THE MEANING OF OUCH AND OOPS

Explorations in the theory of Meaning as Use

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(This version from a few years ago has been extensively revised, but the revisions are still hand-written.)
[PROLOGUE]

A few years ago, while reflecting on the notion of Character in “Demonstratives”, I realized that although the main body of the paper presents itself as – and is – a tidying up and systemization of largely uncontroversial principles, there lies within it the seeds of something more radical, a vision of semantic theory, and of logic, that veers off from the traditional path. These aspects of “Demonstratives” are associated with what I now think of as a different conception of semantics, a Semantics of Use.

In these lectures, 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 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.²

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

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1 The discussions, in “Opacity”, of the putative eliminability of indexicals and in “Afterthoughts” on taxonomy are early signs of germination.
2 Scholars may disagree. I know my uncles, the formalists, much better than I know my anti’s.
humanistic and to avoid the rigors of logical theory. (This was a foolish and naïve view, but I was a graduate student. No offense to graduate students!)

The slogan, *Meaning is Use* was a theme of Strawson’s 1950 classic “On Referring”. Strawson argues that the primary bearers of reference and truth are not expressions but *uses* of them. It is noteworthy that Strawson’s prime example of an expression requiring an analysis in terms of *use* was one that essentially involved an indexical.

“On Referring” is a brilliant, sprawling paper with many axes to grind. The argument for a semantics of use is mixed in with a vigorous defense of ordinary language and more than a bit of logician bashing. Thus:

Conventions for [the referring use of language] have been neglected or misinterpreted by logicians. The reasons for this neglect are not hard to see ... Two of them are, roughly: (1) the preoccupation of most logicians with definitions; (2) the preoccupation of some logicians with formal systems.

and the very last sentence, which reads:

Neither Aristotelian nor Russellian rules give the exact logic of any expression of ordinary language; for ordinary language has no exact logic.

Although the logician bashing added spice to the paper, it was not likely to attract logicians to his point of view. But it reflected a widespread view that the methods of logic were, by their nature, only suitable to a highly regimented, unadorned, core of language, a core adequate to mathematics and parts of science, but hopelessly remote from the subtle riches of natural language. Strawson thought that where meaning is use, it lies beyond logic’s domain (which is the obverse of the foolish and naïve view I held as a graduate student).

The most prominent logician of the time encouraged this view, for his own reasons. When I asked Strawson why he thought that there could be no logic for a language with indexicals, he said that it was because Quine had told

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3 Russell, at whom Strawson’s arguments were directed, responded, “The gist of Mr. Strawson’s argument consists in identifying two problems which I have regarded as quite distinct – namely, the problem of descriptions and the problem of egocentricity.” From My Philosophical Development (Allen & Unwin 1959), reprinted in Copi and Gould (eds) Contemporary Readings in Logical Theory (Macmillan 1967) as “Mr. Strawson on Referring”

4 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.
him so. Thus there was formed a strange alliance between those who disdained a regimented language and those who preferred it. The point of agreement was the gulf between logic’s domain and natural language.

The alliance was sustained by the notion that in natural language meaning is determined by use. Strawson asked, in effect, “How could the lumbering formalist capture the context sensitive, intention driven, quicksilver of individual use?”, and the logician replied, “Why would we want to!?”

In “Demonstratives” it was shown that by adding context as a parameter, Strawson’s ‘conventions for referring’, even if ‘neglected’ by logicians, could be accommodated within the range of our methods. At the time, I regarded my work as extending then current semantical methods just to the degree necessary to incorporate indexicals. I regarded it as an epicycle on Carnap’s method of extension and intension. I did not regard it as involving a different conception of semantics.

About five years ago it first occurred to me that the analysis of indexicals in “Demonstratives” could be seen as the scientific realization of the proposed Semantics of Use. Ask not after otherworldly meanings, ask only after rules of use. This led me to explore the differences between what I now call a Semantics of Meanings and a Semantics of Use. I began to see the semantics of indexicals as having greater affinities with that of epithets, diminutives, interjections, nicknames, ethnic slur terms, and the like than with the paradigms of Meaningfulness: definite descriptions, “fortnight”, and “feral”.

