

Still, this book addresses a unique combination of major interlocking developments in recent molecular biology in a concise, informative, and refreshing manner. As such, it deserves the widest possible audience.

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MANUEL GARCÍA-CARPINTERO & MAX KÖLBEL, eds. 2012. *The Continuum Companion to the Philosophy of Language*. London: Continuum Publishing.

*The Continuum Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, edited by M. García-Carpintero (Universitat de Barcelona) and M. Kölbel (Universitat de Barcelona), aspires to offer an up-to-date introduction to several relevant areas of research in the philosophy of language. The book, therefore, does not intend to provide a detailed historical account of all the developments in the discipline, or an exhaustive exposition of its many sub-fields—something that would lie far beyond the scope, and the space limitations, of this volume. The editors have chosen to concentrate instead on some central topics that are currently the object of intense study.

The contributors to this book are international leading experts in each of the areas covered. As a result, all of its chapters constitute an excellently informed and accurate presentation of the topic in question. Although original contributions to the debates only take place occasionally, most of the chapters manage to offer a high-level and insightful overview of their subject area. Thus, this book will be of interest not only for newcomers, but also for those with previous knowledge in the field. On the contrary, it will perhaps be too advanced to serve as a basic manual for undergraduates. This companion is probably best suited for graduate students, and in general for researchers looking for an introduction to the contemporary landscape of the philosophy of language—or at least, to some of its main sights.

The editorial introduction, written by Garcia-Carpintero consists of a brief outlook of the historical background of the discipline, and of how the central issues emerging from such background have been projected to the more recent debates. The author himself acknowledges that his presentation is idiosyncratic: where the orthodox choice would be to start with Frege's seminal contributions, Garcia-Carpintero prefers to focus on Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and the way it synthesises several Frege's and Russell's insights. From here, he extracts various fundamental questions that would have paved the way for the main future developments of the discipline. This historical perspective provides a sophisticated and unusual introduction to the themes treated along the book—although, of course, it is not the only possible historical approach.

The following chapter (by J. Higginbotham) is entitled 'On the Nature of Language: a Basic Exposition'. One might have expected a discussion of general features of language such as communication and signalling, but what we find instead is a com-

pact, though rather accessible, linguistic account of the most abstract structural aspects of the syntax and semantics of human language. We may wonder whether these are really the most basic and fundamental aspects of the nature of language, but anyway the formal training the reader gains is useful, because the next chapter—written by Josh Dever—goes on in a similar vein, dealing with ‘Formal Semantics’. Rather than attempting to deliver a systematic account of this highly technical field, Dever opts for presenting some representative examples of the problems and tools characteristic of the area. It is to the credit of the author that the chapter is intelligible for the profane reader.

Gradually veering away from formal waters, the following chapter (‘Theories of Meaning and Truth Conditions’, by K. Glüer) is devoted to what could be called philosophical semantics, as opposed to formal semantics. Glüer examines the questions of what determines meaning and what form a formal semantics should take. In looking for answers, Glüer follows the guiding light of Davidson’s truth-conditional semantics. Other proposals—mainly Strawson’s and Dummett’s—are only considered as critical challenges to Davidson’s model. Glüer concludes that, despite such critical responses, there is still hope for Davidson’s line of research.

The progression of the book goes on smoothly with two chapters covering the semantic revolution(s) that took place around the 1970’s with the work of Kripke, Donnellan, and Kaplan. The first one (‘Reference’ by G. Martí), discusses the semantics of singular terms, while the second one (‘Intentional Contexts’, by M. Nelson) deals with contexts of ascription of propositional attitudes. At some points, the discussion is—inevitably—a bit compressed, and it is more likely to be fully appreciated by those already familiar with these topics. However, both chapters offer a good account of recent debates in the field, and they complement each other well. Moreover, Martí ends her chapter with an interesting section on the relevance of experimental philosophy for these questions.

The topic of the following chapter (‘Context Dependence’) is semantic context-sensitivity. Its author, K. Bach explores different expressions as candidates for context-sensitivity. Beyond the cases of paradigmatic automatic indexicals (‘I’, ‘Today’), more often than not Bach concludes that the role of the context is not to determine the semantic content of the expression, but rather to offer evidential clues that allow the audience to infer what is meant by the speaker. Bach also argues that many alleged instances of context-sensitivity are actually cases of semantic incompleteness: such sentences would fail to deliver a complete proposition. Bach’s discussion is thought provoking, if somewhat one-sided.

Context dependence dwells in the fuzzy borders between semantics and pragmatics, so it is not surprising that the next chapter (‘Pragmatics’, by F. Recanati) deals with this last field. The area to cover is quite vast, and Recanati does the best he can to go through the most relevant matters. Besides presenting swiftly the main contributions of classic pragmatics (Austin, Grice, Stalnaker), Recanati also revisits many of the issues addressed in the previous chapter—although casting an interestingly complementary light on them.

