

TOWARDS A LESS SIMPLE BUT SOUNDER (PSYCHOLOGICAL) PRAGMATICS, II: Central notions and methods^a

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses first the applicability of the main notions included in the general notion *meant item*, *meant partial situation* (MPST), *meant activity* (MACT), and *implicitly meant background situation* (IMBST) -that of *meant agent* will be only mentioned in an aside-, plus the notion *meaning activity* (MNGACT). It will be shown that, when coupled to other notions, such as 'ontological status' of IMBST relative to the *focussed (part of) current situation* (F_{CST}), as well as to the matching 'ontological' properties of the meant items above, they allow to set up unified and apparently successful methods to explore important and debated pragmatic issues. Then their usefulness for research in the domain traditionally accorded to speech-act theory is put to (a preliminary) test; and finally the general processual sketch of linguistic activity advanced in the last Sections of P.I is carefully gauged as to its prospects regarding actual implementation of more specific processual sketches of both emission and reception linguistic activities.

1. Introduction

In order to fruitfully develop the approach gained in Part I of the present essay (Sánchez de Zavala, 1994; from now on P.I), it is necessary to review the main notions there arrived at, so that their implications are explored, their capabilities to help tackling some key issues in (psychological) Pragmatics are probed, and the best way to use them in explicit processual theories of the main kinds of linguistic activities is duly ascertained. To this task is devoted the present paper. In next Section the relationships defining the 'ontological status' of the main *meant items* are explored, and some somewhat surprising differences between 'ontological statuses' are delved into. In Section 3 two readings of "meant" (as just used to refer to these items) are distinguished and compared, and it is shown that this cleavage allows a succinct formulation of a tendency or *leaning* operating in many different classes of utterances. Section 4 addresses similarities and differences between several kinds of so-called speech acts, showing how they may be accounted for within the simple framework of notions sketched in previous Sections: injunctions and questions are tackled successively, showing how the latter are, as intuition seems to demand, a specific kind of the former; then different ways of

'doing things with words' are examined and provided a theoretical grounding in the posited notions and relationships; finally, a quick review of assertives is offered. Section 5 reviews some problems arising when an attempt is made to apply the general scheme for inception of linguistic activities that was developed in Part I of the present essay to language comprehension; it is there shown that although such problems could not but arise, they may be easily defused. A short Appendix addresses an interesting issue (regarding questions) raised in recent Pragmatics literature.

2. 'Ontological statuses' and meant items

Consider now the notions introduced (in P.I Section 5) as key notions for our final processual sketch of linguistic activities. The suggestion was there made that an implicitly meant background situation IMBST will have one 'ontological status' (out of exactly three possible ones) relative to F_{CST} : it may be *identical with* it, it may be as '*real*' as F_{CST} is (but different from it), or it may be *not-'real'*, where the standard or ground level of 'reality' is that of F_{CST} . (No doubt, in every case the status is attributed by a subject; Pragmatics does not make metaphysical assertions.)

In addition, it was there suggested that as regards MPSTs, the three cases amount respectively to *overtly* 'real' status (it inhabits F_{CST}), *plain* 'reality' (i.e. MPST will be as 'real' as anything in F_{CST} , but will not be included in it), and the status of being *not-'real'* (say, possible, or just impossible). As to MACT, and ignoring for convenience any non-cognitive facet in it (a policy I will abide by throughout), three continua of 'values' (ranging in each case from *full commitment to 'reality'* to its all-out rejection) were postulated -of which I name here for simplicity only the 'uppermost', maximally positive value: *endorsement, acceptance as fully 'real'*, and *preparedness to have its non-'reality' dispelled*. (An amendment on this matter is perhaps needed. It will be deferred until a brief examination has been performed of the somewhat puzzling condition of an IMBST being allocated a '*real*' but *not identical with* F_{CST} 'ontological status'.)

Consider now the allocation of an 'ontological status'. Firstly, even though, as mentioned, it is obviously a subject who does it, he or she does confer the status as an objective one, as something acknowledged -or assumed as given. By contrast (and trivially) a subject's degree of commitment regarding some or other aspect of an 'ontological status' cannot be but subjective. Second, there are at least two -not just one- items to which what I called an ontological status may be allocated: a MPST and its IMBST. In fact, I contended that such a status is primarily allotted to IMBST, whose 'ontological relation' to F_{CST} was assumed to play a key role in the processes having as 'output' a spell of linguistic activity; so there is an asymmetry in status' allocations.

An obvious corollary of the asymmetrical attribution of statuses is that, if there is at all any potential for disparate assignments of 'ontological statuses', a certain pairing is excluded in principle (by definition): a *plainly 'real'* MPST included in an IMBST *identical with* F_{CST} . And, again on the assumption that such a divergence in 'ontological statuses' may occur, other potential couples are also

prima facie unlikely (e.g. a *non-'real'* MPST inhabiting an IMBST *identical with* F_{CST}, or vice-versa a *overtly 'real'* MPST included in a *non-'real'* IMBST). Now, as it will be shown below, after having discussed the role a MACT may apparently play in the assignment of an 'ontological status' to its associated MPST, in the present framework it must be accepted that there are in fact pairs of items (an MPST and its implied IMBST) allocated to different statuses.

Ignore momentarily the issue of disparate 'ontological statuses' as regards matching MPSTs and IMBSTs. One may wonder whether the disagreement is allowed to occur at a 'lower level'; for instance, when a MPST is highly complex, may any item within it be assigned a different 'ontological status' than the MPST itself? The answer must certainly be on the affirmative, for there are some quite ordinary utterances that undeniably -or so it seems- show the disagreement.

Notice first that optative utterances 'depict' states or events that the speaker construes as not 'real'. But then it seems quite possible (in fact almost unavoidable) for such a non-'real' MPST to contain a 'part' (an included meant *partial situation*) having a fully 'real' status. For consider a 'normal' utterance of (1):

(1) If only you were quiet for ten minutes!
there is no doubt that (in ordinary circumstances, if no figurative speech is used, etc.) the person addressed by "you" must be considered as 'real' by the speaker. And similarly, in order for someone to (honestly, etc.) cry in the following manner,

(2) Were this old crock a brand new Cadillac! Everyone would envy me!
it seems to be necessary that there is an old, shabby car of his/her laying in front of his/her eyes: the car referred to (and so, meant) by "this old crock". (The puzzle is certainly related to the philosophical problem posed by 'counterparts' and their identification across possible worlds; a subject that cannot be addressed here.)

A slightly more complex pattern is shown in next examples. If you deridingly say to a certain Smith:

(3) Who will come to hear your mobs and implorations?
the MPST you are alluding to or meaning is an episode that -so you believe- neither occurred nor will come to pass, and so is not 'real'. The episode can be 'depicted' more directly (i.e. as if it were a real event or partial situation) in the following way:¹

(4) Somebody comes to hear Smith's mobs and implorations.
But certainly, since this *somebody* in a deriding (4) points to a non-'real' object, "Who" in deriding (3) confers still less 'real' status than that assigned by the complete partial situation globally 'depicted' by (3) -otherwise it would be a straight question, not a deriding one. So it seems that one must accept degrees on non-'reality'. (Notice, by the way, that a deriding utterance such as that represented immediately below

(5) Will anyone come to hear your mobs and implorations?

assigns to the total event that (4) 'depicts' an extra high degree of un-'reality' similar to the one *somebody* was apparently bestowed through "Who" in (3). If essentially correct, this is evidence for such degrees, since not only a 'part' of a MPST may reach this higher non-'reality': also a whole MPST can.)²

Irrespective of the issue of asymmetrical allocations of 'ontological statuses' and its corollaries, let us briefly study at this juncture the relationship between a primarily assigned 'ontological status' (i.e. one allocated to an IMBST) and the degree of commitment -of the very subject that assigned such a status- to the 'reality' of the MPST associated with the IMBST. (Notice that the latter is just the background situation that was implicitly meant while -or in- meaning through the utterance that partial situation.) The relationship seems again to be not so simple as anticipated. If someone says (seriously, in good faith, etc.) on March 17, 1995, at 11:00 pm,

(6) John is not at home right now.

a plausible interpretation is that the speaker's MPST may be 'directly' offered by

(6') John is at home on March 17, 1995, at 11:00 pm, and that, at least in a purely cognitive aspect, he or she disassociates with the 'reality' of such a MPST. This interpretation may in turn be accommodated in the advanced framework by hypothesising that the associated IMBST has an identical with F_{CST} 'ontological status'. The rationale for the move is that in this way we account at the same time and in the simplest way for utterances where the sentences are:

- (7) John is at home right now.
- (8) John is quite certainly at home right now.
- (9) John is very probably at home right now.
- (10) John is rather likely at home right now.
- (11) John is probably at home right now.
- (12) John is maybe at home right now.
- (13) John is not probably at home right now.
- (14) John is unlikely to be at home right now.
- (15) John will hardly be at home right now.
- (16) John is almost certainly not at home right now.
- (17) John is inconceivably at home right now.