François Reconati, in a clever play on the notion of truth-conditional meaning, calls the semantics based on rules of use, “Use-conditional meaning”. What I wish to emphasize is that for the expressions in question, the rules of use that I will discuss are conventional and a part of the semantics.

So here is what I am trying to do. Explore the semantics, i.e. the conventionalized information carried by an expression, -- I call it “semantic information” – of a range of expressions whose semantics had largely been ignored by those, like myself, who work in a formalist tradition. Our ignoring –

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5 The point was rather obvious, and had been anticipated by others.
6 It was in 1994, while preparing for the Bielefeld conference on indexicality.
7 We hear the same, or similar slogans, from others who decry the malevolent effects of the myth of meanings. My friends Howard Wettstein and Joseph Almog had long deplored the conception of character as a kind of Fregean hyper-sinn.
8 I use “Meaning” with a capital “M” to indicate a particular form of semantic value, modeled on Frege’s Sinne. I use “means”, “meaning” and its cognates with a lower case “m” in a neutral, pre-theoretical way.
9 I’m not sure he has exactly the same notion in mind as I do.
perhaps the roper word is “ignorance” – is probably best explained as flowing from a combination of disdain, acceptance of a false theory (that these expressions are merely *stylistic variants* of expressions we can already account for), and the imagined *impossibility* of a systematic semantics whose goal is something other than *what is said*.

But I now believe that by attending to rules of use – the right sort of rules of use – we can extend our formal semantics, and thus even our logic, to systematically account for the ignored semantic phenomena. *And*, with surprising, and I devoutly hope, *illuminating* results.

So here is my method. I ask not what the expression *means* (for example, I do not ask, “What does ‘Goodbye’ mean?”). Instead, I ask, “What are the conditions under which the expression is *correctly or accurately* used?” This seems a much more fruitful line of inquiry for a word like “Goodbye”. To the degree that such conditions reflect linguistic convention, the *information* that such conditions obtain is carried in the semantics of the expression. [I am speaking roughly here.]

Now note that in the case of the indexicals, a similar situation obtains. Take, for example, the first person pronoun, “I”. It seems fruitless to ask what the first person pronoun *means*. As Frege said, It seems to mean different things on different occasions of use. But the question, “What are the conditions under which the first person pronoun is *correctly used*?” quickly yields a good answer: “to refer to the person who uses it”. And, this simple, good answer constitutes an adequate basis for a fruitful semantics of indexicals (or so I believe).

Furthermore, I will try to persuade you, by consideration of a quasi technical feature of the form of the semantical metalanguage, that the Semantics of Use, which results from asking for the conditions under which the expression is correctly *used*, really is different in *nature* from the semantics that asks after *Meanings*, and is not merely a stylistic variant of it.

My tale wanders, as is my wont, but I will try to help you keep track of the essential morals as the story progresses.

The exploration of the differences between a Semantics of Meanings and a Semantics of Use is an ongoing project. It may be that the *primary* problem in semantics is not what does this or that *mean*, but rather in what *form* should we attempt to say what this or that means.
One good reason for examining these meta-semantical issues is that the methods and conceptual tools of a theory make certain aspects of the subject matter salient and cause other aspects to pale into insignificance. 10 Method determines Matter. If a semantic theory is to state what an expression means, then semantic theory cannot accommodate the word “Goodbye”. 11 If a semantic theory is to state what conditions govern an expression’s use, then semantic theory can accommodate the word “Goodbye”. I believe that the tendency to banish a wide variety of semantic regularities (including those of indexicals) to the netherworld of ‘pragmatics’ has been a direct consequence of the fact that the dominant forms of semantic theory are unsuitable for these expressions.

About 25 years ago, when I saw 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”, I thought I 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 now I think that there really isn’t any incompatibility between the project of the formalist and the anti-formalist 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.

Part of my venture is to show that rules of use and rules of meaning are really different, not merely reformulations of one another, and not merely reflective of ideological differences, but rather substantively different semantic accounts.

Once I recognized that the work I had done in constructing a logic of indexicals was actually a scientific realization 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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10 Note that the semantical tradition of my upbringing treats all of the expressions having affinities with indexicals with condescension.
11 And all the more so if the semantic theory is to state the meaning by giving truth conditions.
[LOGIC: VALIDITY]

Let me turn first to my most audacious claim.

