

*Pekka Väyrynen – Evaluative Terms and Normative Role*

Evaluative and normative terms play a practical or normative role in our discourse. The normative role of 'right', for instance, might include any or all of the following: a person who calls an action 'right' characteristically commits herself to there being weighty normative reasons to do it; she will tend to be disposed to feel guilt for failing to do it and resent others for not doing it; and she will characteristically incorporate the action into her plans about what to do. At least the thinnest uses of "thin" evaluative terms, such as 'good', 'right', and 'ought', are widely thought to play their normative role as a matter of meaning; they are semantically constrained to express only something that plays the relevant normative role for at least competent and rational speakers. In this talk I'll argue that a "pragmatic" view is at least a serious contender. The characteristic normative roles of even the thin(nest) uses of 'good', 'right', and 'ought' are to be explained pragmatically, as a feature of their uses in conversational contexts, not as a semantic feature. I'll first raise some considerations against a semantic explanation of normative role, and then outline how a pragmatic explanation of normative role might plausibly go.