

November 17, 2020

Week 14 Presentation Notes

Conclusion of the Course

Looking back from the vantage-point of what we learned in the second half of the course, we can see **Rorty as a metalinguistic pragmatist**, whose principal recommendation is that we work philosophically in *pragmatic* metavocabularies, which let us *say* what it is we are *doing* in making claims and talking about things, rather than in *representational semantic* metavocabularies, which let us say what we are talking *about*. That is how we should understand the slogan: “**coping, not copying.**” The pragmatist asks what function doing what you are doing in talking the way you talk (using the vocabulary you use) plays in your lived life, or in the life of your community. That is a question that is asked and answered in a *pragmatic* metavocabulary.

The “linguistic turn” was the move from thinking about *minds* to thinking about *language*. (What Ian Hacking calls the move from the “heyday of ideas” to the “heyday of sentences.”) What distinguishes us is to be understood in the first place not as a capacity for *rational thought*, but as a capacity for *discursive practice*. Our *sentience* is due to biology, but our *sapience* is due to society. (Sentience is being aware in the sense of being awake: what we share with dogs and cats. Sapience is being aware in the sense of thinking *that* things are thus-and-so: being in a state with a content that can be expressed by a declarative sentence.)

Pragmatism after the linguistic turn is pragmatism about discursive practice. The question Rorty asks is whether the most important feature of discursive practice is in fact its function of *representation*—as Enlightenment philosophy of mind and epistemology, from Descartes through Kant would teach us, when that lesson is transposed into a linguistic key.

What we learned from Price is to think not in narrow terms of *object naturalism*, naturalism about the objects we are talking and thinking *about*, what we (supposedly always, but at least sometimes) are *representing* as being thus-and-so. Instead we are to think in broader, more widely applicable terms of *subject naturalism*. That is, we are to think about what we are *doing*—the practices we engage in and the abilities we exercise—in talking and thinking.

I suggested that we could bring Price and Rorty closer together by generalizing this important lesson, by “**dividing through by the naturalism**” in the crucial opposition between object naturalism and subject naturalism.

The idea is that we can do that by using **the distinction** (adapted from the early Sellars) that I exploit in *Between Saying and Doing*, **between semantic metavocabularies and pragmatic metavocabularies.**

We can remain methodologically agnostic about when and whether to impose the requirement that those metavocabularies be restricted to *naturalistic* vocabularies.

After making those two moves (Price’s original distinction, and the generalization I suggest), **we can see Rorty’s pragmatism as consisting in recommending working in pragmatic metavocabularies instead of representational semantic metavocabularies.** That is what I mean by “metalinguistic pragmatism. Rorty confirms this characterization by adoption (beginning already in *Consequences of Pragmatism*, and in full flowering in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*) of what I have called **the ‘vocabulary’ vocabulary.** It bears on its face its character as a *metavocabulary*.

The other big lesson we learn from Price is a crucial **clarification of the notion of a representational semantic metavocabulary.** There is one anodyne, very general sense in which some representational semantic metavocabularies apply to the use of all declarative sentences—all those that can be used to make claims or assertions, and in which they have propositional contents.

These **“i-representational” idioms** apply just in virtue of what is essential to and characteristic of, what distinguishes *discursive* practice as such from practices that while *vocal* are not genuinely *verbal*, not really *Sprachspiele*.

I have suggested these derive from **inferential roles, inference and assertion being two sides of one coin.**

More specifically, the locutions of ordinary natural language that let us distinguish what we are saying (propositional content) from what we are talking *about* (representational content) are those that let us specify propositional contents of others assertions *de re* rather than just *de dicto*, in ascribing propositional attitudes. And if we specify, in a suitable pragmatic MV, what one must *do* in order to be specifying propositional contents *de re*, we see that the functional role of locutions such as “what one is talking or thinking *of* or *about*” is to mark the difference in *social perspective* between commitments the speaker *undertakes* herself, and those she *attributes* to another.

We should contrast this broad notion of i-representation, universally applicable wherever assertion is taking place (so, according to the *declarativist* criterion of demarcation), so in *every* autonomous discursive practice (ADP), from a narrower one, **“e-representation,”** that applies only to *some* partial, dependent vocabularies (idioms): at least the vocabularies of the natural sciences, and perhaps ordinary empirical descriptive (OED) vocabulary as well.

From the point of view afforded by Price’s distinction, Rorty’s rejection of semantic representational MVs in favor of pragmatic MVs should be clarified to involve the rejection only of *e-representational* semantic MVs, and to be a rejection of them *only* for *declaratives generally*. They are all very well in their place.