In earlier work on indexicals I attempted to show through the use of formal methods 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 \( \Phi \) is a logical truth, that Necessarily \( \Phi \) is a logical truth) seems to fail.

I will, below, try to show the same – i.e. that the semantic rules produce a distinctive pattern of logical consequence -- for epithets, as well as diminutives, interjections, ethnic slur terms, and the like. I will try, that is, to challenge the dictum:

Logic (and perhaps even truth) is immune to epithetical color 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.

I think it is – or should be -- uncontroversial that expressions of these kinds have a conventional meaning, or, better, a conventional use. We say “Hello” when we meet, “Goodbye” when we part. One who used these expressions in the opposite way would be making a linguistic error. Similarly, the word “honkey” is a derogatory term for a Caucasian. Anyone who claims to be using it in a non-derogatory sense is also making a linguistic error. So the question is not whether there are any rules governing the correct use of such expressions, the question is whether such rules, which give expressions what I call expressive content, can affect logic.

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

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12 “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.

13 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.

14 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
Consider Argument 1:

That damn {{freaking?}} Kaplan was promoted.
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:

Kaplan was promoted.____
That damn Kaplan was promoted.

{{“Alas, Kaplan was promoted.” “Regrettably, Kaplan was promoted.” has also been proposed, but seems more like a plain statement (or mis-statement) of fact, though its truth conditions are a bit obscure.}}

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 displays something which either is or is not the case.15

{{Here is a possibly critical point: Distinguish Ventilatives (a poor term for expressives in a narrow sense) and Situationals (like “goodbye”) from those 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. To transform what we intuitively take to be the expressive content of a term into sentential form sometimes takes a bit of ingenuity. For example, whereas one might intuitively say that my shriek displays fear, I shall say that it displays the fact (if sincere) that I am in fear.16 17 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). In either case we ultimately get something of sentential form to assess. This is

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15 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”.

16 A shriek is not generally part of the language, but you get the idea.

17 Note also the importance of the availability of the first person in transforming what is displayed into sentential form. Perhaps an adequate analysis of expressive contents depends on a prior analysis of indexicals.
critical to my line of development of the project, since once we have the expressive content in sentential form, we can bring out our old toolbox, and go to work.

I say that an expression is \textit{descriptively correct} if what it describes is the case, and I say that an expression is \textit{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. Thus, your shriek may be expressively correct, because what it expresses is that you are in fear, and you \textit{are} in fear, while mine may, which expresses that I am in fear, may fail to be expressively correct because it is fakery. \textit{Usually}, but \textit{subject to exceptions noted below}, 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 \textit{lie} with them) by separating the semantic information associated with the expressive, i.e. \textit{what is expressed}, from the question whether what is expressed is or is not the case. (Here the use of \textit{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.\footnote{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 \textit{derive} the conclusion, a meaning postulate connecting the terms would be required).} (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 here about “that bastard Kaplan”, wherein \textit{the sheer syntax of it} (that “bastard” can function as a predicate adjective in “Kaplan is a bastard) tends to suggest a wrong analysis. But probably not worth the 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 \textit{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: 19 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 sentence, 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 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

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

In thinking about when to call a sentence true if its semantics associates two contents with it, a descriptive content and an expressive content, it is interesting to 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. It is perhaps also worth noting that the proposition associated with the relative clause tends to take primary scope, and thus is not always conjoined with the smallest sentence within which it lies. For example, in

If it was not the case that Napoleon, who recognized the danger to his right flank, personally led his troops against the enemy’s position, then it must have been his brother who led them.

(1) is not conjoined with (2).

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20 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”. The Frege material was called to my attention by Ben Caplan. It appears at the end of “Sinn und Bedeutung”.
There are many other situations in which more than one proposition seems to be associated with a single sentence. Russell’s theory of descriptions is a classical case. If we say that the author of Waverly is Scottish, both the proposition that a certain person is Scottish, and the proposition that there is exactly one author of Waverly are expressed. Russell believed (roughly) that we assert the conjunction of these; Strawson believed that the latter proposition is presupposed, and only the former is asserted. For Strawson, the latter is not logically implied by the original sentence.

I believe that it is this phenomenon – that a single sentence can involve more than one proposition, not all of which may be asserted – that causes the application of the notion of truth to often be more uncertain than the application of the notion of validity.

