

On Being Post-Gricean

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1. Preliminaries

Being ‘post-Gricean’ is not an easy task. One has a vague sense of membership in a classificatory unit pertaining to a handful of assumptions concerning meaning, intentions, rationality, linguistic communication, and so forth, and at the same time an even stronger sense of various shades of divisions. First, we had the relatively simple dichotomy into Grice’s what is said and what is implicated, then radical pragmaticists made semantics underdetermined and prepared the ground for the further blurring of the boundary: pragmatic inference was allowed to contribute to the ‘intuitive’ truth-conditional content *en masse*. Dubbing this move ‘contextualism’ (e.g. Recanati 1994, 2005) did not clear the divisions but, instead, proliferated them in that we now have degrees of contextualism all the way to the radical version on which every proposition expressed requires contextual input. Grice’s (1978) modest and grammatically triggered allowance for pragmatically acquired contributions to the semantic representation came back, however, in the form of Cappelen and Lepore’s (2005a) semantic minimalism. Another ‘minimal’ view of truth conditional content of sentences appeared in the form of Borg’s (2004a) version of minimalism. At the same time, in the contextualist camp, we have a plethora of debates on the process of arriving at what is said where ‘nonce-inferentialists’ (to use Levinson’s 2000 apt term) can be contrasted with the more wide spread view that such processing allows for shortcuts or defaults.¹ There is also a vivid debate on the provenance of such pragmatic embellishments: as pertaining to slots in the syntactic representation or as a result of ‘top-down’, ‘free’ enrichment in the form of so-called ‘unarticulated constituents’ (see e.g. Recanati 2002). And this is only a small sample of post-Gricean debates.

A methodological question arises, how to identify those discussions which best foster progress in disentangling this post-Gricean web. The first and obvious directive would have to be not to narrow our interests down too much but instead to synthesise what various levels of linguistic analysis, from phonetics all the way to sociopragmatics, tell us about the communication process. Thorstein Fretheim got it right. His seminal paper on the role of intonation in the recovery of scalar

¹ See Jaszczolt 2006 for a presentation of some major default-based accounts.

implicature (Fretheim 1992) opened a new field in pragmatics where more attention was paid to prosody. At the same time, topic/focus considerations came into the centre of attention of formal semanticists (see e.g. Bosch and van der Sandt 1999). His edited books on reference accessibility and on discourse markers and propositional attitude (Fretheim and Gundel 1996 and Andersen and Fretheim 2000 respectively) give philosophers of language a lot to think about and a lot to learn in that he breaks away with rigid categories of referentiality (direct and contextual reference) and the well entrenched restrictions on what counts as propositional attitudes – both going back at least to Frege and Russell. I dedicate this paper to him, with thanks for helping open up these new perspectives for us, younger post-Griceans. I also want to thank him for being always open to constructive and friendly discussion when some of the post-Gricean stances listed above divide us. Thank you, Thorstein, and Happy Birthday!

In what follows I shall concentrate on one strand of post-Gricean debates, namely the one between contextualism and minimalism in semantics. I shall pursue it with the Gricean assumption that whatever we say about meaning, truth conditions are our best, reliable tool. To narrow the field further, I shall ask the question as to whether the contextualism/minimalism controversy is a real choice a post-Gricean has to make or, rather, as some contributors to the debate maintain, they can happily co-exist in virtue of having sufficiently different objectives.

2. The Expansion and Reduction of Truth-Conditional Semantics

Since the rise of ‘radical pragmatics’ (Cole 1981) in the late 1970s, we have grown accustomed to thinking of pragmatics as ‘dual’, to use Borg’s (2004a) phrase, divided into the ‘primary’ role it has in enriching, (expanding, completing, saturating, modulating... etc.²) the semantic content derived through the processing of sentence structure, and its ‘secondary’ role in deriving implicatures, where both layers of this dual picture are regarded by the addressee as intended by the speaker. For example, according to the so-called ‘Atlas-Kempson thesis’ (Atlas 1977, 1979, 1989, 2005a; Kempson 1975, 1979, 1986), negation in English is not ambiguous between wide and narrow scope meanings as Russell had it for the infamous King of France example, but instead underdetermined or ‘sense-general’. Semantic underdetermination, originally just an attempt to rebut the theories of generative semanticists, opened up the whole new tradition of research in which truth conditions became appropriated by utterances or thoughts, making Recanati’s (2002) term

² Terminology and accounts of this addition to the logical form vary considerably. See e.g. Recanati 1989, 2004, 2005.

