**Does metaphysics depend on representationalism?**

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According to Michael Devitt (e.g. 2010, 2013), John Searle (1995) and others, belief in a mind-independent reality and the viability of theorizing about the structure of this reality does not depend in any way on semantic theses, such as the correspondence theory of truth – which is naturally construed as a variety of a broader position I call *representationalism*, according to which meaning is explained by reference to properties like reference and truth. Huw Price (2004, 2011, 2013) has recently argued, on the contrary, that substantive metaphysical questions, at least in the form of so-called ‘placement problems’ concerning how everyday phenomena can be located in a naturalistic world-view, are only viable given the correctness of some kind of representationalism (a view of meaning which he also rejects). This paper discusses and evaluates this (at least apparent) disagreement, and argues that there is indeed a threat to the metaphysical programme of ‘placement’ and its metaphysically realistic presuppositions from anti-representationalism, though not quite for the reasons Price thinks.

I first outline a generic anti-representationalist view I call ‘neo-pragmatism’, or NP for short. NP adopts a neo-Carnapian (in the sense of Carnap 1950) view of language on which questions about whether, and if so what, a term refers to only make sense against a background of concrete linguistic practices involving that term; moreover the existence and coherence of such practices alone typically ensures that answers to certain questions conceived of by many philosophers as requiring serious metaphysical enquiry (cf. Jackson 1998), such as whether there are numbers or moral values, turn out to be trivially positive. This kind of view is allied to a use theoretic conception of meaning, and deflationary conception of reference and truth as defended by Horwich (1990, 1998). (Cf. Price 2009 and Thomasson forthcoming for defences of these bundles of ideas.)

I then argue that NP both a) in and of itself *suggests* anti-metaphysical consequences insofar as it repudiates the idea of a unified reality ‘out there’ to investigated, and b) is the minimal form of anti-representationalism worth caring about, so that a view which sees no tension between the meaningfulness of metaphysical enquiry and, say, deflationism, in the way Horwich (2013) does and Devitt and Searle seem committed to, is *ipso facto* suspect. However the suggestion of a conflict is not yet a demonstration, for the neo-Carnapian thesis concerns primarily ontology not metaphysics. Now Price (2004) offers an argument that can be seen as aiming to bridge that gap, namely that outlined in the first paragraph above. However, given Price remains committed to a strong form of naturalism, I argue that – notwithstanding his aim is to vindicate expressivist rather than metaphysical or reductionist forms of explanation – his arguments leave a loophole for someone who would want to promote metaphysics within a neo-pragmatist framework, such as Quine. I then go on to argue that nevertheless, for a supporter of NP at least, Quine’s conception of physics as a kind of foundation for all other sciences is not very plausible – a result which does serve to bridge the gap in question, i.e. vindicate the apparent anti-metaphysical consequences of accepting NP. Finally I sketch how NP can reasonably be seen as a realisitic i.e. non-idealistic philosophy without being *metaphysically* realistic, that is, without subscribing to the idea of a ‘mind-independent’ reality.

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