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Chapter 14

Explicit Communication and ‘Free’ Pragmatic Enrichment¹

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1. Introduction: commitments and issues

In this chapter, I set out to develop some ideas about the way in which pragmatics contributes to explicit communication and, in the process, respond to a range of comments and criticisms on my earlier work in this area. In this introductory section, I briefly lay out the assumptions that I am working with and then indicate the issues that will be addressed in the chapter.

First, I take it that understanding an utterance is a matter of forming a confirmed hypothesis about the speaker’s meaning. Following Paul Grice, this is a matter of (non-demonstrative) inference directed at the goal of identifying the speaker’s communicative intention on the particular occasion of utterance. Second, although the approach is informed by relevant philosophical ideas and distinctions, the kind of account pursued here is set squarely within cognitive science. So it is responsive to research on human cognitive architecture and on the nature of particular mental systems, in particular our language processing (parsing) faculty and our capacity to recognise certain of each other’s mental states (beliefs, intentions).

On this basis, I assume that the mind is modular, to at least the extent that Jerry Fodor (1983) has proposed and defended – the language processing system being a primary case of such a dedicated encapsulated system – but probably considerably more so. Arguments from evolutionary psychology suggest that the mind is massively modular, in the sense that a great many distinct dedicated procedures and processes have evolved to solve specific cognitive problems (Cosmides and Tooby 1994; Sperber 2002). Another fruitful and well-supported development in thinking about human cognition is the idea that, for many of our decisions and solutions to a wide variety of everyday problems, we employ ‘fast and frugal heuristics’ rather than foolproof algorithms or lengthy explicit reasoning processes (Gigerenzer et al. 1999). The heuristics are ‘fast and frugal’ in that they carry out limited computations and consult just a small salient subset of all the available information, rather than working through myriad possibilities and comparing candidate solutions. A process of this sort can only achieve a high degree of accuracy in a particular domain to whose regularities it is specifically tailored or adapted.

The relevance-theoretic approach to communication situates pragmatics within this sort of cognitive framework, that is, one which consists of largely domain-specific capacities, each with the function of solving a specific pressing problem in human mental life and employing quick, relatively cheap computations to do so (Sperber and Wilson 2002; Allott 2008). The human pragmatic capacity is such a dedicated system whose domain is ostensive stimuli (utterances and other acts of ostensive communication) and the comprehension procedure it employs is a fast and frugal heuristic: in recovering a speaker’s meaning we follow a path of least effort until we reach an interpretation which meets a particular expected level of cognitive relevance (for the technical details, see Wilson and Sperber 2004).

The issues I discuss in this chapter all turn on the idea that grasping the proposition that a speaker explicitly communicates (the explicature) is a matter for

pragmatics and that what the linguistic system provides is a template or set of constraints, which is sufficient to ensure that swift and effort-minimal pragmatic processes recover the intended content, but which seldom, if ever, provides all that content itself. Most controversial in this context is the claim that there are ‘free’ pragmatic processes that can affect this level of content, where ‘free’ is understood as not required or directed by any element of the linguistic expression used. The term ‘*free* pragmatic enrichment’ was coined by François Recanati, who has made a clear and useful distinction between two kinds of contributions pragmatics can make to explicature: linguistically controlled, bottom-up, obligatory processes (such as disambiguation and the saturation of indexicals), and linguistically uncontrolled (that is, ‘free’), top-down, optional processes (Recanati 1993, 2004). The existence of the latter is hotly contended, even among some relevance theorists, and it is this putative kind of pragmatic effect on explicit speaker-meant content that I will be focusing on in this chapter.

There are, arguably, two kinds of ‘free’ enrichment process: one which effects modulations or adjustments of linguistically encoded meanings and another which recovers components of content which are not linguistically indicated in any way (and so are known as ‘unarticulated constituents’ of utterance content). Both kinds are discussed below, though different sorts of questions are broached for the two cases. With regard to the latter, the issue is one of existence, of whether any such entirely pragmatically-motivated process of inferring components of content takes place. I will look, in particular, at the doubts about this recently expressed by Luisa Martí (2006), who finds free pragmatic enrichment an unacceptably informal notion, and proposes instead that the grammar supplies all the meaning-bearing constituents that make up an explicature, although many of these are not only covert but also optional. With regard to the former kind of enrichment, meaning modulation, there has been (so far at least) less of an issue made about its existence, and the main questions concern the nature of the meanings – the *ad hoc* concepts – to which it gives rise, how extensive a process it is (for instance, whether or not it accounts for the understanding of certain metaphorical or other figurative uses, as suggested within relevance theory) and the way in which the process of concept adjustment actually works.

The chapter is structured as follows. In the next section, I discuss some issues concerning the move from the Gricean saying/implicating distinction to the relevance-theoretic explicature/implicature distinction. In section 3, the focus is on the viability and explanatoriness of a process of ‘free’ pragmatic enrichment giving rise to unarticulated constituents. The claim that optional hidden linguistic structure is a better explanation of the key data is considered. In section 4, some of the questions raised by recent work within relevance theory on lexical pragmatics, *ad hoc* concepts and meaning modulation (including metaphor understanding) are explored. The discussion in both of these central sections points to the difficult underlying issue of which aspects of utterance meaning come from the linguistic code and which are pragmatically inferred. There are a number of subquestions here, including the long-standing one of whether the semantics of lexical forms is complex (decompositional) or atomic (unstructured). In section 5, some specific instances of this huge ‘division of labour’ issue are considered. Then, in the final section, I discuss the ‘contextualist’ position on sentence/utterance semantics, a position which embraces the kind of free pragmatic processes focused on here and which relevance theory (henceforth RT) has been closely associated with. I suggest that the cognitive-scientific basis of the relevance-theoretic account of communication and

comprehension distinguishes it in some ways from the more philosophically-oriented concerns of contextualist semantics.²

2. Explicature, what is said, conventional/encoded meaning and cancellability

The point of departure for the relevance-theoretic concept of explicature is Grice's notion of 'what is said' (contrasted with 'what is implicated'). As he construed it, 'what is said' has the following two properties: (a) it is speaker-meant ('m-intended') content and (b) it is 'closely related to the conventional meaning of the words (the sentence) [...] uttered' though grasping it might also require a hearer to choose between several senses and to identify indexical reference (Grice 1975: 44). It is widely recognised now that these two requirements pull in different directions and that it is not generally possible to sustain both in a single entity.³

With regard to the property of being speaker-meant (and distinct from implicature), a number of theorists have converged in delineating a much more pragmatically rich level of utterance content, variously called 'explicature' (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95), intuitive or enriched 'what is said' (Recanati 2001), or 'implicature' (Bach 1994), and one of the upshots of this has been that many cases of what Grice discussed as generalised conversational implicatures, as well as certain cases of non-literal (figurative) meaning, including hyperbole, metaphor and metonymy, are now quite widely thought to contribute to this level of directly communicated speaker meaning.

At the same time, some theorists, in particular Kent Bach (1994), Laurence Horn (2006) and Manuel García-Carpintero (2007 and chapter 5 of this volume) have argued the case (on varying grounds) for a minimal 'semantic' notion of 'what is said' which answers to the second of Grice's requirements, that of close correlation with sentence-type meaning. Note that if this were found to be a viable notion, it would be additional to, not instead of, the conception of explicit content favoured by relevance-theorists and other contextualists (that is, explicature). This essentially follows from the fact that the minimalist 'what is said', unlike explicature, need not be, and frequently isn't, speaker-meant (in RT terms, it doesn't fall under the speaker's communicative intention), a point made with particular clarity and strong endorsement by Bach (1994: 143-4). A couple of examples should suffice here to demonstrate this minimalist notion of 'saying without meaning':

- (1) *Mother (to child crying over a cut on his knee):*
You're not going to die. (example due to Bach 1994)
- (2) Jim: Would you like to stay for supper?
Sue: I've eaten.

In (1), what the mother means (m-intends, in Gricean terms) is that the child is not going to die from the cut on his knee but what she says (without m-intending it) is that he's not going to die *tout court*. In (2), what Sue means (the explicature of her utterance, in RT terms) is that she's eaten supper that evening, but what she says (on this minimalist semantic construal) is just that she's eaten (something, at some time). Furthermore, on the Bach/Horn minimalist construal, what is said need not be fully propositional: sentences such as 'He is ready', 'She is too tall', 'I've had enough', although syntactically complete, are generally thought to be semantically incomplete, so when a speaker utters one of these, the content of what she says, in the favoured

minimal sense, is just a propositional radical and, therefore, cannot fall within the propositional content meant or communicated by the speaker.

I have argued elsewhere, at some length, that neither Bach's very minimalist 'what is said'⁴ nor any other minimalist 'proposition semantically expressed', such as that advocated by Herman Cappelen and Ernie Lepore (2005), has any role to play in an account of utterance interpretation (Carston 2002: 177-81, 2006). I won't repeat those points here.⁵ An interesting question arising now, though, is whether this (wholly or largely) pragmatically unaffected (context-insensitive) 'what is said' might have a role to play in some other kind of theory about language or language use, distinct from, perhaps complementary to, the concerns of a theory of utterance comprehension. García-Carpintero (2007 and chapter 5 of this volume) answers this question affirmatively. Like Bach, he endorses the view that there are two notions of 'saying' and hence of 'what is said': the pragmatic speech act notion (explicature or implicature) and a semantic notion, according to which 'saying is just conveying [or expressing] conventionally encoded information' (García-Carpintero 2007: 172). If I understand him correctly, his idea is that the standing linguistic meaning of a sentence-type (its 'character', in Kaplan's terms), although not itself propositional, may determine a propositional content which answers to certain native speaker intuitions concerning logical properties of, and logical relations between, natural language sentences. For instance, language users have the intuition that the inference from 'He is hungry' to 'Some male is hungry' is valid, and that the inference from 'That planet causes perturbations in Mercury's orbit, if it exists' to 'There exists a planet which causes perturbations in Mercury's orbit' is not valid, reflecting their grasp of the linguistic meaning (character) of pronouns and demonstratives.⁶ These logico-semantic intuitions reflect an important part of our knowledge of language, our semantic competence, and are on a par with our intuitions about grammatical well/ill-formedness, which reflect our syntactic competence.

I have no quarrel with this (as discussion along somewhat similar lines in Carston 2002, chapter 1, indicates), nor with García-Carpintero's wider concern to account for the 'systematicity' of our semantic competence, including our knowledge of the meaning of words like 'but', 'moreover' and 'anyway', which tend to be ignored by truth-conditional semantic theories. Clearly, without the systematicity (and relative stability) of encoded linguistic meaning, or 'character-semantics', as García-Carpintero calls it, the linguistic evidence that an utterance provides the hearer with would be considerably less reliable and useful as a basis for inferring the speaker's meaning. The enterprise of detailing our knowledge of our languages, specifically of their semantic/logical properties, both complements and informs the attempt to account for how verbal communication works (we seem to have here an instance of the good old competence/performance distinction). I'm not sure, though, that anything is gained by using the label 'what is said' in this essentially formal semantic endeavour, but that may just be a matter of terminological preference (for me, it is speakers, not linguistic expressions, that do the saying, referring, predicating, implicating, and so on).

