Radical and Moderate Pragmatics: Does Meaning Determine Truth Conditions?[1]

Herman Cappelen and Ernie Lepore

> "... words are no good; .. words dont ever fit even what they are trying to say at"– Addie Bundren, in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*

1. Introduction

According to one conception of language, the meaning of a (indicative) sentence determines the conditions under which it is true, or determines what a speaker can say or express with that sentence. Anyone who understands (1) knows what it means and by virtue of knowing what it means knows that it is true just in case Rutgers University is in New Jersey; and knows that anyone who asserts (1) will have said or expressed that Rutgers University is in New Jersey.

(1) Rutgers University is in New Jersey.

Unlike (1),[2] sentence (2)-(3) include the context sensitive nouns 'that' and 'I' respectively, and so do not have truth conditions *tout court*.

(2) That's nice.
(3) I've eaten.

But the sort of context sensitivity exhibited in such sentences does not compromise the claim that meaning determines truth conditions, since recourse to context here is directed and restricted by conventional meaning alone. Anyone who understands sentence (2) knows that its utterances are true just in case whatever object is demonstrated in the context of utterance is nice; and he also knows that any utterance of (2) says of, or expresses about, whichever object is demonstrated that it's nice. (Similarly, anyone who understands (3) knows that any utterance of it is true just in case whoever utters it has eaten. And every utterance says of, or expresses about, the speaker that he or she has eaten.)

In sum, according to the thesis that meaning determines truth conditions, (indicative) sentences divide into two classes – those with truth conditions *tout*

---

[1] Earlier versions of this paper have been presented at various conferences and to various philosophy departments. We would like to thank the audiences of all these institutions for their helpful feedback, in particular, we would like to thank Kent Bach, David Chalmers, Jerry Fodor, Jeff King, Kirk Ludwig, Mike Martin, Michael Nelson, Rob Stainton, Jason Stanley, Zoltan Szabo, Charles Travis, and Jessica Wilson.

[2] For the purposes of this paper we'll ignore considerations having to do with tense.

court, and those with truth conditions only relative to the semantic values of their context sensitive linguistic items being fixed in a context of utterance.[3]

A number of authors have challenged, in varying degrees of scope, this picture. At one extreme is what we shall dub 'radical pragmatics' (RP), the defining characteristic of which can be summarized as follows: Were you to take any English sentence S and

a) specify the meaning (or semantic value) of every word in S (doing so in accordance with your favorite semantic theory);
b) specify all the relevant compositional meanings rules for English (doing so in accordance with your favorite semantic theory);
c) disambiguate every ambiguous expression in S; precisify every vague expression;
d) fix the referents of every referring expression in S (including indexical ones, even those 'hidden' in logical form),

you would fail to provide (derive, or otherwise specify) any of (i)-(iii):

(i) the conditions under which S is true.
(ii) the proposition expressed by S.
(iii) what intuitively is (literally) said by S.

According to RP, sentences neither have truth conditions, nor say nor express anything, even with (a)-(d) being settled. RP does not deny that speakers usually say and express something with their utterances, or that their utterances are sometimes true or false, and so have truth conditions. Rather RP charges that whatever truths or falsehoods are said or expressed is not determined by meaning and linguistically relevant contextual factors alone.[4]

Philosophers who explicitly endorse RP are John Searle and Charles Travis.

> What words mean plays a role in fixing when they would be true; but not an exhaustive one. Meaning leaves room for variation in truth conditions from one speaking to another (Travis, 1996, p. 451).
>
> …in general the meaning of a sentence only has application (it only, for example, determines a set of truth conditions) against a background of

[3] We will need also to worry about ambiguity; take a sentence like "Not all banks are banks". Contingent on how one individuates words, this sentence may or may not be true. On one construal of word-individuation, this sentence requires a context in which to determine the extensions of its two occurrences of 'bank'.

[4] Instead of assigning truth conditions to sentences, semantics for natural languages assigns something non-truth evaluable, "fragmentary representations of thought" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986, p. 193, 'propositional radicals', Bach, 1994, p. 127).

> assumptions and practices that are not representable as a part of meaning (1980, p. 221).

Both philosophers allude to Wittgenstein and Austin as their chief influences (Travis, 1987, p. 187; 1996, p. 451; Searle, 1980, p. 229).

A more moderate pragmatics (MP) holds that the meaning of only some (indicative) sentences for which (a)-(d) have been settled does not issue in (i)-(iii). According to MP, the truth conditions of many utterances go well beyond anything that semantics legitimately assigns to the sentences uttered. Many philosophers and linguists (Sperber/Wilson (1986), Perry (1986), Carston (1988), Crimmins (1992), Recanati (1993), Bach (1994), Schiffer (1995)) endorse MP to some degree. Indeed, it's our impression that most people, wittingly or not, adhere to MP to some degree.

Our polemical strategy here will be first to argue that MP is unstable. To wit, we will argue that there is no principled line to draw between MP and its fanatical cousin RP. So, if you inclined towards MP, you will inevitably wind up endorsing RP. We will also argue that neither RP nor MP has advanced sound arguments against the view that sentence meaning determines truth conditions.[5] And then we will argue that RP (and so MP) is internally inconsistent. Although our goals here are primarily negative, in the last part of this discussion we will speculate on alternative accounts of the data that has impressed radical and moderate pragmatists in the first place, accounts which are consistent with the main thesis that meaning determines truth conditions.

A larger issue, one we have discussed elsewhere,[6] concerns the costs of insisting upon invoking context in determining truth conditions, when contextually sensitive items are neither linguistically represented nor syntactically motivated. We have argued (and maintain here as well) that these costs are unreasonably high, and so we adopt as a methodological policy not to permit context to

---

[5] In this paper we will concentrate on critical claim (i) of RP and not on claims (ii) and (iii); however, towards the end of our discussion we'll return to critical claim (iii), and, in effect, agree with RP – with this twist – we will deny its significance for truth conditional semantics.

[6] See Lepore, "Is there a problem with incomplete definite descriptions", and Cappelen and Lepore (forthcoming).

collaborate with meaning in determining truth conditions unless morphology or syntax requires it.[7]

2 Incompleteness and Context Shifting

Proponents of RP tend to inundate their readers with lots of examples the upshot of which is supposed to be that you must surrender to the claim that all sentences lack truth conditions. As far as we can tell, all of their examples seem to be in the business of either advancing what we shall call an incompleteness charge or in establishing what we shall call a context-shifting claim. In this section we will look at each in turn.

Incompleteness

RP aims to establish that no meaning theory can determine truth conditions for, e.g., sentences (4) and (5) and, in particular, any theory which issues in, or entails, (4*) and (5*) fails to do so.

(4) This kettle is black.
(5) Smith weighs 80kg.