‘truth conditional pragmatics’ an appropriate label for the kinds of questions posed.

However, in the past few years, and especially with the arrival of so-called minimalist semantic accounts (Borg 2004a, Cappelen and Lepore 2005a), we seem to be turning full circle to the origins of formal approaches to sentence meaning with the foundations in Tarski’s, Davidson’s, or Montague’s seminal works, and considering once again the possibility that semantics should be kept ‘uncontaminated’ by the result of pragmatic inference and perhaps by any psychological facts or stipulations about sentence processing. I shall briefly discuss these two minimalist accounts and address the question as to whether we are faced with a genuine choice between contextualism and minimalism (not forgetting varieties in-between) or rather the two enterprises have sufficiently different objectives to justify coexistence.

3. Semantic Minimalisms

Borg (2004a) argues that semantic theory is to remain unaffected by pragmatic considerations. Logical form is, as she says, ‘an inherent feature of an expression’ (p. 72) which deserves to be revindicated to the object of study of semantic theory. While contextualists take an utterance as the basic unit of analysis and assess the truth conditions of the utterance deemed to be intended by the speaker, Borg constrains the task of semantics to accounting for deductive, formal operations through which sentence meaning is arrived at:

The truth-conditional semantic theory is governed, not by rich non-demonstrative inferential processes, but rather by formally triggered, deductive operations. So, from the start this looks good for someone who wants to see linguistic understanding as the result of processing in some distinct, compartmentalized language faculty, governed by computational processes and appealing to something less than the full range of information possessed by the agent. Borg (2004a: 8).

The main reason for this is modularity: sentence meaning is processed in the encapsulated computational language module, while the recovery of speaker’s intentions and *a fortiori* the meaning of the utterance are wholly unencapsulated.³ While the modularity of semantics is still a hypothesis, it is certainly a plausible one. And while it remains plausible, the proposal of minimal semantics is likely to gain ground. The more so that the strongest objection, from the need to incorporate pragmatic inference in the case of reference assignment to demonstrative and

³ See also Borg 2004b and Jaszczolt 2005a.

indexical expressions argued for since Grice (1978), is also well rebutted: in the sentence ‘That is red’, for example, ‘that’ is treated as a singular term referring to a certain object, whatever this object is for this particular act of uttering the sentence. The argument is then extended, albeit in a somewhat shaky way, to other cases of semantic underdetermination: an utterance of the sentence ‘Steel isn’t strong enough’ is true iff Steel isn’t strong enough for something, where this ‘something’ depends on the context of the utterance. We are not told where exactly the slot for ‘for something’ comes from.

This somewhat concealed shift from sentences to utterances is a dubious one for the following reason. Borg professes that truth conditions should be used in semantics in a ‘minimal’ way, so to speak, in that although we need truth conditions to tell what sentence meaning is, we don’t have to know whether the truth conditions are satisfied. She calls such truth conditions ‘liberal’. On the other hand, she claims, contextualists, for example Recanati (2004: 92-3), confuse truth conditions with verification:

We need to hold apart knowing the truth-conditions of a sentence (a semantic matter) and knowing whether or not those truth-conditions are satisfied on some particular occasion of utterance (a non-semantic matter). Borg (2004a: 239).