(and many others, of course).³

Now, the very fact that the speaker rejects in this way a (fully) positive degree of commitment to the 'reality' of MPST, i.e. that he or she rejects its (full) endorsement, must be interpreted within the present framework as evidence for the following 'value' as to primary allocation of 'ontological status': IMBST is identical with F_{CST} . But on the other hand, the speaker surely does not entertain as *overtly 'real'* the MPST related to (6)-(17), in other words, the MPST 'directly' pointed to in (6'). In fact, at least as far as (6) is concerned, the MPST is unquestionably thought of as being *not-'real'*. So it seems that different 'ontological

statuses' may be allocated by a subject to a MPST and its matching IMBST -a somewhat surprising outcome.

The outcome, though, may be not so odd as it looks like if it is accepted -as just intimated- that (at least as far as an IMBST identical with F_{CST} is concerned, i.e. when the associated degree of commitment regards an *endorsement of 'reality' status*) assignment of an 'ontological status' to a MPST is brought about through the occurrent *degree of commitment to a its 'reality'* -at least whenever this is a maximally negative degree. (No doubt these are too many caveats, but I cannot press the issue here.) It is not an odd outcome because of the 'subjective' nature of the degree of commitment, in counterdistinction to the 'objective' nature of the 'ontological status', a distinction pointed out a few paragraphs back which might explain the apparently surprising difference in 'ontological statuses'.⁴

An obvious alternative (for the critical instance (6), the single case where, assuming (6') as the MPST, there is no denial of a shift to the opposite 'ontological status') would discard commitments to 'reality' altogether as a catalyst responsible for allocation of non-'reality' to MPST. But this move does not ensue in any specific illumination; it just loses any explanatory capability regarding the contrasting statuses provided by invoking the different, 'subjective' nature of such a degree of commitment.

A second and more serious alternative -again for the hardest case, (6)- is to claim that its MPST is rather 'directly' portrayed by one of the following sentences:

- (6") a. John is somewhere else than at home on March 17, 1995,
at 11:00 pm.
- b. John is in a different place than home on March 17, 1995,
at 11:00 pm.

(or some such). Unfortunately (6) and (6") depict different MPSTs: both (6"a) and (6"b) entail (6), but not vice versa, as shown by the fact that (18)

- (18) John is unlocalized/not any more spatial on March 17, 1995,
at 11:00 pm.

is inconsistent with (6"), but quite compatible with, in fact entails, (6).

Actually, the argument, short as it is, wasn't terribly needed, given the pervasiveness of the view that negation, even when strictly semantic (i.e. excluding so-called *pragmatic* or *meta-linguistic* negation -see Horn, 1984), is 'parasitic' on asertion. (A view that might be traced to early century ponderings on 'negative facts'.)

An immediate objection, though, to the *disparate 'ontological statuses'* claim may be worded as follows. Sentence (19),

(19) Hans thinks/Everyone believes/ ... that John is not at home right now. and an unbounded number of similar ones, necessitate a truly 'objective' construal of (the effect of) the negation, not one conveyed by such a highly 'subjective' item as some or other degree of commitment to a MPST's 'reality'. But, Why? The present writer, when first displayed (6), did in effect write a sentence identical

with (19) but for the substitution of *Someone says* for *Hans thinks/Everyone believes/...*, and the objection apparently would have had no force. (Simply, the subject that it is assumed to ascribe the relevant 'ontological status' through his/her negative degree of commitment to the 'reality' of the MPST associated with (6) is the person assumed to be alluded to by *someone*.) And in this respect neither *Hans* nor even *Everyone* add any obstacle.

Let us now return to the matter of the amendment to be introduced in the range of 'values' allowable for a MACT. If it is correct to say that when an IMBST is identical with F_{CST} , assignment of an 'ontological status' to a MPST may be effected through the occurrent *degree of commitment to a its 'reality'*, as it was advanced above, an obvious generalization would assert that also when the 'ontological relation' between IMBST and F_{CST} is different, such an assignment is (or in specific cases may be) done as a result of some or other 'new value' of the associated MACT. This seems a rather wild proposal, but perhaps the generalization can be vindicated -a desirable result from a methodological standpoint. (See §4.2 below.)

A different problem is posed by the *'real' but not identical with F_{CST}* 'ontological status' of an IMBST, at least as regards an associated MPST having the 'ontological status' that could be deemed regular. How could a *plainly 'real'* MPST, as 'real' as any item inhabiting F_{CST} , not be considered as also included in it? This seems to display an enigmatic condition.

Nevertheless, no conundrum hides here, as demonstrated by the example offered when the notion was suggested. To a subject suddenly recalling something, the scene, event or object recalled is something 'real' (even though it is not currently accessible in the fashion in which his/her whereabouts are), and if he or she talks about it, what is talked about is, then, 'real' in this sense. This is in counterdistinction to any future state or event -which must be correctly deemed as not 'real'. Unnecessary to say, as soon as attention and speech shift towards such items, F_{CST} changes accordingly and they are now its inhabitants; but, still, they cannot be considered to have been included in it before the shift occurred -they were not already there. Contrast this condition with a part or aspect of your physical neighborhood, no matter what your previous awareness of it. Your uttering (20)

(20) Say, surely there is a nail siticking in the bench. Look at the kid's torn jeans.

assumedly discloses a feature of a piece of furniture in your house (or in the school, say); a feature that it is thought to have been there (and to have been accessible to you in the general fashion of items located in this kind of neighborhood) for some time before your talking about it. This is true (or at least is talked about as true) even though you may arrive at this realization not by physical contact nor by distal perception, but through an inference -as it occurred in the circumstances alluded to in the second sentence of (20), where apparently you feel compelled to hint to such an inference.

3. The notion 'meaning' in linguistic activity

Let us now broach the subject of the complexities attendant to MPST and MACT themselves and their relation. Since the introduction, in P.I §4.1, of their first forerunners, a *designated partial situation* and an 'enacted' relation to it (or in other words a *designated activity*), it was pointed out that a crucial lack of precision clearly shows in this use of "designated" -and similarly for "pretended" and "meant". I will concentrate on the latter term, the one that applies in pragmatic studies.

Keep in mind, first of all, that the notions MPST and MACT are essentially connected: a MACT is an 'enacted' -i.e. meant by virtue of emission linguistic activity- relation to a MPST, so that one may construe either item as whatever matches the other one.⁵ In addition to it, the lack of notional stringency just recalled (which in that passage of P.I. was mistakenly referred to as a mere vagueness) allows two main readings of "meant" to be used in these technical terms: what the speaker attempted to have it indicated by his/her utterance, and what the form of words he or she uttered did in fact (literally) indicate -to which a host of other, 'intermediate' readings may be added, as discussed in the literature taking its lead from Grice's work on 'non-natural' meaning since Grice (1948, 1957).⁶

Not only these readings of "mean" are to be acknowledged. As soon as it is accepted that a particular speaker may well have in mind a fully particular meaning for his/her utterance, a meaning where perceived setting, previous discourse -if any-, and beliefs/assumptions of several kinds (including those about the addressee's -if any- beliefs/assumptions) play their role, there does not seem to be any reason to prevent the theorist from an acknowledgement of what the speaker may mean to do in (or by) uttering his/her words and phrases. In different terms, from raising the issue of the goals of linguistic performance -from then on an almost unavoidable move.

Grice himself (Grice, 1967) aired his dissatisfaction with only contending the goals related to providing and receiving information; and the need to overcome this restriction is now and then voiced by other theorists. But, as pointed out in P.I §2.1, and no matter whether stemming most directly from Grice's work or coming mainly from other traditions, hardly any piece of research in the theory of psychological Pragmatics (in the sense sketched in P.I Introduction) makes any real attempt to go beyond such a limitation. (In Sperber & Wilson, 1986, Ch.1, §9, e.g., after offering a small and variegated sample of goals assumed by human beings, the approach that sees us as processors of information is resumed, cognitive goals are delved into, and from then onwards the only goals that play a role in pragmatic explanations are those relative to modification -improvement- of informational states.)

