

1st LanCog-LOGOS Workshop

Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa
 28-29 October 2010
 Room 5.2

	Thursday 28th October 2010	Friday 29th October 2010
09:00 - 10:20	Eduardo Castro (LanCog) <i>Regularity, Necessity and the Induction Problem</i> Comments: José Díez (LOGOS)	Gonçalo Santos (LanCog) <i>Ontological versus Ideological Hierarchies</i> Comments: Pepe Martínez (LOGOS)
10:30 - 11:50	Marta Campdelacreu (LOGOS), <i>An endurantist answer to the (temporal) grounding problem</i> Comments: Pedro Galvão (LanCog)	Fiora Salis (LOGOS) <i>Understanding Names</i> Comments: Adriana Silva Graça (LanCog)
12:00 - 13:20	Pedro Santos (LanCog) <i>Edgington and Block on indicative conditionals</i> Comments: Dan Zeman (LOGOS)	Guest Talk: Bernard Linski (University of Alberta) <i>The paradox in Russell's letter to Frege</i>
	Lunch (Letras Bar)	Lunch (Letras Bar)
15:10 - 16:30	Josep Prades (LOGOS) <i>How to be a good quietist</i> Comments: Rui Silva (LanCog)	
16:40 - 18:00	Célia Teixeira (LanCog) <i>Conceptual Knowledge</i> Comments: Genoveva Martí (LOGOS)	
18:10 - 19:30	Miguel Ángel Sebastián (LOGOS) <i>Phenomenal Properties, Representation and Vagueness</i> Comments: João Branquinho (LanCog)	
20:00	Workshop Dinner (SANA Metropolitan Hotel)	

Talks: 50 minutes
Comments: 20 minutes
General Discussion: 10 minutes

Abstracts

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

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

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

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

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

The versions of perdurantism and endurantism affected by the temporal grounding problem are the following. Perdurantism claims that objects persist through time by having a temporal part at every time they exist. Endurantism claims that objects are wholly present whenever they exist. The versions of these theories for which the temporal grounding problem can be posed add that in cases like the one above there are two different objects that coincide for a period of time.

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

(1) At the time of coincidence Goliath and Piece share their basic properties — examples of shared basic properties that are often mentioned are: their material components (at least at some basic level of composition), their mass, size, shape, at least some of their extrinsic properties (such as being placed at a certain spatial region, standing in certain specific relations to this or that object...), etc.

(2) The basic properties of objects determine their non-basic properties — examples of non-basic properties that are often mentioned are: modal, sortal, aesthetic, futural properties, etc.

(3) Therefore (by (1) and (2)), Goliath and Piece share their non-basic properties.

However,

(4) Goliath and Piece do not share their non-basic properties. For instance, they do not share their sortal properties.

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

Pedro Santos, *Edgington and Block on indicative conditionals*

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

J.Ll. Prades, *How to be a good quietist*

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

It is true, for example, that normally we do not feel we have alternative options in our way of understanding an instruction in our native language. In a normal context, we can only perceive a certain determined meaning in a certain sequence of phonemes, not some other, different and incompatible meanings. The problem is the modal status of "can", in the last sentence. Perhaps we can only perceive a certain determined content in a certain verbal or written expression, after a process of training. But, if this were only a mere factual impossibility, an impossibility that would not exist if certain contingent

facts were different, I doubt that McDowell's description of the role of human practices could be enough to totally dispel the illusion of infra-determination. In order to avoid the challenge of deflationary accounts of meaning, we must show that certain abilities that are grounded on contingent facts of human nature set the limits of what is conceptually possible. And I do not think that McDowell manages to show this. The fact that we have been led by our nature and the processes of socialization to understand some linguistic expression in a certain way without the need of interpretation, does not seem to entail that we cannot conceive of people who, for instance, tomorrow would start reacting in a completely different, bizarre, and deviant way. Of course, we can always say that those strange, deviant people would be giving different meanings to our words. This might be true, but the problem would still be that those alternative meanings would be equally rooted and determined –if our meanings are supposed to be determined- in the common past practice of using language. So it could be possible to legitimately provide incompatible descriptions of the meanings that are determined in our actual practices, our institutions, and our customs. This looks like a *reductio* of the idea of a determinate meaning.

Both in *Philosophical Remarks* and in the *Philosophical Grammar*, we can find remarks that can be paraphrased in terms of the thesis that the intentional object can only be fixed by expressive behaviour: “Tell me how you are searching, and I will tell you what you are looking for”.¹ Those types of considerations antecede the considerations that form the nucleus of the reflections on following a rule in *Philosophical Investigations*. It is determined now that I am looking for something that could, or could not, be found in the future. That I am looking for it, now, is independent of my finding it, even independent of its existence. But my way of behaving now depicts what I am looking for. By themselves, those are considerations about what could be called “proto-phenomenon”: those basic cases in which our possession of intentional concepts is manifested. It is by reference to those cases that the meaning of intentional terms is learned. But they give us a clue about why it is conceptually impossible to dig below this proto-phenomenon. Expressive behaviour is not only our epistemic door to intentionality; it is not only our way of detecting the presence of intentional content. It is the original locus of intentionality itself.

