Introduction: "Value in Language"

Valuing seems to be a fundamental human endeavor. We constantly attribute positive and negative traits to people, actions, events and objects around us. Thus, we find a character trait admirable, an action commendable, a dish delicious, a piece of music beautiful, a reasoning correct and so on—as well as the opposite. As we move in the world, we are guided by our evaluations, by seeking what is valuable and avoiding what is not.

We also talk a lot about valuing and about what is valuable, and natural languages have plenty of expressions that allow us to do that, in more direct or indirect ways. Given our many worldviews and goals, we also quite often disagree about what is or is not valuable, as well as about how to express it. How exactly to connect value and valuing to the meaning of the expressions we use to do all that is a question that has been on philosophers of language's minds for a long time. It is, still, an open question.

This special issue hosts 11 papers that tackle various questions that arise in relation to value and valuing in language. The interests of the authors featured range from general considerations regarding the normative sphere to very specific issues and phenomena connected to the use of various natural language expressions such as predicates of taste, generics, evaluatives, slurs and taboo words. This introduction serves to present the special issue to the reader by giving a short description of the main claims and arguments of each contribution.

The issue opens with Pekka Väyrynen's paper "Normative Naturalism on Its Own Terms". In it, Väyrynen focuses on normative naturalism (the thesis that normative facts and properties are among natural facts and properties) and investigates two claims related to how we talk and think about norms. The first is that a successful naturalist view requires describing normative properties in wholly non-normative terms. Using arguments found in the literature (especially those by Sturgeon (2003)) and offering some of his own, Väyrynen argues that providing the said description is not a commitment of normative

naturalism *per se* and that this does not threaten the notion of natural property. The second claim is that normative properties are "too different" from natural properties to be counted as such. Here, Väyrynen shows, first, that once the previous point is acknowledged, the objection loses its force; and second, that the notion of "genuine autoritativity" (what makes normative concepts play the special role they do: their connection to deliberation, decision, action etc.) is hard to pin down. The paper also contains a "proof of concept" (in terms of orderings of non-arbitrary selections among the live options in a given deliberative context) that normative naturalists have no troubles accounting for thought and talk related to genuine autoritativity.

The next two papers tackle the much-discussed phenomenon of faultless disagreement, said to be found chiefly in "disputes of inclination"—for example, about matters of taste. Natalia Karczewska's paper investigates this phenomenon in relation to the predicate of personal taste 'tasty'. Thus, in "Illocutionary Disagreement in Faultless Disagreement", she argues that extant contextualist proposals fail to account for autocentric disagreements involving 'tasty' and proposes a novel view of disagreement that does. Karczewska takes predicates of taste to be associated with a new type of illocutionary speech act—what she calls "evaluations", which she thoroughly characterizes following Searle and Vanderveken's (1985) list of features. Disagreement arises due to failed attempts at introducing opposite commitments imposed on the common ground by such acts. Karczewska further argues that this way of seeing disagreement, although close to the more familiar "clash of attitudes" construal (originating with Stevenson 1963), is nevertheless different from it and less troublesome.

Alex Davies also picks up the issue of faultless disagreement in his contribution, but takes the discussion in a different direction. Davies argues in "Faultless Disagreement Contextualism" that whether a certain exchange is a faultless disagreement essentially depends on context. His main target is the widely assumed idea that the source of the phenomenon is the meaning of the target predicates themselves—that is, their "subjective" character, which distinguishes them from "objective" ones. By carefully going through a wide range of examples and by putting forward a positive proposal that connects faultless disagreement with the reasons interlocutors have for making their assertions (so that it arises when those reasons are permissive with respect to assessing whether

a certain object has a property), Davies shows that this assumption doesn't hold. One (important) consequence of this view is that the metasemantics of "subjective" predicates is context-sensitive, thus undercutting the debate between contextualism and relativism. The final part of the paper is dedicated to answering four objections to this way of seeing faultless disagreement.

The next paper in the issue—Katharina Felka's "'Boys Don't Cry' - An Ambiguous Statement?"—focuses on generic statements. Specifically, Felka aims to show that sentences like the one in her title that have what is called a "normative" reading should not be given a semantic treatment, but a pragmatic one instead. Felka proposes that such readings are best taken to be conversational implicatures, generated by the maxim of relation ('Be relevant!'). She engages with two prominent views on generics, Leslie's (2015) and Cohen's (2001), showing their inadequacy to capture normative readings, and arguing at the same time that a pragmatic account like the one described above has all the resources needed to do so.

'Good' is one of the English words perhaps most closely connected with valuing and value. In "Value and Scale: Some Observations and a Proposal", Andrés Soria-Ruiz sets out to disentangle what semantic treatment

is best suited for it. Starting from the observation that 'good' is gradable, Soria-Ruiz investigates what type of scale should be associated with the word, and argues that a novel type—"round ratio scales"—is the answer. In doing so, he operates within the framework proposed by Lassiter (2017), but enriches and transforms it so that to accommodate various linguistics phenomena (most importantly the felicity of expressions like 'twice as good') that Lassiter's framework in itself was not able to. One notable consequence of Soria-Ruiz's view is that there is a rift between propositional level and individual level 'good': while the former has an interval scale, round ratio scales apply to the latter.

