Research Statement

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My primary research project is on rational explanation, the mode of explanation in which we seek to account for a person’s thoughts and actions by citing her reasons for them. My aim is to describe what is distinctive about rational explanation—what blocks its assimilation to other, better philosophically understood, kinds of explanation—and to trace out the implications of these results for the so-called “naturalization” project in the philosophy of mind, for rule-following skepticism, for the normativity of rationality, and for several other topics. My secondary research project concerns semantic contextualism, the view that the meaning of an utterance is shaped in far-reaching and unobvious ways by the context in which it is uttered. Here a central part of my focus is to understand and oppose the initial moves that set the stage for arguments for contextualism, moves that tend to be taken for granted in the contemporary literature by contextualists and their opponents alike. In my work on both projects, I am interested in bringing to bear what I regard as important ideas and insights on the part of the later Wittgenstein.

In §1 and §2 I describe my work to the present on these projects. In §3 and §4 I discuss my plans for the development of these projects in the immediate and less immediate future.

1. Rational explanation: work to the present

1.1 Semantic naturalism and the explanatory role of content

Naturalism is the doctrine that the phenomena of mental life—perception, thought, deliberation, action, and so on—can be fully understood and ex-
explained in terms drawn from the natural sciences. This doctrine is the governing conviction of much current work in the philosophy of mind (not to mention the popular-intellectual discourse on the mind) and sets for that work a clear agenda. The agenda is to “naturalize” mental phenomena: i.e., to construct a theory that displays the phenomena as constituted by states and properties belonging to the ontology of some natural science.

I am convinced that naturalism is a mistake. This is not because I take mental phenomena to be in any sense supernatural, nor because I doubt the legitimacy of the scientific study of the human organism. My view is rather that our ordinary understanding of mental phenomena constitutes an autonomous compartment of our thought, one that neither competes with, nor reduces to, the sciences of the brain and body.

In the earliest of the work here discussed, I made the case for this view by arguing that going naturalistic accounts of mental content were impossible to reconcile with a ground-floor principle about the nature of rational explanation: that for purposes of rational explanation, the relevant properties of a belief or other attitude include its content. The principle is familiar but its implications are difficult to keep in view.

In “Teleofunctionalism and Psychological Explanation” (Bridges, 2006c), I press this point against teleofunctionalism, a naturalistic account of content developed by the philosopher Fred Dretske (1988, 2000) and others. What gives the objection particular bite in this case is that Dretske is more sensitive than most of his naturalist peers to the need to respect the contours of rational explanation, and indeed, his view is motivated by a perception that other naturalistic accounts of content, especially those that look to evolutionary biology, fail to accommodate the principle mentioned above. That even Dretske cannot effect the accommodation suggests that the challenge for naturalism posed by the principle is severe.

In “Does Informational Semantics Commit Euthyphro’s Fallacy?” (Bridges, 2006b), I argue that informational semantics, the most well-known and worked-out naturalistic account of content, conflicts with an uncontentious claim about the holistic character of belief formation. Since this claim is a premise in the argument for informational semantics, the result is that the view is self-contradictory. In fact, it turns out to be guilty of a sophisticated version of the fallacy famously committed by Euthyphro in the eponymous Platonic dialogue. The argument turns on a small set of fundamental points about the logic of explanation, including the principle about the role of content in rational explanation mentioned above.
1.2 Concepts of mental life and concepts of animal life

The main source of resistance to acknowledging that concepts of mental phenomena have their home in an autonomous mode of understanding and explanation—a mode of understanding that cannot be reduced to those at work in natural science—is that this acknowledgement can seem in conflict with the thought that human beings are wholly natural creatures, with no foot in a super- or extra-natural realm. It might seem a short leap from this thought (call it the naturalness thesis) to naturalism as defined above. One of several possible strategies for suggesting that naturalness doesn’t entail naturalism is to show that denying the prospect of reduction is perfectly consistent with recognizing meaningful dimensions of continuity between rational explanation and the style of explanation we bring to bear in observation and reflection on the activities of non-human animals.¹ In Davidson’s Transcendental Externalism (Bridges, 2006a), I suggest specifically that the quasi-intentional notion of responding to, crucial for propositional-attitude ascription, is also a fundamental and well-integrated element in what I call the ordinary conception of animal life.