The mistake is what Sellars called **“descriptivism”**: the assumption that e-representational semantic MVs provide a model for understanding the use of language *in general*, that they license an *invidious* attitude toward other uses, or, crucially, **that we can understand *assertion* and so *propositional content* generally in terms of the applicability of e-representational semantic metavocabularies.** That idea is the legacy of Enlightenment philosophy of mind and epistemology that Rorty rightly sees as a confining straitjacket that must be cast off if we are better to understand ourselves as discursive beings.

Having assimilated these later lessons, we can look back with different eyes at the development of Rorty's thought, through the different stages we already discerned, and redescribe it in this new (metameta)vocabulary.

[Working title of a book-length telling of this story for OUP Spinoza lectures volume:
Rorty and Representation]

Plan (in 3 parts, with an optional 4th):

- I. Recollecting Rorty
- II. Tasks for Post-Rortyan Metalinguistic Neopragmatism
- III. Adjudicating the Dispute of Naturalistic vs. Normative Pragmatic MVs
- IV. Kant and Hegel on Normative Attitudes Instituting Normative Statuses

(I) Six phases of the development of Rorty's thought on representation:

- 1) *The Linguistic Turn* (1967):
Ideal vs. ordinary language philosophy.
Eventually motivates pragmatism with a linguistic turn, *metalinguistic pragmatism*: the pragmatism of the 'vocabulary' vocabulary.
- 2) "Incorrigibility as the Mark of the Mental" and eliminative materialism (1970):
An ontological category—Cartesian minds and the mental episodes they comprise—is understood in *normative* terms of the *authority* structure of the *vocabulary* used to discuss them.
- 3) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979):
Traces out the deleterious consequences of working in a representational semantic metavocabulary of the sort inherited from the Enlightenment, for the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and the philosophy of language.
- 4) *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982):
Principal target is the idea that different vocabularies-in-use can be compared and normatively assessed as better or worse, just *as vocabularies*: as more or less accurately representing what they represent. Pragmatism is the alternative.
- 5) *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (1989):
The romantic power of redescription becomes visible when one adopts the 'vocabulary'-vocabulary as one's *pragmatic* metavocabulary.
- 6) *Girona Pragmatism: A View* (1996):
Pragmatism as antiauthoritarianism, so as a second Enlightenment.
Representation understood as a normative concept.
Reconstructed punchline:
No longer just reject representational semantic metavocabularies in favor of pragmatic metavocabularies.
Now **social pragmatism about normativity is applied to a normative *pragmatic* metavocabulary for representational *semantic* metavocabularies for naturalistic OED vocabularies generally.**

(II) Constructive theoretical philosophical tasks for post-Rortyan metalinguistic pragmatists:

Price objects that theoretical *quietists*, while on the negative side properly rejecting the assumption that *e-representational semantic* metalanguages are universally applicable or appropriate, shirk the positive task of providing accounts of potentially problematic vocabularies in *pragmatic* metavocabularies.

Some such tasks:

1. Using pragmatic metavocabularies (whether naturalistic or normative or something else) to characterize *autonomous* vocabularies (ADPs) in general.
2. Using pragmatic (meta)metavocabularies to characterize *i-representational* semantic metavocabularies (applicable to all vocabularies-idioms with declaratives) generally.
3. Using pragmatic (meta)metavocabularies to characterize *e-representational* semantic metavocabularies (applicable only to some vocabularies-idioms) generally.

Five candidate conceptions of semantic e-representation:

- i) *Isomorphism* of constellation of representings and constellation of representeds.
- ii) Subjunctively robust *tracking* of representeds by representings.
- iii) *Empirical* structure of justification (special authority of observations = noninferentially elicited reports).
- iv) (ii) + (iii)
- v) *Eliatic* criterion: Must adequate semantic metavocabulary *use*, and not just *mention*, the terms of the vocabulary is an MV for?

4. Using pragmatic metavocabularies to characterize *naturalistic* vocabularies (and MVs).

Q: Are (3) and (4) different descriptions of the *same* task? I will claim ‘Yes’ below (III-6-ii).

5. Using pragmatic metavocabularies to characterize *normative* vocabularies (and MVs).
6. Brandom: Using pragmatic metavocabularies to characterize *categorial* metavocabularies: vocabularies that are *elaborated from* and *explicative of* (LX for) every autonomous discursive practice (ADP). It is claimed that included among vocabularies that are categorial in this sense are:

- Logical vocabulary
- Alethic modal vocabulary (paradigmatically, subjunctives)
- Deontic normative vocabulary.

