

INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

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Johannes BRANDL: Semantic Holism Is Here To Stay 1
Critically reflecting some theses of Fodor & LePore's *Holism*, it is argued that semantic holism in spite of all their criticism is not defeated. As a consequence of the rejection of the analytic-synthetic distinction, a first result is that they do not take Traditional Holism, as it originates from Frege and Wittgenstein, serious at all. Whereas a Weak Anatomism, inspired with views of Traditional Holism, might be an interesting alternative to atomism and holism even for Quine and Neo-Fregeans like Dummett. Concerning the Principle of Compositionality an ambiguity between recurrence and functional compositionality is localized that relativizes their critique on Davidson. And finally versions of content- and belief-holism in combination with adequate charity-principles are discussed as a basis for squaring Intentional Realism with Brentano's Thesis.

Michael DEVITT: A Critique of the Case for Semantic Holism 17
At its most extreme, semantic holism is the doctrine that all the inferential properties of an expression constitute its meaning. Holism is supported by the consideration that there is no principled basis for localism's distinction among these properties. The paper rejects four arguments for this. (1) The argument from confirmation holism is dismissed quickly because it rests on verificationism. (2) The argument from the rejection of analyticity fails because it saddles the localist with unacceptable epistemic assumptions. Localism is not committed to a priori knowledge or to knowledge that is in any interesting sense unrevisable. (3) The argument from psychological explanation fails because it begs the question. (4) The argument from functionalism needs to be accompanied by a further argument that functionalism is essentially holistic. In any case it could only establish a very mild holism.

Georges REY: The Unavailability of What We Mean: A Reply to Quine, Fodor and LePore 61
Fodor and LePore's attack on conceptual role semantics relies on Quine's attack on the traditional analytic/synthetic and a priori/a

posteriori distinctions, which in turn consists of four arguments: an attack on truth by convention; an appeal to revisability; a claim of confirmation holism; and a charge of explanatory vacuity. Once the different merits of these arguments are sorted out, their proper target can be seen to be not the Traditional Distinctions, but an implicit assumption about their superficial availability that we have abundant reason to reject. Once we reject it, we can see how issues of the absorption of conventions, the revisability of belief, and confirmation holism are compatible with the Traditional Distinctions, and that Quine's discussion only serves to camouflage the question of whether some confirmation relations are constitutive of meaning and knowable a priori.

Joseph LEVINE: Intentional Chemistry 103

This paper discusses the debate between atomists and molecularists regarding the nature of mental content. A molecularist believes that some, but not all, of a mental symbol's inferential connections to other mental symbols, are at least partly constitutive of that symbol's intentional content. An atomist believes that none of the symbol's inferential connections play such a constitutive role. The paper is divided into two principal parts. First, attempts by Michael Devitt and Georges Rey to defend molecularism against traditional Quinean arguments are evaluated. The conclusion is that their attempts fall short of providing an adequate defense. Second, the prospects for an atomistic theory are investigated, building on the various remarks of Fodor and LePore in their book, *Holism: A Shopper's Guide*. It is argued that the prospects are better than at first they appear.

Louise ANTHONY: Conceptual Connection and the Observation/Theory Distinction 135

Fodor and LePore's reconstruction of the semantic holism debate in terms of "atomism" and "anatomism" is inadequate: it fails to highlight the important issue of how intentional contents are individuated, and excludes or obscures several possible positions on the metaphysics of content. One such position, "weak sociabilism" is important because it addresses concerns of Fodor and LePore's molecularist critics about conditions for possession of concepts, without abandoning atomism about content individuation. Properties like DEMOCRACY may be "theoretical" in the following sense: only devices capable of inference can come to be selectively sensitive to such properties. Thus, such concepts cannot be punctate, although their contents are individuated, as atomism requires, independently of their conceptual connections.

Gilbert HARMAN: Meaning Holism Defended 163

The meaning of a symbol is determined by its use, but the canonical way of specifying meaning is in a statement of the form “S means ...”. To be able to provide such a specification is equivalent to being able to translate the symbol S into one’s own terms. A change in usage of terms involves a change of meaning iff the correct translation between earlier usage and later usage takes a term into a different expression. Such translation is holistic, a matter of finding the best mapping. Sameness of meaning is a similarity relation, as is sameness of concept. The meaning of a larger expression is derived from the meaning of its parts iff the translation of the whole is derived from the translation of its parts.

Kirk A. LUDWIG: Is Content Holism Incoherent? 173

The doctrine of content holism is made precise, and distinguished from related doctrines, such as anatomism and molecularism about content, and meaning holism. While content holism entails both anatomism with respect to the property of having content, and meaning holism, neither of the latter doctrines entails content holism. Content holism, which holds that everyone must have a large number of psychological attitudes of any given type whose contents are essentially interrelated, is shown to be self-contradictory in the light of our ordinary criterion for individuating attitude contents. The argument against content holism is defended against objections that its intended force or content has been incorrectly characterized.

Anne BEZUIDENHOUT: The Impossibility of Punctate Mental Representations 197

In *Holism: A Shopper’s Guide* Fodor and LePore contend that there could be punctate minds; minds capable of being in only a single type of representational state. The Kantian idea that the construction of perceptual representations requires the synthesizing activity of the mind is invoked to argue against the possibility of punctate minds. Fodor’s commitment to an inferential theory of perception is shown to share crucial assumptions with the Kantian view and hence to lead to the same conclusion. The argument from the need for synthesis is then extended beyond the perceptual case to mental representation in general.

Takashi YAGISAWA: The Cost of Meaning Solipsism 213

Meaning Solipsism says that it is possible for there to be a meaningful state without any other meaningful state. The meaning of such a solo meaningful state should be non-natural. The best strategy for establishing Meaning Solipsism is to argue for the determination of

the meaning of a possible solo meaningful state via the set of entities the meaning of the state fits. Embracing merely possible and impossible entities is the most straightforward way to do so. Also, a good way to honor analyticities the meaning of a solo meaningful state gives rise to is to insist on certain facts about impossible entities as non-negotiable brute facts.

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The paper deals with three sources of holistic arguments: confirmation of scientific theories, translation between languages, and the relationships of meaning with belief. Certain difficulties of each of the involved versions of holism are pointed out: such difficulties concern the lack of evidence in support of holistic theses, as well as the presence of slippery slope arguments, and finally inconsistencies, in holism. We argue that the dualism of atomism and holism is just a polarization of a much richer spectrum of cohesiveness levels, and that their consideration is needed in order to provide explanatory power to naturalistic epistemology. In the end, the features of a “local” alternative to holism are sketched, taking into account the role of gestaltic schemata in making stable reference possible.

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Jerry Fodor and Ernie Lepore argue against inferential role semantics on the grounds that either it relies on an analytic/synthetic distinction vulnerable to Quinean objections, or else it leads to a variety of meaning holism fraught with absurd consequences. However, the slide from semantic atomism to meaning holism might be prevented by distinctions not affected by Quine’s arguments against analyticity; and the absurd consequences Fodor and Lepore attribute to meaning holism obtain only on an implausible construal of inferential roles.

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