Contextualists keep enriching the proposition until it can be plausibly taken to correspond to what would make the *utterance* true, and also until the semantic representation faithfully mirrors, according to the processing agent, the content intended by the speaker. But it is very difficult to see how contextualists can be accused of verificationism here. While they do indeed pursue the ‘intuitive’ truth conditions of the utterance, nowhere do they say that the truth value is what they aim to achieve. And, coming back to Borg’s analysis of the example ‘That is red’, one can clearly see that both accounts are, in effect, accounts of utterance meaning, differing in the degree of specificity with which they handle the contextual additions. Atlas (2006b) analyses this point with a considerable degree of detail in the example of weather predicates. The punch line is that, for Borg, the structure of the sentence ‘It is raining’ allows for quantification over locations and *a fortiori* the ‘liberal’ truth condition accounts for this location. She argues from the fact that (i) all utterances about raining are utterances about raining somewhere to the conclusion that (ii) the sentence itself has to have this location in its logical form. Although she seems to agree with Perry (e. g. 1993) and Recanati (e. g. 2002) that the location is an unarticulated constituent that matters only for the ‘intuitive’ truth conditions, at the same time she seems to admit that ‘somewhere’

figures in the minimal, ‘liberal’ truth conditions. So, it looks like the location is ‘articulated’ on the level of the logical form after all.

At this point, our first attempt to give an impressionistic answer to the question as to whether the contextualist and minimalist proposals can coexist would have to end with a negative impression. Borg’s minimalism is not ‘truly’ minimal: it allows for context-dependence. It is not independent in that she compares her use of truth conditions for analysing sentences with the truth conditions of contextualists who use them for analysing utterances and the speaker’s meaning. If the enterprises were to be viewed as independent, the employment of truth conditions on both levels would not be a problem. Verificationism (if indeed it is present in contextualist accounts) would not be an object of criticism. Although Borg overtly claims that both projects can co-exist (and, as a result, is classified by Recanati 2005 *not* as a true minimalist but as a ‘syncretist’), the discussion she engages in with contextualists proves otherwise. To use Atlas’s apt summary,

Borg believes that John Searle and Recanati are contextualists because they confuse verification-conditions with truth-conditions (like John Perry, perhaps?). Now it turns out that Borg is an existential-quantificationalist because she confuses verification-conditions with truth-conditions. Well, that’s philosophical progress for you! Atlas (2006b: 9-10).

Moreover, the rebuttal of verificationism clearly engages with the issue of psychologism: not only is it possible to provide such ‘minimal’ truth conditions but one can find people who *think* in that way (notably children and philosophers, see Borg 2004a: 243 and Atlas 2006b). And, the argument can then go, if people can grasp minimal propositions, then minimal propositions are not, contrary to what contextualists say, without psychological reality. And the very fact that this psychological reality of minimal propositions is deemed worthy of debate signifies the intimate interconnectedness of the objectives on both sides.

Let us then search further for an ‘uncontaminated’ semantics. Be that as it may, it is clear from the above discussion (as well as from Atlas’s analysis) that one can, in principle, construe a version of minimal semantics that is ‘more minimal’ than Borg’s. Cappelen and Lepore (2005a, b) bring more ammunition to the rescue of semantic minimalism: in the spirit of Frege’s objections to psychologism in the theory of meaning⁴, they emphasize the importance of extracting a content that has the property of being shared across contexts. On the other hand,

⁴ See Cappelen and Lepore (2005a: 152-153)

If communicated contents are restricted to (or, essentially tied to) specific contexts of utterance, then it is hard to envision how speakers who find themselves in different contexts can communicate, i.e., under such circumstances communication between contexts is thrown into doubt. Cappelen and Lepore (2005a: 153).

They demonstrate that, with the exception of grammatically triggered expressions such as demonstratives and indexicals (in the wide sense⁵), to go beyond minimal content would be to entangle oneself in metaphysical debates and possibly also metaphysical nihilism. To say that something is red is just to say that it is red. Similarly, to say that someone is ready or had enough is to say that he is ready or had enough. ‘Red on the outside’, ‘ready to go out’, ‘enough to eat’ are not part of the semantic content. Otherwise, to take the latter enrichments to the extreme, one would have to admit that no objects share properties and just as there is no ‘enoughness’ or ‘readiness’, so there is no ‘redness’ or ‘tallness’ or even ‘tallness for a giraffe’ or ‘redness on the inside’. When you try more fine-grained descriptions such as ‘red on the inside’, you are still left with insurmountable differences as to what it means for a particular object or substance to be red on the inside... and so on, possibly *ad infinitum*. It has to be pointed out that their minimal semantic content is not to be identified with Grice’s equally minimal notion of what is said. Cappelen and Lepore’s ‘what is said’ is indeed contextually influenced as contextualists have it (and even far beyond), while the semantic content is minimal, and, contrary to what contextualists claim, plays an important role in communication.⁶

