Summary and Conclusion

Finally, we should briefly summarize the argumentative thread in order to illustrate how the first three chapters, while each addressing a separate issue, support the T-externalistic position outlined and defended in chapter four.

The primary aim of the first chapter is to give an adequate account of semantic norms in terms of the requirement that we find an "equilibrium" for the putative extensions and general characterizations of our terms. As the discussion of Linnaeus's and Ishmael's use of "fish" illustrated, accepted usage at a time may leave a number of different equilibria open to the speakers of a community, and the differing interests and commitments of different speakers can lead them to adopt different equilibria and thus come to mean different things by their terms. This result is of considerable importance on its own, and is particularly relevant for the T-externalist once we come to understand disputes about meaning and content in terms of our trying to find equilibria for our semantic terms. In particular, the possibility that *multiple* equilibria may be accessible from our present usage makes room for a type of pluralism when it comes to such disputes. Their may be a type of 'blameless disagreement' between competing semantic theorists. As a result, the T-externalist need not tackle the ambitious task of showing that we are rationally *compelled* to adopt his position and that the competing accounts are unacceptable. Rather, he need only take on the more modest task of showing that we are at least rationally *permitted* to accept his position and the competing accounts are not obviously preferable to his.

The second chapter is concerned with defending and providing an account of the expressive constraint. The argument for the expressive constraint supports theT-externalist in two ways. First of all, by tying belief and utterance content together, the expressive constraint insures that a T-externalistic equilibrium for either thought or utterance content will be an equilibrium for the other as well. Secondly, the more synthetic account of the constraint presented at the end of the chapter introduces the idea that a speaker's conception of language itself plays a crucial role in determining the language he speaks and thus the

content of his thoughts. The T-externalist makes crucial use of this idea when he argues that our conception of language is, in fact, a conception of a shared practice that extends through time.

The importance of our self-interpretation plays a crucial role in the argumentative strategy of the third chapter as well. While the third chapter's manifest objective is to argue that an equilibrium for our semantic terms should endorse the truth of the sorts of non-individualistic ascriptions brought to our attention by Burge, it has a secondary agenda of paving the way for the T-externalistic position defended in chapter four. In particular, many of T-externalism's purportedly counterintuitive consequences come from its denying that one's thought contents supervenes upon non-relational facts about one's body. Non-individualistic accounts of content also require giving up the supervenience claim. As a result, if the non-individualist can give an acceptable account of self-knowledge and behavioral explanation that does not require such supervenience, such an account will be available also to the T-externalist. Most of the potentially counterintuitive consequences of allowing future use to contribute to what we mean (particularly those associated with self-knowledge and behavioral explanation) have thus already been defused once we have succeeded in incorporating the non-individualistic ascriptions Burge appeals to.

The fourth chapter tries to give a clear account of the T-externalistic position itself. Such an account makes use of the first chapter's explanation of when an equilibrium's is "accessible" in order to restrict the instances in which future usage can properly be understood as contributing to what we presently mean. Such clarifications, along with the dialectical moves established in the third chapter, are enough to disarm most of the objections to T-externalism. Since non-temporalist accounts of what to say about the cases that the T-externalist focuses on have problems of their own, a T-externalistic equilibrium seems accessible for our semantic terms. The problems with the non-temporalist accounts are not, however, devastating. One may be ultimately be able to adopt such an equilibrium for one's semantic terms as well. This would entail that our semantic terms lend

themselves to the type of pluralistic position the possibility of which was allowed for in the first chapter. The T-externalist and his more temporally conservative competitor may be like Linnaeus and Ishmael, each with an acceptable way to give a consistent account of most of the pre-systematized subject matter, but neither able to convince the other that their own systematization is preferable.