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***Paul Grice: Philosopher and Linguist*, by Siobhan Chapman.
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Pp. vii + 247. H/b £45.**

Paul Grice seems to have led a quintessentially academic life — a life spent jotting notes, giving lectures, reading, talking, and arguing with his past self and with others. In virtue of his age and station, he remained largely at the fringes of the great battles of his day — World War II and the clash of the positivists with the ordinary language group. There are no grand family tensions à la Russell, nor any deep psychoses à la Wittgenstein. Just obstinacy, unfashionable dress, cricket, and periods of gluttony. It is not the usual stuff of high drama. But Siobhan Chapman's biography *Paul Grice: Philosopher and Linguist* tells a compelling story. It's a story of surprising influences and gradual intellectual evolution. And it is well timed from the linguist's perspective. Now more than ever, the boundaries of conversational implicatures, Grice's most important designation, are being re-drawn. It is illuminating to return to their sources and track their development.

Chapman organizes her biography chronologically, moving from Grice's school-boy days in suburban England, up the ladder of academic positions at Oxford, to his tenure at UC Berkeley and his death in 1988 (with "as many projects on the go as ever" (p. 182)), and on into a final chapter on his intellectual legacy. But the events of his life — marriage, military service, illness — play only a minor role. They seem to be here largely to provide some semblance of physical structure to a life spent moving mostly along intellectual paths. The overall portrait is of an argumentative, persistent mind, one tending so far towards perfection that he was invariably late to publish if he published at all.

Chapter 1 sets the stage. We learn that, "for Grice there was no real distinction between life and work" (p. 8). We get glimpses of his preferred approach to philosophy and a general picture of where his work took him. In Chapter 2, Grice comes of age intellectually while J. L. Austin and A. J. Ayer do battle over the interrelationships between logic, language, and philosophy. Grice allied himself with Austin, his teacher and later colleague, but a theme of the first four chapters is Grice's growing unease with the aims and methodology of ordinary language

philosophy.

By Chapter 3, we have sped past the war and into the post-war days at Oxford. Grice has found a permanent lectureship at St. John's College, Oxford. Chapman expertly reviews the topics of the day and also provides us with a clear-sighted view of Grice and his colleagues at work. They behave like linguists: they run through example sentences, construct idealized dialogues and discourse situations, and toy with grammaticality and felicity intuitions. But whereas linguists aim to understand language and the human capacity to process and use it, Grice and his colleagues hoped that their linguistic investigations would provide them with answers to questions of metaphysics and epistemology.

Chapter 4 details the development and publication of his paper 'Meaning' (1957). By this time, Grice had deep misgivings about ordinary language philosophy. He remained a sort of lifelong ambassador for the Austinian program, but around this time he had begun in earnest a search for general principles and theories — a search that was in many ways anathema to the ordinary language group's philosophy about how to do philosophy.

Chapters 6–8 cover his Berkeley years. The new environment seems to have deeply influenced his intellectual interests while leaving his accent, spelling habits, and views on social class firmly moored across the Atlantic. These chapters show Grice returning time and again to his "linguistic botanising" even as he addresses questions of ethics, metaphysics and the foundations of psychology.

Linguists will be most interested in chapters 5 and 9. Chapter 5, 'Logic and conversation', covers Grice's 1967 William James Lectures at Harvard, where he delivered his most influential paper, 'Logic and conversation'. Chapter 9, 'Gricean pragmatics', discusses some of the major extensions and modifications of Grice's theory of conversation that have developed since 1967. These chapters are full of revelations about Grice and his influences, and Chapman handles them with clarity and grace. For instance, the passages in which she sets the stage for the original Gricean maxims are as informative and insightful as anything found in the work of Grice's most influential present-day commentators. These two chapters could fruitfully be read as part of a course on pragmatics.

The story of 'Logic and conversation' is, broadly construed, a typical story of intellectual breakthrough. Grice's major achievement was to propose and sketch a theory of the "system and order" (p. 98) that underlies communication among rational agents. But, as Chapman shows, the idea was very much in the air already: John Searle had already begun looking for rule governed systems for communication, as had Peter Strawson. Reaching farther back, Chapman cites John Stuart Mill, G. E. Moore, and even Aristotle talking about what we would today call

scalar conversational implicatures, following Grice and Horn (1972). But it was Grice who said it in a way that others could hear clearly.