The immediate aim of that paper is to challenge Donald Davidson’s attempt to demonstrate that certain causal relationships to the physical-cum-social environment are metaphysical preconditions for the acquisition of thought. Davidson is no naturalist; he explicitly disclaims the naturalistic project. But nor, I think, does he achieve a perspective from which the irreducibility of the mental does not threaten its status as fully real. In particular, I try to show that Davidson’s argument for his externalist preconditions turns on a doubt about the independent basis of our judgments concerning what other creatures are responding to. Seeing that such judgments are implicated in our reflection on non-human animals no less than in our reflection on creatures with thought and language, I argue, gives the lie to Davidson’s doubt.

1.3 Motivation and deliberation

My work on rational explanation has components in both the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of action. I now turn from the former to the latter, where my emphasis is on articulating a positive account of rational

¹For some discussion of a different strategy for detaching naturalness from naturalism, see Bridges (2007a).
explanation and setting it to work in solving central problems.

In the philosophy of action the reasons for which people act are often called *motivating reasons*. The dominant view of motivating reasons in the literature is the so-called *Humean theory of motivation*, according to which every motivating reason involves a want or desire on the part of the agent. The Humean theory opposes *cognitivism*, the view that motivating reasons can be constituted wholly by the agent’s beliefs. The basic intuition behind the Humean theory is that beliefs and other cognitive states are motivationally impotent, their role limited at best to harnessing and directing motivational forces generated by other elements in the agent’s psychological economy. As Blackburn (1995, p. 695) puts the thought, “there is always something else, something that is not under the control of fact and reason, which has to be given as a brute extra, if deliberation is ever to end by determining the will.” This “brute extra” is naturally conceived as a want or desire. And for various reasons, it is generally conceived in dispositionalist terms.

In *Dispositions and Rational Explanation* (Bridges, forthcoming), I oppose the Humean theory. Part of my case against the account is a diagnosis of its appeal. As I try to bring out, this appeal stems from an assumption about the nature of causal explanation that is not inevitable and that may in turn be understood as a manifestation of the same frame of mind that motivates naturalism in the philosophy of mind.

But the bulk of my case against Humeanism is the promotion of a resolutely cognitivist alternative. The argument for this alternative appeals to two features of rational explanations: their *normativity* and their invocation of the *deliberative standpoint*. That rational explanations have the first of these features is fairly widely recognized in the literature, and many Humeans believe they have the resources to accommodate it. I argue that these attempts at accommodation fail on grounds of extensional adequacy. But more importantly, the confidence of Humeans on this score is a result of their failure to appreciate the precise way in which normativity enters into rational explanation. The normativity of rational explanation is a side effect of its methodology: a rational explanation operates by reconstructing the explicit or implicit course of deliberation by which the agent was led to form the intention to perform that action, and deliberation—the reflective activity in which one aims to settle what to do—necessarily has a normative subject matter. I call the view thus arrived at *deliberative cognitivism* (I’ve never been good at finding snappy names). Once we have a clear understanding
of this connection between rational explanation of action and practical deliberation, I argue, we will see that the Humean emphasis on non-cognitive volitional states is a serious confusion.