(4*) 'This kettle is black' is true iff the demonstrated kettle is black.
(5*) 'Smith weighs 80kg' is true iff Smith weighs 80kg.

According to the incompleteness charge, (4*) fails to specify truth conditions for (4) *because* it fails to answer any of the following sorts of questions. (What follows are essentially quotations from Travis (1985, p.197); similar ones can be found in Searle (Searle, 1978, p. 208, 215; 1980, p. 224).) Would (4) be true of some demonstrated kettle if it is:

4a) made of normal aluminum but soot covered?
4b) made of normal aluminum but painted?
4c) made of cast iron but glowing from heat?
4d) enameled white on the outside but saturated in black light?
4e) made of cast iron with a lot of brown grease stains on the outside?

Since (4*) doesn't tell us whether (4) is true when the demonstrated kettle is washed, black on its inside, black all the way through, painted, illuminated or not, etc., RP concludes that it fails to specify ('settle', 'decide' 'determine') conditions

[7] Showing that RP and MP, and their collective arguments against truth conditional semantics are flawed – we want to emphasize – is not a defense of truth conditional semantics directly, but it does fend off what has become a rather irksome opponent.

under which (4) is true.[8] Likewise, (5*) doesn't tell us whether (5) would be true were Smith to weigh:

5a) 80kg when stripped in the morning?
5b) 80kg when dressed normally after lunch?
5c) 80kg after being forced fed 4 liters of water?
5d) 80kg four hours after having ingested a powerful diuretic?
5e) 80kg after lunch adorned in heavy outer clothing?

Since (5*) is mute on these (and endless related) questions, RP concludes that it fails to specify truth conditions for (5).

(4) and (5) are but two of the examples that RP advances; yet its intended scope is supposed to be limitless (see, e.g., Travis, 1996, p. 455; Travis, 1997a, p.119; Searle, 1978, p. 219; Searle, 1980, p. 227). *No sentence* has its truth conditions determined by linguistic meaning alone (even when this meaning is appropriately contextually sensitized according to the edicts of (a)-(d)).

One rejoinder to incompleteness is to flat out deny the data on which it is based, and instead to affirm, for example, that the truth conditions for sentences (4) and (5), as determined by their meanings, are not (4*) and (5*) but rather (4**) and (5**) (cf., e.g., Searle, 1978, p. 212).

(4**) 'This kettle is black' is true iff the demonstrated kettle is black on its surface.
(5**) 'Smith weighs 80kg' is true iff Smith weighs, naked, exactly 80kg early in the morning before breakfast.

But (4**) and (5**) won't (and shouldn't) silence RP:

First, even with such qualifications implemented indefinitely many other questions just like those in (4a)-(5e) remain unanswered by (4**) and (5**). (4**), for example, fails to answer how much of its surface must be black for the surface to be black? Must it all be? Suppose the surface is chipped with white enamel underneath an otherwise black coat of paint. Is its surface still black? How chipped can a surface be before it is no longer black? Would it suffice for a surface to be black that it appear black to normal observers when illuminated? Must it be washed? Scrubbed? Similarly, (5**), for example, fails to tell us under

[8]If we cannot specify the truth conditions for (4) and (5), Travis concludes that we cannot fully specify what's said by them nor can we specify which propositions they express. We'll put aside Travis' skepticism about what's said and the propositions expressed for the moment and focus on the truth conditional aspects of his discussion.

what conditions an individual weighs exactly 80kg in the morning before breakfast? Weighed where? On the moon? On earth? By which standard? Under which conditions?

In short, if it's the lack of answers to (4a)-(5e) that establishes (4*) and (5*) are incomplete, then there's no basis for saying that (4**) and (5**) specify truth conditions for (4) and (5) either.

A different sort of worry is that, even if we presume that (4**) and (5**) do succeed in attributing truth conditions to (4) and (5), we have been provided with no principled reason for deciding why they do. As we depart further and further from mere disquotation, and conditions become more and more specific, what is the principled basis for choosing among alternatives? What, for instance, is the principled basis for *not* including in (4**) the condition that the surface should be washed or scrubbed? Isn't it absurd to hypothesize that linguistic meaning should be expected to make these sorts of fine-grained discriminations?

Context Shifting

Incompleteness is supposed to establish that what determines the truth conditions for any given utterance is a combination of what the uttered sentence means *and* a collection of various 'non-semantic' features surrounding its context of utterance (where 'non-semantic features' are those *not* employed in settling (a)-(d)). But if we do assume that facts about context suffice to determine truth conditions for *utterances* of (4) and (5), why, then, can't we infer that they also determine truth conditions for (4) and (5) themselves? Simply take the truth conditions for utterances of (4) and (5) and posit them as the truth conditions for the sentences themselves. Unfortunately, this won't work and here's where context shifting kicks in (see Travis, 1985, pp. 199-200; Travis, 1996, pp. 454-55; Searle, 1978, p. 212; Searle, 1980, pp. 224-225).

RP proponents argue that in some scenarios an utterance of (5), for instance, with its meaning fixed, is true when conditions C obtain, while in another scenario C's obtaining would neither necessitate nor suffice for the truth of an utterance of (5). For example:

Scenario One:

> Smith has been dieting for the last eight weeks. He steps on the scale one morning, naked, before breakfast (but after having gone to the bathroom), and it registers 80kg. A friend at work who wants to let Smith's co-workers in on his achievement can use (5) to say something true. Notice it doesn't matter at all that Smith is, at that time, dressed, wearing a heavy overcoat, and has just consumed an enormous lunch.

Scenario Two

> Smith is exactly as in Scenario 1. However, the speaker's circumstances (and purposes) have changed. At the time of this utterance of (5) (suppose the same time as in Scenario 1), Smith is about to enter an elevator with a capacity of no more than an extra 80kg. An utterance of (5) in these circumstances could be both fatal and false. Note that what the scale registers when Smith is naked in the morning is in this context irrelevant.

So, two simultaneous utterances of the same unambiguous sentence type with the same meaning, whose referring terms are assigned the same referents, are alleged to differ in their truth conditions due to 'non-semantic' differences surrounding their respective contexts of utterance. It is supposed to follow that truth conditions are generated in individual contexts of utterance, where the truth of an utterance depends on non-linguistic aspects like the non-linguistic interests of speakers, their shared non-linguistic background knowledge, etc. Since meaning is not in the business of tracking and revealing these sorts of interests and shared background information, it fails to determine these truth conditions.[9]

In summary, straightforward disquotational claims like (4*) and (5*) are alleged to be incomplete. And the articulation of truth conditions for a particular utterance of a sentence *s* cannot be converted into truth conditions for *s* itself since conditions that determine whether utterances of *s* are true can shift from context to context, and so singling out any one truth condition would fail to provide a sufficient condition for the truth of *s*.