Much of the literature on pejoratives (an excellent source is the dissertation of Paul Saka) recognizes that sentences like “That damn Kaplan was promoted” have two contents, something like what is said, which I call ‘descriptive content’, and something like what is expressed or displayed, which I call ‘expressive content’. However, because most of these authors focus on the vexed question of truth, rather than on semantic information, their emphasis is often on an unpersuasive general account of how expressive content figures into truth.

[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.

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 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. Not all expressives combine with other expressions to form compounds ("goodbye" and "hello"), but some do ("damn", "honkey" etc.). 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 IF”.

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:

The Regents acted foolishly.

If that damn Kaplan was promoted, then the Regents acted foolishly.

Other cases of non-standard compositional rules have been noted, and it may turn out that the form of logical heresy is already well known. It may turn out to be something like Free Logic or Presuppositional Logic (though I don’t think it will). But a deviant logic should be expected on compositional grounds alone.

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21 I have myself suggested that apposition is such a case.

22 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 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.}
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 what must be the case in order for the expressive to be expressively correct, 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 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.\(^{23}\)

\>{{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.\(^{24}\) 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 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” is - more accurately, is represented by -- the set of those contexts at which the word “ouch” is expressively correct (since it contains no descriptive

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\(^{23}\) “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.

\(^{24}\) 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.
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 not 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”.

This may suggest that there are semantic differences between the two modes of expression, differences not captured by the model theoretic...

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25 There seem to be both interested and disinterested empathetic uses.
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 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”.

Not for Distribution
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 minor mishap, you were intending a macabre joke. An utterance of “oops” in the face of a true disaster is expressively incorrect. The main point I want to make at this stage of the discussion is that for “oops” to be expressively correct, the observed event must be correctly 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

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26 Another case in which the literal semantics of “oops” is manipulated to achieve social purposes concerns my saying “oops” when my guest has caused the mishap. Here the characterization of the mishap as minor, though possibly expressively incorrect, is dictated by social practices of blame taking and blame placing. (The example is due to Seana Shiffrin.)
differently 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). 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,

27 I will shortly mention a third possibility for certain honorifics, that they are situational. But even if the third possibility were correct for honorifics, the derogatory expressions would remain.
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.\(^{28}\)

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.

[AND VS BUT: PART I]

Now to some arguments concerning “and” and variants of “but”. According to Grice’s quite plausible analysis of such logical particles as “but”, “nevertheless”, “although”, and “in spite of the fact”, they all have the same descriptive content as “and” and differ only in expressive content (they express but do not state the speaker’s view of the coherence of the related facts). The arguments I will present are meant to show that even accepting Grice’s analysis, the logic is affected by the choice of particle, as it should be on my view of logical validity as the preservation of truth-plus rather than merely (descriptive) truth. If this is correct, than generations of logic teachers, including myself, have been misleading the youth. Grice sides with the logic teachers, and though he regards the expressive content as conventional and hence (I would say)

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\(^{28}\) 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.
semantic (as opposed to being a consequence of his conversational maxims), he categorizes it with the maxim-generated *implicatures*. He regards the logic as unaffected because he regards only the descriptive content as being asserted, and (incorrectly, in my view) regards logical validity as preservation of (only) descriptive truth.

The Arguments:

Argument 3:

Whenever Michael Jordan plays, the Bulls win.
*Michael Jordan will play tomorrow*        
Michael Jordan will play, and the Bulls will win.

Argument 4:

Whenever Michael Jordan plays, the Bulls win.
*Michael Jordan will play tomorrow*        
Although Michael Jordan will play, nevertheless the Bulls will win.

As in the case of Arguments 1 and 2, Argument 3 strikes me as intuitively valid, but Argument 4 does not. In Argument 4, the conclusion seems almost to contradict the first premise, and in no way seems a consequence of it. As for so many of my examples, I am not perfectly confident that the analysis, here Grice’s analysis, of “Although … nevertheless …” as having no descriptive content beyond that of “and” is correct, but I can imagine it correct without wavering in my conviction that Argument 4 could not be valid.

*AND VS BUT: PART II*

Now some more delicate issues: Consider:

Argument 5:

Although Michael Jordan will play, nevertheless the Bulls will win.
Michael Jordan’s playing will hinder the Bull’s winning.

and

Argument 6:
Kaplan was promoted.  
I have a derogatory attitude toward Kaplan.  
That damn Kaplan was promoted.