J. Zalabardo's chapter ('Semantic Normativity and Naturalism') assesses the challenge that normativism about meaning poses to semantic naturalism. Among other issues, Zalabardo examines whether truth is a norm for belief. The discussion is deep and suggestive—although the arguments analyzed and put forward by Zalabardo are subtle and involved, and may remain obscure for the non-initiated.

The last thematic chapter, 'Anality, Apriority, Modality'—written by A. Casullo—, lies in the intersection between metaphysics, epistemology and semantics. As well as offering a modern view on traditional approaches to these matters (Kant, the Neo-Positivists, Quine), Casullo considers more recent work by authors such as Putnam and Kripke—thereby providing a new perspective on issues discussed in previous chapters.

The book closes with a prospective chapter in which one of the editors, M. Kölbel, identifies some current, and future, trends of research in the philosophy of language. There is no telling what the future may bring, but it has to be said that Kölbel's outlook completely harmonizes with the sort of questions and approaches that have appeared in the body of the book—for instance, Kölbel highlights the research on issues related to semantic context-dependence.

This coherence is perhaps one of the main virtues of the book. Despite its multiple authorship and the wide range of topics examined, the different chapters link together almost seamlessly. Consequently, the book offers a consistent and unified view of the research within the philosophy of language. The downside of such unity of focus, of course, is the risk of disregarding alternative views. Although the contributors have done a good job of presenting competing positions, the book tends to gravitate around a particular approach to the philosophy of language. This would be an approach that follows the traditional order of explanation—from syntactics to semantics and, finally pragmatics—, and which tends to start by considering the more abstract or formal aspects of language, and then turn to its communicative and use-related features (in this regard, it is telling that the chapter on formal semantics precedes the one on philosophical semantics, or that the introductory chapter to the nature of language is on formal linguistics).

Certainly, this is a relevant approach, maybe even the mainstream one, but there is no denying that there are also alternatives. If, as the editors suggest, this sort of viewpoint stems from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, a different line could perhaps be traced back to his *Investigations*. In such alternative approach—and in related ones—, the emphasis would be on language as a practice, as a form of human interaction. Many of this kind of views are mentioned in the book, but they usually occupy a somewhat peripheral position in the discussion.

On the other hand, even if many of the central areas of the contemporary philosophy of language are present in the book, there are still some absences (just to mention a couple: figurative uses of language—particularly, metaphors—, argumentation theory or naturalistic accounts of meaning). I do not say this in a critical spirit: the philosophy of language is a very extended and polymorphic field, so the editors have done well in focusing their scope on a reasonably compact and coherent set of matters—instead of dispersing their efforts by trying to cover as much ground as

possible. The resulting book manages to present a compact, but highly informative and enlightening, overview of (many of) the most relevant topics in the modern philosophy of language.

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JOSÉ L. ZALABARDO. 2012. *Scepticism and Reliable Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This book presents a deep and detailed reliabilist account of knowledge that attempts to overcome the central sceptical arguments (the regress argument, arguments based on sceptical hypotheses and the problem of the criterion), which is worthwhile on its own. It is an extremely suggestive and dense analysis that surpasses the task of offering a theory of knowledge and goes deep into our metaphysical outlook. The book has this double aspect. Firstly, it tries to concede to the sceptic as much as possible, with the result that he proposes a change in our way of conceiving the goal of cognition, that is, a middle position between realism and anti-realism, in order to defuse the sceptical threat. But, secondly, although the motivation is anti-sceptical, the account of knowledge presented is, as the author himself asserts, “largely independent of how it affects the prospects of the sceptical arguments” (p. viii).

In *Knowledge and its Limits*, Timothy Williamson jolted the philosophical community with a series of striking claims that prima facie seemed quite hard to accept, but which were so compellingly argued that it proved very difficult to reject them. These claims included among them, that knowledge is not to be analysed in terms of belief and justification, but that it can be used to elucidate the latter concepts, and also that knowledge is a mental state. One has quite the same feeling regarding Zalabardo’s book. It is full of striking claims, but so well argued that it is difficult not to end up convinced of their truth, their initial implausibility notwithstanding.

Zalabardo argues for a reliabilist account of knowledge, according to which evidence is not necessary for knowing. This allows us, on his view, to block those sceptical lines of argument we have just referred to, since all of them rest on what he calls the *evidential* constraint, i.e. that knowledge requires adequate evidence. Particularly, he maintains that evidence is not necessary for non-inferential knowledge. It is fair to say at this point that the author conceives evidence in a propositional way: only propositions can be evidence. This may help to understand why non-inferential knowledge is possible without evidence. His account of knowledge is based on Nozick’s truth-tracking account, but in a revised form (construed in terms of conditional probabilities, instead of counterfactuals and possible worlds), and restricted to a kind of non-inferential knowledge. So the claim is: it is not necessary for inferential knowledge to track the truth. But some qualifications are in order. Whereas Nozick’s truth tracking