Setting aside now issues around (various conceptions of) a minimal or semantic 'what is said', it seems that all the theorists discussed here (García-Carpintero, Recanati, Bach, Horn, relevance theorists) agree on a distinction between two kinds of speaker meaning or communicated propositions: conversational implicatures, on the one hand, and the more linguistically-based, more directly communicated proposition (explicature or implicature or intuitive 'what is said'), on the other. Despite significant differences in their theoretical frameworks, Bach,

Recanati and relevance theorists also essentially converge on the nature of this ‘primary’ speaker meaning or communicated content (intended here as a theory-neutral term). A particularly important point of agreement is that it can incorporate meaning whose recovery is wholly pragmatically motivated, that is, not driven either by propositional incompleteness or by linguistically articulated elements (whether overt or covert) which call for occasion-specific contextual values.

As Bach (chapter 8 of this volume) explains, such differences as there are between his ‘implicature’ and relevance theory’s ‘explicature’ spring from deeper differences between his Gricean framework and that of relevance theory. There are some substantive issues here which deserve attention, but they lie beyond the scope of this chapter and I’ll pick up on just one of the points of divergence that he mentions. The relevance-theoretic category of explicature is broader than the category of implicature, since it includes what are known as ‘higher-level’ explicatures, which are propositions that are explicitly communicated over and above the basic explicature (see Wilson and Sperber 1993, 2004; Ifantidou 2001). Instances of these are given in (3b)-(3c), where (3a) is taken to be the basic explicature (Bach’s implicature):

- (3) Jo utters: ‘I’ll finish by Tuesday’
- a. JO WILL FINISH HER ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 - b. JO IS SAYING THAT SHE WILL FINISH HER ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 - c. JO BELIEVES SHE WILL FINISH HER ESSAY BY TUESDAY.

A higher-level explicature is one for which the pragmatic development of the logical form of the utterance includes embedding it under a speech act description or a propositional attitude description. I will focus here on the propositional attitude case.

The first thing to note is that while this sort of proposition falls within what is communicated, given the relevance-theoretic definition of ostensive communication (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95: 50-64), it might not be speaker-meant, in Grice’s (and Bach’s) terms. However, there *are* instances where it would be not only RT-communicated but also Gricean-meant and would, in fact, be the main point of the utterance. For instance, suppose someone I don’t recognise comes up to me and says the following:

- (4) You’re Robyn Carston.

The basic proposition expressed here is clearly uninformative and irrelevant to me; it looks very much as if what the speaker means and what could be relevant and informative to me is that *she knows or believes that* I am Robyn Carston. In an appropriate context – say we are at a large academic conference – this utterance might also communicate implicatures along the following lines: the speaker recognizes me, we may have met before, we probably have common intellectual interests, and so on, implicatures whose derivation is warranted (at least in part) by the explicature that she knows that I am Robyn Carston.

In a brief discussion, Grice acknowledged that there was a question concerning how speaker-meant propositional attitude cases (specifically, the ‘speaker believes’ case) should be thought of within his system:

On my account, it will not be true that when I say that *p*, I conversationally implicate that I believe that *p* [...] it is not a natural use of language to

describe one who has said that p as having, for example, “implied”, “indicated”, or “suggested” that he believes that p ; the natural thing to say is that he has expressed (or at least purported to express) the belief that p . (Grice 1978: 114)

It remains unclear, then, what place this particular component of speaker meaning could occupy within Grice’s taxonomy, though he goes on, later in the same passage, to say that while the speaker’s commitment to the proposition that he believes that p is not a case of saying, ‘it is bound up, in a special way, with saying that p ’ and the way in which it is bound up with what is said concerns the role of the indicative mood (ibid.: 114).

As noted already, Bach’s more expansive framework offers the further category of ‘implicatures’, which are completions/enrichments/developments of what is said, as distinct from implicatures, which are additional propositions external to what is said (Bach 1994: 141). But he seems unwilling to extend this category to cover the propositional attitude cases and the reason he gives for this is:

‘[i]mplicatures, like implicatures, are things speakers mean, not other things inferable from their saying what they say or from what they mean in saying it.’ (Bach chapter 8 of this volume). However, the propositional attitude case is, at least on occasion, something that the speaker means, as in example (4) above and others yet to be discussed. When this is the case, it seems that Bach, unlike Grice, would opt for treating them as conversational implicatures ‘since they are cases of meaning one thing by way of meaning something else’ (Bach p.c.).

Let me briefly indicate a couple of advantages of an explicature account over a conversational implicature account (in addition to its meshing better with Grice’s observations). In what we might think of as the standard case of conversational implicature derivation, the basic explicature plays a key role as premise, together with certain contextual assumptions, in the inferential process (for myriad examples, see Carston 2002; Recanati 2004; Wilson and Sperber 2002, 2004). As suggested above in connection with example (4), the higher-level proposition expressing the speaker’s belief in the lower-level proposition has the same sort of role. That was perhaps a somewhat unusual case, so let’s consider a more ordinary communicative exchange, one where the basic explicature is not patently uninformative or irrelevant to the addressee. Suppose Ann and Beth are old friends, who regularly tell each other the ins and outs of their lives. For some months, Ann has been listening to Beth’s complaints about her ‘vile’ colleague Jane, but more recently Beth has mentioned instances of kind and helpful behaviour by Jane:

- (5) Ann: So have you changed your views about Jane?
Beth: She is basically a nice person.

Beth’s response seems to conversationally implicate that she has indeed changed her views about Jane. The question here is what this conversational inference is based on. Ann has ready access to a contextual assumption that Beth has held the belief that Jane is a vile person and what’s needed for the conclusion that Beth has changed her view (opinion/belief) is not the proposition that Jane *is* a nice person but the higher-level proposition that Beth (now) *believes* that Jane is a nice person (together with assumptions about what’s involved in having a change of view about someone/thing). So what’s playing the crucial premise role in the derivation of the implicature here is the higher-level explicature concerning Beth’s propositional

attitude. On the relevance-theoretic account, then, an implicature of an utterance quite generally rests on (is warranted by) an explicature of the utterance, rather than sometimes by an explicature/implicature and sometimes by some other unspecified inferred entity. Other things being equal, I take it that this unified view is preferable.

Moving on now to utterances of non-declaratives (specifically imperatives and interrogatives) and the question of what they can be used to communicate as the primary speaker meaning. Consider the following exchange between Ann (tutor) and Bob (student) concerning the deadline for Bob's essay, where (6a) and (6b) are alternative utterances of Ann's, to which Bob replies as in (6c):

- (6) a. Ann: Will you finish by Tuesday?
 b. Ann: Finish by Tuesday!
 c. Bob: I will finish by Tuesday

In the two possible utterances by Ann, there is no basic explicature since, although the logical form is pragmatically completed/enriched in certain ways (for instance, the constituent BOB'S ESSAY is supplied), the propositional form thereby derived is not communicated. But, as pointed out by Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber (2004: 623), there is a very strong intuition that neither of these possible utterances by Ann is any less explicit than Bob's in (6c), which does communicate the explicature BOB WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY. All three surely communicate a primary speaker meaning built out of much the same elements of linguistic meaning, the main difference being that the imperative and interrogative moods indicate that the speaker is not putting that content forward as something she endorses. According to RT, Ann's interrogative utterance communicates the higher order proposition in (7a) and probably also the one in (7b), and her imperative utterance communicates the higher order proposition in (8a) and probably also (8b):

- (7) a. ANN WANTS BOB TO TELL HER WHETHER HE WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 b. ANN WANTS TO KNOW WHETHER BOB WILL FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
- (8) a. ANN IS TELLING BOB TO FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.
 b. ANN WANTS BOB TO FINISH HIS ESSAY BY TUESDAY.

Any of these might well warrant certain conversational implicatures. For instance, suppose Bob is already well overdue with his essay and has just enquired of Ann whether she is still willing to read and assess the essay, then her utterance of the imperative (6b) might well implicate that she is still willing to mark it provided he satisfies her communicated desire in (8b), that it is finished by Tuesday.

Summing up, there are several reasons for favouring this account of propositional attitude cases as instances of (higher-level) explicature: (a) Like basic explicatures, they are (pragmatic) developments of the encoded linguistic meaning (logical form); (b) Like basic explicatures, they can play the role of an essential premise (together with intended contextual assumptions) in the derivation of implicatures; (c) They answer to the strong intuition that non-declarative utterances, no less than corresponding declaratives, communicate a primary non-implicated proposition (explicature or implicature). However, while this kind of unity in the account is appealing, it is probably not enough to establish the case for higher-level

explicatures against its critics and more work is needed, both in teasing out the ramifications of this construct and in looking at how pragmatic frameworks that eschew it account for the same range of communicative phenomena.^{7,8} Higher-level explicatures won't come up again in this chapter, so from now on whenever I mention explicature I will mean the basic-level directly-communicated proposition (essentially the same as Bach's 'implicature' or Recanati's intuitive 'what is said').

Finally in this section, I would like to look at the issue of the 'cancellability' of aspects of utterance meaning and how this applies to explicature. In an early presentation of his views on 'implicature', Bach made the following statement more or less in passing, apparently taking it as pretty much self-evident: 'Implicatures are, as Grice observed, cancellable and can be vague or indeterminate, but the same is true of implicatures' (1994: 140). I would endorse this, albeit substituting 'explicatures' for 'implicatures', which in this instance makes no difference to the point being made. A slightly more precise statement would be that the *pragmatically derived* elements of the content of an explicature (or implicature) are cancellable. This, therefore, includes pragmatic enrichments of all sorts, as well as instances of pragmatic saturation and even the results of disambiguation. However, according to Noel Burton-Roberts (chapter 9 of this volume) '... *cancellation* of explicature is logically impossible and empirically incorrect.' There are two claims here, each of which I'll look at briefly, despite the oddness of their conjunction (one might expect logical impossibility to wipe the issue of empirical (in)correctness off the agenda). First, though, let's go back to Grice's original discussion of the property of cancellability – this was the starting point for my application of the term to explicature (Carston 2002: 138-40), which in turn is the focus of Burton-Roberts's criticism.

For Grice, cancellability is one of several diagnostics that can be used to help decide whether or not a particular aspect of utterance meaning constitutes a conversational implicature:

a putative conversational implicature that *p* is explicitly cancellable if, to the form of words the utterance of which putatively implicates that *p*, it is admissible to add *but not p*, or *I do not mean to imply that p*, and it is contextually cancellable if one can find situations in which the utterance of the form of words would simply not carry the implicature. (Grice 1978: 115-16)

What he meant by an explicit cancellation being 'admissible' is spelled out a little more in Grice (1981: 186), where he talks of the possibility of attaching a cancelling clause 'without logical absurdity' or 'linguistic offense'.⁹ Leaving aside *contextual* cancellability for the moment (though this instantly secures the case for the cancellability of explicature), let's take a look at some applications of the explicit cancellation procedure since Burton-Roberts is solely concerned with this.

Consider the following, where *P* is an aspect of utterance meaning and *Canc* is a conjunction of the original utterance and a cancelling clause:

- (9) A: Does Bill have a girlfriend these days?
 B: He flies to New York every weekend.
P: Bill has a girlfriend (in New York)
Canc: He flies to New York every weekend but he doesn't have a girlfriend (there).