We will see below how the notions suggested in developing the general 'blueprint' for inception of activities of a certain kind, and, specifically, their application to linguistic activities, are enough to overcome this restriction with no need of ad hoc stipulations, and so to improve the usual level of explanatory capability in pragmatic theories.

Not surprisingly, for any of the meant items MPST and MACT, the 'distance' from its content as per the second reading or construal of "mean" above mentioned to its content in any of the other construals is bridged in each case by making some or other change(s) in the information provided by that 'purely linguistic' content. The changes; either by 'enrichment' or otherwise (remember e.g. Ducrot-Anscombe's *arguing-scales* or 'Horn pairs', and also drastic changes such as those brought about by so-called indirect speech acts and especially through conversational implicatures), take advantage of assorted sources: cross-cultural assumptions, cultural and popular lore, 'knowledge' about the specific setting where a particular spell of linguistic activity occurs, and so on. What is of significance here is that some cross-cultural assumptions are directly associated to our involvement with language, and that these are amongst the ones allowing more substantial changes.

As Bühler (1934: Ch.1, §3.2) noticed, in situations where a non-linguistic activity is in progress, language is used to dispel uncertainties as to which of several available courses of action is to be entered (e.g. one may direct another person by simply saying "Right ahead", or "The upholstered seat"); an observation returning in Wittgenstein's celebrated example of the house builder that does no more than to name the kind of building stone he needs ("Block", "Pillar", "Slab", etc.) in order for his assistant to pass him one token of that kind.⁷ Now, the remark should be extended in two directions. For most times we only phrase the critical information: to a question such as the one directly below,

(21) Who was phoning yesterday, while I was watching the birds?
a 'normal' answer is an unadorned NP, e.g. (22);

(22) John.
while utterances redundant as answers to (21), such as those in (23), are quite rare.

- (23) a. John was phoning yesterday, while you were watching the birds.
b. John was the person who was phoning yesterday, while you were watching the birds.

And whenever what is asked about is a whole event or state ('yes-no questions'), as in (24),

(24) Did you just came in?
the answer is usually no more than a dummy lexical item or phrase, as in (25),

(25) a. Yes.
b. You bet.
rather than a redundant (26).

(26) Yes/You bet; I just came in.
(Remark that even if (24) has not been uttered, and an appropriate and self-evident gesture was used instead, (25) may still be the 'natural' answer -in normal hearing conditions, etc.-, while (26) may be felt as redundant.) Secondly, soliloquy is full with a similar curbing of 'known information', probably because

we 'know' a lot about our own occasional goals, interests, and so on. So, it would strike me as strange to find myself muttering the following sentence,

(27) I will make my best to see Joan, rather than Jane.
while (28) would cause me no surprise.

(28) Joan, not Jane
And similarly (pace Vigotsky: how 'inner speech' was acquired is here irrelevant), at the end of an exhausting workday it seems far more common to mumble (29) than (30).

(29) A drink.

(30) I'll go somewhere and have a drink.

The upshot of this two-pronged accumulation of trivia may be couched in the following terms. Whenever the sole or key goal is for the subject (either the speaker himself/herself -in soliloquy- or the addressee) to entertain a potential belief (either in order to fix it or otherwise), and the speaker feels that the subject has in mind some or other 'part' of a prospective *meant item* (MPST or MACT), in the first sense of "meant" above discussed, this part is likely not to occur in that *meant item*, in the second sense of "meant": the chances are that it will not be linguistically indicated -unless some special effect is intended. (Clearly, the observation may be brought under the scope of Sperber & Wilson's Principle of Relevance. But it seems to me best to see it as an instance of a considerably more general principle of effectiveness, of which the Principle of Relevance would be a particular case; see Sánchez de Zavala, 1990a: §1.2.3.1 and Addendum 3; 1990b: §4.3.) For convenience I will refer in the sequel to this tendency as the *leaning to chop retellings*.

4. Applications: a few ways of using language

The suggestions advanced in Sections 2 and 3 allow a new approach to the controverted domain covered by speech-act theory, a domain that according to the present approach must be grounded anew on the notions here advanced. True, a classification of linguistic activities from the standpoint of what the parties in a language intercourse are legitimately allowed to intend with, and to expect from, their actions (the standpoint clearly adopted by Austin and, in spite of its significant psychological enrichment by Searle and others, still crucial to the theory) is no doubt highly important, in that it may identify major distinctions in the use of language -in a sense it uncovers what speaker-hearers believe they are doing (and admittedly, what they are actually doing from a sociological perspective) when they speak and grasp other people's speech. But the notions assumed and used in previous Sections allow (in a very tentative way, certainly) a different kind of undertaking.

Now the aim is to clarify, and ultimately explain, what the linguistic performers are actually doing (an exploration that must include amongst the items

probed the beliefs just spoken of). Even though most of the analyses will be mainly applicable to speakers, as opposed to so-called hearers, and consequently might perhaps be postponed to the paper where the present essay will be completed, expediency reasons make it advisable to offer them here.

4.1. Questions and requests

Let us examine first some issues recently raised about conventional speech-act theory account of questions. On one hand, uses of interrogative sentences such as in expository and rhetorical questions, and in exam questions (plus their ordinary use in information-seeking questions, of course), has led to the proposal (Sperber & Wilson, 1986: Ch.4, §10) that questions -or, as they say, actions of *asking whether*- constitute instances of a genuine speech act by itself, a speech act of a quite different ilk than commands, requests, petitions and so on -acts of *telling to*. This hypothesis not only changes the basic approach of conventional speech-act theory, it discards the intuitively plausible notion, unswervingly advocated in this theory, that questions are a kind of *directives*, where what is asked for is to provide a certain desired piece of information.

On the other hand, it should be noted that, as a wide cross-linguistic survey (Sadock & Zwicky, 1984) has shown, most languages have distinctively different forms -intonational, morphological, and others- for questions and for commands, etc.; in other words, in language after language interrogatives are different from imperatives. This fact is taken as a basis for a critique of the conventional approach above (Sadock, 1990), in that if the subsumption of questions under the wider notion *directives* were correct, the pervasiveness of the formal difference just mentioned would be hard to account for.

But it is possible to preserve the plausible proposal about questions found in ordinary speech-act theory at no cost, while offering an account of the observed formal differences. Assume a non-'real' status for MPST (and IMBST), and a fully positive associated MACT, i.e. a *preparedness to have MPST's non-'reality' dispelled*; assume in addition that the MPST may be roughly described by any of the following sentences,

- (31) a. Somebody 'fills in' the gap in a representation of *GPS*.
b. Somebody 'fills in' the gap in *RGPS*.

where *GPS*, which may be dubbed a *gapped core (partial situation)*, is a partial situation where an item, to be called a 'gap', is currently deemed to be insufficiently defined (as to nature, properties, amount or whatever) and so in need of additional specification; *RGPS* is a representation of *GPS* (a *represented gapped core*) such as that provided by a direct phrasing of the gapped partial situation; finally, let us say that (31) 'depicts' an *envisioned action* regarding its *gapped core*. (Any attempt such as that shown in (31)

(31') Somebody 'fills in' the informational gap in *GPS*.
to display and directly operate on a 'bare *gapped core*', and in this sense to arrive to a simpler formula, is doomed to failure as a general method. For hardly, if at all,

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can an abstract item such as a piece of information 'fill in' a 'gap' -i.e. provide some actual property, amount or number of objects, etc.- occurring in a physical, 'real world' state, event or array of objects. Nonetheless I will now and then use the term "informational gap" for convenience.)

