Introduction

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This volume presents eleven original essays that critically examine aspects of John Searle's seminal contributions to the philosophy of language, and explore new ways in which some of their themes could be developed. After an opening essay by Searle in which he summarizes the essentials of his conception of language and what he currently takes its most distinctive implications to be, the critical essays are grouped into two interconnected parts – "From mind to meaning" and "From meaning to force" – reflecting Searle's claim that an analysis of meaning would not be adequate if it could not integrate a proper analysis of illocutionary force and if it could not itself be integrated within a satisfactory account of mind.

Searle's views on how force, meaning, and mind are interconnected form part of the general account of intentionality (in the broad sense of an entity's being *about* entities other that itself) that he has developed over the years, and his opening essay includes an outline of that account, emphasizing three of its basic ideas. First, the idea that linguistic intentionality does not merely require the expression of propositions and the existence of conditions under which they might or might not be satisfied, but also the association of those propositions with illocutionary forces of various kinds, which determine the various kinds of acts (asserting, requesting, promising, etc.) that possession of a language characteristically makes possible. Second, the idea that, in a similar way, mental intentionality does not merely require the apprehension of propositions and the existence of conditions under which they might or might not be satisfied, but also the association of those propositions with psychological modes of various kinds, which determine the various kinds of states (believing, desiring, intending, etc.) that possession of a mind characteristically makes possible. And, third, the idea that linguistic meaning derives from the communication-driven installation of conventional procedures whereby the satisfaction conditions that

mentally entertained propositions have under various psychological modes become the satisfaction conditions that linguistically expressed propositions have under various kinds of illocutionary forces (procedures, for example, whereby the satisfaction conditions of beliefs become the satisfaction conditions of assertions, the satisfaction conditions of desires become the satisfaction conditions of requests, the satisfaction conditions of intentions become the satisfaction conditions of promises, etc.).

Moving beyond the recapitulation of these basic ideas, Searle's opening essay explores two directions in which the picture of language that they make possible offers, in his view, explanatory advantages. First, by firmly grounding linguistic meaning in pre-linguistically available forms of intentionality (and thus fulfilling the continuity requirement that a naturalistically adequate account of linguistic meaning should, in his view, fulfill), this picture affords, according to Searle, a solution to the problem of the semantic *unity* of the sentence, as well as an explanation of the fundamentally distinct roles of reference and predication within that unity: the semantic unity of the sentence, he suggests, is a consequence of the thesis that the intentionality of sentences derives from the intentionality of mental states, given the independently motivated thesis that a necessary condition of the possession of a mental state is the capacity to recognize when it would and when it would not be satisfied, and given that it is only whole states of affairs, rather than individual constituents of those states of affairs, that are possible mental state satisfiers. And the fundamentally distinct roles of reference and predication within a sentence derives, he argues, from the fact that the most basic kind of conscious mental state is a *perceptual* state, whose possession involves the capacity to recognize salient objects and salient features of objects as constituents of the states of affairs that act as perceptual state satisfiers. The second kind of advantage offered by this conception of language is, Searle suggests, that it can identify and explain the distinctive sense in which linguistic meaning is normative: the fact that a creature happens to be in a mental state with certain satisfaction conditions does not entail that that creature undertakes, by virtue of being in that state, any *commitments* toward other creatures regarding the fulfillment of those satisfaction conditions; however, the fact that a creature produces a linguistic utterance with the same satisfaction conditions as one of its mental states does entail, according to Searle, that that creature undertakes, in producing the utterance, certain *commitments* towards other creatures regarding the fulfillment of those

conditions, since the imposition of any satisfaction condition on a not *intrinsically* intentional object like an utterance would be impossible outside a system of *conventions* that a particular group of creatures has adopted for the sole purpose of enabling *communication* between its members about the external world; and it is the existence of those commitments, according to Searle, that confers upon linguistic contents a special normativity that is lacking from the mental contents from which they ultimately derive (and which is the source, in his view, of every other sort of social normativity).