(III) Adjudicating the Dispute of Naturalistic vs. Normative Pragmatic MVs:

- 1) Among constructive post-Rortyan metalinguistic pragmatists:
 - Price favors *naturalistic* pragmatic metavocabularies, while
 - Brandom favors *normative* pragmatic metavocabularies
- 2) Rorty himself seems to endorse using *both* kinds of MV:
 - naturalistic ones while channeling Dewey and using the “coping rather than copying” trope for replacing representational semantic MVs with pragmatic MVs,
 - normative ones in the form of the ‘vocabulary’ vocabulary.

There is more grey area or “no man’s land” between naturalistic and normative MVs than might at first appear:

- 3) Understanding normative statuses as socially instituted by normative attitudes—in accord with *social pragmatism about norms*—is naturalistic in a broad sense (cf. McDowell’s “relaxed naturalism”). The implicit norms or statuses so instituted will not be found in any natural scientific theory. But we can understand them as the emergent products of social practices.
- 4) The *teleosemantic* program of Millikan, Papineau, Sterelny and others is in effect a natural scientific account of the institution of discursive norms.
- 5) Suggestion: ***Natural language naturalism*** specifies the use of vocabularies in natural language (*any* ADP) as a pragmatic MV, rather than in any scientific vocabulary. It allows appeal to any idiom not currently being explicated (any potentially problematic target vocabulary-idiom), in the natural language pragmatic metavocabulary it uses to articulate the use of the target idiom.
 - It is a less committal version of the *ordinary language philosophy* Rorty studied in *The Linguistic Turn*.
 - *Regimenting* the natural language used as a pragmatic MV, by stipulating some implications and incompatibilities among what then become technical terms, yields a less committal version of the *ideal language philosophy* Rorty studied in *LT*. (It is less committal because it doesn’t start from an artificial calculus *all* features of the use of which is settled by initial stipulation.)
- 6) Suggestion: ***Categorial metavocabularies can do all the explanatory work hitherto done by both semantic and pragmatic metavocabularies.***

Strategy:

- i. Specify the use of e-representational semantic metavocabularies in *all* of senses (i)-(iv) in (II-3) above, using categorial normative vocabulary and categorial alethic modal vocabulary.
- ii. Argue that this suffices to specify the use of *naturalistic* vocabulary, because naturalistic vocabulary just is vocabulary that expresses conceptual contents specifiable in a semantic metavocabulary that is e-representational in *all* those senses.
- iii. Conclude that both naturalistic and normative pragmatic metavocabularies can be reconstructed using categorial metavocabularies.
- iv. Argue that no matter what standard of *legitimacy* of a vocabulary one uses, one cannot condemn *any* categorial vocabulary as illegitimate without thereby becoming committed to the absurd consequence that all autonomous discursive practices, and therefore *every* vocabulary whatsoever is illegitimate. For the use of any categorial vocabulary can be algorithmically elaborated from the practices and abilities implicit in the use of any autonomous discursive practice. If the ADP is legitimate by the standard being applied, so is any vocabulary whose use can be built on it in this way.

Part I: Recollecting Rorty, a retrospective rational reconstruction.

1. The first significant episode is his book *The Linguistic Turn*. It motivates Rorty to give *pragmatism* a linguistic turn.

For what he does to the James-Dewey pragmatism he inherits is give it a linguistic turn, update it in the light of the linguistic turn. This enables him (later) to see Quine and Sellars as making *pragmatist* critiques of the epistemological foundationalism that had been inherited from the Enlightenment (as Kant left it to us), and transmuted into a linguistic key as philosophy of language displaced epistemology in the sociology of Anglophone philosophy.

He organizes things around the distinction between:

- Ideal language philosophy, modeled on formal calculi, into which philosophical problems are to be translated, and
- Ordinary language philosophy, in which the resources of ordinary (Oxbridge) language are taken to suffice in principle to resolve any philosophical puzzles.

I'll return to this distinction later on.

2. The second episode is his eliminative materialism.

- a) Retrospectively, we can see in this phase of his thought the origins of the 'vocabulary' vocabulary. What is wanted here is roughly the story I tell in "An Arc of Thought." For **here Rorty understands for the first time what we are talking about (Cartesian minds and the "self-intimating" episodes they comprise) in terms of how we talk about them.**

The practices of deploying the *vocabulary* of Cartesian mindedness, *using* linguistic expressions in the particular way we do, is understood as more conceptually fundamental, prior in the order of explanation, to the understanding of the episodes being described, reported, or represented by deploying that vocabulary. And this priority is not merely theoretical, it is practical, too. For it supports the key subjunctive prediction that codifies practical control: if we *were* to change vocabularies, we *would* change the ontological status of what they let us talk about. Minds are *brought into existence* by this way of talking *about* them.