1.4 The normativity of rationality

In one sense of the term, *rationality* is a capacity. On the conception I favor, it is the capacity to recognize, weigh and be moved by reasons—in effect, to be the sort of creature whose antics might be subject to rational explanation. In another sense, rationality is an achievement, opposed not to non-rationality (the absence of the capacity) but to irrationality. Achievement-rationality has been a central subject for many decades in decision theory and psychology and in philosophical work influenced by those subjects. In the context of that literature, rationality is understood as a matter of internal coherence among one’s attitudes; debates concern only the nature of the relationships required for coherence. In “The Normativity of Rationality” (Bridges, ms-a), I argue that making satisfactory sense of (achievement-)rationality requires moving beyond the bare idea of coherence toward considerations of explanation. A rational belief or intention is not merely one that coheres logically or instrumentally with one’s pre-existing attitudes; it is an attitude that is rationally explained, in the sense I’ve been discussing here, by one’s pre-existing attitudes.\(^2\)

The most important issue illuminated by this move concerns the problem of the normativity of rationality. We take for granted in everyday life that achievement-rationality is normative for us—that we have reason to be rational, or at least to avoid irrationality. But the existence of norms of rationality presents severe philosophical difficulties, and various logical and conceptual stratagems philosophers have proposed for avoiding these difficulties do not succeed. Kolodny (2005) is thus moved to deny that rationality is normative, and to propose an error theory of our belief otherwise. In “Rationality, Normativity and Transparency” (Bridges, forthcomingb), I argue that Kolodny’s account is untenable. But that leaves us with the philosophical difficulties with which we began. The main aim of (Bridges, ms-a) is to argue that conceiving rationality in terms of explanation paves the way for a solution to those difficulties.

\(^2\)For criticism of a third strategy for conceptualizing achievement-rationality, see Bridges (2007b).
1.5 Rule-following skepticism and rational explanation

It is common to read Kripke’s celebrated ‘skeptical paradox’ about rules and meaning as directed in the first instance to the existence of rules and meanings—more generally, to the existence of items that have a normative bearing on our behavior. In “Rule-Following Skepticism, Properly So Called” (Bridges, forthcoming), I argue that the argument for the paradox is best understood as challenging, in the first instance, the possibility of following rules or meanings—of acting on the basis of the normative bearing for one’s behavior that one takes the rule or meaning to provide. To characterize a person as following a given rule is to offer an explanation of her performance; it is, in fact, a species of rational explanation. So interpreted, then, the skeptical argument attacks the intelligibility of (at least some) rational explanations.

Viewing the skeptical argument in this light illuminates otherwise puzzling features of Kripke’s text and provides for a richer understanding of the relationship between Kripke’s argument and the remarks on rule following by Wittgenstein that constitute its ostensible source. But it does not render the argument sound. To summarize the gist of a lengthy effort to extract a valid skeptical argument from the material of Kripke’s text: I try to show that the argument turns on the thought that when a person follows a rule her performances are guided by her understanding of the rule. This thought, which I call the guidance conception of understanding does indeed generate a regress of the kind Kripke’s skeptic is concerned to bring out. But the problem for the skeptical argument is that we are not given sufficient reason to accept the conception. Its appeal, I suggest lies in its belying what Nagel (2001, p. 52) calls Wittgenstein’s “facial descriptions of our practices”: that is, the descriptions throughout Wittgenstein (1958) that add up to a picture of a rule follower as merely responding to the circumstances, without consideration or reflection, in whatever he was trained or habituated. For Nagel, and I suggest for Kripke as well, those descriptions are incompatible with the thought that rule following is a rational activity, a matter of proceeding on the basis of the reasons you take the rule to provide. The guidance conception is explicable as an attempt to underwrite the intuition that Wittgenstein’s facial descriptions are not consistent with what rule following, so understood, would have to be. But that intuition may well be mistaken; certainly Kripke does not give us adequate cause to accept it. I argue that Wittgenstein’s own appeals to custom and practice seek to get us to see that a case of genuine
rule following might after all just involve a person’s doing whatever comes naturally in the circumstances.