Obviously, in wh- questions the wh-phrase points to the 'gap'. If the account is to cover also yes-no questions, some place where the 'gap feature' sticks must be found. The problem apparently springs from the fact that the whole partial situation talked about seems to be a 'gap': it is not defined (as far as the subject is concerned) regarding its being or not being the case, and the subject deems that the missing information well deserves to be provided. Nonetheless, there may be advanced a simple suggestion (a panoply of them may be gleaned from the logical literature on questions) which takes directly advantage of the very source of the problem: the *gapped core GPS* sports now a very special nature, since it may be described by a sentence such as (32),

(32) Some one of the following items is the case: *GPS*' or otherwise.
where *GPS*' -to be called the *gapped core key (partial situation)*- is the MPST matching the obvious declarative counterpart to the question resulting when the *represented gapped core* is combined with a suitable question *signalling* (see below); and the pointer -in a sense 'forked pointer'- to the 'gap' is the NP "some one of the following items". We may now say that in (32) -which will be an 'embodiment' of the *represented gapped core RGPS*- it is 'depicted' a (*gapped core*) *key holder* holding its *gapped core key*. E.g., coming back to the question displayed in (5), repeated below for convenience

(5) Will anyone come to hear your mobs and implorations?
(which in order to discard issues here irrelevant is now assumed not to incorporate deriding overtones), its matching MPST or *gapped core key* might be 'depicted' by (4'),

(4') Somebody will come to hear Smith's mobs and implorations.
i.e. by a counterpart to (4) where "will come" is restored, substituting again for "comes" -see (4) in Section 2 above.

As soon as a highly plausible specific assumption is also accepted for each of the hinted at problematic kinds of questions, this proposal results in rather simple and satisfying accounts of them. The specific assumptions are as follows. For exam questions: the speaker is (usually) assumed to know how to 'fill in' the informational gap, but it is unknown whether the examinee does. For expository questions: it is conventionally assumed that the audience is unable to provide the missing information (so the speaker should proceed to do it). For rethorical questions: everyone knows that both himself/herself and everyone else know how to 'fill in' the gap, so that no one is expected to volunteer the information. Finally, for self-addressed questions: addressing no audience, the speaker is obviously left to his/her own resources; he or she may, then, look for the missing information, or perhaps venture a guess about it.⁸

Clearly, the *leaning to chop retellings* advanced in Section 3 above provides a straightforward explanation for the fact that an *envisioned action regarding a gapped core* and, if applicable, a *gapped core key holder* are linguistically omitted. Consider now how over-important is the commodity *information* (cp. 'permanent goal' G4' in P.I Appendix 3), and the, so to say, ever-present need we have for it. Given these facts, it may indeed be regarded as a highly expedient method to acquire a specific piece of information the simple procedure of questioning knowledgeable people about the subject. No doubt as a result of being so, such an 'action' is known to every speaker-hearer, since it is exactly the same no matter what the question. And how any *gapped core key* is 'held', being invariable irrespective of what the (yes-no) question is, is also perfectly known to speaker-hearers generally.

So, once the fact of being a question (in fact, such-and-such specific question, as far as this is not specified in *RGPS* itself) is clearly signalled, i.e. as soon as there is clear *signalling* that MACT does have the positive 'value' above referred to, and that the MPST linguistically phrased is a *gapped core*, i.e. it includes a 'gap' (here symbolised by "G" in "GPS") regarding such-and-such aspect of such-and-such item, both the *envisioned action regarding the (represented) gapped core* and -if there is any- the *gapped core key holder* may be linguistically omitted at no risk.⁹ Undoubtedly, the idiosyncratic formal properties of questions provide the needed signal -while perhaps fulfilling also other functions; they, or a part of them, may be a dummy for the omitted items.

A retort, though, comes easily to mind. In ordinary injunctions (i.e. when they have not the nature of questions) such as (33)

(33) Pass me the slab!

you may indeed, as per the suggested *leaning to chop retellings*, drop "pass me" on the assumption that your addressee, on one hand, knows what action must be taken (and is able and willing to do it, etc.), and, on the other, does not know which kind of building stone is to be passed. But, it may be argued, the parts in (33) and (31) that eventually become 'silent', i.e. "(you) pass me ..." and "somebody 'fills in' the gap in a represented ...", look too dissimilar to be comfortably considered as matching parts in a single, unified phenomenon.

In fact the difference does not go deep, and no real problem is here hiding. Consider one common class of petitions -which, characteristically, (almost) always show an omission quite similar, if not identical, to that of questions:

(34) Help!

It seems plausible to assert that restoration of the omitted items would result in something like (35).

(35) Somebody should do something that effectively helps me (to flee from my plight)!

Now, since a shift to the associated MPST must leave out (for MACT to take care of it) any expression of desire, intention, etc. -cp. in Section 2 above the transition from (5) to (4)-, such a MPST may be directly 'depicted' by the sentence below¹⁰

- (36) Somebody does something that effectively helps me (to flee from my plight).

(or something such), which in turn may be abbreviated as shown in (37),

- (37) Somebody does something that *HPS*.

clearly parallel in form to (31). Here the linguistic expression of *HPS* is usually enough signal for restoration of what could be dubbed the *envisioned action regarding HPS*, i.e. "somebody does something that ..." -even though some or other check of the real nature and threatening degree of the (implicitly) voiced plight is usually conducted on the spot.

Paying attention to other requests such as the following ones,

- (38) Any of you who is a good technician, please come here and open the CPU in my computer while a keep operating my text processor.

- (39) a. ((You guys put) the settee) right there (please).
b. The settee/It goes right there (please).

- (40) (You acquire/should have good manners at table so that) you don't (ever) put your knife in your mouth.

it may be suggested, as a 'direct' expression of the general form of a MPST associated to a request, command, etc. (to a *directive*, if you prefer this term), the following sentential scheme,¹¹

- (41) x does something specifically apposite so that *YPS*.

where "x" ranges over (sets of) members of the linguistic community within hearing reach, *YPS* ranges over partial situations having the nature of events, processes, states or combinations of these, and what is denoted by "something specifically apposite so that ..." may be a function of the particular *YPS* involved.

But, as shown by (34) and (39), there is no need to indicate linguistically in full partial situation *YPS*: an aspect or part of it (i.e. an included partial situation) which may well be 'smaller' than a whole event, process or state may perfectly be the only partial situation linguistically expressed. Bearing this in mind, (41) may be superseded by (42).

- (42) x does something specifically apposite so that an event, process or state *YPS* is the case, where *ZPS* occurs.

Here *ZPS* is an unrestricted partial situation (possibly, but not necessarily, identical with *YPS*); and the operation of our suggested *leaning to chop retellings* will result, whenever everything else is assumed, or known, to be obvious to a subject, in its linguistic omission, so that only *ZPS* (and possibly some *signalling* of the associated MACT) receive linguistic embodiment.

Now, if we come back to (31), repeated here for convenience,

- (31) a. Somebody 'fills in' the gap in a representation of *GPS*.
b. Somebody 'fills in' the gap in *RGPS*.

it clearly may be rewritten in the following form;

- (31") Somebody does a 'filling' in the gap of *RGPS*/a representation of *GPS* so that a 'filled' partial situation is the case, where *GPS* occurs.

and since obviously (31") is a particular case of (42), so that e.g. *ZPS* may well be called a *core (partial situation)* and seen as subsuming as a particular case a *gapped core GPS*, it seems a sensible theoretical policy to claim that questions are but a specific sort of requests/commands/petitions/...¹²

If the suggestion is correct, the unique features that set apart questions are that, because of the universal nature of the operations mentioned in (31"), there is in each language a distinctive (family of) *signalling device(s)*, and that, as a consequence of this and the universal *leaning to chop retellings*, it is almost mandatory to linguistically omit everything but the *gapped core* (or, if any, the *gapped core key*) -i.e. not to give linguistic expression to a *gapped core envisioned action* (nor to a *gapped core key holder*, if there is any). On the other hand, such a pair of properties takes care by itself of Sadock & Zwicky's observation. (See the Appendix for the relationship between questions and exclamations.)

4.2. On things that may, or may not, be done with words

Consider now injunctions where the subject firmly assumes or believes (he or she feels absolutely sure of it) that *YPS* is bound to occur directly, at the very moment the command is issued. The assumption may indeed be perfectly sound, as when self-fulfilling injunctions are issued:¹³

- (43) Let us stop keeping the silence unbroken!
(44) May I vibrate my vocal chords!
(45) That my neuronal structures for speech be active in their specific fashion!

(43)-(45), and any other injunction where in a *YPS* it is included the occurrence of either *MNGACT* itself or any of its parts or properties, is satisfied as soon as it is uttered. On the other hand, no matter what the grounds for this kind of assumption, the fact that it is entertained in so uncompromising a manner, that no allowance is made for potential failures, does certainly make a difference in expectations and in the very use of such commands -it makes a difference in what the person(s) involved in this specific spell of language activity is(are) legitimately allowed to intend and to expect. In a word, as a speech act it may well require not to be any more classified as a *directive* (or as a specific sort of *telling to*).

