of good or efficient players (strategic rules). The author proceeds with a detailed presentation of this alternative approach to meaning and shows how it can accommodate for phenomena which are traditionally difficult

to explain on the grounds of inferential theories - specifically the phenomenon of semantic change.

In *Untangling the Knot of Intentionality: Between Directedness, Reference, and Content*, Pierre Steiner addresses a problem of multiple characterization of intentionality in terms of aboutness, contentfulness and having the property of being representational. Since all three kinds of characteristics are common in the literature the question is do they concern a single notion of intentionality. The author's reply is negative. He proposes a hypothesis according to which we have to distinguish two concepts of intentionality: intentionality-T and intentionality-C. The former is intentionality qua object-directedness, the latter is intentionality qua contentfulness. Next, the author sketches the logical map of possible relations between the two concepts and proposes an interpretation of the main thesis of anti-representationalism as the claim that intentionality-C is neither sufficient nor necessary for intentionality-T. In the last sections of the paper he presents a pragmatic theory according to which public language is constitutive for intentionality-C (which is necessary for intentionality-T) while the acquisition of the public language depends on intentionality-T as a property of "[...] deeds, non-linguistic acts and behaviour, historically and socially situated".

The next paper in the volume concerns the concept of metaphor. Richmod Kwesi starts the analysis with a critical discussion over Davidson's causal view on metaphor according to which metaphorical sentences have only literal contents while all the other "meanings" that metaphors are supposed to have can be explained in terms of causal effects of sentences on their interpreters. Kwesi argues that the Davidsonian causal account is inadequate as a theory that attempts to describe the systematic account of how figurative expressions work in communication. Kwesi contrasts three general models of figurativeness: the first (non-Davidsonian) attributes literal and metaphorical meanings to words, and claims that both are involved in the compositional generation of the literal and metaphorical meanings, the second (Davidsonian) denies the existence of the metaphorical meanings of words and the entire compositional generation of figurative meanings, the third – defended by the author – enables metaphorical meanings of compound expressions but denies that they are compositionally generated out of the literal meaning of non-compound expressions. The third (non-compositional) view shares literalism of the Davidsonian view when it comes to words and embraces the non-literalism of compound expressions. As such it comes out as the most promising view on metaphorical content when a general desiderata for each theory of metaphors are taken into account (Kwesi carefully describes such desiderata in the final section of his paper).

In *Lexical Concepts as Fluctuating Structures*, Alyona Budnikova presents a theory of lexical concepts conceived as semantic units conventionally associated with linguistic forms. The author argues that they can be identified with structures consisting of conceptual slots filled with various types of information about the referent with different structural weight. Next, a way of modelling the graded structure of lexical concepts is proposed by the author. Roughly speaking, the

model assesses the weight of each constituting structure of conceptual slots according to its relevance for defining purposes, frequency of contextual profiling and salience in derivation processes. The author presents the application of the model (to particular English nouns) as well as discusses briefly its merits and potential limitations.

In *Basic Concepts: A Cognitive Approach*, Wiesław Walentukiewicz attempts to critically analyze theories of conceptualization devised in psychology. He starts with a juxtaposition of the philosophical understanding of concepts and the way they have been defined in psychological literature. The author identifies that the psychological literature contains two main strategies for explaining the human ability to categorize objects. On one account, objects are categorized via perceived similarity. On the competing account, they are perceived on the basis of key properties associated with given categories. As pointed out by Walentukiewicz, both strategies lead to different descriptions of the details of the categorisation process. This is especially visible in how categories created by children are later developed into fully-fledged categories. In contrast to the prevalent approach found in psychology the author advocates the general similarity based approach. He claims that the logical properties of the relation of similarity make it better for the explanation of the existing empirical data.

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