2. SEMANTIC CONTEXTUALISM: WORK TO THE PRESENT

Semantic contextualism (henceforth, just “contextualism”) is the view that the content of an utterance is shaped by the context in which it is uttered in ways that are far-reaching, unobvious and quite possibly recalcitrant to the familiar machinery of formal semantic theory (e.g., logical forms and indices). In recent years, contextualism has become one of the most widely discussed topics in the philosophy of language, and even those who purport to break from contextualism tend to offer alternatives that, from my perspective, cede almost everything of importance to the contextualist. Contextualism’s rise to dominance may be to some extent an historical accident, the result of disparate research programs—certain work on pragmatics in linguistics and cognitive science, certain responses to skepticism in the epistemological literature, and a certain reading of the later Wittgenstein—all happening to converge on the same place. Whatever its origins, I am convinced that contextualism is in error. But it is a very interesting error, and my work on the topic is directed toward getting a satisfying diagnosis of that error into view, assessing its implications, and articulating an opposing conception.

In “Wittgenstein vs. Semantic Contextualism” (Bridges, forthcoming), I critique attempts by Charles Travis and others to read contextualism back into Wittgenstein (1958). My central interpretive claim is that this reading is not only unsupported; it gets Wittgenstein’s intent, in the parts of the text at issue, precisely backwards. The focus of the paper is on Wittgenstein’s treatment of explanation and understanding in the passages on proper names and so-called family-resemblance concepts.

The arguments for contextualism generally conceded to be the most compelling appeal to intuitions about the truth conditions of specific utterances in specific imagined contexts. In “Pulling Semantic Contextualism Out by Its Roots” (Bridges, msh), I assess the reasons contextualists have variously given for taking those intuitions at face value, namely: that this policy is underwritten by reflection on the connection between meaning and “ordinary” use, that accepting those intuitions is necessary for acknowledging the constitutive dependence of the content of an utterance on the point of that utterance, and that the intuitions reflect an awareness of the diverse ways
in which given objects can satisfy given predicates. I argue that all of these arguments are misguided, and offer opposing ideas about the relationship between the content of an utterance and the meaning of the expressions of a natural language.

3. Rational Explanation: future work

3.1 Essays on anti-anti-psychologism and the heterogeneity of the psychological

Both the Humean theory and cognitivism share the assumption that motivating reasons are constituted by psychological states of the agent. In recent years, there has begun a groundswell of opposition to this view, led by Jonathan Dancy (2003a,b). According to the so-called “anti-psychologism” Dancy espouses, to cite a person’s reasons for doing something is not to offer a psychological explanation of that person’s action; it is not, say, to explain that person’s action in terms of her beliefs or desires. Dancy allows that it may be a necessary precondition for acting for a reason R that one believe R to obtain, but when we explain a person’s action by saying she acted for reason R, the belief ascription in which we may thus be implicated is not itself what does the explaining.

The anti-psychologistic challenge looks to be one of the main items on the agenda of philosophy of action in coming years. And there are genuine insights motivating anti-psychologism—indeed, insights not unrelated to the considerations about normativity and deliberation that I appeal to in arguing for deliberative cognitivism. In effect, anti-psychologism represents an inability to see how these considerations can be incorporated into an account of rational explanation that preserves the natural and extremely attractive thought that rational explanation is a species of psychological explanation. In “Anti-Anti-Psychologism about Reasons”, in progress, I try to show that the source of this inability is the same naturalistically based assumption about causal explanation that funds the Humean theory. Whereas the Humean distorts or ignores the considerations about normativity and deliberation so as to fit rational explanation to the template imposed by the assumption, the anti-psychologist responds to the dilemma by removing rational explanation from the domain of causal explanation entirely. The right view will steer between these unpalatable alternatives.
I should note that although I reject “anti-psychologism” as Dancy understands it, I do not endorse any view that might properly warrant the label “psychologism”. For “psychologism”, in the context of analytic-philosophical discourse, is traditionally applied to views that, from my perspective, take for granted an illicitly mechanistic, non-normative conception of the workings of the psychological realm. The latter conception is exemplified by Humeanism on my interpretation of it. It is because both psychologism and anti-psychologism seem to me in error that I call the view I put forth in opposition to Dancy anti-anti-psychologism.