A natural way to do so in the present framework is to construe differently the relations between the main items involved in this strange breed of 'rulings', i.e. *IMBST*, *MPST*, *MACT*, and *F_{CST}*. The assumption may be as follows: here *MACT*, all by itself, brings about a change in the 'ontological status' of a specific 'part' (potentially the 'improper part') of the associated *MPST*, namely *YPS*, since it determines a shift to a *fully 'real'* status -this 'part' of *MPST* will be now (perhaps transiently, as any brief event does) included in *F_{CST}*. The construal does in a sense introduce a 'new', extra-high positive value for *MACTs* associated to non-'real'

IMBSTs, and so amends, as surmised (see Section 2 above), the accepted range of values for MACT when IMBST is non-'real': not only a *preparedness*, but an (*assumedly effective*) *intention to have MPST's non-'reality'*, at least as regards its 'part' *YPS*, (*directly*) *dispelled*, will be now operative.

This is indeed a debatable move. But the fact that in taking it one directly meets a prediction consequent to an immediate generalization previously suggested certainly confers it a measure of plausibility. On the other hand, it provides at least a convenient way of referring to these 'new speech acts' -a way I will use it throughout.

More interesting cases than the 'self-fulfilling injunctions' we have perused are easily found. Firstly, an entire class of examples, some definitely time-honored, others just traditional, may be included amongst the commands sporting an 'extra-high' positive MACT: consider "*Stand still, O Sun, in Gibeon; stand, Moon, in the Vale of Aijalon*" (Joshua 10, 12), "*Open sesame!*", "*Abracādabra*", and a host of magic expressions and spells both in white and in black witchcraft. And no exception should be taken to the seemingly implicit claim that these injunctions are in fact able to effect the portrayed changes (a surely weird claim), for Pragmatics has no say on ontological issues -it cannot decree against effectiveness of incantations, charms, etc., or extremely effective Covenants with God.¹⁴

If slight deviations are disregarded, such as that "sesame" may be sort of an alias, not a true name of the object that suddenly opens (although it may well rather be a special *signalling* device of the kind of value here had by MACT, a category where "abracadabra" fits in most naturally), in this class of examples *YPS* undoubtedly 'depicts' the desired -and assumedly directly brought off- change (ignoring for simplicity, of course, that arguably *YPS* gets no linguistic expression in utterances such as "*Abracadabra*", an omission made possible by the presumable insight that the dark Powers have about matters directly involved in the associated changes). In other instances what gets mentioned is the final state to be reached, not the path that leads to it. This may be the case with many incantatory formulae, and definitely is in other, more respected kind of linguistic performances. Think of a suitable person that in suitable circumstances says: "*Ecce corpus meum; ecce sanguis meus*" (or the right words in a vernacular alternative ritual). It may still be contended that here also only injunctions are used: examples such as (39a) -see §4.1 above- showed that undisputable commands may have a similarly restricted *core*, and undoubtedly God, and other super-human Powers lurking behind some such transmutations and changes, know what got omitted.

Nonetheless, there is an alternative construal where these utterances not merely preserve the linguistic remnants of a request or an appeal; they are taken as giving linguistic form to everything that is involved. For it may be argued that the words (say, those used for Consecration) describe a partial situation in a way that at the very moment of their utterance is assumedly true to the facts, while not only in a different context they would be plainly false: even the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church would consider the words mistaken if referring to what was the case a moment before their being uttered. In other terms, now the operative MACT is apparently associated to a MPST that was not there, was not 'real' before

the words were pronounced. And since this is a mark of MPSTs included in an IMBST having as 'ontological status' that of being '*real*', *but not identical with* F_{CST} (as discussed in Section 2 above), this construal seems to lead to an acceptance of the following view: the MPST at issue is located in an IMBST having such an 'ontological status' (undoubtedly thanks to some concurring Power), and the associated MACT does not seem to do much more than acknowledging (*accepting*) this fact. So, irrespective of what its previous 'ontological status' was (presumably it was also 'located' in such an IMBST but deserving a fully negative value of MACT), it gets the status of a *plainly* 'real' MPST. (Only after the subject shifts his/her attention to these just occurred developments, so that the items involved become included in the new F_{CST} , may such a MPST reach *overt* 'reality' -i.e. only then may it 'move' to F_{CST} .)

But it is not so. First of all, the theological belief assumed for the sake of the argument does not agree on the 'final location' of the discussed MPST. For according to this belief, that MPST, and the items it includes, range as to physical accessibility (in spite of their 'disguised' perceptual features) just as anything else (belonging to the same ontological category, of course) in the subject's neighborhood. But its being then a part of the ground level of 'reality' (refer to P.I Section 5) does not occur just if and when the subject's attention shifts and the relevant F_{CST} varies: no change in focus is assumed to have occurred by the mere uttering of the Consecration formula -simply, the facts are afterwards different.

In sum, if theological/ontological potential problems are ignored, the claim is as follows. Both in the initial and in the final condition IMBST *is identical with* F_{CST} ; and the only split between them comes from some developments which took place in this single 'real' arena. So, the 'push' provided by the presumed extra-high positive MACT (surely 'aided' by super-human Powers) ensues in getting that something which before was not 'real' becomes so (plus a 'compensating' converse change). At any moment everything is within the *full* 'reality' domain, within F_{CST} . If this is correct, there is, as just intimated, a new 'extra-high' value for *degree of commitment to MPST's 'reality'*, a value which, in parallel fashion to that suggested for a *non-'real'* IMBST, might be described as an (*assumedly efficient*) *intention for MPST to (directly) be overtly 'real', so that this 'reality' may be fully endorsed.*

Nevertheless, even ignoring -as I argued it should be done in pragmatic theory- the problems posed by theological and ontological claims, a difficulty seems to remain, arising from the fact that the agency responsible (from a counterfactualist standpoint) for the developments at issue is rather outlandish as a 'causal' agency; it is an utterance (or a 'part' of it such as its MACT). But the bizarre outlook of such a 'causal' agency when compared with its effects may be deemed but a deceptive appearance, due to our own theological and/or ontological beliefs.

To see it, consider other, more mundane examples, such as (46),

(46) Tomorrow I will come at 9:00 am. (Be certain of it!)
assumed to be uttered in a culture where promises are acknowledged, openly expressed, and taken up; (47),

(47) What I just said is an off-the-record statement.
where the assumption is similar, but regarding personal rights to determine whether or not one's own words are allowed to be made public; (48),

(48) You are the 1995 Formula 1 racing world champion.
as uttered by an appropriate official (obviously, in a culture where Formula 1 races are acknowledged by law or custom); or the sentences in (49)

(49) a. Here begins my new endeavour.
b. I (hereby) begin my new endeavour.
(which do not seem to need any special assumption nor circumstances). I don't think that these utterances would raise anyone's brow; on the contrary, it seems to me that they are likely to be considered rather unexceptionable -if not winning immediate acceptance by everyone.

This fact -or so it seems to me- shows our widespread belief that an institution usually, if not always, offers some room for changes in social situation (which in turn determine changes in behavior involving the institution) to be brought about by some specified way of using language. A belief, no matter how correct, that should not lead in Pragmatics to utterly ignore, or legislate against, other kinds of effects that people may believe are achievable by linguistic means.¹⁵

Coming back to the general issue raised by the construal above suggested (about 'extra-high' values of MACT), it may be easily seen that as regards the third kind of 'ontological relation' between IMBST and FCST, i.e. where IMBST is as 'real' as FCST, but not identical with it, a positive value for MACT that goes beyond *acceptance of this plain* 'reality' of MPST, should also be posited. For even though changing a dull self-fulfilling injunction of the kind above displayed into a (contingent always true) description, as in the examples below,

(50) I vibrate my vocal chords.