Changing vocabularies would *eliminate* the entities that vocabulary lets us talk *about* (describe, report, represent).

That is true, uncontroversially, of *fictions*. Fictional characters are brought into existence by the promulgation of fiction-producing speech acts, the deploying of fictional vocabularies including reference to and claims about fictional characters (and their presuppositions and consequences: not only Sherlock Holmes, but his maternal grandmother, not only the coachman but his horse). But Rorty's claim is *not* that Cartesian minds are fictions. His claim is that they are real—as we'll see, and as he eventually came to see, every bit as real as Objective Reality. But they stand in a one-way counterfactual dependence on the vocabulary used to talk *about* them.

This is the bold, original thesis of eliminative materialism: **vocabularies are in the ontological driver's seat**, at least in this case. He will generalize the point soon enough.

- **The existence of items of an ontological category**—Cartesian minds and the mental episodes they comprise—is **understood in normative terms of the authority structure of the vocabulary used to discuss them**. That is “incorrigibility as the mark of the mental.”

Here we see *in nuce* the conceptual priority of *vocabularies* over *ontology*.

b) We also see the advent of his transmutation of epistemological-semantic issues into a *normative key*. For he diagnoses the advent of Cartesian minds in terms of a distinctive structure of *authority*. Cartesian mental events or episodes are items about which their subject's sincere first-person avowals have an overriding authority. Such avowals justify or entitle the avower (it is controversial whether she qualifies as a *reporter*, since that implies a certain independence of the reported over the reporting) to her claim.

c) And we see the first stirrings of his *social pragmatism about norms*. This is the idea that *normative* statuses (above all, of being justified, of authority and responsibility) are always and everywhere *social* statuses. To have a normative status is to be understood as playing a role in social practices. The normative status is instituted by the social practices, and the practical attitudes adopted by practitioners.

That normative authority structure is understood as instituted by and incorporated in contingent, therefore mutable social practices, that correspond to a historical epoch with a beginning and possibly, an end.

Here we see *in nuce* social pragmatism about norms.

d) We learned the lesson of Price's object naturalism / subject naturalism distinction, and generalized it to concern with saying, in a *pragmatic* metavocabulary, what we must *do* in order to deploy a particular vocabulary, rather than trying (to begin with) to say in a *representational semantic* metavocabulary, what we are talking *about* (describing, representing). In these terms we can see that already with his eliminative materialism Rorty is asking what we have to *do*, how we have to talk, what practices we need to engage in, to count thereby as deploying the vocabulary characteristic of Cartesian mindedness.

That is, **he is already deploying a pragmatic metavocabulary to address the discursive practices that articulate Cartesian mindedness**, rather than asking in a representational semantic metavocabulary about the *ontological* nature of the items (supposedly) represented by engaging in those discursive practices. This is exactly the strategy Price counsels under the heading of “global expressivism.”

Rorty has not yet explicitly drawn out the conclusions and methodological recommendations that are implicit in this first big, bold philosophical idea of his. And he

will never extract the lesson in just the terms I have done here. But we can see, retrospectively-recollectively, that all of this constellation of ideas was already implicit in this early work. (Rorty turned 40 in 1971.)

3. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*:

- a) The first big move here is the identification of the Enlightenment notion of representation as the source of philosophical puzzles. We can think of these in terms of the sort of ontological and metaphysical puzzles that are epitomized by the object naturalists' location or placement problems. Looking back from what we've learned from Price, we can see the ultimate diagnosis here as a Wittgensteinian one. Working in a representational semantic metavocabulary (for empirical and natural-scientific discourse) rather than a pragmatic metavocabulary has raised ultimately pointless puzzles. **The pragmatist lesson will be to stick with describing the use of those base-level OED and natural-scientific vocabularies in a pragmatic metavocabulary, jettisoning the perspective of representational semantic MVs.** That it is possible, useful, and desirable to put things in terms of vocabularies (though that is not the terminology he has available for what he is doing) is a consequence of taking to heart the linguistic turn in processing the pragmatist lessons of James and Dewey (making available those of Quine and Sellars).
- b) In *PMN* (1979), Rorty traces out the deleterious consequences of working in (taking for granted as the proper framework) a representational semantic metavocabulary, for the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and the philosophy of language.
- In the *philosophy of mind*, the result is a Cartesian notion of immediate experience: self-authenticating, intrinsically authoritative episodes, whose authority can then be inherited by other claims.
 - In *epistemology*, the result is an oscillation between *skepticism* and *foundationalism* that Rorty thinks is made inevitable by framing epistemological questions about justification and (so) knowledge in a representational semantic metavocabulary.
 - In the *philosophy of language*, the result is a notion of meaning that underwrites the idea of claims with a distinctive kind of *authority* deriving from their *analyticity*. Their authority is a result of their merely expressing the result of analyzing meanings.