I was delighted to learn that Chomsky was a catalyst for Grice. It speaks to Grice's intellectual greatness. At the time, Chomsky was a vocal opponent of any and all who sought to drag the messy world of meaning and use into linguistics. Moreover, what Grice proposed is by no means a modified-purpose Chomskyan generative grammar, but rather a loose calculus of nonmonotonic inference, one that leans more heavily on world knowledge than it does on linguistic competence. It was a remarkable analytic achievement to see through the rhetorical and substantive differences to a common goal: "a general theory where previously there had been only localized description" (p. 86). This is, in my view, Grice's major contribution to studies of linguistically-expressed meaning.

Chapman portrays Grice as a "skillful heretic", but he emerges also as a talented mediator. He showed that neither the formalists nor the informalists had it quite right, but neither had it completely wrong either. In 'Logic and conversation', he sets out the idea that linguistic communication is rooted in conventions about meaning, but that speaker-meaning often extends far beyond this. Chapman tracks the emergence of this subtle balance, which begins (like 'Logic and conversation' itself) with the relationship between the classical logical connectives and their usual natural language glosses and culminates in a full-blown theory of meaning.

Chapman recounts (p. 186) the story of the accidentally dual publication of 'Logic and conversation'. Davidson and Harman 1975 is reported to be Grice's preferred home for the work. Its appearance in Cole and Morgan 1975 might trace back to a long evening at a Texas bar. I confess to some dismay that Grice favored the Davidson and Harman 1975 publication. There, 'Logic and conversation' is just one of many papers about truth and reference by leading lights in philosophy. In contrast, Cole and Morgan 1975 is practically devoted to Grice's theory of conversational implicature. It was the linguists who placed him in the spotlight. The contrast seems representative of Grice's position in the two fields: in philosophy, he is one in a long list of influential theorists of language, meaning, and reference. In linguistics, he is absolutely central; he and Richard Montague are the two theorists most responsible for the shape of linguistic meaning studies today. And within current pragmatic theory, just about every position is in some sense defined by its relationship to Grice's William James Lectures.

The evolution of the pragmatic maxims provides a good sense for Grice's centrality to linguistic pragmatics. The original maxims are now widely regarded as redundant in some places and objectionably vague in others. Most theorists accept

them only in greatly modified form (Horn, 1996). But Grice's central insight — that pragmatic inferences are governed by something like contractual obligations, rather than logical axioms or the like — survives in all influential present-day theories.

The centrality of the maxims leads fairly directly to a more specific, and more easily tested, proposal: that many pragmatic meanings are *calculable*. That is, given the conventional meaning of an utterance, the maxims, and an understanding of the discourse context, we can predict which conversational implicatures will arise and which will not. Calculability is near and dear to just about all current researchers. For some, conversational implicatures are not only calculable, but in fact calculated wherever they arise (Horn, 2005). Others have proposed a class of default (presumptive) inferences — meanings that language users have, in some sense, pre-calculated (Levinson, 2000). And still others have stipulated them as a kind of secondary lexical meaning (Chierchia, 2004), implicitly assuming that they will receive some kind of principled derivation. The consensus opinion is that a properly functioning pragmatic theory can deliver these meanings from more basic elements. This brings us back to Grice, though perhaps along a route he did not travel.

One of the central questions of current theorizing might have surprised Grice. Are conversational implicatures properties of sentences or of utterances? Gricean pragmatics provides a clear answer: they are properties of utterances (in context), and to talk about them as though they inhered in sentences is to commit a philosophical blunder. But researchers have uncovered evidence that even proper subparts of sentences can produce (generalized) conversational implicatures (Kadmon and Landman, 1993; Levinson, 2000; Chierchia, 2004). With the sentence, *Joan believes that some of her students will fail*, we seem able to convey that Joan believes that not all of her students will fail — a classic scalar conversational implicature, but derived from a nonasserted subconstituent of the sentence. These *intrusive* pragmatic meanings are highly unexpected from the original Gricean perspective. They have led Chierchia and Levinson to propose mechanisms that allow for the manipulation of pragmatic meanings by lexical items at the sub-sentential level. As of this writing, it is unclear where exactly these problems will take the field of linguistic pragmatics even in the short term.

Chapman's biography can serve as a useful guide, as we address this question and also explore entirely new avenues — connections between Gricean pragmatics and game theory (Benz et al., 2005), implications for theories of acquisition and psycholinguistic processing, and so forth. Chapman has performed a great service for us all by organizing and distilling Grice's numerous unpublished notes and

unresolved collaborations. As philosophers and linguists continue to redefine and renegotiate the nature and role of (Gricean) pragmatics, they would do well to mine Chapman's research for the subtleties of perspective and emphasis that she has uncovered and articulated for us.

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