

Actualist Meaning Objectivism

In this paper, I defend a strong version of actual intentionalism. First, I argue against meaning subjectivism, conventionalism and contextualism. Second, I discuss what I take to be the most important rival to actual intentionalism, namely hypothetical intentionalism. I argue that, although hypothetical intentionalism might be acceptable as a definition of the concept of utterance meaning, it does not provide an acceptable answer to the question of what *determines* an utterance's meaning. Third, I deal with the most serious objection against actual intentionalism, namely the failure objection. I argue that the failure objection can be overcome within a framework of full-blown actual intentionalism if one distinguishes between categorial and semantic intentions. Moreover, I show how this version of actual intentionalism accounts for the possibility of innovative metaphors and other implicatures. Finally, I demonstrate that actual intentionalism – thus construed – makes it possible to distinguish between communicative failures and the intentional breaking of conventions.