RP claims that incompleteness and context shifting have nothing to do with ambiguity, vagueness, or ordinary linguistic ellipsis. Nor do they have anything to do with failing to locate and relativize (implicit or explicit) contextually

[9] "…the notion of literal meaning of a sentence only has application relative to a set of background assumptions, and furthermore, these background assumptions are not and could not all be realized in the semantic structure of the sentence in the way that presuppositions and indexically dependent elements of the sentence's truth conditions are realized in the semantic structure of the sentence" (Searle, 1978, p. 210).

sensitive items to a place, time, speaker, etc. (Searle, 1980, p.223). We will grant them all of this for the purposes of our critical discussion.[10] Still, we believe that the phenomena that are invoked to establish incompleteness and context shifting are irrelevant to the concerns of semantics – we will argue as much below. However, RP, whatever its flaws, does exemplify one significant virtue, *viz*., it exposes the instability of MP.

3. Interlude: Moderate Pragmatics on Incompleteness and Context Shifting

MP, recall, contends that though the meanings of some sentences suffice to determine their truth conditions (relative to (a)-(d) being settled), the meanings of others do not. For these latter sentences only their individual utterances have truth conditions. Representative sample sentences include (6)-(9).

(6) Steel isn't strong enough.
(7) Tipper is ready.
(8) Peter's book is gray.
(9) It's raining.

Here are representative comments about these and like sentences:

> though syntactically well-formed, [they] are semantically or conceptually incomplete, in the sense that something must be added for the sentence to express a complete and determinate proposition (something capable of being true or false). (Bach, 1994, p.127)

> … the recovery of the proposition expressed by the utterance of a linguistic form has an even stronger degree of context-dependence than indexicality; some content supplied by the context received no direction at all from linguistic expressions…The logical form of the linguistic expression uttered is the semantic representation (or sense) assigned to it by the grammar and recovered in utterance interpretation by an automatic process of decoding. As we have seen, in a range of examples this logical form is frequently not fully propositional, and a hearer then has the task of completing it to recover the fully propositional form that the speaker intended to convey…There is always a linguistic contribution, but this contribution varies from near total determination [of what's said] to a very small role… (Carston, 1988, pp.166-7)

> There is widespread view that all the thoughts that a human might entertain and want to communicate could in principle be linguistically encoded…. What does it mean to say that every thought is expressible by

[10] Indeed, in another paper, one of us argues that any effort to try to solve these sorts of worries by appeal to "hidden" indexicals at some level of linguistic analysis fails (Lepore, "Is there a problem with incomplete definite descriptions"), See also Cappelen and Lepore 2001, and Cappelen and Lepore (forthcoming).

> some sentence? …If sentences do not encode thoughts, what do they encode? What are the meanings of sentences? Sentence meanings are sets of semantic representations, as many semantic representations as there are ways in which the sentence is ambiguous. Semantic representations are incomplete logical forms, i.e., at best fragmentary representations of thoughts. (Sperber/Wilson, 1986, pp. 191-193)

> In order to assign a truth-value to my son's statement ('It's raining')…I needed a place. But no component of his statement stood for a place…. Palo Alto is a constituent of the content of my son's remark, which no component of his statement designated; it is an unarticulated constituent. (Perry, 1986, p. 206)[11]

Proponents of MP infer that for utterances of sentences such as (6)-(9), through a non-linguistic process of *free enrichment* (Recannati, 1993, ch. 14), various conceptual materials ('background facts' (Perry, 1986, p. 210)) get added to their meanings and only then does it make sense to speak of truth conditions being determined.[12]

The reasoning that leads MP to conclude that the meanings of these sentences do not determine truth conditions for them seems to parallel RP, both with respect to incompleteness and context shifting.

With respect to incompleteness, alleged disquotational truth conditions such as (6*)-(9*),

(6*) 'Steel isn't strong enough' is true iff steel isn't strong enough.
(7*) 'Tipper is ready' is true iff Tipper is ready.
(8*) 'Peter's book is gray' is true iff Peter's book is gray.
(9*) 'It's raining' is true iff it's raining.

are deemed deficient because they fail to settle answers to crucial questions. (6*) fails to ascribe truth conditions to (6) because it doesn't answer questions such as, strong enough for what? (7*) fails to ascribe truth conditions to (7) because it doesn't tell us what Tipper is ready for; (8*) fails to ascribe truth conditions to (8) because it doesn't tell us what the relevant relationship is

[11] Strictly speaking, (9) is treated differently from (6)-(8) by many authors in the literature, since (9) is thought to be able to express a proposition on its own in a way that the others cannot. Clearly, Perry is not thinking of (9) this way when he writes, "in order to assign a truth-value to my son's statement ('It's raining')…I needed a place."

[12] Not all of these authors agree about the status of these sentences. Some assimilate some of these examples to cases like (2) and (3), arguing, e.g., that it's an integral part of the genitive that "Peter's book" means 'the book that bears R to Peter", such that no definite content gets expressed unless R is giving a semantic value.

between Peter and the book; and (9*) fails to ascribe truth conditions to (9) because it doesn't tell us where it's raining. Had these sentences truth conditions, there would be answers to these questions forthcoming and these answers would supply part of these sentences' truth conditions.

With respect to context shifting, just as different utterances of (4) and (5) can, according to RP, be assigned distinct truth conditions, it's supposed to be obvious, according to MP, that different utterances of (6)-(9) can be assigned distinct truth conditions. So, although in some contexts, correct truth conditions for utterances of (6)-(9) are given by expansions (6b)-(9b) respectively (Bach, pp.128ff; Carston, p.167; Sperber/Wilson, p.188; Recanati, p. 235; Perry 1986, p.206; Crimmins, 1992, p. 17),

(6b) Steel isn't strong enough to *support the roof.*
(7b) Tipper is ready *for the exam.*
(8b) The book *owned by* Peter is gray.
(9b) It's raining *in Palo Alto*.

in other contexts, (6) can be used to say that there's something else that steel is strong enough for; (7) can be used to say that Tipper is ready for something other than an exam; (8) can be used to say that the book chosen by Peter is gray; and (8) can be used to say it's raining somewhere other than the place of its use (Perry, 1986, p.209).

4 The Instability of Moderate Pragmatics

Something has gone wrong here. For why should we suppose that (6b*)-(9b*) succeed in specifying truth conditions for (6b)-(9b) if (6*)-(9*) fail to specify truth conditions for (6)-(9)?

(6b*) 'Steel isn't strong enough to support the roof' is true iff steel isn't strong enough to support the roof.
(7b*) 'Tipper is ready for the exam' is true iff Tipper is ready for the exam.
(8b*) 'The book owned by Peter is gray' is true iff the book owned by Peter is gray.
(9b*) 'It's raining in Palo Alto' is true iff it's raining in Palo Alto.