The volume's critical essays do not purport to address all aspects of the multifaceted work that Searle has produced over the past four decades on linguistic intentionality and its mental background, but the aspects of that work that they do address are clearly important, both in terms of their pivotal role within Searle's system of ideas, and in terms of their connections to issues of prominent philosophical interest. It is, therefore, both to a better understanding of Searle's work and to a better understanding of the wider philosophical debates within which that work is embedded that the essays aim to make a contribution.

The volume's first part, "From mind to meaning," contains six essays, of which the first three examine aspects of the account of the intentionality of perceptual experience that Searle places at the foundation of his account of mind (and, as just noted, of language itself). François Recanati acknowledges the significance of the condition of causal self-referentiality that Searle introduces into his analysis of conscious perceptual states, but argues that Searle misconstrues that condition when he assigns it to the propositional content of the perceptual state rather than to its psychological mode: the requirement that, in veridical perception, the perceived scene must be the cause of its own perception, is, Recanati contends, a requirement that concerns not the propositional content of the perceptual state (that is, what the subject perceives) but rather its psychological mode (that is, the fact that the subject is in a state of perception as opposed to, say, a state of expectation). After arguing that similar misallocations occur not only in Searle's analysis of mental states but also in his analysis of speech acts (where conditions that properly concern the illocutionary force of the speech act are misrepresented as concerning its propositional content), Recanati claims that these problems require replacing a basic assumption of Searle's approach to mental and linguistic intentionality with a different one. The assumption to be replaced is the assumption that it is only the content (as distinct from the mode) of a mental state that determines

the state's satisfaction conditions, and that it is only the content (as distinct from the force) of a speech act that determines the act's satisfaction conditions. And the alternative assumption Recanati recommends (within a framework whose details he has developed in independent work) is one that allows a mental state's satisfaction conditions to be determined *jointly* by its mode and by its content, and a speech act's satisfaction conditions to be determined *jointly* by its content and by its force. Recanati then applies that idea to the analysis of specific intentional states, noting that its application is capable of doing justice to the fact that, in many cases, the content (as distinct from the mode) of an intentional state is, contrary to what Searle has been assuming, *not* a complete proposition, but rather an entity akin to a propositional function (whose arguments are drawn from elements determined by the state's mode). And he concludes by showing how his approach provides a solution to an important problem in the analysis of the relation between perception and memory: the idea that episodic memories *retain* the content of perceptions naturally leads to the view that a memory and a perception on which the memory is based must have the same content; but that appears to be in conflict with the equally natural view that a memory and a perception on which the memory is based cannot have the same content, since memories concern past experiences whereas perceptions concern present ones; the resolution of that conflict, Recanati argues, requires adopting the view that a perception and a memory deriving from it do have the same content, but that the content in question is *not* a full proposition, but only a propositional schema whose unspecified temporal parameters are set to the present or to the past depending on whether it is associated with the perception mode or with the memory mode.

A main motivation of Searle's analysis of the intentionality of perception was his aim to show that a thoroughly internalist approach to questions of mental and linguistic content can successfully cope with certain facts widely held to be only accountable on the basis of externalist premises. Specifically, the hardly disputable fact that perceptual experiences put perceivers in relation to *particular* objects in the world has seemed to many to preclude an analysis of the intentional content of perceptual experiences as consisting in its entirety of purely conceptual elements supplied by the perceiver's mind. And Searle's analysis was aiming to deflate that so-called *particularity objection* to internalist analyses of mental content (and thus to pave the way for an internalist response to externalist accounts of linguistic reference), by claiming