In brief, Cappelen and Lepore distinguish between (minimal) semantic content and the communicated content. The first only allows for those (very few) contextual, grammatically-triggered additions that pass the tests of context-sensitivity. The latter allows for a multitude of speech acts associated with the utterance – a multitude to which the speaker does not have any privileged access.⁷

⁵ I. e., not only those whose semantic role is fixed such as ‘now’, ‘here’ or ‘I’. See Cappelen and Lepore (2005a: 144) for a list of such expressions: it is short indeed.

⁶ One can go even further. As Atlas (2006a) convincingly argues, ‘ready’ or ‘red’ have meanings fixed by lexical semantics. The discussion as to whether their meanings alone suffice for the minimal proposition is beside the point, in that we do not need a complete, minimal proposition that would be amenable to assessing the truth condition. Instead, says Atlas, all we need is simply sentence meaning. See also Atlas 2005b. I discuss sentence meaning as a possible candidate for the object of semantics in Section 4.

⁷ It has to be mentioned, for completeness, that there is another way to achieve minimalism and that is by postulating a wide array of syntactic slots to be pragmatically filled, building up, in effect, an ‘unpronounced’ syntactic structure. See Stanley (2002), Stanley and Szabó (2000), and King and Stanley (2005). We are not concerned with this variety here in that it allows for a considerable enrichment of the content of the uttered sentence by altering the syntactic structure in such a way that it can accommodate these additions. It is thus not a ‘minimalist’ account in the sense assumed here. But see Recanati 2005 for a different classification.

How does this construal of semantics fare with contextualist assumptions? It minimises pragmatic input by providing a very restrictive list of context-sensitive expressions and by offering tests for context-sensitivity. Again, it is not as ‘minimal’ as minimalisms get: like Borg’s version, it makes an assumption that one has to perform some operations on sentence meaning in order to retrieve the proposition. As long as this assumption that we have to have a minimal proposition is adopted, the route to becoming any more ‘minimalist’ is blocked. The restriction of context-dependence to personal pronouns, demonstratives, indexical adverbs such as ‘here’, ‘there’ or ‘now’, indexical adjectives such as ‘present’ and tense forms is as far as one can get in the minimization of semantics. The coexistence with contextualism is even more problematic than in the case of Borg’s version, in view of their liberal and rather indiscriminate treatment of utterance meaning. Cappelen and Lepore’s Speech Act Pluralism proposes unlimited utterance content:

‘No one thing is said (or asserted, or claimed, or...) by any utterance: rather, indefinitely many propositions are said, asserted, claimed, stated, etc.’ Cappelen and Lepore (2005a: 199).

They do not distinguish between the primary meaning which could be the enriched/modulated sentence meaning and the secondary meanings which contextualists call implicatures. Indeed, they do not make any distinction between primary communicated message and implicit communication, while this is an assumption adopted in all contextualist theories. Let us briefly compare, in this respect, their Speech Act Pluralism with the most radical version of contextualism. To my knowledge, the most radical version in this respect is my theory of Default Semantics (Jaszczolt 2005b). In Default Semantics, all sources of meaning interact, so to speak, on an equal footing to produce what is called a ‘merger representation’. This merger representation is not a development or modulation of the output of syntactic processing. Instead, the output of the processing of the structure and lexicon of the sentence interacts with the outputs of other sources of information about the speaker’s meaning and results in a representation that may, on some occasions, bear no resemblance to the sentence’s logical form. However, radical as it is, Default Semantics, like other contextual accounts, stresses the importance of the primary meaning of an utterance: this primary meaning, produced in the process of interaction as a merger representation, is then contrasted with other conveyed meanings (implicatures). Cappelen and Lepore proceed in a very different direction. They attempt to sever the link between semantics and pragmatics so far that contextualism becomes a vacuous term. There is nothing that takes us directly from sentence