- (10) Utterance: John killed the hedgehog.
P: The hedgehog died.
Canc: John killed the hedgehog but it didn't die.
- (11) Utterance: He took off his trousers and got into bed.
P: The trousers' removal preceded the getting into bed.
Canc: He took off his trousers and got into bed, but not in that order.
- (12) Utterance: Mary is intelligent but she is moody.
P: There is some sort of contrast between Mary's being intelligent and her being moody.
Canc: Mary is intelligent but she is moody and I don't mean to imply that there is any sort of contrast between her being intelligent and her being moody.

The first two cases of applying the 'cancellability test', as Grice tellingly calls it, give clear results: in (9) the implication in question is clearly cancellable without causing any linguistic anomaly while in (10) it is not (the result is clearly contradictory). Hence the status of the implication in (9) as a conversational implicature is, to this extent at least, confirmed, while that in (10) seems clearly disconfirmed. The outcomes of the test are not as starkly distinct in the cases of (11) and (12) but still clear enough, I think. The application in (11) is taken directly from Grice (1981) who suggests (tentatively as ever) that there is no 'linguistic offense' here, which is an indication that 'what one has here is a conversational implicature, and that the original suggestion of temporal succession was *not part of the conventional meaning of the sentence*' (ibid.: 186 [my highlighting, RC]). In (12), on the other hand, (discussed very briefly in Grice 1961),¹⁰ there does seem to be a linguistic offence of some sort, if not the clear contradiction that there is in (10), indicating that the implication of contrast (or unexpectedness) is not conversationally induced but is a matter of conventional meaning (of the word 'but').

Several points emerge from Grice's various brief discussions of cancellability (Grice 1961, 1975, 1978, 1981):

(A) He sees it as a test or diagnostic tool whose results provide *some evidence* or indication that what one is dealing with is a conversational implicature. He does not think that the cancellability test is decisive (Grice 1978: 116) and maintains that what is required to establish definitively the presence of a conversational implicature is an account of how it could be inferred (Grice 1981: 187).

(B) As already indicated in the highlighted part of the quotation above, what the test is for is to distinguish between cases of 'conventional meaning of expressions' and cases of utterance meaning that depend on the observation of the conversational maxims or at least the Cooperative Principle (Grice 1975: 56-8). The immediate context of Grice's discussion was his distinction between generalized conversational implicature and conventional implicature (for example, (11) and (12) above), which can be quite hard to tell apart and for which cancellability and various other Gricean diagnostics can, therefore, play a useful role (while the status of occasion-specific conversational implicatures, such as (9) above, is not usually a matter of contention).

(C) Given that the key distinction is between the conventional and the conversational (or, in RT's terms, the linguistically encoded and the pragmatically inferred), it would seem to follow that such context-dependent aspects of what is said as the results of disambiguation and reference assignment should also be cancellable without linguistic offence. Although Grice himself didn't mention this, it was pointed out quite early on (by Sadock 1978 and others) that one of the shortcomings of admissible cancellability as a diagnostic for conversational implicature is that the test gives a positive result for cases of clear ambiguity (as in (13)).

- (13) a. John ran to his coach but he didn't run to any vehicle.
 b. John ran to his coach but he didn't run to an instructor of any sort.

In other words, one tentative disambiguation can be cancelled in favour of the other without linguistic upset, which is as we would expect if cancellability is a property of any and all pragmatic inference.

(D) It is significant that Grice's own applications of the various tests, in particular cancellability and (non)detachability, were largely pitched at the lexical level, for example, at putative strong senses of connectives such as 'and', 'or', 'if', operators like 'some', 'a', 'the', and other words for which some ordinary language philosophers had proposed rich senses, including 'know', 'voluntary', and 'try' (Grice 1967: lectures 1-3). Given this focus, he was happy to run the cancellability test on quite schematic sentence forms such as 'A tried to x and he succeeded admirably' (thereby cancelling any postulated implication carried by 'A tried to x' that A failed to x). [The relevance of this point will be more apparent shortly when we look at applications of the test to explicature.]

(E) As briefly mentioned before, in all of his discussions of cancellability, Grice gives as much weight to 'contextual' cancellability as to explicit cancellability, though commentators have tended to focus on the latter. As he put it:

a putative conversational implicature that *p* is [...] contextually cancellable if one can find situations in which the utterance of the form of words would simply not carry the implicature (Grice 1978: 115-16)¹¹

The possibility of contextual cancellability makes it crystal clear that any and all pragmatically derived elements of utterance meaning are cancellable: the meaning that an ambiguous linguistic form has in one particular context can change when the form occurs in a different context; ditto for the meaning (the referent) of a pronoun; ditto for the completion of 'She is ready' and for the location supplied for 'It is raining', and so on.

For the sake of the argument, let us set aside contextual cancellability, which Burton-Roberts doesn't consider, and look at his two claims concerning the inapplicability of explicit cancellability (à la Grice) to explicature: (i) it's logically impossible to cancel an explicature and (ii) applying the test gives empirically incorrect results. To ease our way into the first point, consider two of the examples he discusses, (14) and (15):

- (14) She's ready but Karen isn't ready to leave for the airport.

(15) She's ready but she's not ready.

It seems to me (and to every student I've tried it out on) that there's a clear difference between (14) and (15): while the former is not contradictory or in any other way *linguistically* anomalous, the latter is; in fact, (15) is judged by most people to be a clear contradiction. But, says Burton-Roberts, neither of them can even be assessed for contradictoriness (they fall outside the domain of eligible entities) because contradiction is a logical relation that holds only between truth-evaluable propositions and, on the relevance-theoretic view, these are not fully propositional as they stand, but merely templates or schemas which require pragmatic processing (specifically, reference assignment and completion of 'ready') in order to attain propositionality.

It's true that relevance theorists are committed to the view that, by and large, sentences *per se* don't encode propositions and various pragmatic tasks have to be performed in order to derive the explicature of an utterance. In effect, Grice took the same view with regard to 'what is said', although the pragmatic tasks he envisaged were fewer: in many instances, no truth-evaluable proposition can be grasped prior to disambiguation and/or reference fixing. But the point is: people can and do, quite confidently, assess (14) and (15) for contradictoriness and they find (14) non-contradictory and (15) contradictory. On that basis, I take the explicature of a particular utterance of 'She's ready' (for example, KAREN IS READY TO LEAVE FOR THE AIRPORT) to be cancellable, as in (14). Similarly, as mentioned above in point (D), Grice used quite schematic (arguably, nonpropositional) forms (for example, 'A tried to x and he succeeded in x-ing') when running the test and was satisfied with the resulting judgements of (non)contradictoriness and/or linguistic (in)felicity.

What needs explaining here, then, is why/how people so readily make these judgements even when well aware of the context-sensitivity of 'she' and the need for context-specific completions of 'ready'. Of course, if one were to utter (15) in such a way as to render the two occurrences of 'ready' (or of 'she') non-homophonous – perhaps by giving them distinguishing prosody (stress, intonation) – thereby effectively indicating that they are to be given different semantic values, (15) would be much less likely to be judged contradictory. So do we simply forget about, or abstract away from, context-sensitivity when presented (out of context) with an apparently perfectly homophonous 'S but not S'? I don't know, but two considerations seem relevant to me in understanding what is going on here. First, recall García-Carpintero's point discussed above that, although encoded sentence meaning is usually not propositional it can determine a propositional content and this propositional content seems to inform native speakers' (reflective, off-line) intuitions about the logical properties/relations of natural language sentences. In fact, we can propositionalise virtually any element of meaning, including something clearly subsentential like 'On the table', if we need to do so for some purpose. The second point concerns the nature of the propositional form we construct and it seems that the default move (the *least effort* move, probably) is to assume sameness of semantic value for sameness of form. Just how far this goes I'm not sure, but it might well extend to even such obviously context-sensitive terms as indexicals and demonstratives, and perhaps also to ambiguous forms like 'bank'. Consider 'She's here and she's not in Paris' versus 'She's here and she's not here' (with no distinguishing prosody on the two occurrences of 'here'). I think many people will say that while the first one is not contradictory the second one is, and that is because

they take this sentence, decontextualised as it is, to express something like: a is at location b and a is not at location b.¹²

So I am unmoved by the claim that explicature cancellation is logically impossible on the grounds that sentences do not encode propositions (though I agree that, generally, they do not) and, therefore, cannot be assessed for contradictoriness (or other logical properties). The point is that native speakers can and DO make judgements about whether conjoined sentences, such as those in (14) and (15), are contradictory or not and this is a reflection of their knowledge of the semantic properties of their language (specifically of the context-invariant conventional or encoded meaning of words in their language). Naturally, the pragmatically inferred elements of an explicature can be explicitly cancelled without contradicting the encoded content of the utterance.

Let's move now to the 'empirical incorrectness' claim. Here are some key examples:

- (16) a. Utterance: I haven't eaten breakfast.
 b. *Explicature*: I haven't eaten breakfast today
 c. *Canc*: I haven't eaten breakfast – but I have eaten breakfast today.
- (17) a. Utterance: Everyone left early.
 b. *Explicature*: Everyone at Professor Drone's lecture left early.
 c. *Canc*: Everyone left early, but not everyone at Professor Drone's lecture left early.

Both of the attempted cancellations here give rise to something pretty anomalous, even contradictory, so it might seem that these particular explicatures are not cancellable and that, therefore, the claim that explicatures are cancellable is, after all, wrong. I do not draw this conclusion. Rather, what these examples demonstrate to me is that there are a few cases to which it is difficult to apply the *explicit* version of the test – and it's pretty clear what is causing the difficulty here. As is well-known, pragmatic enrichment, unlike implicature derivation, is a *local* process, that is, it effects modifications at a lexical or phrasal level (see Recanati 2004; Hall 2008a, 2008b). A consequence of the localness of the pragmatic effect is that sometimes, as in these examples, it may fall within the scope of operators (quantifiers, negation, propositional attitudes, and so on), with the result in some cases (depending on the semantic properties of the particular operator) that entailment relations are reversed. Focussing on (16), while the positive sentence 'I've eaten breakfast today' (arguably) entails 'I've eaten breakfast' and so the more specific meaning can be cancelled without contradicting the more general meaning, negation reverses the entailment relation and makes a comparable cancellation inadmissible. This means that the test has to be applied with some care, making appropriate allowances for certain embedded enrichments, perhaps by running it on the disembedded counterpart when that seems feasible (as it clearly is for (16), less obviously so for (17)).

But there is really no need to go to all this trouble since we are not confined to the *explicit* version of the cancellability test. As noted earlier, for Grice (and so also for relevance theorists), the cancellability of some element of utterance meaning can be established *contextually*. It seems quite clear that the pragmatically inferred elements in (16b) and (17b) are contextually cancellable – they simply won't show up in certain other contexts (for example, an utterance of (16a) in the context of a group therapy session in which individuals are disclosing their long-term

idiosyncratic eating habits). In short, the alleged empirical shortcomings of applying the Gricean cancellability test to explicatures are easily surmounted.

