Editor's Introduction

From Signaling and Expression to Conversation and Fiction

Since we met for the first time several years ago, Mitchell S. Green and I have been in close contact and had innumerable inspiring discussions about a variety of philosophical and other topics. In the course of this, it became clear to me that most of his work revolves around a common underlying concept: *meaning*. I learned that this was the concept most central to Green's philosophy. This brought me to organize a workshop at the University of Münster in 2017 whose success motivated me to undertake the present special issue.

Against this background, it was quite surprising for me that it was not too long ago—we had just been discussing some of his earlier texts I had reread—that I came to realize something remarkable about Green's overall philosophical body of work I had not noticed before, something which, it appeared to me, was underlying, or rather guiding, his overall philosophical enterprise: I came to think that a great deal of Green's work should be regarded as an ongoing *challenge*, a challenge to philosophers to look beyond the familiar and well-studied phenomenon of literal meaning as it is found in human communication.

Apart from the fact that I and many others have accepted his challenge, I have to admit that I admire the persistence with which Green himself has worked to meet it. And he is also successful in doing so, which can already be seen from the fact that, over the course of the last 25 years, Green has demonstrated that the emergence of meaning can be traced back to different sources that are not themselves irreducibly either semantic or intentional. During this period of time, he has, while taking inspiration from philosophers such as Ruth Millikan and biologists such as John Maynard Smith, produced a far-reaching theory of signaling that applies across and beyond the animal kingdom, developed an account of expression as having a distinctive communicative status, formulated a taxonomy of conversation-types and an account of speech acts in terms of their conversational role, and articulated a theory of how both fictional and metaphorical discourse can be sources of knowledge and of empathetic engagement. In addition, he has shown how these different sources can reasonably be integrated into a larger picture, which, in turn, leads to a better understanding of the concept of meaning in general.

It is these insights about Green's philosophy that inspired and led to the preparation of the present special issue which is, therefore, entitled "*Sources of Meaning. Themes from Mitchell S. Green*".

The aim of the present issue is threefold: First, it aims to follow Green on his fascinating path from the evolutionary biology of communication to fictional discourse, with stops to enjoy views of expressive behavior and conversational dynamics. Second, it is a key aim of this issue to complement Green's philosophical work by critically engaging with it—just as he challenges us to do. And third, the present issue with its broad thematic range aims to exemplify the way in which philosophy at its best can discern unity among a wide variety of topics without sacrificing analytical clarity.

After a synoptic contribution by Mitchell S. Green, the present issue has four parts:

1. Signaling
2. Expression
3. Speech Acts & Conversations
4. The Epistemic Value of Fiction

In total, this issue contains ten contributions from an international group of both prominent and emerging researchers: Except for Mitchell S. Green's synoptic contribution, there are two contributions by Manolo Martínez and by Richard T. Moore to the Signaling part, two contributions by Sabine A. Döring and by Maciej Witek to the Expression part, two contributions by Claudia Bianchi and by Jan G. Michel to the Speech Acts & Conversations part, and three contributions by Manuel García-Carpintero, by Kerstin Gregor and Steffen Neuß, and by Kathleen Stock to the Epistemic Value of Fiction part.

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