According to me, there is no increase in information in either argument, so truth-plus is preserved. If one regards them as valid, as I have some inclination to do, they support the idea that logical validity just is the preservation of truth-plus.

If one does not regards them both as valid (the first may make a stronger claim than the second), several possible conclusions can be drawn.

1) IF Grice is right about the descriptive content of the premise in Argument 5, then UNLESS it is not valid, then I am wrong and Grice is right about logic, OR information conveyed expressively cannot be converted into information conveyed descriptively.

2) Analogously, IF the descriptive content of the second premise of Argument 6 includes the expressive content in the conclusion, then again, IF the argument is not valid, then I am wrong about logic, UNLESS information conveyed descriptively cannot be converted into information conveyed expressively.

Rejecting out of hand the hypothesis that I am wrong about logic, I ask why there should be barriers to the conversion of information between expressive and descriptive modes of conveyance. It occurs to me that possibly for reasons related to the ‘vividness’ of expressives, the cognitive systems wherein displayed information is processed and that wherein described information is processed do not mix and exchange data so easily.

There appears to be a phenomenon of accepting displayed information as genuine, i.e. sincere, more readily than that which is asserted. Is this because we rationally regard expressives as less subject to the manipulation of insincerity? [Undercover agents seem to have little trouble using expressives, and even body language, insincerely.] Or are we simply programmed to react differently to the two modes in which information is presented, with the processing of displayed information more closely connected to affective centers, and the processing of descriptive information more closely connected to higher cognitive centers? Another possibility, linked to the second, is that we care about the behavior that displays certain attitudinal states in a way that is over and above our caring about the existence of the states themselves. More on this last below.
Boss Tweed is said to have declared in regard to Thomas Nast’s political cartoons about Tammany hall, “I don’t give a damn about anything the editorial writers say about me, but get rid of those damn pictures.”

Note that the sight of a hideous vulture may provoke a primordial information processing response (disgust or horror) that the ‘editorial’ simile, “Boss Tweed preys on our citizens like a hideous vulture” does not. Analogously, we respond to displays of respect and contempt differently from avowals. Could this be in part because there is not an easy channel of information flow between the processors of the descriptively presented and the processors of the displayed?

When we speak of ‘colorful’ language, we may be in part calling attention to this idea: that language can invoke information processing systems other than the ‘purely cognitive’. Perhaps it is like comparing an utterance heard at normal volume with the same utterance heard with the volume turned way up. The impact is different. Here, not because of any difference in semantic information, nor because of any difference in semantic modes of conveying information, but rather because of -- shall I say -- purely pragmatic factors. What I am suggesting is that some factors that act in this way to evoke different parts of our information processing system may be encoded in the semantics and syntax of our language, in particular in the different modes whereby semantic information is presented.

Finally, my claim that truth-plus must be preserved in valid arguments is not challenged by constraints on the free exchange of descriptively presented information with expressively presented, or displayed, information. My claim gives only a necessary condition for validity. It may be that an additional requirement is needed: that the descriptive content of the conclusion is contained in the descriptive content of the premises, and that the expressive content of the conclusion is contained in the expressive content of the premises. Call this the Strong Requirement. At the moment, I am inclined to think that perhaps a weaker requirement would suffice, a requirement that allows expressive content to be converted into descriptive content, but not vice versa. This amounts to accepting the validity of Argument 5 and of some version of the following:

Argument 7:

29 According to the story, an expressed reason for Tweed’s concern was that his followers didn’t read editorials but did look at the cartoons. I don’t think such a belief is necessary to motivate Tweed’s concern. I have long wondered why editorial cartoons have so much more affective power than editorials (and I do read editorials).
That damn Kaplan was promoted.
I have a derogatory attitude toward Kaplan.

In explanation of my view that Arguments 5 and 7 might be valid, but Argument 6 may not be, I note that the former, but not the latter, seem to me to be reiterations.