In “Anti-Psychologism and the Heterogeneity of the Psychological”, I will pursue a less abstract critique of anti-psychologism by considering the ways in which rational explanations interact with other psychological explanations of actions. Philosophy of action in the analytic tradition often seems to proceed under the absurd pretext that every explanation we give of human action can be construed as rational explanation—as a matter of specifying the agent’s reasons for acting. This is very far from the truth: explanations of actions that appeal to, for example, emotions, habits, biases and unconscious mechanisms typically cannot be fit into that mold. Moreover, it’s not uncommon for our explanations of actions to involve a combination of rational and non-rational components, with these elements interlocking in a variety of complex ways. By refusing to place rational explanation in the domain of the psychological, I will argue, anti-psychologism renders itself incapable of making sense of such ‘mixed’ explanations.

That psychological explanation is a motley is itself a point that, in my view, is both interesting and insufficiently appreciated. The Humean theory jibes well with a one-size-fits-all approach to conceptualizing explanations of actions, and analytic philosophers tend to be rather fond of one-size-fits-all conceptions. But in fact, explanations of actions display an irreducible diversity, of which the rational is only a part (albeit a part that plays a fundamental structuring role). In “Rational, Non-Rational, and Irrational Explanation”, I will spell out this phenomenon in more detail. Picking up on some threads of the work mentioned in 1.4 above, I will examine in particular explanations of attitudes and actions that portray those attitudes and actions as irrational.
3.2 Essay on deliberative cognitivism and free will

In “The Irrelevance of Ultimate Responsibility”, I will bring deliberative cognitivism to bear on the problem of free will. The ‘problem of free will’ of course contains multitudes. But at least one strand of the material that has been presented under that rubric seems to me illuminated by the view of rational explanation I defend.

One way to frame doubts about free will is in terms of the concept of responsibility, and one way to motivate a doubt, so framed, is with the following simple train of thought: since we are not responsible for being the way we are, and in particular for having the psychological makeup we do, we are not responsible for anything that results from our psychological makeup, and so in particular are not responsible for our actions. The last step in this train of thought has as a tacit premise that, in the words of noted free-will skeptic Galen Strawson (2002, p. 443), “When you act, you do what you do because of the way you are.” Strawson takes this premise to be so “obvious” that he “will not defend it.” The gist of this line of thought is often expressed in the free-will literature with the claim we lack “ultimate responsibility” for our actions.

But I will argue that Strawson’s premise is at best a half-truth. Granted, your having the beliefs and other attitudes you do can be counted in some sense as part of ‘the way you are’, and granted, it is these attitudes that furnish the input for practical deliberation. But when a person deliberates, what she deliberates about are not, typically, her psychological states, but rather the range of real-world considerations that she takes to bear upon the decision she faces. And according to deliberative cognitivism, when we offer a rational explanation of her resultant action, we take up her deliberative perspective, and thus have in view the same considerations that occupied her attention. In this respect, rational explanation looks outward, to the world the agent encounters, rather than inward, to states and mechanisms that might be thought to constitute ‘the way she is’. And yet rational explanation remains psychological explanation. Seeing how these elements can coexist, I will try to show, helps to explain why responsibility need not be threatened by the undeniable observation that we do not create our personalities and character from scratch.
3.3 Essays on knowledge and its place in rational explanation

Discussion of rational explanation in the philosophy of action tends to ignore the concept of knowledge. The reason, I take it, is that any motivational potential had by a piece of knowledge, say the knowledge that \( p \), is assumed to accrue equally to the corresponding belief that \( p \). That assumption has recently been challenged at an abstract level by Williamson (2002). I share the view that it is a mistake and believe that deliberative cognitivism can help illuminate why. Making this case will be the aim of “Knowledge and Psychological Explanation”.