All these ideas have their origins in the Enlightenment representationalist conception of mindedness, rational justification, and meaningfulness, which have been inherited by their distinctively TwenCen philosophical heirs.

He has already diagnosed the Cartesian conception of the mind in terms of the use of vocabularies and the social authority-structures they articulate. He is able to recharacterize Sellars's critique of the Myth of the Given—corrosive to both contemporary philosophy of mind and foundationalist epistemology—as developing this line of thought. He sees Sellars as implicitly pragmatist, in asking about the social

practices of according authority to noninferential reports, and what their practical presuppositions are.

He assimilates **Quine's critique of analyticity in "Two Dogmas"**, too, to a **pragmatist inquiry into the difference in the social-practical use of expressions that would correspond to the distinctive sort of authority attributed to analytic claims.**

His reading of Quine's pragmatist argument here, as undercutting the distinction between languages and theories (meanings and beliefs) leads to his adoption of the **'vocabulary' vocabulary.**

4. *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982?) Rorty fully identifies his alternative to semantic representationalism as *pragmatism*.
 - a) He **is now using the term 'vocabulary'**, and explicitly considering the relations between the practices of using one vocabulary and the practices of using another. That is, he has at least implicitly come to the idea of pragmatism after the linguistic turn as addressing various vocabularies-in-use, working exclusively in pragmatic metavocabularies.
 - b) A principal target is the idea that different vocabularies-in-use can be compared and normatively assessed as better or worse, just *as vocabularies*. This is the idea that there is some single dimension of assessment derivable from their common function as describing or representing how things objectively are. That idea is the essence of global descriptivism or representationalism, the thoughtless, or at least heedless, adoption of a representational semantic metavocabulary. The overarching normative standard of assessment of vocabularies it underwrites is that of *accuracy of representation*. To that, Rorty opposes a Wittgensteinian pragmatist pluralism. The truth is one, but practices and vocabularies are many. There are many dimensions of normative assessment of vocabularies. Rorty doesn't think it is intelligible to imagine stepping outside of all vocabularies to find a normative standard that is independently authoritative, governing all of them, as representationalism purports to do.
 - c) Looking back from the standpoint of later developments, we can see Rorty as denying that the standards of e-representational semantic metavocabularies (isomorphism, tracking, empirical epistemic authority, generalized Eliatic criterion) apply to all vocabularies just as vocabularies.

5. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* fully exploits the 'vocabulary' vocabulary.
 - a) Here we get for the first time (or at least, the idea really comes into focus here) the Romantic idea of the *power of redescription*. The sort of *change* of vocabulary that Rorty had first theorized about in his eliminative materialism now becomes an explicit topic. Rorty exploits the idea of a distinctive kind of *authority* that communities and individual discursive practitioners have to change their worlds by changing their vocabularies. They can bring Cartesian minds into existence, or

- eliminate them. They can understand their world as something merely represented (“mirrored”) or as an arena for the exercise of their authority.
- b) The romantic power of redescription becomes visible when one adopts the ‘vocabulary’-vocabulary as one’s *pragmatic* metavocabulary. That is now how Rorty understands being a pragmatist.
 - c) Rorty is particularly concerned with the application of the newly articulated power of redescription, consequent upon change of vocabulary, for *self*-description. Here it is a power of *self*-transformation—*ontologically*, as we learned already from the discussion of Cartesian mindedness and the possibility of eliminative materialism.
 - d) He contrasts two arenas for such self-transformation by redescription—exercises of the distinctive authority of vocabulary-users to *change* vocabularies: by individuals in their private lives and by communities making existential political decisions about who *we* are all to be in the form of decisions about what vocabularies we shall adopt to characterize our situation, and frame our options, articulate our desires, preferences, and aspirations, and deliberate about means to those ends.
 - e) Rorty introduces his crucial conception of *irony* as resistance to identification with any vocabulary, appreciation of the contingency of our attachments to and use of one rather than another, and willingness to change vocabularies.
6. Final Girona conception of pragmatism as antirepresentationalist because antiauthoritarian:

Here I think we get the full flowering and synthesis of the ideas of :

- a) Pragmatism as the adoption of a pragmatic metavocabulary rather than a representational semantic MV,
- b) Adopting a specifically *normative* pragmatic metavocabulary,
- c) Applying that normative pragmatic metavocabulary to the representational semantic metavocabulary, and
- d) Applying social pragmatism about norms to the result of adopting a pragmatic metavocabulary for representational semantic metavocabularies.