(6b*) fails to specify truth conditions for (6b) (we leave (7b*)-(9b*) as an exercise) because it doesn't settle for how long the support must last? Do a few seconds suffice? More than three days? Many years? Why mustn't (6b*) also settle whether (6b) is false if steel fails to support the roof when placed in temperatures

over 390°? Then there is the question of why the amount of steel needed to support the roof mustn't be decided in order to settle whether (6b) is true? Would (6b) be false if 1/10th of a square inch of steel wouldn't suffice to support the roof?

Nothing in the meanings of the words in (6b) (or their composition) answers these questions, certainly nothing in (6b*). If the sort of reasons that led MP proponents to conclude that (6*) is incomplete are any good, why don't they extend to (6b*) as well? MP has provided us with no reason to believe that (6b*) gets it just right. If (6*) is incomplete because it doesn't answer the question 'isn't strong enough for what?', then why isn't (6b*) also incomplete because it doesn't answer, *inter alia*, the question 'isn't strong enough for how long?'

So, if the reason why (6*)-(9*) are incomplete is because they fail to answer these kinds of 'would it be true if…'-questions, why should we hold that this alleged incompleteness is limited to some (more or less) circumscribed subset of English sentences? What RP proponents see clearly is that the same sorts of incompleteness can be found in any English sentence (as illustrated by (4)-(5) above). In other words, if (6)-(9) lack complete truth conditions, because it only makes sense to speak of their utterances as having truth conditions, why aren't all truth conditions generated in contexts of utterance (regardless of whether a sentence has context sensitive elements or not)?[13]

In sum, MP is unstable since no proponent of MP has provided a principled reason for how to stop expansions, e.g., at (6b)-(9b), and frankly, it's hard to see how such *non*-linguistic expansion should stop anywhere.

5 Replies to Incompleteness and Context Shifting

Before turning to arguments directed against RP, we want to look more closely at its alleged skeptical consequences about meaning determining truth conditions. We begin with a claim. Nothing that RP has so far argued shows, e.g., that (5*) is not true.

(5*) 'Smith weighs 80kg' is true iff Smith weighs 80kg.

[13] Recanati (1993, pp. 260, 267) seems to be aware of this slippery slope but seems not to be aware of its implications for his more moderate position.

First, consider whether alleged context shifting shows that (5*) is not true. (5*) is not true just in case it is either false or lacks a truth-value. With regards to falsity, context shifting doesn't show that for any utterance of (5*), its LHS and RHS can disagree in truth-value. If Smith weighs 80kg, (5) is true; and if he doesn't, (5) is false. Indeed, contrary to as advertised, even assuming for the purposes of discussion that Scenarios 1 and 2 are accurate, they still don't back up these intuitions. According to RP, in Scenario 1, (5) is true and in Scenario 2 (5) is false. Does this establish that (5*) is false? Well, what does Smith weigh in these two scenarios? Can Scenario 1 be accurately described as one in which Smith weighs 80kg? The answer it seems to us is clearly 'yes'. Re-read the description of Scenario 2. Does Smith weigh 80kg in Scenario 2 (i.e., the scenario in which (5) is alleged to be false)? The answer, it seems to us, is exactly what (5*) predicts: No, he doesn't. If your intuition is that (5) is false, your intuition will also be that he doesn't weigh 80 kg. It's exceedingly hard for us to see how to pull these intuitions apart.[14]

Suppose the context shifting argument really worked. Then it should be possible to *explicitly* describe a scenario in which Smith doesn't weigh 80kg, and still elicit the intuition that a literal utterance (in the context of this scenario) of (5) is true. If there are no such cases, context shifting fails to establish that (5*) is false. As far as we know, there are no such cases. We'll pursue this point further in the last part of the paper.

Searle and Travis, as matter of fact, in their thought experiments, never actually say, e.g., what Smith weighs or what color the kettle is. Maybe we should take the fact that they don't address these questions directly to indicate that they intend the main force of their arguments not to show (5*) is false but rather to show that it lacks a truth-value altogether. But the charge of truth valuelessness is the force *not* of context shifting, but of incompleteness.

Can incompleteness establish a truth-value gap for (5*)? In some places RP proponents get close to saying that unless the RHS of (5*) answers the sorts

[14] We should emphasize that we are just going along with Travis' description of these examples (and the alleged intuitions) for the sake of argument. We wish to remain neutral about how these kinds of cases

of questions they insist must be answered, it lacks a truth-value altogether and if it does, then so does (5*). If this is their claim, then it is urgent that they tell us why (5*) is supposed to settle answers to their questions. No semanticist we are aware of ever said (5*) and its ilk could (or should) answer these sorts of questions.

We can only speculate on why anyone would think otherwise; so, in what follows we will present concerns that proponents of RP might have in mind in faulting truth conditional semantics, in particular, in faulting the likes of (5*). This strategy leaves open the possibility of our having failed to identify the relevant concern. But the burden is clearly on the proponent of RP and not us to come up with other relevant concerns.

An Epistemic Concern

Why think that the RHS of (5*) lacks a truth-value? Here's an answer: Because it's impossible to *figure out* (or settle, or decide) the truth-value of the RHS of (5*) without knowing more about the intentions of someone who uses it.[15] Without knowing answers to questions such as, under what conditions should Smith be weighed?, we cannot figure out whether the conditions specified on the RHS of (5*) obtaining suffice to establish the truth of (5). But we cannot answer this and other questions unless we know why a speaker is interested in Smiths' weight in the first place. When looking at the RHS of (5*) alone we're *at a loss as to how to ascertain* its truth-value because we don't know what to *look for*. We require more non-linguistic contextual information.

Replies to the Epistemic Concern:

a) Whether ordinary speakers are at a loss when looking at the RHS of (5*) is irrelevant to whether it lacks a truth-value. Verificationism might explain why RP proponents hold that without answers to their questions there's a truth-value gap. But they nowhere state that their arguments rest on verificationism. Of

---

should be properly characterized.

[15] "We know..what "open" means and we know what "mountain" means, but we don't know what "open the mountain" means. If somebody orders me to open the mountains, I haven't the faintest idea what I am supposed to do" (Searle, 1987, p.147). We assume he would say the same about "The mountain is open." We don't know how to figure out whether it's true even though we know the meanings of each of its words, and how those meanings are put together.

course, to be told that meaning doesn't determine truth conditions is a lot less exciting if we have to assume verificationism (especially since verificationism is false).

b) Second, what's really being asked for here? If what you need to know is whether to weigh Smith before or after breakfast to determine whether an utterance of (5) is true, why shouldn't you also need to know…[and now fill in innumerably many other possible questions; all the sorts of questions that Travis and Searle ask…]. But it's entirely unclear how any such inquiry could ever come to an end (as is suggested by both Searle (1980, p. 228) and Travis).
As far as we can tell, on the most natural construal of 'completeness', every *specification* of conditions is open to an incompleteness charge (i.e., there's always some unanswered question of the form "but would it be true if …?"). Suppose, for the sake of argument, that this is so. Remember, proponents of RP hold that utterances can have truth conditions (and that we can recognize these conditions as obtaining). How else are they to explain that we recognize some utterances as being true? If so, then (on the assumption that completeness is unobtainable) incompleteness is not incompatible with having determinate truth conditions. But then the incompleteness objection to truth conditional semantics collapses. If incompleteness is not sufficient to establish truth-valuelessness, then why we can't just stop at (4*) and be done with it?