However, Burton-Roberts extends his criticism of the applicability of cancellability even further. He denies that *any* speaker meaning is cancellable, on the grounds that speaker meaning is, by definition, meaning that is intended (m-intended, in fact) by the speaker and '[c]ancellation of intention – be it an intention-to-explicate or an intention-to-implicate – is impossible. What was intended *was intended*.' (Burton-Roberts chapter 9 of this volume). What Grice and others have been presenting as explicit cancellation clauses should, he says, be viewed instead as attempts by a speaker to *clarify* (rather than *cancel*) her intended meaning (when, for instance, a hearer seems not to have grasped it). Thus, the charge of non-cancellability, originally aimed just at explicatures, is extended to Gricean conversational implicatures and Grice's conviction that 'all conversational implicatures are cancellable' (Grice 1978: 116) must simply be wrong.¹³

But there is a world of difference between Grice's (and my) employment of a cancellability *test*, that is, a tool or diagnostic for theorists to use in aid of their semantic/pragmatic analyses, and the quite different notion of 'speaker cancellation' discussed by Burton-Roberts, which places the process in an actual on-line communicative situation and which, as he says, amounts to a speaker clarifying her intended meaning for the hearer. Recall, yet again, that Gricean admissible cancellability may be shown by placing the words uttered in a different context, a clear indication that in carrying out the test we are not tied to any particular communicative intentions.¹⁴ In the hurly-burly of actual communicative interactions, a speaker may carry out any of a variety of acts of clarifying, self-correcting, repairing or rewording of aspects of her utterance. The cancellability (or not) of aspects of utterance meaning is a different matter entirely; it is a means of distinguishing between two sources of meaning: linguistic conventions (the code) and non-demonstrative (hence defeasible) pragmatic inference. A speaker may seek to clarify virtually any aspect of her utterance, whether it was originally linguistically encoded or left to pragmatic inference, but only pragmatically inferred aspects of utterance meaning (whether conversationally implicated or components of explicature) can be admissibly cancelled, in Grice's sense.^{15, 16}

In the next section, I focus on what has become one of the most contentious issues in current semantics/pragmatics: whether or not there are components of explicit utterance content which are not only recovered by pragmatic inference, but whose existence is entirely *motivated* by pragmatic considerations, specifically by the goal of finding an optimally relevant interpretation.

3. Optional pragmatic processes or optional covert linguistic structure?

Among the cases of possible unarticulated constituents of an explicature (equated by many with the truth-conditional content of the utterance) that have been discussed in the literature are the following, where the bracketed constituent has not been overtly expressed:

- (18) a. It is raining. {in Granada}
- b. I have eaten. {supper}
- c. Every bottle is empty. {in the fridge}
- d. Jill reported Jack for misconduct and he was fired. {as a result}

Certain semanticists have taken the view that either there *is* some linguistic articulation of the pragmatically contributed element or, if not and the pragmatic process is a free one, the result is a conversational implicature, so a non-truth-conditional aspect of utterance meaning (see, in particular, Stanley 2000; King and Stanley 2005). With regard to the first three cases, the view would be that there is a covert indexical element in the linguistic logical form: a location variable in (18a), an object argument in (18b), and a domain variable in (18c), while the cause-consequence relation in (18d) would be an implicature. I don't intend to review the by now fairly extensively discussed arguments for and against this sort of proposal. Instead, I'll focus on a single respect in which the analysis in terms of hidden elements has been found wanting by people on both sides of the debate, namely, that these alleged covert indexicals seem to behave differently from overt indexicals (see Carston 2000; Recanati 2002; Martí 2006).

In order to fully grasp the proposition explicitly communicated by an utterance containing an overt indexical, a hearer has to find the intended occasion-specific value for the variable. In other words, linguistic forms like 'she', 'it', 'this', 'that', 'here', 'there', etc. must be assigned a specific value rather than be merely existentially closed. A hearer of 'She's happy' who retrieves just the proposition SOME FEMALE PERSON IS HAPPY hasn't fully grasped the proposition expressed. The pragmatic process of assigning a referent to 'she' is obligatory. This does not seem to be the case for at least some of the alleged covert indexicals. For instance, there are some occurrences of (18b) for which there is no need to supply a particular object value (for example, 'After I'd eaten this morning I felt quite sick') and, arguably, so also for some utterances of (18a) (for example, 'What happens in the atmosphere when *it rains?*' and see Recanati's 2002, 2007 'weatherman' example). In other words, it is not always the case that correctly grasping the proposition explicitly communicated requires saturation of the (alleged) linguistic variable; an existentially closed interpretation is quite sufficient in some contexts. This upsets the idea that the elements proposed by Jason Stanley are simply covert counterparts of overt indexicals; rather, they appear to be a new and unknown category of linguistic element (for which there is scant evidence). Many theorists see this as an unattractive feature of Stanley's account, including Martí (2006), who is otherwise totally at one with his dictum that all and any extralinguistic contextual effects on truth-conditional content (explicature) can be traced to linguistic logical form.

Martí's solution is to posit *optional* covert variables, such that if and when they do occur they must be assigned a specific contextual value, just as in the case of overt indexicals.¹⁷ The pragmatic process involved is the apparently semantically safe process of obligatory saturation (which straightforwardly maintains semantic compositionality). So, for the case of an utterance of 'It is raining', which is the primary focus of her discussion, there are several possible logical forms, including one with a covert location variable and one without, and when the sentence uttered has the first kind of logical form, the variable is always saturated by a specific value for the location (or it is bound by a quantifier), just as for overt indexicals. She sees this proposal as a fleshed out version of a possibility I briefly considered when discussing the problem posed by the existential closure interpretation of some of Stanley's hidden indexicals (Martí 2006: 151n7):

Another way out might be to propose that the sentence 'I have eaten' (and innumerable others) has a variety of logical forms, each with an array of variables, differing in number and type (including one with none), marking

possible contextual completions. In the case of a sentence with four variables for different constituents, that means sixteen linguistically provided logical forms. (Carston 2002: 204)

I dismissed this as a non-starter, because the considerable proliferation of logical forms for a single surface form seemed to me (and still does) both wildly counter-intuitive and excessively computationally burdensome. Martí explicitly accepts the latter point but maintains that this is a general problem for all standard semantic treatments of indexicals, such as overt pronouns. And anyway, she says, it is far less pernicious than positing the non-standard and mysterious process of free pragmatic enrichment, whose defendants don't have a leg to stand on since they haven't 'provided a coherent and detailed algorithm that explicates the operation of the process of free enrichment' (Martí 2006: 151-2).

In his chapter in this volume, Recanati, one of the great advocates of free pragmatic enrichment, sees Martí's account as simply 'another – admittedly deflationary – syntactic construal of free pragmatic processes.' He seems to be taking the view that there is not much difference between Martí's approach in terms of optional covert variables and one such as that pursued within relevance theory in which free pragmatic enrichment is a matter of augmenting or adjusting conceptual representations in the process of inferential comprehension, a 'syntactic' process in his terms.¹⁸ He says that the only possibly substantive difference between the optional covert linguistic structure account and the optional pragmatic enrichment account 'is that the level of syntactic representation to which the additional elements belong remains within the confines of the language system (rather than involving a shift to the conceptual system).' (Recanati chapter 2 of this volume). In what follows, I will suggest that this *is* a consequential difference, at least if what we are interested in is an account of utterance comprehension, and that the processing consequences weigh against the optional covert indexical view.

According to Martí's account, on any occasion of utterance comprehension, any number, possibly all, of the various logical forms that could underlie the surface structure are derived and the correct one is selected pragmatically. For instance, for any utterance of 'It is raining', including those for which the proposition the speaker expresses does not incorporate either a specific location of raining or any binding of a location variable by a quantifier, a structure containing a location variable may nevertheless be derived. As she puts it: 'the system tries out different derivations, and only those that comply with all the principles of grammar, including Gricean principles, are successful' (Martí 2006: 150). She gives five possible derivations for an occurrence of 'it is raining', three involving covert location variables. What the optionality claim seems to amount to is that the variable-containing structures generated may be eliminated as the derivation process proceeds. It's not totally clear to me whether she assumes all possible derivations are tried out in every instance (perhaps in parallel) or envisages a sequential process of trying out derivations. Since this 'derivation' process includes pragmatics (conformity with Gricean principles), it should be that, in cases of satisfactory communication, at most one of the possibilities is ultimately successful for any given utterance. So, if derivations are tried out one by one (there being some basis for the order in which they are accessed), it may well be that, at least on some occasions, the successful solution is found before all possibilities are generated. Either way, though, the computational burden is heavy, as she acknowledges, and it frequently involves the generation of logical forms which turn out to be wrong for the utterance being interpreted.

Free pragmatic enrichment, on the other hand, is truly optional: it occurs only when pragmatically motivated, that is, only when it is required for the interpretation of the utterance to meet the usual standards of rational communicative behaviour (for example, the Gricean maxims or the criterion of optimal relevance). So for any given utterance of the unembedded string ‘It is raining’, a single logical form (without a location variable) is derived – the same in every instance – and, only if pragmatically warranted, the relevant location of raining is inferred. Martí’s claim (ibid.: 151) that the two accounts are equally costly in terms of the number of different representations required to be generated is simply wrong. On any occasion of utterance, the free enrichment account involves a single logical form and, assuming successful communication, a single (pragmatically enriched) basic explicature. The optional covert structure account, on the other hand, can involve the generation of multiple logical forms and, even on the most minimal derivation possible within this system, an interpretation of ‘It is raining’ as referring to a specific location requires a mediating logical form containing a location variable.

Setting aside considerations of computational/representational economy and going along for now with the idea that multiple logical forms are generated for ‘It is raining’ or ‘I have eaten’, let’s consider how the interpretation process works. There are clearly two obligatory pragmatic tasks involved: selection of the correct logical form (a kind of structural disambiguation) and, in the case where the form chosen includes a covert indexical, provision of a context-specific value for the indexical (a process of saturation). Both processes require the accessing of information from wide extra-linguistic context, constrained by pragmatic principles (so are bound to be heuristic and defeasible, rather than algorithmic). Consider an example:

- (19) *Ann and Ben are in their London flat and Ann has just got off the phone after talking to her parents in Christchurch, New Zealand.*
 Ben: How are they?
 Ann: Mum’s a bit fed up. It’s raining so she can’t get out into her garden.

I take it that the explicitly communicated (truth-conditional) content of Ann’s utterance of ‘It’s raining’ is: IT IS RAINING IN CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND. On Martí’s account, this has to be a case of saturation of a location variable occurring in the logical form of the utterance. In comprehending Ann’s utterance (grasping her meaning), Ben’s linguistic system may derive (access or construct) two logical forms, one with a covert location constituent, one without. What is the basis for choosing the first of these? The answer, fairly obviously, is that the selection of the form containing the covert indexical follows from the contextual presence of the propositional constituent CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND, which is readily available to the hearer given his knowledge that Ann is reporting on the situation where her mother lives. The proposition that it is raining in Christchurch New Zealand is both highly accessible to Ben and is the overwhelmingly likely speaker meaning (given its low cost and high relevance).