We are now in a position to see what we were not conceptually in a position to see when we first read the Girona argument: that the linchpin of this argument is **the adoption of a *normative pragmatic metavocabulary to characterize the use of representational semantic metavocabularies***. This is a stunning, symphonic philosophical synthesis. Recollectively-retrospectively, it appears as “the one far-off, divine event, towards with the whole Creation moves,” the proper culmination of Rorty’s lifetime of conceptual innovation.

It is this move that sets up Rorty’s final move:

- e) Characterizing his ‘vocabulary’-vocabulary pragmatism (pragmatism after the linguistic turn) as completing the antiauthoritarian work of the original Enlightenment. For this move depends on articulating an analogy between:
 - Rejecting the ontological grounding of *practical* normativity in a supernatural being and a supernaturally ordained Great Chain of *objective*

relations of superiority and subordination—a particular normative (meta)vocabulary—in favor of looking at norms as instituted by human practices. And

- On the *theoretical* side: Rejecting representational semantic MVs by applying social pragmatism about norms to a description in a normative pragmatic metavocabulary of what one is doing in using a representational semantic metavocabulary.

In this way, the Enlightenment itself is seen as an ultimately *pragmatist* revolt. Both the original Enlightenment concerning practical normativity (justification, authority) and Rorty's recommended Second Enlightenment concerning theoretical normativity (justification, authority) are redescribed as the **substitution of pragmatic for semantic metavocabularies**, metavocabularies for practical and theoretical *normative* vocabularies, respectively.

What the first Enlightenment criticizes is redescribed in effect as a representationalist semantic metavocabulary for the practical normative vocabulary in which we articulate who is responsible and authoritative, who the obedient subordinate and who the commanding superior. **It is a *representationalist* semantic metavocabulary for that practical normative vocabulary because it sees ground-level assessments of authority and responsibility as reflecting or representing an antecedent objective structure of subordination and superiority: the Great Chain of Being.**

And what the original Enlightenment recommended, on Rorty's redescription, is the replacement of that representationalist semantic metavocabulary (which assesses normative claims as correct or incorrect accordingly as they do or do not accurately reflect or represent the objective normative structure of superiority and subordination) with a *pragmatic* metavocabulary that describes the practices of taking or treating people *as* authoritative or responsible, the social-practical attitudes that, according to social pragmatism about normativity, institute those normative statuses. **It is under this description—substituting a social-pragmatist normative pragmatic MV for a representational semantic MV (one that says what it *means* to be authoritative or responsible)—that Rorty assimilates his pragmatism to what shows up for him as the pragmatism of the first Enlightenment.**

Pragmatism comes into this story twice, in two different forms.

- One is the substitution of pragmatic metavocabularies for representational semantic metavocabularies.
- The other is the application of social pragmatism about norms.

In Rorty's case, as I am reading him in the final Girona iteration-evolution of his thought, as I put it just above:

Rorty rejects representational semantic MVs by applying social pragmatism about norms to a description in a normative pragmatic metavocabulary of what one is *doing* in using a representational semantic metavocabulary.

(Note that we saw an intimation of this move in the insistence that **a hygienic concept of representation should not divorce *meaning* from *understanding*, the idea of semantically being a representing of a represented from what it is practically to *take* or *treat* something as a representing of a represented** (for instance, in my “Global Antirepresentationalism?”). The failure to enforce such a divorce of what he construes as “semantics” from “epistemology” is what Fodor diagnoses as the “Great Bad” of the sort of pragmatism he sees as common to Dummett and Davidson.)

Part II: Constructive theoretical philosophical tasks for post-Rortyan metalinguistic pragmatists:

Price objects that theoretical *quietists*, while on the negative side properly rejecting the assumption that *e-representational semantic* metalanguages are universally applicable or appropriate, shirk the positive task of providing accounts of potentially problematic vocabularies in *pragmatic* metavocabularies.

Some such tasks:

1. Using pragmatic metavocabularies (whether naturalistic or normative or something else) to characterize *autonomous* vocabularies (ADPs) in general.