If, on the other hand, RP says that it is possible to specify a complete set of conditions, a set of conditions that somehow answers all questions of the form "Would it be true if …?", then we must be given an idea of what exactly would constitute this sort of completeness. Must it specify all of the possible 'truth makers' down the smallest elementary particles? All the relevant laws of nature? In other words, must it specify (or determine) an entire description of the universe (and, presumably, alternative universes)? If that's what completeness amounts to, then how can any utterance ever manage to be complete? We have no proof that such questions can't be answered, but absent a convincing story, we remain highly skeptical.

Context Dependency Concern

Maybe we're missing the point: maybe there's supposed to be the following intimate connection between context shifting and incompleteness. We are supposed to know from the context shifting claim that truth conditions change from context to context, so that the only way to know which truth conditions are expressed by the RHS of (5*) is to 'say more', i.e., provide answers to the relevant sorts of questions mentioned in backing up the incompleteness charge. What the correct answers are, of course, are contingent upon the particular details of the context of utterance in question.

Reply Context Dependency Concern:

This way of putting things mischaracterizes the scenarios used in trying to establish context shifting. None of these shows, so we have argued, that the truth conditions change from context to context. Every context in which an utterance of (5) is true is one in which Smith weighs 80kg. We made this point above and will pursue it again at the end of our paper.

****

We tentatively conclude, conditional on someone else coming up with a telling concern we've missed, that neither incompleteness nor context shifting establish that RP is true.

6 Extension to Moderate Pragmatics

We have already urged that MP unavoidably slips into RP. However, it's useful to speak directly to these other cases. Not surprisingly, parallel reasoning establishes the same conclusion against attempts by proponents of MP to use incompleteness and context shifting to establish that (6*)-(9*) fail to specify truth conditions for (6)-(9). We'll use (8) to illustrate.

Any circumstances in which an utterance of (8) is true can be correctly described as circumstances in which Peter's book is gray. None can be described as ones in which Peter's book is not gray but in which (8) is true. So, everything we have said about (4) and (5) extends with equal force to (8).

Yet the incompleteness charge seems to many, we suppose, to be more powerful with respect to sentences like (8) than with respect to (4) and (5), and

so we'll focus on it. Our claim is that whatever intuitions we harbor about (8*) being incomplete are irrelevant to truth conditional semantics.

If we are right that (8*) is not in the business of answering the sorts of questions proponents of MP raise about it, why might someone think otherwise? The concerns we discussed above all resurface here and our replies are as before. We'll revisit one old concern and discuss one new one.

Epistemic Concern Revisited

How, someone might wonder, can I figure out how the truth-value of the RHS of (8*) unless I'm told what the relevant/intended relation is between Peter and the relevant book? Is it authorship, possession, proximity, current choice or what?

Reply Epistemic Concern

Our reply is twofold (you've seen both folds before). First, sentences like (8*) do (or at least certainly need) not specify verification conditions for their LHS, so the charge that they don't is irrelevant. This reply to the epistemic concern is fundamental.

Second, suppose we give you the following non-linguistically motivated 'expansion', 'enrichment', or 'completion' for a particular utterance of (8):

(8E) The book that Peter has authored is gray.

Does (8E) suffice to meet the epistemic concern? We've already shown that it doesn't. (8E) doesn't reveal *how* Peter must have authored the book. Would (8E) be true if he ghostwrote it for someone else (and this other person's name appears on its cover)? What if, what if, what if… In other words, if (8) isn't enough, we're not sure what would be to satisfy the epistemic concern. Recall, we are *here* speaking on behalf of the MP, for whom completion is supposed to be possible. But if the demand is epistemological, until we are told why and how much, it's not clear there are any epistemologically satisfying completions, or at least it's not clear why it's permissible to stop with the likes of (8E). The proponent of MP seeks a middle ground where there just isn't one.[16]

[16] It is tempting to reply to this second concern that it all depends on context and speaker's intentions, that is, how much completion is required is determined in context. In some contexts (8E) is sufficient, and in

Co-opting Charge

At this point proponents of RP and MP might with a certain irritation say that all of our responses to their concerns succeed only because we are smuggling their own position into our replies. They claim that (4)-(9) can only get completed (expanded, enriched, whatever) in contexts of utterance: only utterances produced by flesh and blood speakers have truth conditions. We, in our reply to context shifting, could be charged with exploiting this very aspect of their positions: In effect what we did is ask the reader to take a context of utterance C and suppose, e.g., that (7) is true in C. Aren't we thereby merely pointing out that it would be true to describe context C by saying that *in it* Tipper is ready. But according to MP, (7) gets completed in C to something we might approximately describe with (7a). So, when we describe C, our utterance of (7*) (used in describing C) takes on the same completion, because our discussion of C has rendered this completion contextually salient. So, proponents of MP would predict our response (and explain why we can give it).

Reply Co-opting Charge:

This sort of reply has gotten the dialectic backwards. Recall, that at this stage in the dialectic we are *not* trying to refute MP or RP. (We will do that in §7 below.) Instead, what we are trying to do is to show that none of the proposed data or arguments supports either RP or MP. So, suppose, for the sake of argument, that RP and MP theorists can explain why any circumstance in which an utterance of (5) is true can be described as one in which Smith weighs 80kg. Then so much the worse for their argument to the effect that truth conditions can change across contexts of utterance. It shows that even from the perspective of RP and MP, there's no sound argument for the claim that the truth conditions change between contexts.

7 Refutation of Radical and Moderate Pragmatics

---

other contexts it is not. In those contexts in which it is sufficient, the questions left unanswered can be settled any way we want, and it's irrelevant to the truth-value of the sentences. In these contexts, the only thing that matters is whether the book that Peter has authored is gray. But this is clearly not a reply RP/MP can make. They were trying to show that there's something intrinsically wrong with (8*). That it simply doesn't specify truth conditions. On the current view, they are granting us that (8*) can specify 'complete' truth conditions.

So far we've argued that Incompleteness and Context Shifting fail to show that meaning doesn't determine truth conditions. None of this, however, establishes that meaning does determine truth conditions and we won't attempt to do that in this paper. However, our reply to the context shifting argument, if correct, does provide a direct refutation of RP.