The logical form thereby selected then requires the further pragmatic process of giving a specific contextual value to the location variable it contains (saturation). But now we see clearly that something has gone awry: there is no need for any such variable-saturation process since the relevant value (CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND) is already in place. This odd state of affairs has arisen because the pragmatic basis

for selecting the right logical form has relied on a prior identification of the correct propositional content.

It's worth noting that the ambiguity created by this 'optional covert indexical' account, that is, the multiplicity of logical forms, is quite unlike familiar instances of structural ambiguity, such as 'She saw the spy with binoculars' or 'Visiting relatives can be fun'. In these uncontroversial cases, the ambiguity is not just a matter of two distinct syntactic structures (differing only in that one has an additional adjunct category) but of two distinct meanings or conceptual contents – for example, SEE WITH BINOCULARS and SPY WITH BINOCULARS – and the role of pragmatics is to choose the more relevant one on the particular occasion of use. With respect to the two (let us assume) logical forms at issue on an optional covert elements account, we have a single content (for example, IT'S RAINING), which is present in both of them, and an additional element in one of them indicating that another constituent of content is to be supplied. Here the task for pragmatics is not to decide between two senses or contents but to answer the question: are we or are we not required to supply further constituents of content in this context, specifically, a constituent specifying location? My point is that, in this sort of case, it is the high accessibility and relevance of the context-specific component of content itself (for example, CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND) that provides the answer to the question and tells us which of the two logical forms is the right one. But the only point in deriving the logical form of an utterance is for the role it plays as input to the pragmatic processes responsible for recovering the intended propositional content. If we already have that propositional content (derived pragmatically on the basis of the decoded linguistic meaning IT'S RAINING, which is the common contentful core of all the alleged logical forms), no purpose is served by recovering any other logical form. In other words, on the optional covert indexical account, the processes appear to be back to front and constructing a variable-containing logical form is unnecessary and computationally wasteful. This outcome could reasonably be taken to indicate that there just are no optional covert linguistic elements.^{19, 20}

Contrary to Recanati (chapter 2 of this volume), Martí rejects any suggestion that her account amounts to a version of free enrichment and is adamant that she stands with Stanley against any position that allows strong pragmatic effects on truth-conditional content. I think Recanati is right about the similarity of the optionality positions if one takes an abstract, god's-eye view of the various component pieces required in the move from the overt linguistic form to the truth-conditional content or explication (one way or another, you optionally wind up with more constituents than are visibly or audibly present in the entity you start with). However, what I've tried to show above is that, when we look at the actual on-line processes of comprehension, there are important differences between the two positions. There can be no saturation without a variable to saturate, but uncovering the evidence needed to establish the presence of the variable-containing logical form seems to involve the prior recovery of content which is indistinguishable from what a free pragmatic enrichment process would deliver. Thus any process of variable saturation is pre-empted and the variable-containing logical form is superfluous.²¹

Martí repeatedly emphasises that her approach uses only well-established syntactic and semantic machinery (unlike the free enrichment account) and rests on standard linguistic assumptions. However, I would question the semantic assumption that seems to underlie her whole approach, namely that the grammar, specifically the semantic component of the grammar, delivers the truth-conditional content of an utterance, where this truth-conditional content is non-minimal and seems to equate

with what the speaker has said (explicature). By non-minimal, I mean that it is considerably richer than the minimal propositional semantics of, say, Emma Borg (2004), who excludes all pragmatic processes (defeasible inferences) from semantics or even of Cappelen and Lepore (2005), who confine the role of pragmatics in semantics to the fixing of values for the small set of overt indexicals. Unlike their approaches (or that of relevance theorists or Bach, for whom semantics need not deliver anything fully propositional), Martí takes the domain of semantics to be *intuitive truth-conditional content*. That this is intended to be identical with what is explicitly communicated (said and meant by the speaker) is backed up by statements such as the following: ‘the derivation for a sentence with an overt pronoun crashes if there is no referent for the pronoun in the context’ (ibid.: 143); ‘the system tries out different derivations, and only those that comply with all the principles of grammar, including Gricean principles, are successful’ (ibid.: 150); ‘a simple string such as *He left* has an infinite number of derivations in the system’ (ibid.: 151).

Although this view of the nature of semantics certainly has a history, it is far from well-established and uncontroversial nowadays – it has, for instance, been dubbed ‘the Mistaken Assumption’ by Cappelen and Lepore (1997, 2005), who have mounted an array of tests designed to show that much of what we intuitively take to contribute to what the speaker has said does not fall within semantics. For those who take a modular view of language, such as Chomsky, Fodor, Borg and most relevance theorists (for example, Sperber, Wilson, Carston, Hall), the output of linguistic processing falls well short of answering to ordinary speaker-hearer intuitions about the truth-conditional content of utterances. In criticising Recanati’s ‘truth-conditional pragmatics’, Martí strongly implies that she herself sees semantics as a module separate from pragmatics (ibid.: 139). I don’t know what to make of this since, on any characterisation of modularity that I know of, the essence of a modular system is that it operates in accordance with its own dedicated (domain-specific) system of rules or procedures, and, on the widely accepted Fodorian definition, the language system is encapsulated from extralinguistic context, including perceptually available information and beliefs about speaker intentions. But Martí’s semantic module includes Gricean principles which perform tasks such as disambiguation and the assigning of contextually relevant referents to pronouns, both of which require penetration of the system by a non-pre-specified range of contextual information. So these tasks are not algorithmic, hence not formally tractable, as Borg (2007) says in forcefully arguing against reference assignment being a semantic process. And the pragmatic principles or heuristics which guide these tasks must also be at work in a distinct system responsible for deriving conversational implicatures, so there is certainly no clearcut semantics/pragmatics distinction here. In short, the assumptions on which Martí’s account is founded are far from being standard or widely accepted and need their own defence.²²

The focus in this section has been on the free pragmatic process of supplying linguistically unarticulated constituents of content. In the next section, I move to the other kind of free pragmatic enrichment, that which effects modulations or adjustments of linguistically encoded (articulated) meanings. An issue I won’t directly address in this chapter but which is worth bearing in mind is whether we are right to be thinking in terms of two distinct processes. Perhaps the one can be recast in terms of the other and, even if this is not generally the case, there is a question about the right analysis of specific cases (for instance, it might be that some of the examples just discussed would be better construed as cases of modulation of encoded linguistic meaning).

4. Lexical pragmatics, *ad hoc* concepts and metaphor

Understanding the intended meaning of a word on a particular occasion of utterance typically requires some degree of modulation or adjustment of its encoded meaning. As discussed in recent relevance-theoretic work, this involves an interaction among the lexically encoded concept, other concepts encoded by the utterance and contextual information, constrained by the hearer's expectation of relevance (see, for example, Wilson and Carston 2007). The outcome of this process is what is known as an *ad hoc* concept ('ad hoc' in that it has to be inferentially derived on, and for, the particular occasion of use) and it is marked with an asterisk (HAPPY*, MAN*, OPEN*, and so on) to distinguish it from the context-independent lexical concept (HAPPY, MAN, OPEN, and so on). The pragmatically derived concept may be more specific or more general than the encoded concept; that is, its denotation may be either a proper subset or a superset of the denotation of the linguistically encoded concept, or it may be a combination, both extending the lexical denotation and excluding some part of it. Consider a very simple example:

(20) Let's dance.

It's not too difficult to think of a range of scenarios in each of which 'dance' would be understood somewhat differently: suppose speaker and addressee are (a) at a ball where the orchestra has just started playing a waltz, (b) at a Scottish céilidh where a six-person round is about to begin, (c) at a party where people are moving about individualistically apparently in response to blaring rock music, or (d) suppose the speaker is Rudolf Nureyev addressing Margot Fonteyn. Although the word 'dance' is used literally in all these cases, the particular concept expressed is likely to be distinct in the four situations, each one a more specific (narrower) concept than the lexically encoded concept DANCE. Suppose next that the interlocutors are, in fact, already dancing but in a somewhat unenergetic lacklustre way when one of them, inspired by a change in the music, utters (20), thereby communicating a concept that might be roughly paraphrased as 'dance in an intense, focussed, lively way', or 'do our flamboyant party piece', hence further narrowings of the lexical concept. Equally, the opposite sort of concept adjustment, loosening or broadening, could result in any of a range of concepts, from those that involve extensions to the range of bodily movements included in the denotation, for instance, what might be roughly paraphrased as 'walk together in a light, rhythmic way, keeping in step with each other', through to those of a more clearly metaphorical nature, like 'spend our life harmoniously together, attuned and responsive to one another, never moving far apart'. Further variations in the 'dance' concept expressed will come with a change of subject: consider, for instance, 'Bees dance to tell their conspecifics where nectar is located', or 'See how the daffodils dance in the breeze'. In short, the unambiguous verb 'dance' might be used to communicate any of an indefinite range of related concepts (DANCE*, DANCE**, DANCE***, ...). See Carston (2002), Wilson and Carston (2006, 2007) for more examples and more detailed analysis and explanation.

This is a 'free' pragmatic process in that nothing in the linguistic form indicates that it must be carried out; it is therefore optional, that is, there are contexts where the encoded lexical concept would suffice (an utterance of 'Children in most cultures dance spontaneously' might be an example where the encoded concept DANCE is communicated). The consensus is that these pragmatic adjustments

contribute to explicature (hence to the truth-conditional content of the utterance) rather than merely being implicated (for arguments supporting this point, see the references immediately above). This kind of free pragmatic process has not drawn the barrage of fire that the possibility of unarticulated constituents of content has – probably for the following two reasons. First, although it isn't a linguistically mandated pragmatic process, it appears to involve working with a lexically encoded concept and so to be constrained by the information made accessible by that encoded meaning (in fact, on the RT account, as we'll see shortly, the strictly linguistic contribution is very minimal). Second, it doesn't seem as directly threatening to a principle of semantic (truth-conditional) compositionality as do constituents of content which are wholly unarticulated within the linguistic form of the utterance.

Although contextualist philosophers of language have for quite some time been pressing the point that word meaning is irremediably context-sensitive and occasion-specific (see, in particular, Travis 1985, 1997), the attempt to give a cognitive account of the mechanisms and processes involved is quite recent. Thus there are many intriguing questions yet to be pursued, in particular concerning the nature of *ad hoc* concepts in the mind, how they are 'constructed' or accessed in the course of utterance comprehension, how they can be progressively conventionalised and lose their 'ad hoc' status, and so on. Here, I'll take up two central issues (or sets of issues) which are raised by a number of contributors to this volume. The first concerns the nature of the linguistic semantic input to the pragmatic modulation processes, specifically whether or not lexically encoded concepts are atomic or structured/decompositional, a question which then arises in turn for the output, that is, the derived *ad hoc* concepts themselves. The second array of issues concerns certain figurative uses of words (and phrases), including metaphor, simile and metonymy. Each of these gets a different treatment within relevance theory: metaphor is claimed to be a case of loose use (on a continuum with approximations, category extensions and hyperboles) and so is accounted for by the same inferential mechanism of concept adjustment as the cases just discussed; similes have received little attention, but it has generally been assumed that they are not subject to the kind of conceptual adjustment, in particular broadening, that their corresponding metaphors undergo; metonymic uses present an interesting challenge since they seem to result in an *ad hoc* concept which contributes to explicature (truth-conditional content) but they are not instances of narrowing or broadening of the encoded lexical concept.