Here I have offered (in *MIE*) a sequence of claims:

- a) Criterion of demarcation for being a discursive practice is that some performances have the pragmatic significance of *claimings* (assertings). This speech act is criterial and “downtown” in discursive practice. This pragmatic characterization should be appealed to in marking out *declarative sentences* syntactically, and *propositional* contents semantically.
 - b) The “home language game” of assertions is practices of giving, asking for, and challenging *reasons*. Assertions are what can both serve as and stand in need of reasons. Assertable (=propositional) contents are what can play the role both of premise and conclusion of *inferences*.
 - c) The pragmatic significance of asserting is to undertake or acknowledge a *commitment*. Providing reasons for and against claims affects interlocutors’ *entitlements* to those commitments.
 - d) Assertional practices, practices of giving and asking for reasons, are *social* practices, in which performances alter the *deontic normative score* interlocutors keep on each other: the commitments and entitlements they attribute to one another and acknowledge or claim for themselves. The inferential relations among the propositional contents of assertions determines how assertional performances alter the score of commitments and entitlements of speaker and audience.
2. Using pragmatic (meta)metavocabularies to characterize *i-representational* semantic metavocabularies (applicable to all vocabularies-idioms with declaratives) generally.

We considered 3 kinds of *i-representational* locutions, and offered sketches of specifications of them in pragmatic metavocabularies:

- a) Deflated or broadly disquotational accounts of the use of ‘true’ (and ‘refers’ or ‘denotes’) and ‘fact-stating’. (Price’s “semantic minimalism.”)
My version sees these idioms as anaphoric proform-forming operators.
- b) Both Price and I see a notion of truth or truth conditions that goes beyond:
 - i. The deflated version in (a), and

- ii. Mere justification, “assertibility,” (*upstream*, inferentially) entitlement, “what your community will let you get away with,” and “the parts of Neurath’s boat we are currently leaving alone” (Rortyan phrases).
- iii. Mere “cautionary” uses: “I believe it, but I know I might be wrong and it isn’t true.”

Price (in “Truth as Convenient Friction”) looks *downstream*, to the significance of assertions premises providing reasons *against* other claims.

In “Truth and Assertibility” I, too, look *downstream*, to the significance of assertions as premises providing reasons *for* other claims.

Their key observation is that claimables can have the same *circumstances* of appropriate application (upstream) and different *consequences* of application (downstream).

Both should be understood as essential features of the inferential roles that articulate propositional contents.

Adding these “downstream” inferential consequences lets us specify a notion of propositional content that makes sense of *embedding* declaratives as *unasserted* components of assertible compound and complex [*not* the same thing] sentences.

This is necessary and sufficient to respond to the Frege-Geach problem, appreciation of and attention to which distinguishes second-wave metaethical expressivism (Blackburn, Gibbard) from the first-wave (Ayer, Stevenson).

It offers at least a downpayment on the possibility of *formal* semantics, which explains how to compute the semantic interpretants of compound and complex sentences from the semantic interpretants of the simpler sentences from which they are formed.

- c) I-representational vocabularies (idioms) express differences of *social perspective*, between *undertaking* commitments, oneself, and *attributing* them, to others.

We considered two ways in which this phenomenon shows up:

- i. An account of what is right about the JTB (Justified True Belief) account of knowledge. In taking S to know that *p* I:
 - *attribute* to S a *commitment* to *p*—corresponding to the Belief condition,
 - *attribute* to S *entitlement* to that commitment—corresponding to the Justification condition, and
 - *undertake* a commitment to *p* myself, endorsing the claim—corresponding to the Truth condition.
- ii. The locutions in natural language (as opposed to high philosophical theory) that we use to distinguish what we are talking or thinking *about* from what we are saying or thinking (which is a matter of propositional contents) are, I claim, ***de re specifications of propositional content***, paradigmatically in ascriptions of propositional attitude (*saying* what someone else claims, believes, or is committed to). It is their role in locutions playing this expressive role that make ‘of’ and ‘about’ express the intentional directedness that is a crucial part of the i-representational dimension of all declarative discourse.

3. Using pragmatic (meta)metavocabularies to characterize *e-representational* semantic metavocabularies (applicable only to some vocabularies-idioms) generally.

The implicit criticism of Rorty is that he treated representational semantic metavocabularies as all of the same kind, and so as standing or falling together. Price argues that we should have different attitudes towards them, that each is fine in its place, and that what deserves criticism is the conflation of them that is *global descriptivism* or *e-representationalism*.

This is a much more nuanced view than Rorty's global rejection of representational semantic MVs.

What it takes him to have gotten right is:

- Negative thesis: the critique of global descriptivism or e-representationalism.
- Positive thesis: the pragmatism that consists in starting off with *pragmatic* MVs. For only that pragmatist move opens up the possibility of making the crucial distinction between the two kinds of representational semantic MVs.