Recall that in response to context shifting we asked, how could any utterance of (5) be true unless Smith weighs 80kg? If it cannot, it's hard to see what RP is complaining about. Travis has responded to a related concern:

> What could make the given words 'The leaves are green' true, other than the presumed 'fact that the leaves are green,'[17] is the fact that the leaves counted as green on the occasion of that speaking. Since what sometimes counts as green may sometimes not be, there may still be something to make other words 'The leaves are green' false, namely that on the occasion of their speaking, those leaves (at that time) did not count as green. (Travis, 1997b, pp.101-02; see, also, Travis, 1996, p. 457)

This passage suggests the following response to our argument: an utterance of (5) can be true when Smith doesn't weigh 80kg because he might *count* as weighing 80kg. Apparently, as Travis sees things, Smith can count as weighing 80kg even if he doesn't weigh 80kg.[18] This would establish that (5*) fails to specify correct truth conditions for (5). But Travis' (current) position is inconsistent with his own RP. We will show this with two different arguments.

First Inconsistency Charge

What other than Smith weighing 80kg can suffice for the truth of an utterance of (5)? Travis' current answer: It suffices that Smith counts as weighing 80kg (in a situation) and Smith can count as weighing 80kg in some situation even though he doesn't weigh 80kg. Notice that as soon as Travis provides this answer (more generally, any answer) he has in effect specified (generalized) truth conditions for (5). His position now seems to be that (5) is true in a context C just in case Smith counts in C as weighing 80kg. Travis has provided no argument for thinking that this doesn't follow from the meaning of (5) alone. So,

[17] We are no friends of facts, but we'll go along with this for purposes of discussion.

[18] A natural extension would be that he thinks that an utterance of (5) can be false in a context C, when Smith does weigh 80kg, as long as he counts in C as not weighing 80kg.

the correct T-sentence for (5), according to Travis, as determined by its meaning, is something like (5_{Travis}):

(5_{Travis}) 'Smith weighs 80kg' is true in a context C iff Smith counts in C as weighing 80kg.

Notice that some version of (5_{Travis}) is available for whatever answer Travis or any other RP proponent provides to the question, 'What can make an utterance of 'Smith weighs 80kg' true except Smith weighing 80kg?' Travis' position is internally inconsistent. For as soon as he tells us what would suffice for the truth of (5) in a context C other than Smith weighing 80kg (and he has to tell us that in order to answer our claim that nothing else would suffice), he has provided a (generalized) T-sentence.

This constitutes an objection to RP only if what fills in the RHS of (5_{Travis}) is determined by the meaning of the words (and their mode of combination). We don't see how an RP'ist could deny that the RHS of (5_{Travis}) is so determined. We are supposed to be able to figure out what the truth conditions of an utterance are from what sentence is uttered and the context. We don't go on nothing, presumably, and different people figure out pretty much the same thing (that's why Travis can rely on our reaction to his examples.) But if that's true, then there must be some sort of tacit rule guiding our interpretations. Something like: *Look for the relevant information* (where this presumably has something to do with intentions and social practices) *that actually determines the truth conditions*. If RP were right about the practice, this is a routine feature of interpretation of (literal) utterances of sentences, and everyone recognizes that everyone else follows the rule when we use sentences. Thus, that we follow these rules for looking for the relevant information looks like a convention associated with the use of sentences, and if we always (or almost always) use it, there's no reason not to say that it attaches to the use of the words as a matter of convention, and hence of their conventional meaning.

Second Inconsistency Charge[19]

[19] Some comments from Jessica Wilson help us get clearer on the issues in this section.

The second inconsistency charge also arises from Travis' answer to the question: "What, other than Smith weighing 80kg, could suffice for the truth of and utterance of (5)?" Note that Travis' answer itself is provided in a particular context. Since the answer as we encountered it occurs in a Mind article, we call this the Mind Context (MC, for short). According to Travis, the sentences in his paper have their truth conditions determined in MC. In particular, sentences containing the word "green" in Travis' article, must, according to RP, have the kind of context sensitive truth conditions RP claims all sentences have. So the truth conditions for (13)

(13) What could make the given words 'The leaves are green' true, other than the presumed 'fact that the leaves are green,' is the fact that the leaves counted as green on the occasion of that speaking.

are determined (in part) by what counts as green in MC, i.e., the semantic contribution of the expression "green" as it occurs in an utterance of (13) in MC depends on what counts as green in MC. Let's say that something that counts as green in MC is Green_{mc} But if so, (13) should be read as (13MC)

(13MC) What could make the given words 'The leaves are green' true, other than the presumed 'fact that the leaves are green,' is the fact that the leaves counted as green_{mc} on the occasion of that speaking.

This, clearly, is not what Travis intends to say. He doesn't mean to suggest that the leaves counting as green_{mc} is what would make an utterance of "the leaves are green" true in contexts other than MC (and (13) is clearly about contexts other than MC.) He seems to be trying to use "green" as it occurs in (13)[20] *in a context insensitive way*.

According to Travis, such context insensitive uses are not possible. So (13) either says something false (i.e., that counting as green_{mc} is what makes utterances of "the leaves are green" true in contexts other than MC) or he uses the word "green" in a way inconsistent with RP. (The same applies to our use of "green" on the RHS of (5_{Travis}), (and, for that matter, for our attempt to formulate this objection).)

8. A Simple, Underlying Argument?

It has been suggested to us by several philosophers (including Stephen Schiffer and Zoltan Szabo) that our discussion misses the 'fundamental' or 'underlying' argument or intuition in favor of RP/MP. To get at this intuition, go back to the context shifting argument. Why isn't its proper interpretation that since utterances of (9) have distinct truth-values across scenarios, it can't be *sentence* (9) which has a truth-value, and so it lacks truth conditions. On this interpretation, (9*) fails to ascribe truth conditions to (9), since it's everyone's intuition that at any given time not every utterance of (9) is true. Suppose, e.g., on Tuesday, April 10, 2001, you utter (9) while looking out the window from your apartment in NY, watching rain fall gently from the sky, while I, at the exact same time, utter (9) looking out my window in NJ, mistaking droplets produced on my window from a sprinkler for raindrops. Isn't everyone's intuition that what you said is true and what I said is false. Yet according to (9*) the English sentence (9) is true just in case there is a raining event, and so, we both said something true.

Properly understood, then, context shifting does not aim to show that truth conditions can shift from context to context, but rather that sentence-types *cannot* be bearers of truth and falsity, only their utterances can. Your utterance of (9) is true because it is *about* a particular location, namely, NY, where it is raining; and mine is false, because it is about a different location, namely, NJ, where it is not raining. (9*) fails to capture these facts about our respective utterances.