More specifically, I argue that the privileging of the concept of belief over the concept of knowledge in philosophical reflection on rational explanation can be understood as another iteration of the dynamic described in §3.1 and §3.2 above. One difference between saying that S believes that \( p \) and saying that S knows that \( p \) is that the latter ascription entails that it is in fact true that \( p \). And so if we conceive rational explanations psychologically—as explaining attitudes and actions by documenting states and processes of an internal psychological mechanism that gives rise to them—talk of knowledge in the context of such explanations will seem at best gratuitous. That what the subject believes is true, if it is, is a fact about the world outside the mechanism, and hence not directly relevant to an account of its internal workings. Shifting from a psychologistic to a deliberativist conception of the force of rational explanations, this motivation for discounting knowledge falls away.

But the point is not merely one of the absence of a particular motivation for dismissing as irrelevant that which knowledge ‘adds’ to belief. I will try to show that deliberative cognitivism in fact positively conduces to the view that knowledge is the fundamental psychological category for purposes of rational explanation. To see why this should be so, however, will require getting a proper handle on the concept of knowledge, something that is difficult to do in the face of a contemporary epistemological literature that, in my view, has succumbed under the pressure of skepticism to a highly distorted understanding of that concept. It is almost universally overlooked or ignored in that literature that knowledge is a kind of awareness—that to know something about the world is to be cognizant of that fact, to be in touch with it, to have it in one’s grasp. Picking up on a point mentioned in Bridges (msb), I will argue in “Knowledge as Awareness” that giving due weight to this dimension of knowledge will challenge the prevailing au-
sumption (crucial to the arguments for epistemic contextualism criticized in other respects in Bridges (msb)) that knowing that \( p \) entails being able to rule out on independent grounds salient doubts about whether it is really the case that \( p \).

And it also enables us to see why knowledge is fundamental for rational explanation on the deliberative-cognitivist picture. In “Knowledge and Psychological Explanation” I will make this case from two directions. First, I will draw attention to and elucidate the special status accorded in deliberation to the facts of which one is aware (as opposed to the propositions that one merely believes or suspects or hypothesizes to obtain). And second, I will spell out further the sense in which we, in constructing rational explanations, seek to explain the subject’s attitudes and actions by understanding relevant features of the subject’s particular perspective on a world that is an object of inquiry and engagement for us all. The possibility of understanding divergences between our perspective and the subject’s depends upon our being able to make sense of a good deal of her attitudes and actions as responses to states of affairs of which we share an awareness.

3.4 Book on rational explanation

In addition to working on these essays, I plan to write, and have already begun, a book manuscript that synthesizes and expands upon the contents of the essays described in the previous sections. The book, unsurprisingly titled *Rational Explanation*, will begin with a critique of naturalistic theories of content and move to the exposition of deliberative cognitivism and then to its application to a family of related philosophical questions. I hope that in thus straddling the divide between the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of action the book will prove distinctively illuminating, as these are two areas of contemporary philosophy in which the pressure toward specialization has arguably generated overly narrow senses of the possibilities for philosophical understanding.

I said that the book will expand upon, rather than merely reiterating, the contents of the essays, and I want to briefly indicate three respects in which that is so.

First it will spell out core elements of the deliberative-cognitivist account that are left sketchy in the essays. In particular, given the connection posited by the account between the rational-explanatory and deliberative perspectives, more needs to be said about the character of the deliberative process...
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There is a small but growing literature on what is sometimes called the transparency of belief—i.e., the putative fact that for purposes of theoretical deliberation, the question of whether to believe that \( p \) collapses into the question of whether it is true that \( p \). In my view, no exact parallel to this principle exists on the side of practical deliberation. But there is an important similarity at a more general structural level: in practical no less than theoretical deliberation, the subject matter of deliberation presents itself to the deliberator as objective, as constituted independently of the deliberator’s judgments, reactions and dispositions. An assessment of the implications of this point will both reinforce and fill out the claims of Bridges (forthcoming), “The Irrelevance of Ultimate Responsibility” and “Knowledge and Psychological Explanation”.