meaning to utterance meaning: context has its own ways. As Cappelen and Lepore say, there is ‘*no* one correct answer to what was said by an utterance’ (p. 199). While their view concurs with Default Semantics in observing that there is no algorithm that takes the semantic content (‘proposition semantically expressed’) and delivers the utterance content, their insistence on the indiscriminate plurality of the meaning conveyed by the latter (‘propositions said’, p. 200) seems to make such an algorithm in principle unattainable. Default Semantics, a radical contextualist view, assumes the feasibility of constructing such an algorithm – in accordance with the dynamic semantic accounts that rely on formalizing context change (see Kamp and Reyle 1993; van Eijck and Kamp 1997; Asher and Lascarides 2003). All in all, compatibility with contextualism as post-Griceans understand the term cannot be gleaned from Cappelen and Lepore’s account.

4. Banning Propositions

Let us now see if minimalism allows for a stance that is more radical (minimal about content) than the two just discussed. Sentences such as (1)-(4) below are normally understood as communicating a more extensive content in a particular context, to the effect, say (1a)-(4a).

(1) John hasn’t eaten.

(1a) John hasn’t eaten breakfast yet.

(2) Everyone came to John’s party.

(2a) Everyone who was invited came to John’s party.

(3) John is ready.

(3a) John is ready to go out.

(4) John has enough.

(4a) John has enough food on his plate.

However, it is debatable whether it is better to keep these ‘additions’ to sentence meaning as a separate kind or conflate them with the output of grammatical processing to constitute the ‘intuitive’, speaker’s meaning, also dubbed on one of the contextualist accounts ‘what is said’ (in the extended post-Gricean sense, Recanati 1989, 2001). Kent Bach (e.g. 1994, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006) offers a third option: in addition to what is said and what is implicated, there is also an intermediate level of what is implicit in what is said, or an ‘implicature’. (1) and (2) express ‘minimal

propositions' that are further expanded to arrive at the meaning intended by the speaker, while (3) and (4) express so-called 'propositional radicals' that require pragmatic completion. In the case of (1) and (2), it is possible to discern a proposition out of the syntactic structure: that there is no time prior to the time of the utterance at which John ate, and that for all individuals x it is the case that this person came to John's party. These propositions are different from the ones intended but they are the 'core' recoverable from the sentence alone. On the other hand, (3) and (4), although they have perfectly complete syntactic representations (logical forms), are semantically incomplete: they do not express propositions. This is so on the assumption that a proposition has to be truth-evaluable: when a sentence expresses a proposition, even a counterintuitive one like in (1) and (2), one is able to tell what situations in the world would make it true. In the case of (3) and (4) such situations cannot be discerned. As a result, (1) and (2) have 'minimal' (counterintuitive) as well as 'intuitive' truth conditions, while (3) and (4) have only the intuitive ones: without completion no truth condition can be gleaned from the sentence. In short, the middle level of mysterious implicatures is added – 'mysterious' because they are classified as built out of what is said albeit they are implicit. But in spite of this apparent obfuscation, the division between semantics and pragmatics is by stipulation clear:

The semantics-pragmatics distinction is not fit to be blurred. What lies on either side of the distinction, the semantic and the pragmatic, may each be messy in various ways, but that doesn't blur the distinction itself. Taken as properties of sentences, semantic properties are on a par with syntactic and phonological properties: they are linguistic properties. Pragmatic properties, on the other hand, belong to acts of uttering sentences in the course of communicating. Sentences have the properties they have independently of anybody's act of uttering them. Speakers' intentions do not endow them with new semantic properties... Bach (2004: 27).