(51) My neuronal structures for speech are active in their specific fashion.
is perhaps no more interesting for Pragmatics (as opposed to Logic or formal Semantics) than any other description of an assumedly 'real' event, if the 'depicted' event (or item, property, etc.: a *partial situation*) is the very MNGACT through which it is established, and in order to be so uniquely referred to also its agent, the speaker, as performing it, and the meant items involved, (the MPST itself and the associated MACT, the speaker's degree of commitment to MPST's 'reality'), are also included, one deals with inhabitants of a 'real', but not identical with FCST, 'world' or 'plane' (i.e. IMBST). For instance, assume that you utter any of the sentences in (52)

(52) a. I linguistically mean just this (what I mean through the present utterance).
b. I meaningfully utter this sentence.
c. I say this, meaning it.

not as an example of a certain kind of utterance, nor as a quote of somebody else's words, etc., but meaning it. (Forget momentarily about what do you specifically

mean with it.) Then you are setting up as MPST a *partial situation* where you are uttering just this sentence in the current circumstances. So, this MPST: (a) is a unique event, for it did not exist in any way before (it was not even mentioned or linguistically meant as something merely possible); (b) it is as 'real' as any event in F_{CST} ; (c) is not at all 'real' or accessible in the same way than items in F_{CST} are, for, because of its uniqueness, it cannot at all be considered as being 'there', as 'inhabiting' it (or, for that matter, any other 'ontological location') before it was originated in your MNGACT; and (d), as repeatedly pointed out, it did not exist at all before your uttering (52). Feature (c) tells us that it cannot be in an IMBST identical with F_{CST} , while (b) indicates that it is *plainly* 'real'.¹⁶

Now, as opposed to the cases of talking (under one's breath or in a 'public' fashion) about recalled states, events, etc. (see Section 2 above in finem), here not only such a MPST is not included in F_{CST} before you shift your attention in the appropriate way (assuming that you eventually do it): as per (d), it came into being as a result of your MNGACT, the one that ensued in the relevant sentence in (52). Now, since in general a MACT is by definition an 'enacted' relation to a MPST ('enacted' in, or by, performing the associated MNGACT), it seems altogether natural, in fact almost unavoidable, to posit that it was its MACT which 'created' (52)'s MPST at issue. In other words, rather than the value of *degree of commitment* to MPST's 'reality' up to now considered as 'maximum', i.e. *acceptance (of such a plain 'reality')*, an extra-high value appears to be now needed; a value that it seems perfectly adequate to dub *establishment of MPST's (plain) 'reality'*.

It strikes me as incorrect to speak now of an (*assumedly efficient*) *intention for MPST to (directly) be plainly 'real', so that this 'reality' may be fully accepted* -as it would be done were we to follow the pattern of previous cases. For in counterdistinction to these (although (49) surely is a limit case where, as noted, no special assumption seems to be needed), the subject's shift to his/her final degree of commitment to a MPST having the relevant 'ontological status' is at present not an operation that in a sense may be called extrinsic to the linguistic activity at issue, something we accept as accruing on it because of some specific assumptions (no matter how sound or flimsy) we happen to have: it simply cannot be denied (barring a refusal to accept the notional framework of MPSTs, MACTs, and so on).

Unfortunately, the sentences in (52) are thoroughly obscure: the 'meanings' they so showily refer to seem to be not less empty than the truth of a positive counterpart, such as the following one,

(53) This very sentence is true.

to Epimenides' sentence. And the grounds for such an emptiness are obviously the same: they are wholly, exhaustively self-denoting. (Though in (53) and (54)

(54) This very sentence is false.

only a specific assesment of MPST is at issue, and neither 'the truthful' nor 'the liar' are talked about.) So it is necessary for the MPST at issue to be cleaved in two: one must 'depict' the complete MNGACT as in (52), but the meaning referred to must be 'depicted' by a different MPST (and, because of the inclusiveness of the

former, necessarily it must be a part of it). It is possible to indicate schematically as follows

(55) I say this: S (having MPST_S as *partial situation* I mean by it, and the value of my *degree of commitment* to its 'reality' being MACT_S).
 what should occur in a sentence able to fill the bill (where of course MPST_S must not go beyond the sentence S, engulfing (55) whole). One may offer as many examples as desired; not only as simple as the following ones,

(56) I say that you should figure out your own sentences (please).

(57) I say: is next sentence more strange than the previous one?

(58) I mention that there is no final theory in Pragmatics.

but also expressing other properties of MNGACT, such as a non strictly cognitive facet in MACT, as in (59),

(59) I ejaculate that even the best swimmers get eventually drowned as the astounding fact that it is.

or a quite different kind of property of MNGACT.

(60) I briefly add that you're disgusting.

So, apparently a speaker may secure that a sentence with specified properties is set up so to say in full view (having *plainly* 'real' MPST and other properties) through the strategy of uttering an explicit mention of his/her own phrasing it -the relevant extra-high value of (purely cognitive) MACT does the trick.

Summarizing: while utterances with 'extra-high' value of MACT apparently include all the (correct) cases originally perceived by Austin as varieties of 'doing things with words', and later construed as showing the peculiar properties of Searle's *declarations*, in the last class of cases (the one that (54) schematically displays) is included the particular kind of *declarations* (see Vanderveken, 1990) formed by explicitly performative utterances. As it was shown, even here, before the specific kinds of linguistic emission and reception activities are tackled, several other types of 'speech acts' not previously acknowledged may be accounted for -as it could be glanced at several junctures- by the present proposal (to be completed in §4.3 below). And so Austin's insight about different uses of language is expanded and provided with a theoretical grounding, in that the counterparts of his 'illocutionary forces' are derived from notions independently gained -advanced in traits (iv) and (v), P.I §4.2, and later developed in P.I Section 5.

4.3. Talking plainly about the world

Only the residual category where none of the special features considered in Sections 2 and 3 occur is to be addressed here; in different terms, only the standard kind of utterances where the conditions as to *meant items* are those to be assumed by default. This is to say that now IMBST will be, as to 'ontological status', *identical with* FC_{ST}, and that MACT may have any 'normal' value. Unbounded

numbers of examples may be (rather unexcitingly) supplied; I refer below to a few that were already offered.

Evidently, (4) and (6)-(19) in Section 2 and also (22)-(23), (25)-(26), and (28)-(29) in Section 3 are to be included in this class. (No problem is raised by the curtness in (22), (25), (28), and (29) once the *leaning to chop retellings* and the existence of dummy expressions are acknowledged, and also the contexts indicated where these examples were introduced -a context only vaguely hinted at as regards (28)- are assumed.) Concerning (27) and (30), they are pragmatically ambiguous. They may be uttered as predictions on one's own future behavior (including intentions, attempts, and so on). If so, the *ground level of 'reality'* defined by F_{CST} is here a (no doubt, in fact only possible) future world in which the speaker sees himself/herself to live and act; then everything just said applies. On the other hand, and this is to me their most natural interpretation, they may be intended as a way of assuming and voicing some kind of (maybe tenuous) commitment. If this is the case, they are similar to (49b), in that the speaker envisions himself/herself as being from that moment on in different circumstances (in the present case stemming from the assumed commitment to his/her future behavior), and the values for the *meant items* should be those indicated when discussing the latter example.

A remark on everything advanced in §§4.1-4.3. It should be noted that, as claimed in Note 8, *represented* linguistic activities should certainly find a place in pragmatic theories, in order to account for irony (as per Sperber & Wilson's theory of this trope) and different varieties of fictional speech. The present framework is able to do so without any need to stipulate ad hoc distinctions nor to incorporate new theoretical or operational notions. For to this end it suffices to use the possibilities offered by a *meant item* introduced while discussing trait (iv) in P.I §4.3 (where it was referred back to common feature (d") of §4.1) -in fact a *meant item* that *cannot be dispensed with* without inconsistency. The item is "a *meant agent* (perhaps only implicitly meant, and either identical [with] the speaker himself/herself or not [so])", related ('in' IMBST) by MACT to MPST. I cannot delve into the subject here, but obviously a *meant agent* different from the speaker and complying with specified conditions takes care of the matter in all (or a ample proportion of) its varieties.

5. Some final queries

As a final clarification prior to the study of both general types of linguistic performance it is necessary to examine how the notion *activity* advanced in P.I §2.3, fits the kinds of activities to be considered here. First of all, it should be noticed that in the *initial phase* posited in P.I §5, where perception of (an originating item or ORITM in) the focussed part of the current situation (F_{CST}) and appraisal of its likely, more or less impending effect (EFF) are carried out, a clear difference emerges. As regards a speaker's performance, no activity of the relevant kind is performed by the subject; so it seems to be advisable, in order to avoid utter confusion of stages, to consider emission processing as beginning only in next

stage, i.e. in the *early processing stage*. But this is not the case as regards a linguistic hearer's activity; for in order to appraise whether and, if befitting, how much someone's utterance (which arguably fulfils here an ORITM role, as pointed out in P.I §4.3) is likely to involve one's own goals, attractors, aversors, etc., the utterance must be first grasped, understood, interpreted or whatnot, and so linguistically (in fact: pragmatically) processed.