Starting with the first set of issues, let's consider the relevance-theoretic stance on lexical meaning. The first thing to say is that, as regards their encoded semantics, words are taken to be a heterogeneous lot: some of them encode full-fledged concepts; some encode 'pro-concepts' or conceptually incomplete information (for discussion and examples, see Sperber and Wilson 1998: 185); some encode procedural meaning (constraints on pragmatic inference) and this category is itself very heterogeneous, allegedly including pronouns, discourse connectives, tense, aspect and mood indicators, particles and interjections. Here we will confine our attention to those words that, arguably, encode full-fledged concepts.²³ The central claim about these is that they encode *atomic concepts* rather than molecular (structured) concepts. Abstracting away from the important formal linguistic information (phonological and syntactic) stored in lexical entries, what this means is that there is a simple mapping from lexical form to mental concept; the concept is completely unstructured and the lexical entry does not specify any further information about its content or semantic behaviour. In short, the position is

essentially the same as that of Fodor's 'disquotational lexicon': the word 'house' means HOUSE, 'miserable' means MISERABLE, 'keep' means KEEP, and so on (see Fodor 1998; Fodor and Lepore 1998, 2002). (However, for an important difference between RT and Fodor on conceptual content, see footnote 25 below). Given the heterogeneity point above, it follows that the conceptual atomism claim applies to only a subset of the vocabulary, albeit a sizable one, consisting of many of those lexical items that fall into what are informally termed 'open word classes', specifically nouns, verbs and adjectives.

Since the opposite view, that lexical meanings are decompositional, is widely supported (including by some contributors to this volume), some brief discussion is in order. It seems to me that the Fodorian arguments against *definitional* lexical decomposition are unassailable (see, for instance, J. D. Fodor et al. 1975; Fodor et al. 1980; Fodor 1998). The most compelling of these, perhaps, is that no-one has been able, despite centuries of trying, to give adequate definitions for any but a tiny group of words (for example, 'bachelor', 'mother', and their ilk). There seem to be principled reasons why, for instance, natural kind terms cannot be analysed beyond the observation that a whole bunch of them entail ANIMAL or COLOUR or PLANT or METAL: what concept is to be added to COLOUR in order to give us RED, other than RED itself, what concept(s) are to be composed together with ANIMAL to give us HORSE, and so on? Furthermore, children's conceptual acquisition seems to proceed from the allegedly more conceptually complex concept (MOTHER, RED, HORSE) to the allegedly more basic or primitive one (PARENT, COLOUR, ANIMAL). I won't rehearse the arguments in any more detail here. Most advocates of complex lexical meanings nowadays favour some kind of *non-definitional* form of decomposition (for example, Pustejovsky 1995; Jackendoff 2002: chapter 11), Vicente and Martínez-Manrique (chapter 3 of this volume), Vicente Cruz (chapter 4 of this volume)). I touch on some of the problems with this seemingly more reasonable decompositional position below.

On the relevance-theoretic view, what the encoded atomic concept amounts to is an address in memory or, viewed from a different perspective, a basic element of the language of thought (a monomorphemic 'word' in Mentalese). The content or semantics of this entity is its denotation, what it refers to in the world, and the lexical form that encodes it, in effect, inherits its denotational semantics. This conceptual address (or file name)²⁴ gives access to a repository of mentally represented information about the concept's denotation, some of which is general and some of which, such as stereotypes, applies only to particular subsets of the denotation. This information includes conceptually represented assumptions and beliefs, held with varying degrees of strength, and also, in some cases at least, imagistic and/or sensory-perceptual representations. A distinction is standardly made in the theory between this kind of information, which is stored in the 'encyclopaedic entry' associated with the concept, and the 'logical entry' for the concept. Logical entries consist of inference rules (rather than propositional representations) which are, crucially, taken to be content-constitutive (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95; Horsey 2006). This logical/encyclopaedic distinction is rather controversial and needs a lot more consideration than I can give it here.²⁵

Returning to our 'dance' example in (20), the idea would be that the decoded atomic concept DANCE gives access to a range of knowledge and beliefs about the activity of dancing, including general information (conceptual and imagistic) about the kinds of bodily movements it involves and about its expressive and social functions, information about specific kinds of dancing, and more idiosyncratic

information (episodic memories) based on one's own observations and experiences of particular instances of the activity. When Tom and Mary, a couple of long-standing, are walking along a busy town street, feeling happy and relaxed, and Mary, in romantic mood, says 'Let's dance', she is most likely not suggesting that they break into an unaccompanied waltz or tango, or perform a balletic pas-de-deux, but rather that they walk in a more mutually attuned way, closer together, taking lighter steps, rhythmically, in time with each other, and so on. The denotation of the concept expressed, DANCE*, is certainly broader than that of the encoded DANCE and possibly also narrower (it might exclude very elaborate dance-movements that require years of training). On the relevance-theoretic account of how this kind of word meaning adjustment takes place in on-line utterance interpretation, it is simply one case of a more general process of *mutual parallel adjustment* in which tentative hypotheses about contextual assumptions, explicatures and contextual implications are incrementally modified so as to yield an overall interpretation which is both inferentially sound and satisfies the hearer's expectations of relevance. So, in the example under discussion, the explicature LET'S DANCE* is, at least partially, the result of backwards inference processes responsive to Tom's on-line hypotheses about the relevance (the intended contextual implications) of Mary's utterance, implications along the lines of 'we are in special harmony with each other tonight; let's enhance further this feeling of closeness and mutual accord; we can walk together in a more coordinated and graceful way despite all the people around us, etc'. These play a shaping role in the derivation of the non-lexicalised, probably ineffable, *ad hoc* concept DANCE*. For much more fully realised accounts of the way in which the lexical adjustment process works, see Wilson and Sperber (2002), Rosa Vega Moreno (2005, 2007), Wilson and Carston (2006, 2007).²⁶

Agustín Vicente and Fernando Martínez-Manrique (2007 and chapter 3 of this volume) take the position that the kind of 'rampant polysemy' entailed by the free pragmatic process of *ad hoc* concept formation just outlined is incompatible with the view that lexically encoded concepts are atomic (or, as they put it, the lexicon is 'disquotational') and they advocate a decompositional view of lexical concepts. I have been unable to find any argument supporting the alleged incompatibility and can only assume that the thinking is that, if a word's standing meaning can be adjusted/modified so that different meanings/senses are communicated on different occasions of use, there has to be an array of meaning components that can be played about with, highlighted, backgrounded, dropped, or otherwise rearranged. An unstructured monolithic atom does not provide us with the distinct parts needed for the job. But, if this is the thinking, it is quite wide of the mark since the account of *ad hoc* concept formation is not semantic, not internal to the linguistic system, but wholly pragmatic; that is, the kind of information that does the work is, for the most part, general encyclopaedic knowledge/beliefs about the world (including, in particular, information about the entities and/or properties denoted by the lexical concept). So, even if word meanings were decompositional, the component features or subconcepts would seldom, if ever, be sufficient on their own to account for the (more or less indefinite) range of concepts that can be communicated by the use of a particular word form on different occasions of utterance.²⁷ As described above, *ad hoc* concepts are an outcome of the process of finding the interpretation of an utterance that meets one's expectations of (optimal) relevance, that is, the interpretation which has a satisfactory range of cognitive implications and requires no gratuitous processing effort. A requirement here is that these implications are properly inferentially warranted and a major source of

premises for deriving such implications is the logical and encyclopaedic information activated by the decoded lexical concept. In short, the lexical decompositional issue is really not relevant at the (conceptual) level at which this is going on.

One of the decompositionalist approaches that Vicente and Martínez-Manrique favour is James Pustejovsky's generative lexicon hypothesis. According to this view, the lexicon consists of quite complex lexical entries; for instance, the entries for nouns like 'potato', 'cake', 'book', 'knife' include information about both the origin (natural or artefactual) and the purpose (the telic role) of the entities in their denotations. The problems with this approach are legion (see Blutner 2002; Fodor and Lepore 1998, 2002; de Almeida 2004; de Almeida and Dwivedi 2008; Bosch 2007; Lossius Falkum 2007). Here are two of them: (a) the lexical entries posited include an arbitrary subset of general world knowledge (for example, that books are written for the purpose of being read, that windows consist of a frame (often made of wood) and a pane of glass, that cakes come into existence through human action, that knives are for cutting, and so on), and (b) the approach can account for only a very restricted range of cases of meaning modulation (not just in practice, but in principle!), leaving the vast bulk of context-specific senses to be explained by a pragmatic account, which, once provided, will, of course, also apply to the few that are allegedly resolved by intra-lexical means.

Another kind of decompositional account mentioned approvingly by Vicente and Martínez-Manrique is Ray Jackendoff's (2002) non-definitional approach. Jackendoff points out that all the standard arguments against decomposition assume that it involves other lexicalised concepts (words) and suggests that a more reasonable hypothesis is that the ingredients that make up a word's meaning are some other kind of element altogether, which cannot be captured by using natural language forms. He makes an analogy with the physical decomposition of substances like oxygen and sulphur into elementary particles that are different in kind, such as electrons, protons, neutrons, electromagnetic forces, and so on. While the general point seems sound, it's not clear that the particular analogy holds, given the special property that both words and concepts (linguistic and mental representations generally) have and which distinguishes them from other things in the world, that is, their intentionality or aboutness. Also, as things stand, there is very little in the way of concrete proposals regarding the nature of the (non-definitional) subatomic elements that might make up lexical meaning. Jackendoff's conceptual decompositions employ features like CAUSE, PATH, OBJECT, EVENT, STATE, which may, but more often do not, mean the same as the apparently corresponding English words, so it is nigh on impossible to assess the content of the proposed analyses.²⁸ For some consideration of Jackendoff's generative linguistic semantic component more generally, see section 5 below.

The questions in the domain of relevance-theoretic lexical pragmatics that strike me as most interesting and most in need of some long hard thought concern the nature of *ad hoc* concepts. Are *ad hoc* concepts the same kind of entity as lexical concepts (apart from not being lexicalised)? Are they atomic or decompositional (perhaps even definitional)? Do they have logical and/or encyclopaedic entries? What do they look like as mental representations (that is, what lies behind the stand-in asterisked notation, TIRED*, DANCE*, and so on)? How stable and/or long-lasting are they as components of our thinking apparatus? This is a research programme with most of the work yet to be done and I don't have much to offer here but a few hunches, hopes and intuitions.

Let's consider the question of whether these pragmatically derived concepts are atomic or complex (decompositional). In line with their decompositional stance on lexical meaning, Vicente and Martínez-Manrique (chapter 3 of this volume) advocate a decompositional view of *ad hoc* concepts too, so that, for instance, ANGEL* (as in 'My girlfriend is an angel') is made up of KIND, GOOD and a few other atomic concepts. They claim that this is 'simpler and more intelligible' than an atomistic view. I can see the intuitive appeal of the view (component elements get removed or added in), but the lack of evidence for the initial lexical input having the required internal structure drastically undermines the apparent simplicity and intelligibility. On the basis of the paraphrases often provided in the RT literature for *ad hoc* concepts, it might look as if they are being construed as decompositional; for example, DRINK* has been glossed as 'drink (a lot of) alcohol', TIRED* as 'tired to the extent that one does not want to go out', RAW* as 'so grossly undercooked as to be virtually inedible', and so on. But, of course, the idea is that *ad hoc* concepts are, generally, ineffable, in the sense that, as well as not being lexicalised, there isn't a linguistic phrase that fully encodes them either, and the paraphrases are intended as just a rough indication to aid readers in understanding what we have in mind in particular cases.