A slew of papers in this issue are concerned with slurs—proving once again how attractive for researchers this topic has been in recent years. While the range of topics dealt with varies from general or more fundamental issues to very specific ones, all papers contribute to the elucidation of some important aspect of the current, multifaceted debate involving slurs. Thus, in "The Derogatory Force and the Offensiveness of Slurs", Chang Liu argues for the importance of clearly distinguishing between the two elements mentioned in his title and that neglecting this distinction in current literature has led to muddling the

waters. Four arguments are presented: from a comparison with non-slurs, from the behavior of quoted slurs, from the use of slurs in argots and from the difference between derogatory and offensive autonomy. He also puts forward a positive view ("The Speech Act Theory of Slurs") according to which derogation and offence are achieved via specific speech acts (the former illocutionary, the latter perlocutionary) and compares this view with a few others on the market (Anderson and Lepore's (2013) prohibition view; Davis and McCready's (2020) invocational view; etc.), showcasing its advantages.

With her paper "Rethinking Slurs: A Case Against Neutral Counterparts and the Introduction of Referential Flexibility", Alice Damirjian brings into discussion an idea that has played a big role in the debate so far: namely, that slurs have what is known as "neutral counterparts" (expressions that refer to the same group as a slur but don't contain an evaluative component). Focusing on Diaz Legaspe's (2018) defense of this claim, Damirjian forcefully opposes it by adducing arguments both from past and present uses of slurs in support of the idea of "referential flexibility": the fact that slurs are often used to refer to a subgroup of members of their presumed neutral counterparts, but also to individuals that don't belong to the group.

This shows that slurs and their presumed neutral counterparts cannot be truth-conditionally equivalent. She maintains not only that the neutral counterparts idea is unsupported by the data, but also that assuming it in current debates leads us astray in our inquiry.

Bianca Cepollaro's paper "The Moral Status of the Reclamation of Slurs" concerns reclamation: the act of taking a negatively-charged expression such as a slur and turning it into a positive one for political, solidarity or camaraderie purposes. Specifically, Cepollaro engages with an argument against the legitimacy of reclamation ("the warrant argument"): namely, that since no negative evaluative property can be essentially connected to a non-evaluative one, neither a positive one should. This puts reclamation into doubt. Cepollaro carefully spells out the premises of the argument and then replies to it by making a parallel with affirmative action: as it can be morally permissible to balance an existing form of injustice by introducing a mechanism that temporarily violates the relevant norm of equality, so reclamation can be morally permissible too. The paper ends with some remarks aimed at debunking "the myth of reverse racism and sexism".

Zuzanna Jusińska is concerned with the same phenomenon, albeit with a different purpose in mind. In

"Slur Reclamation—Polysemy, Echo, or Both?", Jusińska is interested in the precise mechanism by which reclamation works, and to this effect they investigate two prominent views on the market: Jeshion's (2020) and Bianchi's (2014). Jusińska takes each of them not to be wrong, but incomplete, and thus to support the need for a more complex picture. Jusińska appeals to detailed historical records of the reclamation of certain slurs ('queer' and the n-word), which they take to mandate the introduction of an additional pragmatic step in Jeshion's scheme, involving echoic uses of slurs, that leads to the initiation of a new linguistic convention. The result of this endeavor is what is called in the paper "the Combined view of reclamation", which they take both to provide the element missing in previous accounts and to better handle the historical data.

The part of the issue tackling slurs ends with Alba Moreno and Eduardo Pérez-Navarro's paper "Beyond the Conversation: The Pervasive Danger of Slurs". The authors defend the view that occurrences of slurs, both in speech and in written form (including in academic papers) are dangerous in that they have the potential to be harmful. First, they reject the idea that whether a slur is derogatory depends on the linguistic environment it appears in: quoted slurs, for example, can harm too. Second, they pin the derogatoriness of slurs on the type of context in which they occur: while slurs are always derogatory in "uncontrolled contexts", they can be non-derogatory in "controlled contexts" (roughly, the ones in which speakers know how they will be interpreted). However, their claim is that even the use of slurs in such contexts can lead to normalizing derogation. The authors end the paper with some considerations relevant for the practice of researchers writing on slurs.

The closing paper of the issue tackles a puzzling phenomenon that has interested scholars from various fields of inquiry: taboo. In "Unmentionables: Some Remarks on Taboo", Stefano Predelli ponders on what makes taboo words puzzling and shows that neither an orthodox, truth-conditional approach nor a more sophisticated, non-truth-conditional treatment fully accounts for it. On the positive side, Predelli gestures towards a theory that subsumes taboo words under a theory of action, as they are essentially related to acts of tokening, which neatly ties the fact that they are unmentionable to their mere occurrence in speech or writing. The last part of the paper contains some remarks about the silencing power of taboo and a plea for the fruitfulness of inquiring about taboo words—in itself, for the semantics

and for the metasemantics of natural language.

Both the topics of value and valuing in themselves and the range of specific issues related to them go far beyond what has been addressed in these papers. However, by putting together this special issue, I hope to have offered the reader a snapshot of some of the current preoccupations with these topics and issues and, hopefully, a springboard for future developments, arguments, and discussion. Obviously, the special issue wouldn't have been possible without the effort of a great number of people involved. Thus, I want to thank all contributors for their papers and their commitment to improve them, all the reviewers for their patience and dedication, all those involved in the activities leading to the publication of the issue (especially Matteo Pascucci and Mirco Sambrotta for co-organizing with me the "Value in Language" workshop at the Slovak Academy of Sciences on 29-30.03.2021, on which the volume is based), and the Slovak Academic Information Agency for financial support (through the Initiative Project no. 2019-10-15-007). Last but not least, I want to thank the editor-in-chief of *Organon F*, Martin Vacek, for his unflinching support for this project.

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