It is important to note that Arguments 5, 6, and 7 are all somewhat different in character from those that precede them in that they all depend on analytic connections between the expressives and their (purported) descriptive counterparts. This alone makes Arguments 5, 6, and 7 suspect as logical validities, since in these cases truth-plus preservation depends on the informational equivalence between the non-logical expressives and their equally non-logical, descriptive counterparts. Truth-plus is an informational, not a formal, notion. An alternative would be to regard Arguments 5, 6, and 7 as analytic validities, and reserve logical validity for cases in which the Strong Requirement is satisfied. This would have the effect of retaining the formal character of logic.

[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 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:

\[
S \text{ is true if and only if } P
\]

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. 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-language what Quine calls “the austere language of science”, a language without indexicals, tense, epithets, euphemisms, etc.

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

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30 Synonyms may be useful in this project, but they cannot be the goal of the project.
31 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”).
32 We have here an application of Carnap’s Principle of Tolerance: Allow any form of object language, but keep the metalanguage clean.
mean. *This is the heart of my claim that there is a real difference between rules of use and rules of meaning.*

[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. 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* (and perhaps, do) whatever the object language can is a much stronger, and much 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.

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 *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. And note that in fact we do not take on the task of finding an expression in our own

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33 It may be for this reason that those who assume 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.

34 Needs ref.
language that is synonymous with that used by the person reported upon. For example, when we report on Fred’s saying, “I am a fool.”, we are required to say something like, “Fred says that he is a fool.” Here we haven’t really achieved synonymy. This difficulty is, I believe, a reflection of the fact that the language of indexicals has a non-translational semantics.

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.

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.

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, psychological question: Why would he say 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.35

35 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”.
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 at that point in the conversation.

Semantic Information – what an utterance means—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!36

{{For a talk, cut the discussion of the Machers}}

The Case of the Machers: 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.

36 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 should be encoded in some linguistic forms, i.e. some 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.}}
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 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, 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

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.
kinds of inquiry, which is easily seen in the “goodbye” case, wherein social practice, as a different kind of convention, does not figure.\textsuperscript{38}

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

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. But the fact 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.

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 presuppose the conventions that determine the semantic information. Insofar as Pragmatics is concerned with convention, it is in the study of specifically linguistic social practices.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} 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.

\textsuperscript{39} 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
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 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. 40

**[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 could be done, and is best 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

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40 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.
that the only sort of language that ought 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?”

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. 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

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41 I here use “expressive” for any item whose semantical information is carried, at least in part, in the display mode.
are ineliminable.\textsuperscript{42} A preliminary suggestion as to why expressives are ineliminable is that the semantic information in an expressive (that which is displayed by the expressive) is indescribable. I reject this suggestion.

Another 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 \textit{independently} of its evidential value regarding inner attitudes. Thus, we respond positively to displays of respect, even if we suspect them to be insincere, and negatively to displays of disrespect, even if we know them to be due to cross-cultural misunderstandings (and thus evidentially worthless). Whereas \textit{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 \textit{display} respect (or disrespect), then the use of such language, even if thought to be insincere, is \textit{respectful behavior}, and should produce an affective response in its own right. 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 \textit{held} in respect, people desire to be \textit{paid} respect, and honorifics can be the coin of that payment.\textsuperscript{43}

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. But why?

\texttt{[THAT BASTARD]}

Earlier, I sidestepped a controversy in my choice of epithets, avoiding “bastard” so as to avoid the claim that that the phenomena regarding logical consequence that I cite are all explainable in terms of normal logical form. But I wish to return now to explore the claim that the epithet “that bastard” has only expressive, and no descriptive force. I cite some evidence and alternatives. \textit{The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition} (henceforth \textit{AHD}) gives, in relevant part, “\textit{Vulgar Slang. A person, especially one who is held to be mean or disagreeable.” “A person” is satisfactorily vacuous. Does the remainder suggests, as some feel, that the word “bastard” has descriptive content in addition to being derogatory, or is the remainder simply indicative of the \textit{form} of derogation displayed (note: “held to be”). One hesitates to use the expression as derogation \textit{for} being weak or ineffectual, as in

\textsuperscript{42} \{\{See remarks on footnote 93 of “Opacity”. I thought I began such a study in something I published, but I can’t find it.\}\}

\textsuperscript{43} Here, the performative role clearly appears, and perhaps with it, a commitment to utterance theory.
“That bastard Kaplan let people push in front of him, and take my place.” For the descriptive side of such tasks, we have “wimp”, which I think of as being purely descriptive, but descriptive of properties that are generally seen as personal failings.