A decompositional view might also seem to have been implied by my talk (Carston 2002: 239) of the dropping of logical properties (in the case of loose uses) and the promoting of encyclopaedic properties (in the case of narrowing), though it doesn't strictly follow, since these properties are clearly not internal components of the lexical concepts themselves and need not be taken that way for *ad hoc* concepts either. In fact, it was my aim then, as now, to maintain a consistently atomic view of concepts if at all possible. Before going on, it is perhaps useful to remind ourselves here what is meant by 'narrowing' and 'broadening' in the theory (as so far developed): these are descriptions of the outcomes of pragmatic adjustment processes rather than of the processes themselves. The *denotation* of the pragmatically inferred concept is narrower or broader (or both) than the denotation of the lexical concept which provided the evidential input to its derivation. The idea is not that there are two distinct processes – of making narrower and making broader – but rather a single overall pragmatic adjustment/modulation process with these various possible results. The perspective is essentially an externalist semantic one. There are important questions about the internal processes and representations involved in the shift from (atomic) lexical concept to (atomic) *ad hoc* concept – what they are and how exactly they work – and these remain to be answered. Accepting that this is the case, let me try to give a little more substance to the claim that the *ad hoc* concepts that result from the lexical concept adjustment process are themselves atomic.

As indicated above, I take it that Fodor has successfully dispatched the old empiricist idea that lexical concepts are complexes built out of a relatively small set of primitive atomic concepts (whether just sensory, or sensory ones plus a few others like CAUSE, EVENT, PATH, and so on). The next reasonable assumption to make is that in our thinking we are employing, as well as lexicalised atomic concepts, a range of atomic concepts that are not encoded in our particular linguistic systems (Carston 1996; Sperber and Wilson 1998). Given the unequivocal differences among languages with regard to the concepts that are lexicalised in them (the different ways they carve up 'semantic space', as it is sometimes put), this seems pretty uncontroversial. (Cases of cross-linguistic lexical differences are familiar enough not to need extensive exemplification – think of 'aunt or uncle', which is lexicalised in

some languages but not in English, ‘grandmother or grandfather’ which is lexicalised in English but not in Serbian, and so on). That our atomic concepts (far) exceed our lexicalised concepts is also supported by (a) the view that we are born with at least some innate concepts (not lexicalised at that stage), (b) the view that children’s word learning often involves matching a piece of linguistic form to a concept (antecedently acquired) and (c) the idea that at least some animals have some concepts (but no lexical items).²⁹ So, although, for example, there are a range of English words describing states of tiredness (‘tired’, ‘weary’, ‘sleepy’, ‘bored’, ‘exhausted’) it seems likely that the concepts featuring in the thoughts of even the monoglot English speaker concerning such states come in a much finer grain (that is, there are lots more concepts than words in this domain). So also for our ‘happy’ words and our HAPPY concepts, for our ‘upset’ words and our UPSET concepts, and for most of the open class vocabulary. I see no reason to suppose that these stable concepts, regularly employed in our thinking, are not essentially the same in kind as lexical concepts; that is, they are atomic and just as likely to come with logical and encyclopaedic entries as are lexical concepts.

The implication of this for the pragmatic process of inferring *ad hoc* concepts in utterance interpretation is that it may result in a tokening of one of these stable, albeit non-lexicalised, concepts, already established in the hearer’s conceptual system. But, of course, others may be quite new or, at least, have made such an infrequent appearance in the hearer’s thinking repertoire that there is no established conceptual address for them, hence no logical or encyclopaedic entry (or, to put it another way, no mental file has yet been opened for them). Strictly speaking, these new, possibly one-off, *ad hoc* entities are not concepts, although they have the potential to become concepts, that is, stable, enduring components of Mentalese. Nevertheless, they are making a contribution to structured propositional states, specifically explicatures, alongside fully-fledged concepts (whether lexical or *ad hoc*) and, although effectively pre-conceptual, they are playing a role in warranting certain implications of the utterance. Perhaps they are best thought of as metarepresentational or interpretive, where what is metarepresented or interpreted is the lexically encoded concept, and their conceptual potential is partially grasped insofar as they are taken to contribute to the grounding of intended implications of the utterance. Consider the following example: suppose you and I have been discussing a particularly problematic student, Eloise, who insists on being given a lot of one-to-one time and attention from her lecturers and who usually ends these sessions by truculently declaring herself more confused than when she arrived. Knowing that you’ve just had a couple of hours across the desk with Eloise, I ask you how it went and you reply:

- (21) She was her usual self – asked questions frantically and promptly buried all my answers.

I interpret you as meaning (implicating) that Eloise didn’t think about the answers you gave, didn’t try to understand them, didn’t seem to really want there to be answers to her questions, but rather was intent on venting her frustration, and so on. But your use here of the verb ‘bury’ is new to me; the *ad hoc* component of the explicature which I form, based on the encoded concept BURY, is not a concept already knocking about in my conceptual system. It is “BURY”*, which is both *ad hoc* and metarepresentational (hence the quotation marks). What I grasp about it is that when it is used to describe someone’s reaction to another person’s attempts to

answer his/her questions or provide helpful advice, it seems to imply dismissing, ignoring or refusing to process those responses, with perhaps some more evocative elements that arise from the mental image of a literal burial (of once-animate but now-dead things placed under a weight of earth). Although the ‘concept’ is new to me and I might have to think a bit before trying to employ it myself, it does the job quite adequately in this particular one-off communicative exchange where the intended implications are plain enough.³⁰

I realise that not everyone may find this example convincing. For instance, you could object that many of us already employ in our thinking an atomic concept BURY*, which is expressed by an utterance such as ‘The government tried to bury such and such a piece of news [which would put them in a bad light] by focussing on problems elsewhere in the world’, and this is surely very similar to what is expressed by ‘bury’ in (21). While they are clearly related, perhaps quite closely related, they seem to me to be nonetheless different and, arguably, one is established and the other is not. If you remain unconvinced, you might like to try replacing ‘buried’ in (21) with ‘cremated’ or ‘nuked’ or ‘smothered’ or ‘guttered’ or ‘binned’ and, even if none of those quite work for you as communicating something new, not an already established concept in your repertoire, hopefully, you nevertheless get the general idea I’m driving at. No doubt, there are more creative, new uses which would be more convincing as genuinely distinct from existing concepts. Because they will be less closely related to any concept already established in one’s Mentalese repertoire, they are, presumably, harder for a speaker to come up with and for a hearer to grasp, and are more likely to be found in carefully crafted literary texts.

The overall picture, then, is one of pragmatically inferred (constructed or retrieved) *ad hoc* concepts that range from those that already have a firm presence in the hearer’s cognitive system and so, in that sense, are not ‘ad hoc’, to those that are entirely *ad hoc* (new, occasion-specific) but don’t qualify (yet) as full ‘concepts’, with probably various intermediate cases (involving degrees of *ad hocness* and/or degrees of conceptualness). Thus, it’s worth being aware that we are using each of the lexical constituents of the phrase ‘*ad hoc* concept’ somewhat loosely!

The phenomenon of pragmatically adjusting linguistically encoded concepts in utterance comprehension is usually discussed under the label ‘lexical’ pragmatics but, as pointed out by Romero and Soria (chapter 12 of this volume), there seem to be instances where the input to the process is phrasal rather than lexical. Possible examples are the following, where the (alleged) phrasal input is italicized:

- (22) a. Jane is a *working mother*.
 b. That guy isn’t a *complete human being*.
 c. Sally was everyone’s favourite, a joyful child, a *shooting star*.
 d. Morris considered himself *the biggest fish in this backwater*.

The first two of these are cases where the concept communicated involves a narrowing of the phrasal concept which has been derived by semantic composition of the decoded word meanings and the other two involve loosening of a compositionally derived linguistic phrasal concept. So, for instance, the communicated concept [WORKING MOTHER]* will generally be understood as having a narrower denotation than all women who have had children and who do some kind of work (for example, a 60-year-old woman whose children are grown up and who does voluntary work at the local Oxfam store would not be included). On the other hand, the denotation of [SHOOTING STAR]* would include not only actual shooting

stars but other things in the world that we find similarly rare and wonderful, including certain human beings. In fact, however, the situation is not at all straightforward and clear examples of decoded phrasal inputs to *ad hoc* concept formation don't seem to be particularly easy to come by, or so I have found (it might be argued, for instance, that both 'working mother' and 'shooting star' are single lexical items). Romero and Soria themselves give no examples involving narrowing and the two examples they do give are both cases of metaphor, which they claim requires a process of 'transfer' (or domain-mapping), as distinct from the kind of concept adjustment process (eventuating in a broadening and/or a narrowing) that I've been discussing. Furthermore, it is not entirely clear to me that their examples do involve a phrasal input, so, for instance, (22d), which is one of theirs and which they say eventuates in the *ad hoc* concept [THE BIGGEST FISH IN THIS BACKWATER]*, could be argued to be just as readily understood as THE BIGGEST FISH* IN THIS BACKWATER*, that is, as involving two instances of lexical adjustment/transfer. At the very least, the case remains to be made for a phrasal adjustment.³¹

However, even supposing they are right and there are decoded phrases which undergo conceptual adjustment as a whole, this would not call for any particular addition to pragmatic theory because the mechanism involved is the same as the mechanism in the lexical cases, that is, it's a process of *ad hoc* concept derivation, based on information made available by the linguistically encoded concept(s) and shaped by the search for an explicature which meets the hearer's expectation of relevance. What was new and exciting about the development of 'lexical' pragmatics was precisely the idea that there is such a process of *ad hoc* concept construction in utterance comprehension (distinct from processes of disambiguation, variable saturation, recovery of unarticulated constituents and implicatures) and that these unencoded concepts can contribute to explicit utterance content. This may extend to the comprehension of some phrasal constituents but it won't thereby entail any new kind of pragmatic process or interpretive outcome.³²

The second set of issues that falls within this general area of a free pragmatic process of *ad hoc* concept formation concerns whether and how this construct plays a role in an account of how we understand certain figurative uses of language such as hyperbole, metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche and epizeuxis (immediate word repetitions). Here I will focus on metaphorical uses, with some consideration of corresponding similes. As is well-known, within current relevance theory, comprehension of a metaphorical use is a case of *ad hoc* concept formation where, crucially, the concept inferred is much broader in its denotation than the lexical concept from which it was derived.³³ Corresponding similes, on the other hand, are assumed to work rather differently and it is the literal lexical concept, rather than the broadened *ad hoc* concept, that appears in their explicature, as in (23d), communicated by the simile in (23c):

- (23) a. John is a mouse.
 b. JOHN IS A MOUSE*
 c. John is like a mouse.
 d. JOHN IS LIKE A MOUSE

The reason for this seems clear enough: it would make little sense to say of someone who is a member of a certain category (here MOUSE*) that he is (merely) *like* things in that category; that would be comparable to saying that an apple is (merely) like a fruit or a robin is (merely) like a bird (Carston 2002: 357-8).