Five candidate conceptions of semantic e-representation:

- i) *Isomorphism* of constellation of representings and constellation of representeds.
- ii) Subjunctively robust *tracking* of representeds by representings.
- iii) *Empirical* structure of justification (special authority of observations = noninferentially elicited reports).
- iv) (ii) + (iii)
- v) *Eliatic* criterion: Must adequate semantic metavocabulary *use*, and not just *mention*, the terms of the vocabulary is an MV for?

4. Using pragmatic metavocabularies to characterize *naturalistic* vocabularies (and MVs).

Q: Are (3) and (4) different descriptions of the *same* task? I will claim 'Yes' below (III-6-ii).

5. Using pragmatic metavocabularies to characterize *normative* vocabularies (and MVs).

6. Brandom: Using pragmatic metavocabularies to characterize *categorial* metavocabularies: vocabularies that are *elaborated from* and *explicative of* (LX for) every autonomous discursive practice (ADP): *universally* LX. It is claimed that included among vocabularies that are categorial in this sense are:

- Logical vocabulary
- Alethic modal vocabulary (paradigmatically, subjunctives)
- Deontic normative vocabulary.

Part III Adjudicating the Dispute of Naturalistic vs. Normative Pragmatic MVs:

- 1) Among constructive post-Rortyan metalinguistic pragmatists:
 - Price favors *naturalistic* pragmatic metavocabularies, while
 - Brandom favors *normative* pragmatic metavocabularies
- 2) Rorty himself seems to endorse using *both* kinds of MV:
 - naturalistic ones while channeling Dewey and using the “coping rather than copying” trope for replacing representational semantic MVs with pragmatic MVs,
 - normative ones in the form of the ‘vocabulary’ vocabulary.

There is more grey area or “no man’s land” between naturalistic and normative MVs than might at first appear:

- 3) Understanding **normative statuses as socially instituted by normative attitudes**—in accord with *social pragmatism about norms*—is naturalistic in a broad sense (cf. McDowell’s “relaxed naturalism”).
The implicit norms or statuses so instituted will not be found in any natural scientific theory. But we can understand them as the emergent products of social practices.
- 4) The *teleosemantic* program of Millikan, Papineau, Sterelny and others is in effect a natural scientific account of the institution of discursive norms.
- 5) Suggestion: ***Natural language naturalism*** specifies the use of vocabularies in natural language (*any* ADP) as a pragmatic MV, rather than in any scientific vocabulary. It allows appeal to any idiom not currently being explicated (any potentially problematic target vocabulary-idiom), in the natural language pragmatic metavocabulary it uses to articulate the use of the target idiom.
 - It is a less committal version of the *ordinary language philosophy* Rorty studied in *The Linguistic Turn*.
 - *Regimenting* the natural language used as a pragmatic MV, by stipulating some implications and incompatibilities among what then become technical terms, yields a less committal version of the *ideal language philosophy* Rorty studied in *LT*. (It is less committal because it doesn’t start from an artificial calculus *all* features of the use of which is settled by initial stipulation.)
- 6) Suggestion: ***Categorial* metavocabularies can do all the explanatory work hitherto done by *both* semantic *and* pragmatic metavocabularies.**
Strategy:
 - a) Specify the use of e-representational semantic metavocabularies in *all* of senses (i)-(iv) in (II-3) above, using categorial normative vocabulary and categorial alethic modal vocabulary.

- b) Argue that this suffices to specify the use of *naturalistic* vocabulary, because naturalistic vocabulary just is vocabulary that expresses conceptual contents specifiable in a semantic metavocabulary that is e-representational in *all* those senses.
- c) Conclude that both naturalistic and normative pragmatic metavocabularies can be reconstructed using categorial metavocabularies.
- d) Argue that no matter what standard of *legitimacy* of a vocabulary one uses, one cannot condemn *any* categorial vocabulary as illegitimate without thereby becoming committed to the absurd consequence that all autonomous discursive practices, and therefore *every* vocabulary whatsoever is illegitimate. For the use of any categorial vocabulary can be algorithmically elaborated from the practices and abilities implicit in the use of any autonomous discursive practice. If the ADP is legitimate by the standard being applied, so is any vocabulary whose use can be built on it in this way.

Part IV Kant and Hegel on Instituting Normative Statures by Normative Attitudes:

[Summarize the story from “The Fine Structure of Autonomy and Recognition: The Insitution of Normative Statures by Normative Attitudes” (first Brentano lecture), from *Recognition and Recollection*.]