that his own internalist analysis does make room for the particularity of the objects of perceptual experiences because it insists that, when a subject perceives a particular object, it not only judges that there is an object there, but also that the object that is there is the cause of the *particular* experience that the subject is undergoing. The particularity objection, and its implications on Searle's position in the debate between internalism and externalism, is at the center of the essays by Kent Bach and Robin Jeshion. Both Bach and Jeshion argue that Searle's analysis as formulated does not succeed in deflating the particularity objection, but each locates the source of Searle's main difficulty in a different place, and each offers a different appreciation of the significance of the threat that Searle's account thereby faces. According to Bach, Searle cannot meet the particularity objection because the causal self-referentiality condition that he assigns to the content of perceptual states only ensures the particularity of the subject's *experience* of an object of perception, and not the particularity of the *object* itself. (Readers will note that if this criticism is valid, an analogous criticism would be valid against Searle's token-reflexive analysis of indexicals and demonstratives, which is directly inspired from his analysis of perceptual experience: the criticism would in that case be that, though the token-reflexive analysis aims to guarantee the particularity of the *referent* of an indexical or demonstrative, it only guarantees the particularity of the *utterance* containing an indexical or demonstrative token.) Bach's preferred solution to the problem insofar as it concerns the objects of perceptual experiences does not seek to secure the particularity of those objects either by adding to the content of the experiences further general propositions of the sort supplied by Searle or by substituting to those propositions a singular proposition of the sort favored by Searle's externalist opponents; his preferred solution is rather to deny that the particularity of the object of a perceptual experience is a feature determined by its content (which, in Bach's view, is not a complete proposition) and to suggest instead that it is a feature determined by its psychological mode: a perceptual experience, Bach grants, cannot be of a particular object unless that particular object causes the experience; but that requirement, he insists, specifies what it takes for an experience to be perceptual and not what a subject having a perceptual experience experiences. Bach's suggestion, then, is that Searle could and should seek to meet the particularity objection by exploiting his own distinction between the mode and the content of mental states, and by rejecting an assumption that both he and his

externalist opponents commonly make, namely, that the content of perceptual experiences is the only terrain in which the particularity of their objects could be captured.

Robin Jeshion's essay argues that the particularity objection is ultimately unavoidable for internalism, and that the extent to which Searle's internalist account of perceptual experience is open to externalist challenges is significantly greater than has so far been appreciated. Reviewing first some common worries to the effect that the causal self-referentiality condition introduced by Searle may be too complicated or too sophisticated to be supposed to be available to the subjects of perceptual experiences, she suggests that these worries are not decisive and that Searle can in fact address them. She next argues, however, that the particularity objection can be raised against Searle on grounds quite different from those that have triggered the introduction of the causal self-referentiality condition, and that the specific form that the particularity objection takes when it is raised on those new grounds cannot be dealt with by Searle unless he abandons either his internalism or his fundamental and widely shared conviction that perceptual experiences put their subjects directly in contact with the external world. Jeshion's principal claim is that perceptual experience of objects through vision necessarily involves conscious identification of the real-world *locations* of objects relative to the experiencing subject, and that, contrary to what Searle's account requires, the subject's awareness of its relation to those external locations cannot be fully specified in purely internal terns – in other words, that the content of the subject's experience cannot contain a fully identifying specification of what the subject is aware of when it judges that an object is *there*, if the specification of the location denoted by "there" is to be couched in purely conceptual terms. (Jeshion notes that a parallel problem arises in the context of Searle's account of linguistic reference: even granting the token-reflexive part of Searle's account of the meaning of indexicals and demonstratives, reference to particular *locations* by means of indexicals and demonstratives cannot be supposed to be enabled, Jeshion contends, by the kind of meaning that Searle ascribes to indexicals and demonstratives, since that meaning fails to be sufficiently specificatory by virtue of being purely conceptual.) Having provided detailed a priori reasons against a purely internalist account of the content of perceptual experience, Jeshion completes her discussion by considering a rich body of recent experimental research that suggests that subjects are able to consciously track the successive locations of multiple moving objects under conditions that

preclude the hypothesis that their ability to do so is based on conceptually encoding their changing locational properties. She therefore concludes that there are good empirical and nonempirical reasons for doubting that Searle can deflate the full range of externalist arguments that can be lodged against his internalist account of the content of perceptual experiences, even though the causal self-referentiality condition that he has introduced might well constitute an apt characterization of one aspect of those experiences.