Semantic content of sentences and the intended content of utterances are separate concepts and should be kept as such. It is not necessary to expect of semantics that it produce truth conditions. In the case of propositional radicals it does not, and the fact that it does *not* doesn't mean that the semantics itself is deficient and needs to be amended in such a way that it *does* produce them, by employing, say, the idea of 'intrusion' of the output of pragmatic inference into semantic representation. Semantics equals sentence meaning, full stop – a claim independently advocated in Atlas (2006a), discussed above, and Horn (2004, 2006). Assuming that every sentence expresses a complete thought in the sense of corresponding to a full proposition is a mistake – a fallacy of Propositionalism. Cappelen and Lepore assume Propositionalism and that is why, the argument goes, they are forced to equate semantic

incompleteness of sentences with their context-sensitivity and impose the requirement of their ‘minimal’ completion. That is why, as I observed above, they can’t be any more ‘minimalist’ than they are.

Bach (2006) calls his view Radical Semantic Minimalism. So, we have yet another ‘minimal’ account in which even truth conditions are not a necessary semantic tool. With a little distancing oneself from ‘intuitive truth conditions’ advocated by contextualists, one can appreciate the simplicity and common-sense appeal of this view. At the same time, however, one can not fail to notice that truth conditions ended up, so to speak, on the wrong side of the boundary. While they historically and methodologically belong with sentences, i.e. with the output of grammatical processing, they are now banned from semantics and adopted as ‘intuitive’ truth conditions of utterances. This move significantly weakens truth conditions as a tool for analysing meaning. Truth conditions are a powerful tool when they are predicated of the *compositionally recovered output*. Banished to pragmatics, they will have to remain futile until we have a compositional, fully formalizable theory of utterance meaning. I return to this problem in the concluding section.

5. Co-existence, Inclusion, and Some Proposed Directives

The concluding remark will have to be a shot at answering the question as to whether a psychologically defensible account of utterance interpretation and a formal theory of sentence meaning should be kept apart and coexist or rather should be merged in such a way that the former subsumes the latter.

Contextualism can be informally presented as a common-sense reaction to ‘literalism’ (Recanati 2004, 2005) – the stance that truth conditions should be ascribed to sentences. In this discussion I am not interested in ‘degrees’ or flavours of literalism, neither am I interested in the historical process that according to Recanati leads logically from strong literalism to contextualism and perhaps beyond to even more radical, late-Wittgensteinian, context-dependence. I am interested in semantic minimalism(s) and the question of their alleged compatibility with the contextualist stance taken as a whole. To sum up, leaving aside for the moment Bach’s Radical Semantic Minimalism, the ‘truth-conditional’ minimalism comes at present in two versions:

Version 1: Semantic content is a result of formal, deductive, modular operations. Utterance content remains as on the contextualist account.

Version 2: Semantic content allows for some pragmatic input but this pragmatic input is dictated by grammar and by some strict tests on context sensitivity. Utterance content is a plurality of further indiscriminated speech acts.

We should also include here the view that Recanati calls truly minimalist but on our classification we did not. We shall call it here *pseudo-minimalism*:

Pseudo-minimalism: Truth-conditional content is permeated with the result of pragmatic inference but this inference is guided by grammar. A large part of syntactic structure is unpronounced; there are syntactic slots to be filled for a wide range of pragmatic enrichments.

This view is represented by Jason Stanley (e.g. Stanley 2000; Stanley and Szabó 2002; King and Stanley 2005). To repeat, Recanati dubs this view minimalist, while our Versions 1 and 2 fall for him under ‘the syncretic view’ in that in addition to the minimal sentence content it also acknowledges rich utterance content. Since in this paper we are concerned with the question as to how ‘minimal’ sentence content can be, Recanati’s ‘true’ minimalism of Jason Stanley is not minimalist at all: it is *pseudo-minimalist*. On the other hand, compatibility with contextualism would not make our two minimalisms any less ‘minimal’.

I have argued in Section 3 that Version 2 is incompatible with contextualism. Let us now look at the possibility of subsuming Version 1 under contextualism. Contextualists are well equipped with experimental evidence to the effect that minimal propositions are not a real stage in utterance interpretation. Therefore, one needs a good defence of minimal semantics as a theory that fends off any hints of psychologism: a defence that would give such a theory its own independent *raison d’être*. To repeat, contextualists (e.g. Recanati 2005: 185) point out

(i) the lack of evidence that minimal propositions are a real stage in utterance processing;

(ii) the overall lack of purpose in postulating minimal propositions;

and

(iii) the weakening of the notion of truth condition by semantic minimalism, to the point where the truth conditions are not helpful in establishing what the world would have to be like for the sentence to be true.