The mere fact that there are usage rules for a particular epithet that confine its correct use to a specialized range of cases does not show that it has descriptive content, i.e. that it makes a descriptive claim which can be adjudged as true (not true-plus) or false. I may choose a specialized instrument to express my attitude, based on my belief that the target has certain characteristics, without asserting that the target has those characteristics, without the attitude even being based on those characteristics. This is easily seen in the honorifics “Sir” and “Ma'am”, forms of address for, respectively, males and females, that express respect, but not respect for being, respectively, male or female. (This, at any rate, is what I was taught in Military School). Nor does their use assert something about the gender of the addressee, though they may indicate that the person using the form of address has, if sincere, a certain belief about the gender of the addressee. I can even express respect for you for being F without asserting that you are F, just by addressing you with a respectful F-title. In such a case, if you are not F, the title would have been wrongly used, but would not have made a false claim. If I say “Goodbye” in the false belief that you were leaving, I have, perhaps, in some sense ‘expressed’ my false belief (though not in any official sense of “express”), but I certainly haven’t asserted it. As we have seen, the exclamatory “oops” is governed by rules of use, but a use that violates these canons is not an incorrect description, though it may suggest that the speaker holds an incorrect description.

[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. 44

Many languages contain a distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘familiar’ second person pronouns, a distinction that once existed in the English of “thou” 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. 45 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 46). 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 not 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.

44 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.
45 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.]
46 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.
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 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.

[ANALYTICALLY COREFERENTIAL NAMES]

An interesting case of the interaction between semantic information and social practice arises in connection with what I call shortened names, such names as “Dave” for “David”, “Bob” for “Robert”, etc. Shortened names are also interesting as apparent counterinstances to the Millian principle enunciated by Saul Kripke:

> The sole linguistic function of a proper name is to refer to its bearer.

It would appear that names are linguistically linked to their shortened forms, which, in addition to being coreferential with the name, express familiarity in the manner of the ‘familiar’ second person pronoun. In exact analogy to shortened names are diminutives, “Davey” for “David”, “Bobby” for “Robert”. Shortened names and diminutives are, I believe, derived from the standard name in much the same way in which a plural noun is derived from the singular (usually in a regular way, with an occasionally irregular case). Thus a man given the name “Robert” inherits the names “Bob” and “Bobby”. These three names are analytically coreferential, coreferential in virtue of linguistic convention.

A side comment: When we give human names to an inanimate thing -- calling the wind “Mariah”, or a hurricane “David” -- the derived contracted and diminutive names are not used. I believe that this is because their role is to add an expressive element to the name, something like familiarity in the case of the contracted name, and, according to AHD “smallness, youth, familiarity, affection, or contempt” in the case of the diminutive.
Contempt? Surely not! *AHD* must be incorrect in claiming that *contempt* is part of the semantic information in diminutives. Probably, the claim is an erroneous extrapolation by *AHD* from a *sarcastic* indication of smallness, hence, a failure on the part of *AHD* to separate the psychological state that led to the use of the diminutive from the semantic information carried by the linguistic form, and thus a case in point of the sin against which I have been preaching: confusion between Semantics and Pragmatics. [It is very reassuring for a philosopher to discover a case in which the failure to make a philosophical distinction has led to an error on the part of someone other than another philosopher.]

Dictionaries accumulate uses and are often lax in distinguishing the semantic from the pragmatic elements at work. I do not believe that diminutive *names* such as “Davey” and “Bobby”, or other diminutive *words* such as “booklet” or “nymphet” indicate contempt in the way that racial and ethnic epithets do. *Speakers* may indicate contempt through a sarcastic use of a diminutive for an adult, “Did Davey hurt himself?”, but they can do so equally well with a metaphor, “David is a baby”, or, for the more literal minded, a simile, “David is behaving like a baby”. For present purposes, we may take sarcasm and metaphor to belong to Pragmatics. 47 To extend a phrase of Kripke, sarcasm exemplifies *Speaker Contempt* not *Semantic Contempt*.