Externalism may not, of course, be the proper alternative to internalism with respect to the analysis of every sort of intentional content, and in the next essay, whose topic is Searle's analysis of the sense and reference of proper names, Wayne A. Davis argues that Searle's internalist analysis of names, assuming that some of its key elements are replaced with certain original elements that Davis recommends, not only can avoid externalist objections that have been widely assumed to be fatal to it, but is clearly superior to its externalist rivals. Davis takes the basic insight of Searle's early discussion of proper names to lie in his insistence that their semantically relevant properties cannot be fully elucidated without reference to the conceptual contents that their users associate with them, and contends that purely referential, externalist accounts of the semantics of names, even though they can be used to raise valid objections against aspects of Searle's account, encounter insuperable difficulties of their own precisely because they ignore the semantic role that these conceptual contents play. Davis next argues, however, that Searle's central assumption that the semantically relevant conceptual content of names is *descriptively* specifiable makes it impossible for him either to avoid externalist objections or to exploit his internalism's real advantages, and should be replaced with the idea that names conventionally express *atomic* concepts, which, precisely because of their atomicity, cannot be reduced to any description or combination of descriptions of their purported referents. Davis then shows how the view that names express atomic concepts accounts for aspects of their semantic behavior that are impossible to explain on externalist premises, how it can explain certain other aspects of their semantic behavior that externalists have rightly drawn attention to (but which they have mistakenly tried to explain by denying that names have semantically relevant senses and not by accepting that they have *non-descriptive* semantically relevant senses), and how it allows the reaffirmation of Searle's basic internalism by removing the real but unnecessary burdens created by his descriptivism.

The last two essays of the first part of the volume discuss certain assumptions about mind and language concerning which Searle is not in dispute with other philosophers, but rather in fundamental agreement with the great majority among them; and they aim to question those widely shared assumptions, in part by scrutinizing Searle's own way of defending them. Christopher Gauker's essay disputes the assumption, which is fundamental to Searle's and to most other contemporary work on mind and language, that conceptual thought has ontological and explanatory priority over language. On Gauker's view, thought processes that are language-independent do exist – *imagistic* thought processes, in particular, are of that kind – but these thought processes are precisely the ones that are *not* conceptual; properly *conceptual* thought, Gauker contends, is essentially linguistic, and so cannot be supposed either to preexist language or to contribute to its non-circular explanation. (Conceptual thought, in Gauker's view, simply consists in the process of *imagining conversations*, with the purpose of preparing oneself to solve problems of the same kind as those that are routinely solved thanks to the coordinating effects of real conversations.) Gauker's essay is primarily devoted not to expounding his positive view, which he has explored at length elsewhere, but to rebutting a representative array of influential arguments that are commonly taken to make such a view untenable, by establishing beyond doubt that conceptual thought is independent of language. Some of the arguments for the language independence of thought that Gauker examines and rejects – for example, the arguments that begin from considerations of language learning and lead to the so-called "language of thought" hypothesis – are ones that, as he notes, Searle himself should repudiate, since they presuppose views – in particular, the computational view of the mind – which Searle has famously attacked on independent grounds. But some others – for example, those that revolve around the idea that the intentionality of mental states is intrinsic whereas the intentionality of linguistic utterances is not intrinsic – are ones that are due specifically to Searle, and determine much of the structure and content of his account of meaning (it is, for example, the idea that mental intentionality is intrinsic whereas linguistic intentionality is not intrinsic that underlies Searle's fundamental claim that linguistic meaning arises out of a process of *transferring* satisfaction conditions from mental states onto linguistic utterances). Gauker argues in detail that all these arguments for the language independence of thought are open to serious empirical, conceptual, and methodological objections,

and suggests that appreciation of the force of these objections, even though it might not immediately convert one to the view that all conceptual thought is essentially linguistic, should be enough to make one highly skeptical about the legitimacy of the currently orthodox view, of which Searle is a prominent representative, that conceptual thought has ontological and explanatory priority over language.