We are able to perceive the intentional content of action when we observe what could be described as certain physical changes. I am not suggesting that those merely physical movements are necessarily part of our perceptual content when we perceive action; I am only saying that there is a way of describing the world we face with open eyes that does not make use of intentional concepts. And, of course, the intentional description of a situation cannot be reduced to physical or merely behavioural language. But still, someone who, when witnessing those situations in which we naturally perceive content, did not share a substantial part of our epistemic reactions, did not normally see the content we see, would be blind to content. There is no mystery here. It is not that this being would be blind to some magical pictorial powers that certain physical movements have –some magical pictorial powers that, for instance, the printed marks in a book do not have. On the contrary, it is because of the fact that nothing could have those magical pictorial powers that basic cases of content are determined by our epistemic reaction to them. This is why Wittgenstein was so insisting in attacking the illusion that content could derive from the putative representational powers of particulars. This is why intentionality does not have a hidden essence. And there are two fallacies that should be

¹ *Philosophical Remarks*, 27.

carefully avoided. The first one is to think that the world itself does not have intentional aspects. The second one is to think that, if our epistemic reactions had been completely different, then we would have had completely different perceptions of content. Just because intentional types depend on our epistemic reaction when we face certain forms of animal behaviour, a completely different epistemic reaction would not count as a perception of intentionality. Our actual epistemic reaction in front of basic expressions of intentionality determines the content of intentional concepts. Without insisting on this crucial connection, no form of quietism can properly answer the deflationist challenge on meaning-determination, because without determinate intentional content you cannot get determinate linguistic meaning.

Célia Teixeira, *Conceptual Knowledge*

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

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

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

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

In section 2 I introduce certain problems that derive from considering that phenomenal characters are horizontally vague; among them a refutation of strong representationalism. I first present strong representationalism and then argue that phenomenal characters are not vague and

that those who defend these ideas misunderstand the notion of discernibility that should be used for individuating phenomenal characters. I argue that a contrastive notion of discernibility is to be preferred and show that contrastive discernibility is transitive.

My concern in section 3 is arguing that the notion of vertical vagueness makes no sense beyond that of horizontal vagueness. I defend that representationalists that embrace teleological theories of mental content are committed to phenomenal properties being

vertically vague and that they are therefore wrong. Section 4 deals with some objections that the teleosemanticist can raise against my argument.

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

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Gonçalo Santos, *Ontological versus Ideological Hierarchies*

The indefinite extensibility argument has played a central role in the recent debate on Absolute Generality. It is structurally similar to Russell's Paradox and in a simplified form it says the following:

Assume that it is possible to quantify over absolutely everything. Form the set R of all the non-self-membered sets.

Then R belongs to R if and only if R does not belong to R . Absurd!

Thus it is not possible to quantify over absolutely everything, because it is always possible to show that there is an object laying outside any domain of quantification, namely, the set of all non-self-membered sets in that domain of quantification.

Timothy Williamson (2003, section V) replies to this argument in an indirect way, by questioning the legitimacy of a philosophical position opposed to the generality absolutist. In a nutshell he says:

To deny Absolute Generality, the generality relativist produces successive counter-examples to the alleged cases of absolutely general quantification.

But then, to fully state his thesis the generality relativist needs to be quantifying over what the generality absolutist puts forward as an absolutely general domain and also over all the alleged counter-examples to the generality absolutist claims.

Thus the generality relativist appears to be himself quantifying over absolutely everything and that makes his claim self-defeating.

Notice however that independently of the existence of an opposing philosophical standpoint, the generality absolutist needs to show that his own position is not self-defeating.

By the standard notion of logical consequence we say that α is a logical consequence of Γ if and only if α is true in every interpretation that makes every sentence in Γ true. Thus, for example, $\forall xQx$ is a logical consequence of $\{\forall xPx, \forall x(Px \rightarrow Qx)\}$ because it is true in every interpretation that makes both premises true. In other words, $\forall xQx$ is said to be a logical consequence of $\forall xPx$ and $\forall x(Px \rightarrow Qx)$ because it preserves the premises truth-value independently of how the predicates P and Q are interpreted. Notice that given a predicate represented by 'F', there is an interpretation $I(F)$ that interprets the predicate letter P accordingly. Notice additionally that by the notion of logical consequence the predicate letters can be interpreted according to any predicate (for otherwise we would not be generalizing over all the relevant arguments). Now, the generality relativist wants to make use of such a notion when \forall is understood as being absolutely general. But then the following argument needs to be accounted for:

For everything o , $I(F)$ is an interpretation under which P applies to o if and only if o Fs.