We must remember that *semantically* contemptuous words do not form an empty category. *Roget's Thesaurus* cites the following under *FOREIGNER*: “limey (derog), spade (derog), wop (derog), dago (derog), kike (derog), wetback (derog), gringo (derog), whitey (derog), honky (derog)”, and *AHD* validates the “(derog)” designation, designating all but “Limey” as “Offensive Slang”. The point here is that what makes these words ‘derog’ is their *meaning*, not anything about social practice or individual psychology. One might put it this way. The reason why these words are derogatory is not because people feel demeaned when the words are used to characterize them. Rather, the reason why people feel demeaned when these words are used to characterize them is because the *words* are derogatory. Diminutives are not contemptuous in that way.

In defense of *AHD*, it must be noted that because the semantic information in words is carried by linguistic conventions, and because linguistic conventions, like all conventions of their kind, are notoriously subject to the Principle of Accommodation:

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47 I actually find the question of where to put sarcasm, or better, irony, a rather difficult and subtle issue. In any case, even if it were counted semantic (roughly because it is a recognized or ‘licensed’ transformation on literal meaning) it would not affect the underlying *lexical* semantics of words used ironically.
Two wrongs (or a sufficient number of wrongs, or wrongs by the right people) make a right.

A consequence of the Principle of Accommodation is that a sufficient frequency of speaker contempt associated with the use of a particular word or phrase can infect the word with semantic contempt. This is a reflection of semantic dynamics, the processes by which expressions change in meaning, i.e. in the semantic information they carry.

This, however, does not relieve AHD from the responsibility of informing us correctly about where we are at this time. It is also worth noting that there are at least two ‘Principle of Accommodation’ processes at work in semantic dynamics. The fundamental one is the process by which the semantic information in a word comes to accommodate what a sufficient number of appropriately placed speakers believe the semantic information to be. It is, presumably, in this way that “nauseous” came to mean nauseated rather than nauseating, and “parameter” came to mean limit or perimeter. [Include the material on “the normative, feed-back loop of convention”?] This process is well known, if ill-understood. But the process whereby speaker contempt is transformed into semantic contempt seems to involve a different, more interesting, and more subtle kind of error. The auditor carelessly takes what the speaker never intended as semantic information. This is not the mere accommodation of prior error; this is original sin.

It is this last that seems to have afflicted the accumulating ways of the AHD. Recalling the “generalized term of approval” entry for “bastard” in Webster’s Third inclines me to think this sin a common affliction of the trade.

Returning now to naming. One may deplore the indiscriminate use of shortened names, just as the French woman deplored the indiscriminate use of “tu”. But here social practice may play the additional role of converting certain shortened names into nicknames. Summarizing: the language provides, in addition to a stock of generic names, naming systems that, among other things, link different forms of a name. In English we have shortened or contracted forms as well as diminutive forms for generic names. English speakers know that “Robert” shortens to “Bob” (and also yields the diminutive “Bobby”) in the way that they know that “Mister” abbreviates to “Mr.”, some generic title or other abbreviates to “Mrs.”, and in the way they know that “cannot” contracts to “can’t” (though this last is unrelated to naming systems). However, linguistic competence cannot tell us whether, in any particular case, the shortened or diminutive form of name has gained social currency. Social practice may frown
on the use of “Liz Windsor”, but it is not semantically incorrect. Similarly, social practice may give sufficient currency to a shortened name to transform it into a *nickname*. Lacking the powers claimed by Humpty Dumpty, I cannot prevent “Dave” from naming me, but social vigilance can prevent it from becoming my nickname.

It is worth indicating that a plausible way to preserve the Millian Principle (that the sole linguistic function of a proper name is to refer to its bearer) is to not count contracted names and diminutive names as *genuine* names unless validated by an independent practice of application, i.e. unless they are, or have spawned, nicknames.  

[There is much more to say on this subject, but not here, now.]

[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 44). 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

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48 An *application* of a derived name is an actual use of the name to refer to that individual. The *application* of one of these preexisting transforms of a name replaces the *giving* of a name, the dubbing. It both creates, or participates in the creation of, the (genuine) nickname that emerges from the transform, and sets up the referential correlation between name and object. This seems a different role from that of *sustaining* a referential correlation, which is the usual role that application of a name has for semantics. [All this is predicated on the above speculations regarding the analysis of nicknames.]
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.\textsuperscript{49}

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), 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

\textsuperscript{49} 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.]
considerations. Here I continue my long term project of unmasking semantical truths in epistemological clothing.