This apparent 'inversion' of what at first blush might be considered the 'normal' sequence will be tackled when specifically addressing reception. But its sheer occurrence raises a more encompassing issue, namely whether or not a truly general 'blueprint' is to be used (perhaps providing it with appropriate *parameters* to be separately specified). Or is it preferable to develop from the outset two different (although undoubtedly related) general sketches or 'blueprints'?

As a matter of fact, it is possible to evade the problem posed by the apparent occurrence of the relevant linguistic activity in the *initial phase* of reception. One may assume that in linguistic reception the initial activity it postulates is an active search for interpretation -an interpretation 'deep' enough to allow identification of effects that may involve full sets of competing *driving agencies* (where these *agencies* are apt to include human interests, desires, etc. of any kind). Unfortunately, this is a non-solution to the problem. First, the *initial phase* is now highly redundant, since the same sequence of operations occurs twice; and this happens with a vengeance, in that its first token (the one assumed to occur 'in' the *initial phase*) seems to be inaccessible to further scrutiny, so defeating the very purpose of a processual theory. Second and more importantly, the proposal ignores the well-known fact that almost any segment of an utterance, from a word -ultimately, a phoneme- to a whole sentence (remember so-called garden-path ones), may be found 'mistaken' and replaced by a 'better' one, i.e. one that fits the gained interpretation of a bigger segment. Obviously this proposal does not exhaust the routes to flee from the problem by preserving a truly 'general blueprint', but others that come to mind look even less promising and I will not explore them here.

On the other hand, the fact just mentioned (first empirically proved in Marslen-Wilson's work) apparently plays havoc with any sequencing of processes in reception activity that seems 'naturally' derived from our general 'blueprint' -not only with the sequencing incorporated in the proposal above. Any real solution to the puzzle must acknowledge from the outset that such timing reversals do arise, and that they may develop at any point -or so it seems- in the general process of utterance interpretation.

But the root of the difficulty is not hard to find. If 'perception of language' is a befitting label, there is nothing odd in it being so difficult for a 'general blueprint' to model in perfect parallel fashion a linguistic utterer's and a linguistic hearer's activities. For perception is highly eccentric as a bona fide activity (i.e. as an activity closely comparable to and/or directly ensuing in 'external' action): its final target is not action (a means to change the environment), but representation (an inner operational likeness to it); and -a connected feature- it does not proceed by building schemes, plans, etc. to be implemented, but (more and more detailed)

representations to be 'stored' as a resource. True, emotions and their elicitation processes are not either regular activities. But while an emotion can certainly prompt to and drive 'external' action (the single fact that guided psychologists' study of emotion up to the early eighties and that is still considered by an important fraction of these investigators as defining the central function of emotions, or at least the key function of a core array of them -usually called *basic emotions*-, and so as explaining their emergence in evolution), it would be certainly odd to say that an emotion is a representation or (necessarily) results in one such; a denial that not only is intuitively correct, it is implicit in a claim (Oatley and Johnson-Laird, 1986) such as that emotions lack propositional structure. In sum, emotions, irrespective of their being only *activities* in the generalized, technical sense here suggested, are more closely related to 'regular' *activities* (those associated to ordinary action) than to perception and its elicitation; a claim that accounts for the fact that the original, 'non inverted' sequence of the 'general' blueprint was arrived at through a direct generalization of the model for inception of emotions advanced in P.I §3.1.

Two final observations concerning the issue. First, by no means should the old 'blueprint' be simply discarded; for the interpretation processes eventually ensue in regular activities, even straightforward actions. A hearer eventually chooses between different lines of activity: he or she either keeps acting as such, or turns to linguistic emission (which obviously may be 'external'), or else, in response to the utterance heard, launches some non overtly linguistic, inner or outer activity -from changing some of his/her beliefs to performing an action in order to conform to a command, a plead, etc. Second, it must be kept in mind that, as it is well-known (see e.g. Neisser, 1976, and precursor ideas advanced in Goldstein, 1934; Von Weizsäcker, 1940; or Piaget, 1947), an integral part of the perception process is an active search for more information to fill in gaps, dispel inconsistencies, and so on.

APPENDIX - On exclamations

Sperber & Wilson, in the passage above referred to (in §4.1 ad initium), point out that their theory of the speech act *asking whether* explains why in so many languages exclamative and interrogative sentences are very similar. Now, the explanation they offer of the similarity to a specific kind of wh-interrogatives ('indirect questions') of 'indirect exclamatives', exemplified in (61)

- (61) a. Jane is so clever!
- b. How clever Jane is!

(their examples (157) and (158)), extends automatically to other kinds: on the very same grounds they suggest, (full sentence) 'direct exclamatives' should be formally similar to yes-no questions. But they aren't: (62) and (63)

- (62) John is here!
- (63) The garden is swarming with bees!

bear witness to it. In the absence of a rationale for preclusion of this kind of questions, their explanation is suspect.

A clue might be found in the fact that whenever the *leaning to chop retellings* has been given an opportunity to operate we find expressions that may be used as exclamations: see (64)

- | | | |
|------|--|------------------|
| (64) | a. John! | Cp. (22), Sect.3 |
| | b. Right ahead! | |
| | c. A slab! | |
| | d. Joan, not Jane! | Cp. (28), Sect.3 |
| | e. A drink! | Cp. (29), Sect.3 |
| | f. (The setee) right there! | Cp. (39), §4.1. |
| | g. You don't put your knife in your mouth! | Cp. (40), §4.1. |

(although examples a., c., e., and g. have a slight or null significance, since apparently both NPs and declarative sentences may freely occur as exclamations). But this fact, coupled with the offered theory of questions (§4.1) cannot be the sole answer, since it would predict that (65) and (66)

- (65) *Is John here!
 (66) *Is the garden swarming with bees!

are well-formed, and so it would make the incorrect claim we already know. A rejoinder, though, is closely at hand.

One of the central claims of such a theory is that there is a cleavage in the internal, meant (in the first sense considered in Section 3: intended, not necessarily explicitly phrased) structure of questions: wh-questions bear an *envisioned action* regarding a bona fide *GPS* or *gapped core* (i.e. a *gapped core* not concocted through introduction of a *key holder* and its 'forked pointer'), while the opposite is the case in yes-no questions. Now, a *GPS* in a wh-question and a *gapped core key* or *GPS'* in a yes-no question are counterparts in every respect: as to nature, both are MPSTs possessing a 'gap'; both are identically 'displayed' (for neither is shown 'bare', but *represented*); and each one matches (ignoring the 'gap') the linguistically expressed relevant question. An obvious hypothesis is then that the difference comes from the intervening *key holder*, which in some way or other blocks the parallel exclamative sentence.

The hypothesis, as worded, needs unpacking. This may be achieved by assuming that an exclamative expression is (as the examples above clearly suggest) the 'remnant' of a larger sentence whose MPST would be 'directly' expressed by a sentence complying with the following sentential scheme,

- (67) The subject surprises/wonders/horrifies ... at the fact
 that *YPS* is the case.

which should be compared with (41), repeated here for convenience.

- (41) x does something specifically apposite so that *YPS*.

The schemes cannot be usefully merged but in the more empty generalization (something gets linguistically unexpressed), for two different reasons: in (41) *YPS* must be an event, a process or a state, but this constriction does not hold in

(67); and *YPS* is seen in (41) as the result of some envisioned action, but in (67) as the cause of certain experienced feelings or emotions. (This is as it should be, for exclamations are not a variety or commands, requests or pleas, nor vice versa.) But inasmuch as that part of the 'embodiment' of (67) that explicitly mentions the occurrence of a surprise and/or an emotion is linguistically omitted, the universal significance of emotion in human life and the fact of their potentially covert occurrence makes us to expect some sort of *signalling* of emotives -as there was a signalling of request for information in interrogatives.

Whenever a specific item in *YPS* is acknowledged by the subject as the source of surprise, wonder, etc., since (67) requires that the assumedly occurring feelings result from this item being as it in fact is, the item may be plausibly considered a 'filled in gap' in our sense. This assumption leads to a particular case of (67) which in expanded form may be phrased as in (68),

- (68) a. The subject surprises/wonders/horrifies ... at the fact
that GPS_F is the case.
b. The subject surprises/wonders/horrifies ... at the gap
in GPS_F being 'filled in' as it is the case.

where obviously GPS_F represents a gapped partial situation 'filled in', i.e. a partial situation having an item salient in some or other respect (as to nature, properties, amount or whatever).