We agree with Schiffer (and Perry and Crimmins) that when you produced your utterance of (9), you said something about NY; and when I produced mine I said something about NJ. And indeed anyone who utters (9) in the contexts so described can be correctly reported as having said that it's raining in NY and that it's raining in NJ respectively. Yet if the arguments of the last section are sound, we cannot appeal to RP/MP to explain these intuitions since these positions are internally inconsistent. So, how then are we to explain them? As far as we can tell, we have two choices remaining.

---

[20] At least the third occurrence of "green" in (13), probably also the second occurrence

One strategy would be to treat (9) as more linguistically complex than it might seem. So, instead of treating (9*) as providing the correct interpretive truth conditions for (9), we might instead opt for (9'):

(9') "It's raining" is true relative to a place p iff it's raining at p.

The difference between (9*) and (9') is that in effect (9') treats (9) as harboring a context sensitive element whose semantic role is to pick out contextually salient places. Were one to adopt this strategy, one would have to show that positing this contextually sensitive indexical is motivated on syntactic or morphological grounds, and doing so doesn't raise more problems than it solves. Stanley (2000) has argued as such, by appeal to what he calls the binding criterion. He notes the grammaticality of (9^+).

(9^+) Wherever I go, it rains.

In this statement, the place where it rains can be understood to vary with the place introduced by the quantifier "wherever I go". On its most natural interpretation, (9^+) means "For every location l such that I go to l, it rains in l". For such binding to occur, Stanley argues, there must be a free variable l in (9). That variable can either be bound as in (9^+) or contextually given a value as in (9). If he's right, then the location contextually provided for rain is not unarticulated.

We will not have much to say about this strategy here. We are skeptical about the existence of such variables, and have argued as much elsewhere (see footnote 6 for references). Also, since we agreed for the purposes of this paper not pursue the suggestion that RP/MP could be countered by an appeal to further linguistic analysis. we want to entertain a second strategy. In what follows we will briefly and dogmatically present a framework within which intuitions about typical utterances of (9) can be accommodated without compromising a semantic theory according to which (9*) provides correct truth conditions for (9). We will then provide some motivation for this framework.

To begin with, we want to agree with RP/MP that the meaning of (9) (or any other sentence) need not determine *what's said* by utterances of (9) or what these utterances are *about*. To this extent, our position seems rather concessive, at least with respect to (iii) above in our original characterization of RP: for we are

agreeing with RP/MP that the meaning of a sentence needn't determine what's said by its utterances.

Where we disagree with RP/MP is in denying that there is any close relationship between correct reports of what others have said with their utterances of sentences and what the truth conditions of these utterances are. Accordingly, we don't think it follows from the fact that a particular utterance of (9) can say something about NY that (9*) fails to specify correct truth conditions for (9). Nor does it show that the meaning of (9) doesn't determine (9*) as its correct truth conditions.

To give a sense of why we believe this, we need to say a bit about what's said.

On What's Said

Briefly, here's how we see the relationship between sentences and their utterances: Sentences have truth conditions, as determined by their meaning. Utterances are used to make statements (i.e., to say things), ask questions, and perform other kinds of speech acts. Utterances typically (but not always) are of sentences, but what's said, what's asked, etc., by an utterance can depend not only on the truth conditions of the sentence uttered, but also upon a number of other 'non-semantic' features of the context of utterance. In short:

a) The truth conditions of a sentence S need not correspond to what's said or stated by an utterance of S.
b) What's said by an utterance of S can be true, even though the truth conditions for S aren't satisfied (and *vice versa*).
c) What's said by an utterance of S can be 'about' something (e.g., NYC), even though the truth conditions for S makes no reference (to that thing).
d) Because of (a)-(c), intuitions about utterances of sentences can in no simple and direct way be used as guides to the truth conditions for those sentences.

Here we will briefly show how to support this general framework.

In Cappelen and Lepore, 1997 and 1998, we pointed out that reports of the form 'A said/asserted/stated that p' can be true even if A never uttered a sentence, appropriately contextualized, that is true just in case p. Since intuitions about what's said by an utterance are fixed by acceptable indirect reports, it follows that (a)-(d) are correct. We'll rehearse some data and arguments starting with rather obvious and trivial cases where there's a distinction between the truth

conditions of the sentences uttered and what is said by that utterance. Consider sentence (10).

(10) Stephen lives in NY and Ernie in NJ.

Even if we assume that (10*) correctly specifies the truth conditions for (10),

(10*) "Stephen lives in NY and Ernie in NJ" is true iff Stephen lives in NY and Ernie in NJ.

no one would deny that someone who utters (10) can be correctly reported as having said that Stephen lives in NY.

Even if the truth conditions for (11) are (11*),

(11) John is a good friend.
(11*) "John is a good friend" is true iff John is a good friend.

if a speaker A utters (11) in a sarcastic tone of voice, it would typically *not* be correct to report A as having asserted, claimed, stated, or committed himself to John being a good friend. Everyone would, however, report A as having asserted/claimed/stated and committed himself to John not being a good friend.

Summaries provide further support. Consider an utterance of (12) by O:

(12) Around 11 pm, I put on a white shirt, a blue suit, darks socks and my brown Bruno Magli shoes; I then got into a waiting limousine and drove off into heavy traffic to the airport, where I just made my midnight flight to Chicago.

We can all think of contexts in which (12r) would correctly and prudently report an utterance of (12):

(12r) O said that he dressed around 11 pm, went to the airport and took the midnight flight to Chicago.

Yet no one thinks that (12r) specifies correct truth conditions for (12).

A final example: Suppose that Professor Adams utters 'I failed no one'. He can be correctly reported to his student Mary as having said that he didn't fail her, and so what he can be reported as having said is about Mary, even though his original utterance made no reference to her.

These cases are not peculiar; they are typical. (For further examples and critical discussion of these examples, we refer the reader to earlier work (see above references).) We think they show that the standard picture of the relationship between semantic content (truth conditions) of a sentences, s, and

what is said by utterances of s, should be rejected. On the standard picture, a speaker says that p just in case he assertively utters a sentence that is true just in case p. Accordingly, a speaker's words make reference to an object or a domain just in case what he says with those words does as well. Therefore, on the standard picture, any true report of what's said with an utterance according to which what a speaker makes reference to an object or a domain that neither he nor his words does must *misrepresent* what he said. However, what our examples establish is that determining what's said by an utterance often requires attending to *non-interpretive, non-semantic* considerations. When we try to represent or articulate what's said by an utterance we aim to characterize a speaker's act (that utterance). In so doing, our interests often are not in systematicity or generality, but rather our aim is to determine something about a particular act in a particular context C in order to pass it along onto to a particular audience situated in a (perhaps a very) different (sort of) context C*. In effect, our practice of indirectly reporting what's said treats it as a four-place relation between a sentence and a context of utterance and a reporting sentence and its context of utterance.