Skepticism about the dependence of linguistic contents on mental contents would probably be taken to be mild, if compared to skepticism about the very existence of either mental or linguistic contents as *community independent* properties of individuals' thoughts or utterances. The latter sort of skepticism, together with the suggestion that practices of communal agreement are constitutive of the contents of an individual's thoughts or utterances, is famously associated with Saul Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein's rule-following considerations. And Searle, along with most other contemporary philosophers, has sought to resist Kripke's interpretation, by arguing both that it misrepresents Wittgenstein's views and that, independently of its exegetical accuracy, it does not succeed in offering, through the communitarian account of rule-following it recommends, an acceptable solution to the paradox about content attributions that Kripke identifies in the course of his discussion of Wittgenstein. Martin Kusch's essay examines in detail Searle's critique of Kripke, and argues that Kripke's position is defensible against all aspects of Searle's critique: it does not misrepresent Wittgenstein's actual views; it is correct in suggesting that the paradox about content attributions that Kripke identifies is unavoidable for all individualistic views of mental or linguistic content; and it can successfully address all the objections that Searle has taken to be detrimental to communitarian attempts at resolving that paradox. Kusch concludes that Searle has not succeeded in showing that individualistic conceptions of content, such as the one that he espouses, are immune to the challenges posed by Kripke's communitarian interpretation of Wittgenstein, and suggests that what Searle has analyzed as the "background" of intentionality – that is, the set of *pre*-intentional capacities and practices that make mental and linguistic intentionality possible – would be an important element in further developing a communitarian conception of mental and linguistic content, provided that it would not be interpreted in Searle's own characteristically internalist terms.

The volume's second part, "From meaning to force," begins with an essay by Kepa Korta and John Perry in which, after acknowledging

(along with Searle and most other philosophers of language) the need for a distinction between propositional content and illocutionary force as two distinct components of meaning, they argue that the standard way of conceptualizing propositional content as corresponding to "what is said" in the utterance of a sentence is seriously inadequate and calls for modifications with important theoretical consequences. The ordinary notion of "what is said," Korta and Perry contend, conflates several different types of information that are normally capable of being imparted through the utterance of a sentence, and these types should be kept strictly separate from each other, not only because they are not necessarily co-instantiated in every utterance event, but also because, even when they are, they play importantly different roles both in the speaker's activity of planning an utterance and in the addressee's activity of interpreting it. Having argued that no single theoretical construct can adequately cover the various phenomena that theoreticians have sought to elucidate by making use of the ordinary notion of "what is said," Korta and Perry propose replacing that ordinary notion, for analytical purposes, with a series of distinct theoretical concepts, each of which determines a different *kind* of propositional content that a *single* utterance is capable of conveying, and show how this multipropositional conception of an utterance's content can be made precise by using the resources of Perry's reflexive-referential theory of meaning and cognitive significance (an outline of which is presented in their essay's appendix). The two most important kinds of propositional content that that theory is in a position to attribute to the utterance of a sentence are its *reflexive* propositional content and its *referential* propositional content, whose main difference is that the former does, whereas the latter does not, construe the utterance itself as a propositional constituent. Korta and Perry then show in detail why both of these kinds of propositional content need to be attributed to an utterance in order for different aspects of its significance to be adequately captured, and argue that one consequence of the multipropositional conception of utterance content they defend is that it motivates an important modification to Searle's and to most other conceptions of illocutionary acts: the various demands that Searle's analysis of illocutionary acts places on what he describes as their "propositional content" cannot, they point out, be satisfied by a single *kind* of propositional content, but are rather such that some among them can *only* be satisfied by an illocutionary act's *reflexive* propositional content, while some others can *only* be satisfied by the same illocutionary act's *referential* propositional content; and since