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NORMATIVITY OF MEANING AND SEMANTIC NATURALISM

Abstract

The normativity of meaning is a widely discussed topic in the philosophy of language and mind. A widespread view is that no explanation of semantic properties in terms of natural properties could ever succeed in accounting for the intuitive distinction between correct and incorrect uses of a word or concept, that is, normativity and semantic naturalism are incompatible. Such a view traces back to Kripke's discussion of the topic in *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. The aim of this paper is to argue in favour of the compatibility of naturalism and the normativity claim, by showing that Kripke's argument contains several questionable assumptions. In particular, *internalism* is taken for granted both in its semantic and in its epistemic version. Once internalism is abandoned, we can make room for the idea that semantic relations can be explained in terms of the relations between a human organism and its environment, and in particular, for the claim that norms about meaning derive from natural facts.