In determining what's said we obviously draw upon information about specific intentions, knowledge, and history of the speaker in C (and, not so obviously, we can also draw upon *like features of C**, the context in which we report what's said). Our reporting practices clarify that semantics should not *a priori* constrain what can and can't be said by an utterance. Competent speakers make such judgments all the time, often relying on information that exceeds anything about the meanings of the words used. This competence consists, in part, in a capacity to judge whether a report about what's said is accurate or misleading. There is no reason to believe that determining what's said will be simpler or more systematic than determining whether two items are similar.

What's the upshot for semantics? Not, we believe, what the proponents of RP (and MP) would have us believe. They would have us conclude that meaning doesn't determine truth conditions. But this inference is warranted only if we confuse aspects of our reporting practice with issues about the meanings of our

words. For Schiffer, *et al*, since someone who utters (9) can say that it's raining in NY, how can a theory that insists upon (9*) as its full and explicit treatment of the semantics be correct? Our answer is that what's said isn't determined by meaning. Schiffer agrees, but on this basis he wants to junk truth conditional semantics since he presumes that if (9*) correctly specifies the truth conditions for (9), then every utterance of (9) is true as long as it's raining somewhere in the world at the time of utterance. However, his presumption reflects a misunderstanding about the relationship between semantics and what's said.

According to us, (9) is true at a time t (to accommodate it's tense) just in case there is a raining event at time t. So, whenever someone utters (9) at t what he is uttering is true (at t) just in case there is a raining event at t. Given this likelihood, almost every utterance of (9) is true at its time of utterance.[21] Still, when we ask whether what someone uttered is true, we might not be talking about whether the truth conditions for the sentence he uttered obtain or not. We might instead be asking about what he said with his utterance – something he did. And, so we have been arguing, what he said at time t may disagree in truth-value with the very sentence he uttered at that time t. So, in effect, whether an utterance is true or not, is ambiguous between whether the sentence uttered is true (which, according to us, is completely determined by what the sentence means) and whether what was said by that utterance is true or not (which can be determined by non-linguistic, non-semantic considerations).

In many of the above cases, our interests in what was said went well beyond the meanings of the speaker's words (and the semantic values of the various expressions he used in his context of utterance). Once someone hears a sarcastic tone, his interests are likely to extend beyond what the words uttered mean? If one's interests are in particulars, he will try to turn a general claim, like "Everyone passed" into a specific one, like "Mary passed". And so it goes.

[21] Of course, one might argue that the range of the quantifier "There is a raining event" is restricted in some way. We don't actually like this move, but recognize it as one way to render our position more palatable. Notice also that on our view a sentence like "It's raining in Palo Alto" would mean that there is a raining event and it occurring in Palo Alto", so there is no need to treat "raining" as relational in this sentence.

We have suggested that there are two different ways in which a proponent of the view that meaning determines truth conditions might try to explain away some intuitions behind RP/MP. But still we can imagine someone saying that it ultimately comes down to whether one finds the frameworks we are working in more or less attractive than the one that proponents of RP/MP are working in. But, to repeat, if the arguments of the last section are sound, then RP/MP is internally inconsistent, and so it is not an option.

Conclusion

We began by presenting what we have called the incompleteness charge and the context shifting claim, which taken together are supposed to establish RP. We then argued that there is no principled line to draw between RP and MP, so that if you are impressed by the sorts of considerations advanced in favor of MP, then you must embrace RP as well. We then proceeded to argue that neither separately nor taken together do incompleteness and context shifting establish that meaning doesn't determine truth conditions. We responded to the context shifting claim by noting that every context in which, e.g., we thought an utterance of "Smith weighs 80kg" is true, we also thought that Smith weighed 80kg, and *vice versa*. We responded to the incompleteness charge with a challenge: why should we answer the questions that RP poses? We considered various concerns, and argued that none suffices to establish that sentence meaning fails to determine truth conditions. We then argued for two charges of inconsistency against RP. If right, not only does RP fail to establish that meaning doesn't determine truth conditions, but RP itself has provided no coherent alternative to the standard picture. In the end, we are left with a position, one we did not argue for here directly, that the effects of context on assigning truth conditions to an utterance are limited to fixing the values of context sensitive linguistic items, precisifying vague terms, and disambiguating ambiguous strings in the sentence uttered. In short, in determining truth conditions for utterances of sentences, context interacts with meaning only when triggered by the grammar of the sentence.

Bibliography

Bach, Kent, 'Conversational Implicature', *Mind and Language*, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 1994, pp. 124-162.

Bach, Kent, 'You don't say', *Synthese*, 128, pp. 15-44.

Cappelen, H. and E. Lepore, "On an Alleged Connection between Indirect Quotation and Semantic Theory," *Mind and Language*, Vol. 12, 1997, pp.278-296.

_____"Reply to Richard and Reimer", *Mind and Language*, 1998.

_____, "Insensitive Quantifiers", *Meaning and Truth: Investigating Philosophical Semantics*, eds., J. Keim Campbell, M. O'Rourke, and D. Shierto, Seven Bridges Press, 2002, pp.197-213.

Carston, R., 'Implicature, Explicature, and Truth-Theoretic Semantics,' in R. Kempson (ed.), *Mental Representations: The interface between language and reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 155-181.

Crimmins, M., *Talk about Belief* MIT Press: Cambridge, MA., 1992.

Lepore, Ernie*, "Is there a problem with incomplete definite descriptions",* forthcoming.

Perry, John, 'Thought without Representation', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume,* 60, 1986, pp. 263-283; reprinted in *the Problem of the Essential Indexical and Other Essays*, Oxford: Oxford Univesity Press.

Recanati, F., *Direct Reference*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993.

Recanati, F., 'What is said', *Synthese*, 128, 2001, pp. 75-91.

Schiffer, Stephen "Descriptions, Indexicals and Belief Reports", *Mind,* 104, 1995, pp.107-131.

Searle, John, 'Literal Meaning', *Erkenntnis*, 13, 1978, pp. 207-224.

Searle, John, 'The Background of Meaning', in *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics*, eds., Searle, J., F. Kiefer and M. Bierwisch, Reidel: Dordrecht, 1980, pp.221-232.

Searle, John, *Intentionality*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983.

Sperber, D. and D. Wilson, *Relevance*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1986.

Stanley, J. "Context and Logical Form", *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 23, 2000, pp. 391-424.

Travis, Charles, 'On What is Strictly Speaking True,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 15, No. 2, June 1985, pp. 187-229.

Travis, Charles, *The Uses of Sense*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1989.

Travis, Charles, 'Meaning's Role in Truth', *Mind*, Vol. 100 April 1996, pp. 451-466.

Travis, Charles, 'Reply to Simmons', *Mind*, Vol. 106, January 1997a, pp.119-20

Travis, Charles, 'Pragmatics' in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, eds., Hale, B. and C. Wright, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1997b, pp.97-107.