The third point is well taken care of in Version 1 as the argument from verificationism holds strong there: truth conditions are not verification conditions, they are to show formally what the world would have to be like – or what the extensions would have to contain in the models with respect to which the sentence is interpreted. One need say no more: the minimalist rebuttal certainly works. As an entirely superfluous reinforcement, we could also add here that, contrary to Recanati's remark, contextualists themselves are not verificationists either.

Point (i) is more difficult. As I argued in Section 3, Version 1 contains a couple of (real or apparent) contradictions. First, while it attempts to build an autonomous semantics, well defined by the constraints of modularity and formalization, it resorts to utterance meaning for a class of context-dependent expressions to justify the requirement of having a complete, truth-evaluable proposition. It is not clear how to reconcile these two requirements. Second, while professing the coexistence of minimal semantics and contextualism about utterance meaning, it explicitly makes use of arguments from psychologism to justify the existence of minimal propositions (cf. e.g. "...children and philosophers, I often find, have a very acute sense of what they have literally committed themselves to...", Borg 2004a: 243). The very fact that the psychological reality of minimal propositions is subject to discussion demonstrates that co-existence has to be understood in a very restricted sense: co-existence as semantic and pragmatic theories, but also compatibility on the front of utterance processing!

Objection (ii) only holds when minimalisms are found guilty of psychologism. In virtue of what I said under (i) above, and in virtue of Bach's criticism of Propositionalism discussed in Section 4, we can find them so. A true minimalist, Bach says, remains faithful to sentences and humbly accepts the fact that not all sentences express complete propositions. But then, as we observed, the price to pay is that the most powerful tool of semantics, namely truth conditions, ends up on the wrong side. And perhaps we are also pouring the baby out with the bath water in banning from semantics the only reliable unit of meaning we have ever had: a proposition. So, in this light, let us focus on Versions 1 and 2 once again. Version 1 was found not truly minimalist in being contaminated with pragmatic inference and in making claims about the psychology of utterance processing. Its independent co-existence with contextualism has to be rejected. Its submission to contextualism is much more compatible with its assumptions. Version 2 was found incompatible with contextualism and its separate existence has to be deemed possible but supported by weak arguments: allowing pragmatic filling in of pronouns or demonstratives weakens it as minimalisms go. But it

weakens it in order not to pour out the baby (the proposition) with the bath water. The defence of the co-existence therefore seems successful.

As a last resort, any propositionalist-minimalist, whether of Version 1 or Version 2, could always turn to the old masters and focus, once again, on perfecting our accounts of the meaning that can be gleaned from the language system through the powerful formal tools we inherited. It would be a great pity if formal analysis of meaning derived from systems of natural languages had to suffer at the expense of pondering about speakers impenetrable intentions. In other words, it would be a great pity to appropriate the tool of truth conditions for utterance meaning while our understanding of the compositionality of utterance meaning is very rudimentary, or more often than not, compositionality is even ignored or denied. On the other hand, it would be a great pity to restrict the analysis of meaning to sentence meaning on grounds as shaky as the assumption of modularity and the ban of non-deductive inference such as abductive inference.⁸

To conclude, and, more importantly, to look ahead into the future, propositionalism-minimalism is vindicated, and so is coexisting contextualism. Truth conditions are the best tool we possess for analysing sentence meaning as well as utterance meaning. But when one chooses the contextualist stance, before one appropriates truth conditions one should be in a position to (i) answer questions about the compositionality of utterance meaning and (ii) lay down principles for a formal account of the interaction between the output of grammar and those pragmatic additions. While it is attempted to various degrees in accounts such as Discourse Representation Theory (Kamp and Reyle 1993; van Eijck and Kamp 1997) and its (more and less faithful) offshoots (Asher and Lascarides 2003, Jaszczolt 2005b, respectively), others lag far behind.

⁸ See Borg (2004a: 261): ‘...nothing which requires abductive reasoning (like mind-reading) can be treated as a proper part of semantic theory’.

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