

Contents

Preface	xi
Acknowledgments	xvii

I THE SOCIAL SIDE OF MEANING

1	Platonic Heaven	3
	The Puzzle of Reference	3
	Use, Mention, and Truth	4
	The Language of Thought	7
	Concepts, Mentalese, and the Informational Universe	10
	Language and the World	12
	Platonic Heaven in a Box	13
	Inferences and Mentalese	16
	Further Reading	18
2	My Fall from Platonic Heaven	21
	Phrase Structure Grammar	21
	Grammar and Compositionality	23
	Thinking and Computing	25
	The Heaven in Your Head	28
	Brains in SUVs	30
	Symbols and Proofs	31
	Into the Chinese Room	36
	The Social Nature of Intention	38
	The Excesses of Youth	39
	Further Reading	41
3	Meaning and the Social Contract	43
	Choice and Meaning	43
	Internal Predicates and External Behavior	44
	Public Knowledge	46
	The Economics of Meaning	50

Physical Computation and Social Computation	53
The Sociolinguistics of Meaning	55
Further Reading	58

II GAMES AND TRUTH

4 A Primer on Games 63

The Cake Game	69
Sequential Games and Backward Induction	75
The Holmes Moriarty Game	80
“Ideal Free” Ducks and Mixed Strategy Nash Equilibria	85
Mixed Strategy Nash Equilibria and Language Variation	88
Coordination Games	89
The Prisoner’s Dilemma	93
Cooperation: The Stag Hunt	98
Evolutionary Games	106
Case Marking Systems	112
Further Reading	122

5 A Game Logic for Natural Language 125

The Tale of Abélard and Eloïse	128
Syntax	129
Games and Models	137
<i>Atomic Sentences</i>	137
<i>Negation</i>	140
<i>Logical Connectives</i>	142
<i>The Aristotelian Square of Opposition</i>	150
Prospects	172
<i>Ambiguity</i>	172
<i>Monotonicity</i>	173
<i>Compositionality</i>	174
<i>Limitations</i>	176
Further Reading	177

III GAMES AND THE WORLD

6 Common Knowledge 181

Coordinated Attack	182
Definite Descriptions and the Mutual Knowledge Paradox	183
Common Knowledge and Bounded Rationality	191
Miscommunication	199
Presuppositions and Accommodation	204
Reconciling the Assumptions	212
Further Reading	212

7	Lexical Games	215
	Games for Finding Words	215
	Orderly Communication and Utility	221
	<i>Playing the Odds</i>	226
	<i>Clues from the Context</i>	229
	Back to Descriptions and Common Knowledge	232
	Equilibrium Selection and Implicature	234
	Down the Garden Path	237
	Further Reading	242
8	Two Examples: Pronouns and Politeness	245
	Discourse Pronouns	245
	Politeness, Power, and Implicature	263
	On Game Theoretic Analysis	279
	Further Reading	280
9	The Social Ecology of Meaning	283
	Games and Prototypes	285
	Metrics, Central Tendencies, and Focal Points	289
	Semantic Landscapes and Meaning Niches	301
	Semantic Hierarchies and Defaults	309
	Homophones and Polysemy	314
	Into the Artificial World	321
	Further Reading	327
	Notes	329
	References	333
	Index	345