Now it stands to reason that the formal linguistic means used in a language to *signal* the occurrence, position and nature of (the representation of) a 'gap' in an interrogative is again used, at least partially, to *signal* the representation of a 'filled in gap' in an emotive. (It should be recalled in this context that, as pointed out in §4.1, *signalling* in questions has two facets: it both hints to the characteristic 'value' of its MACT, and to the quantities just referred to regarding the 'gap'.) This takes care of the empirical observation retold by Sperber & Wilson -and with no invocation of relevance nor truth. But again, why yes-no questions form is not taken advantage of in the correlated emotives, why (65) and (66) are excluded?

As above intimated, the only plausible answer is apparently that the *GPS* matching the current GPS_F must be a bona fide one. In other words, either it is mandatory for an emotive that a gapped partial situation does really have a gap *whithin* it, rather than forming a sort of double gap by logical adjunction to its negation, or else in emotives the *gapped core key holder* blocks its signalling power, which is unable to reach that far down. Further investigation is clearly needed to clarify the issue.

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Notes

- ^a In the first Notes to the "Preliminary steps" of present essay, it was asserted that a revised version of the last Sections of a previous and longer essay entitled "How to build a sounder, albeit less simple (psychological) Pragmatics" (completed by February, 1994) was to follow. In fact, the present paper offers only some kind of introduction to that revised Sections. For, under the stimulus provided by critical comments and advice forwarded to me by Prof. Jacob Mey operating on my own dissatisfaction about several features of my approach (a dissatisfaction which was in turn mainly aroused by older remarks by my friends and colleagues Teresa Bejarano, Pompeu Casanovas and Violeta Demonte on previous versions of the essay), the revision went much deeper than I previously thought (even though the spirit and specific approach of the investigation has not changed), resulting in a text of an impossible length. So, I am forced to postpone publication of the final parts, where the new insights gained and specific methods developed find their detailed application. All of the alluded critiques and suggestions are here gratefully acknowledged; but any responsibility of the scholars originating them for any remnant shortcoming or error must be emphatically denied, since first, no attempt was made to comply with all of them (it would have been too Herculean a task for my capabilities), and second, none of these people has discussed with me the new developments here advanced, nor has been even offered any opportunity to glance at this final presentation. (*March, 1995*)
- 1 For simplicity, I ignore many niceties, the most conspicuous being that there was an implicit "ever" in (3) (possibly qualified by a not less implicit "within a reasonable term" or some such) that should here be mirrored in a phrase such as "at some or other time" (similarly qualified). The argument at hand, though, would remain unimpaired after adding the substantial complications that would result from duly taking into account such details.
 - 2 Obviously (3) and (5) are instances of so-called rethorical questions. It is barely possible that the analysis may be extended to all of them; but anyway much more is to be probed and delved into, since these questions, or most of them, are used in communicational contexts, so it may be suspected that the roles that addressor and addressee play for each other are to be taken into account for real illumination.
 - 3 Certainly, new 'shades of meaning' -as they are sometimes referred to- are added in several of them. But the issue, no doubt interesting and important, is obviously irrelevant for present purposes.
 - 4 That a subjective manoeuver is used to confer an 'objective' status should not be surprising in itself. As explicitly pointed out in present Section 2, *ad initium*, it is always a subject who attributes such statuses -and so, ultimately, an 'ontological status' is in this sense unavoidably 'subjective'.
On the other hand, inasmuch as the proposal is correct there is an interaction between 'values' in MPST and 'values' in MACT; consequently the latter should not be thought of as 'orthogonal' to (i.e. selected independently of and having no effect on) the former. (See P.I Section 5.)
 - 5 Keeping to the policy established in P.I, I will ignore in this paper the first term of such a relation. Notice that the symmetrical 'either-or' choice just stated conceals the priority the relation must be assumed to have if the parallel between linguistic spells of activity and pretense play episodes (where the priority is quite apparent, at least to the present writer) is to be preserved. In fact, its preservation is assumed throughout in present essay, as evidenced by the asymmetry showing in the very wording of P.I, §4.1, common feature (d). Again, I will ignore the finer grain implications of this asymmetry.
 - 6 I ignore the moot issue of whether or not literal meaning is (psychologically) more basic than figurative meaning. Anyway, my argument below is quite compatible with a negative position on this matter -e.g. Récanati's (1994).

- 7 Note that no new principle or ad hoc stipulation is needed to accommodate Bühler's insight: such an uncertainty is obviously viewed by the speaker as being 'unfavorable' in itself or about to bring forth 'unfavorable' effects -which may very easily be sidestepped by providing the missing information. (And such an assessment may even be considered as no more than a realization that a specific instance of the subject's goal G4' -or perhaps G5- is in jeopardy; see P.I Appendix 3.)
- 8 The only kind occurring in Sperber & Wilson's (1986) passage above referred to that is not tackled here is that of indirect questions such as the following one
- (i) Peter doesn't know who his neighbour is.
- (their example (156)). It raises no new problem, though: just assume -an assumption almost forced on us by the difference in prosodic pattern- that here the linguistic expression of the specific MACT of ordinary questions is lacking; then no one is asked to provide an answer -to 'fill in' the gap (which anyway occurs, and in the ordinary fashion is pointed out by "who"). As for ironical questions, they should be studied (as per of the proposal due to these writers themselves) by developing a theory of *represented* linguistic activity -a theory that, I believe, should be based on Goffman's (1974) notion of *lamination*. I cannot delve into the matter here (but see §4.3 below).
- 9 It may be asked about the details concerning which specific item is a 'gap' and in what specific aspect it is so (i.e. in which respect it is deemed as insufficiently defined): are they provided by the representation itself of *GPS*, or by the *signalling* needed to compensate for the linguistic omission of the *envisioned action* regarding this representation? It seems to me difficult to give a non arbitrary general answer. I assume for convenience that they are contributed by the *signalling*; but I don't think that much hinges on the issue.
- 10 Here a similar caveat than in Note 1 should be added.
- 11 As it was pointed out regarding the sentences associated to Notes 1 and 10, issues concerning time are ignored for simplicity.
- 12 Obviously, nothing interesting follows from the fact of being able to represent by a single formula -such as (42)- both requests, commands, etc. and questions, for it is always possible to relax the constrictions defining a class of utterances so that some other class is also included. At issue is a very different matter, namely, (a) whether questions are a specific sort of requests (and must be so handled in the theory), and (b) whether the general formula where this fact is represented does not cover also -barring mere happenstance cases- other classes of utterances.
- 13 Admittedly, in (44) an optative, not an request, is displayed. The aim was to offer a greater formal variation; the deviation, though, may be repaired at no cost, and anyway it does not require any change at all in the argument advanced directly below.
- 14 Searle's (1971) contention that non-supernatural 'declarations' must involve an institution is, no matter how strongly are we committed to its actual truth, an unacceptable claim. 'Illocutionary acts' by human beings purporting to change non-social aspects of the world must be accepted at face value in our discipline.
- 15 Clearly, there are many particulars in the conditions that must be met in order for the specific expectations to successfully arise that are associated to use of an utterance as a means to directly 'change the world' (not simply the minds of members of the relevant linguistic community). And most, if not all of them, as also a high proportion of the detailed content of such expectations, directly derive from specific assumptions governing such a use, which in turn derive in each case from some or other specific source (ontological and/or theological beliefs, social conventions, personal experience or whatever). Now, since such a source eludes in principle Pragmatics' purview, the indictment levelled in Sperber & Wilson (1986: Ch.4, §10) against studying ways of using language governed by non-linguistic institutions must be considered correct inasmuch as it concerns these particulars and details. (Their unargued assertion that there are cultures where promises are entirely unknown is extremely interesting -if true-, because of its flying in the face of the almost

unassailable intuition that a *promise* is a cultural universal.) On the other hand, the referred to assumptions themselves are highly relevant to pragmatic theory; not only because their explanation through an account of how they arise is as central to (psychological) Pragmatics as that of any other assumptions governing use of language, but also because the expectations (linguistic and otherwise) that accrue to this way of construing a spell of linguistic activity are utterly different in kind from those associated to 'straightforward use' of symbols (addressed in §4.3 below).

- ¹⁶ Features (a) and (c) are not found in the MPSTs associated to utterances of (50) or (51). Any of these latter utterances may show (d), but only by sheer coincidence -if the sentence was never uttered before by the subject.

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