Second, I will place the ideas about rule-following skepticism developed in Bridges (forthcoming) in a wider context. As I interpret it, the skeptical argument about rule following gets its grip in virtue of the fact that to be correctly characterizable as following a rule is for one’s performance to be subject to a kind of rational explanation. This suggests that the argument and its diagnosis may prove to be one instance of a larger dialectic concerning rational explanation as such. The guidance conception as such will not figure in the larger dialectic; its particular content is dictated by idiosyncratic features of the rule-following case. The corresponding dialectical role will be played rather by a more abstract idea about the nature of causal transitions between mental states. As I will argue, we can see this idea under one guise in the philosophy of action literature on the “right kind” of causal relationship that motivating reasons must bear to the actions they explain, and under another guise in the recent epistemological literature on skepticism about inferential reasoning.

Third, I will expand upon the similarities between rational explanations and the explanations we offer of the activity of non-human animals when we deploy what I call in Bridges (2006a) the “ordinary conception of animal life”. Explanations of the latter sort conceive animals, in virtue for their perceptual capacities, as in touch with the surrounding environment, and the awareness thereby ascribed to animals is analogous to the awareness that I will suggest, in “Knowledge as Awareness”, human knowledge to be. What is shared by these two kinds of awareness may be illuminated in terms of the concept of information originally formalized in communication theory (for background and development, see Dretske (1999)). In the context of work on the mind, that concept is most familiar from its role in the information-
processing accounts of sub-personal systems developed in cognitive science and then adopted by philosophers of mind as the basis for naturalistic accounts of content and cognition. But I will try to show that the concept can be used to illuminate the commonalities between our personal-level engagement with our surroundings and the organism-level dealings of non-human animals, and in so doing reduce the pressure toward naturalization.

4. **Semantic contextualism: future work**

Looking further into the future, I plan to write a book on semantic contextualism, tentatively entitled *Language, Practice and Context*. In part, the book will expand upon the criticisms given in Bridges (forthcoming) and Bridges (msb). I especially plan to say more in defense of a claim for which I offer some evidence in Bridges (msb): that contextualist interpretations of utterances tend to be at odds with key sociological, social-psychological, and cognitive-psychological findings about judgment, bias and self-appraisal. And I plan to develop in greater detail the case presented in Bridges (forthcoming) that semantic contextualists are wrong to see themselves as intellectual heirs of the later Wittgenstein. In particular, I have become convinced that the tendency to regard Wittgenstein (1969) as a foundational text in the development of epistemic contextualism is wrongheaded.

But the bulk of the book will be given over to articulating an alternative account of the relationship between the content of an utterance and the meaning of the uttered words. This account is gestured at in Bridges (msb), but much more needs to be said to bring it into view. The basic idea is that the semantic contextualist is not straightforwardly wrong in linking content to the things she thinks it ought to be linked to. Rather, she has a constricted sense of what those things are, and this results in a similarly constricted vision of what we are speaking of when we utter the words of a natural language. It seems to me illuminating, in this connection, to cast the right view of the matter as a kind of *broad* contextualism. Adopting this conception, we acknowledge that the content of an utterance is constitutively linked, just as the contextualist claims, to use and to point. But at the same time, we insist that the use and point that bear upon the content of an utterance are potentially rich and open-ended enough that there is no guarantee we will have made provision for them unless we conceive the context of the utterance as encompassing vary wide swaths of discourse indeed—perhaps even the
whole of the language in use. Developing this view will involve, among other things, providing a fuller picture of the ordinary discursive practices and dispositions mentioned in Bridges (msb).

5. CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION OF FUTURE WORK

To recap, I discussed in §3 and §4 future work on the following articles and books:

1. “Anti-Anti-Psychologism about Reasons”
2. “Anti-Psychologism and the Heterogeneity of the Psychological”
3. “Rational, Non-Rational, and Irrational Explanation”
5. “Knowledge and Psychological Explanation”
6. “Knowledge as Awareness”
7. *Rational Explanation*
8. *Language, Practice and Context*

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URL: [http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=8743](http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=8743)


Bridges, Jason. forthcomingb. “Rationality, Normativity and Transparency.” *Mind* 117 or 118.