According to the generality absolutist maximally liberal understanding of thing, even an interpretation such as $I(F)$ counts as a thing. That is, the generality absolutist cannot say that he is only quantifying over things of a certain kind. He is quantifying over all things of all kinds and an interpretation certainly is a thing, regardless of its kind. Now define a verb 'R' in the following way:

For everything o , o Rs if and only if o is not an interpretation under which P applies to o .

Now simply put 'R' for 'F' in (1) and apply (2):

For everything o , $I(R)$ is an interpretation under which P applies to o if and only if o is not an interpretation under which P applies to o .

Since 'everything' is unrestricted, o can be $I(R)$ itself. But then (3) implies,

$I(R)$ is an interpretation under which P applies to $I(R)$ if and only if $I(R)$ is not an interpretation under which P applies to $I(R)$.

(4) is obviously contradictory, so the generality absolutist needs to provide an account of what has gone wrong in the previous argument. For this purpose, Rayo and Williamson (2003) adopt the notion of second-order interpretation put forward by Rayo and Uzquiano (1999) and according to which second-order quantifiers are to be seen as plural quantifiers and second-order variables as plural variables. Also according to Rayo and Uzquiano (1999, p.5), the sentence "I is an interpretation", where 'I' is monadic second-order variable, abbreviates the following formula:

$$\exists x \langle \forall', x \rangle \wedge \forall x (Ix \rightarrow (\exists y x = \langle \forall', y \rangle \vee \exists w \exists z x = \langle \in', \langle w, z \rangle \rangle)) \wedge \\ \forall w \forall z (I \langle \in', \langle w, z \rangle \rangle \rightarrow I \langle \forall', w \rangle \wedge I \langle \forall', z \rangle)$$

Since 'I' is a second-order variable, when we speak of an interpretation we are not to be taken to speak of an object of some sort or another. Rather, we should be taken to speak of some sets (the values of the variable 'I'), which happen to satisfy the above formula. The previous argument can thus be blocked from (3) to (4), because contrary to what it says, o cannot be $I(R)$ itself.

Notice however that the notion of second-order interpretation takes as primitive a satisfaction predicate that applies to first-level predicates and that as such can't be explained in terms of plural quantifiers. Rayo and Uzquiano claim that such predicates can be understood in terms of English collective predicates (as 'rained down' in 'The rocks rained down'; it does not apply to a particular object such as this rock or that rock; nor is it predicated of some peculiar complex object made up by these rocks or those. Rather, it is predicated of these rocks or those).

Rayo (2006) provides a semantic account of second-level predicates such as 'rained down' in terms of super plural quantification. However, as he also points out, such an account will suffer from the same problem as before, since it will make use of a satisfaction predicate taking second-level predicates as arguments.

Remember that the notion of second-order interpretation allows the generality absolutist to provide an account of first-level predicates in plural terms. However, that same notion makes use of a second-level predicate and so, for his position to be fully satisfactory, the generality absolutist still needs to provide an account of second-level predicates. It appears to follow that this situation generalizes in such a way that after giving a semantic account of n -level predicates, the generality absolutist immediately needs to provide an account for $n+1$ -level predicates.

As Rayo (2006) points out, at this point the generality absolutist seems faces the following trilemma: he must choose between giving up absolutely general quantification, settling for the view that adequate semantic theorizing about certain languages is essentially beyond our reach, and countenancing an open-ended hierarchy of languages of ever ascending logical type. Rayo ends up by proposing the latter as the least attractive of the three, noticing that this option leads us to adopt an open ended hierarchy of ideology that parallels the open ended hierarchy of ontology advocated by

the generality-relativist. We point out the unattractive aspects of this way out of the trilemma and discuss how satisfactory the generality absolutist position turns out to be in the light of these.

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Fiora Salis, *Understanding Names*

For almost forty years since the origins of direct reference theories the debate on the semantics of names has been permeated by Russell’s idea that fundamental differences in the ways in which we are able to think about particular objects determine fundamental differences in the ways in which referring expressions of ordinary language function. Russell thought that an agent can think about something either by acquaintance, namely by direct awareness of the object itself, or by description, namely by thinking about a particular object as the satisfier of a descriptive condition. He introduced the Principle of Acquaintance² (henceforth PA) as a strict condition on understanding stating that every proposition that an agent can understand must be composed of constituents with which the agent is acquainted. Russell’s version of PA was very strong, holding that an agent can be acquainted only with universals and sense data, while all knowledge of the external world is mediated by descriptions. Contemporary acquaintance theorists³ have advanced several weaker versions of PA. In particular, the causal historical theory of reference (independently promoted by Kripke, Putnam and Donnellan in the ‘70s) inspired one of the weakest and most common versions of PA as knowledge of the referent of a name by direct perception, memory or testimony.

² The principle appears first in Russell (1905), but the fundamental idea is elaborated in Russell (1912).

³ Contemporary acquaintance theorists include Burge (1977), Lewis (1979), Donnellan (1979), Evans (1982), Boer and Lycan (1986), Bach (1987), Salmon (1988), Kaplan (1989b), Recanati (1993), Soames (2003, 2005) and Pryor (2007).

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

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

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

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