Nevertheless, one might feel there is something amiss here in that what is communicated by (23a) and (23c) is surely very similar, if not identical (perhaps just differing in directness or force) and yet the key concept in the explicature in each case is quite different: the denotation of MOUSE* has a radically broader denotation than MOUSE since, as well as actual mice, it includes some human beings and perhaps other animals with the right characteristics (such as being quiet, unobtrusive, and so on). The apparent closeness in the meaning of metaphors and corresponding similes has been captured in other theories in various ways; for instance, by treating metaphors as ellipsed similes or by treating similes as hedged metaphors.³⁴ A different solution is proposed by Hernández Iglesias (chapter 11 of this volume), who finds the metaphor/simile divergence shown in (23) implausible and suggests that this treatment of similes is at odds with my general advocacy of pragmatic effects on explicature. He proposes that similes should also be understood as involving the formation of an *ad hoc* concept which contributes to the utterance's explicature, along the following lines:

- (24) a. John is like a mouse.
 b. JOHN IS [LIKE A MOUSE]*

My difficulty with this is that I just don't know what [LIKE A MOUSE]* amounts to and Hernández Iglesias says very little to elucidate. Is it meant to be a broadening of [LIKE A MOUSE]? It seems that it would be hard to get much broader than that very weak encoded phrasal meaning, since, strictly literally, everything is 'like' everything else. Is it a narrowing, so that the denotation picked out by [LIKE A MOUSE]* is a subset of that picked out by [LIKE A MOUSE]? This seems more likely, given the wide range of ways in which something could be like a mouse. But what we need to know first is what the encoded phrase [LIKE A MOUSE] picks out, including the function of the 'LIKE' here. Is it just the same as it is in non-figurative comparisons (for example, 'A lime is like a lemon') or does it have some other kind of interpretation? Does it simply provide an explicit version of the corresponding metaphor and the reason it packs less of a punch than the metaphor (as people generally feel to be the case) is that it tells a hearer more directly what to do ('look for ways in which John resembles a mouse'), whereas the hearer of a metaphor has to work that out for himself? Until these sorts of questions are answered, or at least tackled, it is hard to see what substance the suggested analysis in (24b) has. I should add too that the thinking lying behind the account in (23) is not that the key concept in the simile is never in any way pragmatically modulated – I agree that would be at odds with my general view of explicature – but just that it doesn't undergo the radical broadening that the corresponding metaphorically used concept does, for the reason given above.

Focusing now on metaphor alone, in recent years the *ad hoc* concept account has been developed in some detail (Carston 2002; Vega Moreno 2005, 2007; Wilson and Carston 2006, 2008; Sperber and Wilson 2008) and has led to new questions and, of course, criticisms. One interesting question concerns how emergent properties are to be accounted for, that is, properties that hearers derive as communicated attributes of the metaphor topic but which are not derivable directly from the metaphor vehicle. For example, understanding 'Robert is a bulldozer' might well include deriving the implication that Robert is insensitive, but *INSENSITIVE* is not likely to occur in the hearer's encyclopaedic entry for bulldozing machines. In chapter 10 of this volume, Adrian Pilkington considers this question and criticisms

some existing accounts that try to explain property emergence in wholly conceptual inferential terms. He argues that mental imagery (across a range of sensory modalities) plays a central role in accounting for emergent properties in metaphor comprehension and, following Colin McGinn (2004), he insists that imagery is a distinctive type of mental category which is not reducible to the conceptual. Taking the case of ‘Robert is a bulldozer’, the way properties emerge is through imagining or (mentally) seeing Robert *as* a bulldozer and then, by internal scrutiny of that mental image, ‘reading off’ properties which can be represented conceptually as INSENSITIVE, OVERBEARING, UNSWERVING (or as related non-lexicalised concepts, such as UNSWERVING*). I agree with the general direction of these remarks and believe that future work on the pragmatics of various kinds of ‘figurative’ language use, including metaphor, should look more closely at the role of imagistic representation.³⁵

A second question, one that has interested me for some time, concerns just how far we should or can take the *ad hoc* concept approach, what range of cases it applies to. While it provides a neat and convincing account of how we understand spontaneous conversational (often somewhat conventionalised) cases of metaphor, such as ‘John is a *mouse*’, ‘That surgeon is a *butcher*’, ‘She *bulldozed* the entire committee into acquiescence’, and so on, it is not obvious that it carries over to more innovative cases or to those that are extended and developed over a stretch of discourse/text (perhaps a whole poem). Hernández Iglesias (chapter 11 of this volume) expresses similar doubts about the adequacy of the *ad hoc* concept account in capturing what goes on in the understanding of highly creative metaphors, for which he claims literal meaning cannot be dispensed with as it can be in the more conventional cases or those easily derivable from stereotypes. I think we share pretty much the same qualms here, though his emphasis is more on the novel/creative, while mine is more on the extended/sustained.

Consider the following familiar example (truncated in the interests of space):

- (25) All the world’s a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players:
 They have their exits and their entrances;
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 (Shakespeare: *As You Like It*, 2/7)

In this developed metaphor (or metaphorical ‘conceit’), it seems unlikely to me that comprehension involves the formation of a series of (radically broadened) *ad hoc* concepts (STAGE*, PLAYERS*, EXITS*, ENTRANCES*, PARTS*, and so on). Rather, what seems to go on is that a literal interpretation is maintained and is metarepresented as a whole, so that what we have is a representation of an imaginary state of affairs in which human life takes place on a large theatre stage, and the phases of each person’s life and the activities he or she takes part in are a matter of acting out a pre-existing script. Our mental representations of this non-actual, imagined world are compartmentalised and sealed off from our beliefs (our representations of the actual world), as with games of make-believe or pretence and other surreal or fantastical conceptions that we recognise as such. Processing of the (strictly false) literal interpretation within the metarepresentation will yield a range of implications and other effects, some of which will be judged to apply to the actual world, that is, to be true (for instance, ‘The course of human life is largely predetermined’, ‘We are powerless against the passing of time’, ‘Most of our activities and concerns are of

only momentary significance', and so on). The hearer/interpreter may disembed these from the metarepresentational frame and carry them over into his descriptive mental representation of the actual world.

This, clearly, is a very different sort of interpretive process from the lexical pragmatic mechanism of *ad hoc* concept construction, so it might look as if I'm claiming there are two kinds of metaphor (the lexical and the extended). Rather, I see it as a matter of processing load or threshold: there's a point up to which interpreters can and do adjust or modulate the literal encoded meaning (that is, construct *ad hoc* concepts to fit the world as they know it) and beyond which they don't/can't. When this point is reached, the literal meaning is maintained but, given that it is clearly not speaker-meant, it is metarepresented and held, as it were, for further processing. There may be individual differences as regards the tipping point for moving from the one mode of processing to the other. Clearly, a lot more needs to be said about how this second kind of interpretation works, the kind of effort it requires and the effects it achieves, whether the processes involved are to be thought of as more controlled and reflective than the fast, automatic pragmatic processes engaged in the comprehension of ordinary conversational lexical metaphors. For a bit more detail, see Carston (forthcoming).³⁶

5. Linguistic evidence, gestural evidence and pragmatic inference

In the previous two sections, I have looked at two ways in which pragmatics may contribute to explicit utterance content in the absence of any direction from the encoded linguistic form that it should do so: (a) by supplying a linguistically unarticulated constituent, and (b) by constructing an *ad hoc* concept which replaces the linguistically encoded concept from which it was derived. If there are such 'free' pragmatic processes, they have important implications for the widespread view that the explicature of the utterance (its truth-conditional content, some would say) is semantically compositional, that is, composed from the meanings of the basic parts of the uttered sentence (lexical items) and the way in which they are syntactically put together. It seems that the composition of the truth-conditional content must be achieved via rules or processes that determine the value of complex expressions on the basis of the pragmatically-affected values of their parts. (For more detailed discussion of such a pragmatics-sensitive compositional process, see Recanati 2009 and chapter 2 of this volume.)

Of course, as we've already seen in section 3, it is far from universally agreed that free pragmatic processes (as opposed to mere pragmatic 'saturation' of linguistically given variables) can affect truth conditions. In chapter 4 of this volume, Begoña Vicente Cruz claims that relevance theorists overlook an important and rich source of meaning that comes from the linguistic system itself, specifically the semantic component of the language faculty, and she suggests that, once proper account is taken of this, there may be no role for free pragmatic processes affecting explicature. While the covert indexicalists (Stanley, Martí) argue for various kinds of hidden linguistic structure (syntax), Vicente Cruz supports the view that there is an internalist linguistic semantics whose combinatorial operations can supply meaning structure which is independent of the syntax of the linguistic expressions uttered. Here she is following work by Culicover and Jackendoff (2005), who take the position that linguistic semantics is a distinct generative system within language, that is, its rules and processes are not constrained by a one-for-one hook-up (homomorphism) with rules of syntax, contrary to what many linguistic theories have

assumed. There isn't space in this chapter to do this position justice, but I'm flagging it here because it points to an important issue for relevance theory and other contextualist/pragmaticist theories: the need to get the language/pragmatics balance right. We don't want to find ourselves, in our pragmaticist enthusiasm, overstating our case and failing to give the language system its due.

The idea, then, is that the semantic component can generate meaning that has no syntactic counterpart in the sentence uttered. This entirely semantically-generated meaning figures in the logico-conceptual form which is the output of the language system and it may be that this form (together with linguistically-mandated pragmatic processes of indexical saturation) exhausts what is involved in deriving the explicature of an utterance. The key cases involve a phenomenon known as 'coercion': in the process of combining two constituents of linguistic meaning into a more complex meaning one of the constituents forces a shift in (often an expansion of) the meaning of the other. Vicente Cruz discusses the following examples from Jackendoff (2002: 390):

- (26) a. The girl slept until dawn.
 b. * The girl died until dawn.
 c. The girl jumped until dawn.

The claim is that temporal adverbials like 'until dawn' and 'for an hour' encode a temporal bound as coming at the end of a uniform ongoing process and, while this is fully compatible with the usually continuous process of sleeping, it is not compatible with the inherently bounded event of dying, and it is only compatible with the action of jumping if that is understood as an ongoing process, hence as a sequence of discrete jumps. So the idea is that certain temporal adverbials coerce a 'repeated action' interpretation of some verbs, including 'jump', 'hit', 'cough', 'flash (a light)', and this, it is claimed, is a function of a semantic composition operation internal to the linguistic system.³⁷

However, without further argument, there doesn't seem to be any reason to prefer this account of the phenomenon to an alternative non-linguistic (pragmatic) account based on our ordinary encyclopaedic knowledge about the activities denoted by the verbs 'sleep' (people regularly sleep for several or more hours at a time) and 'jump' (a single jump takes only a moment or two and ends when the person lands; people can perform lots of jumps one after the other). This sort of knowledge is activated via the lexical concepts SLEEP and JUMP and is used in the process of arriving at an optimally relevant interpretation of the sentence uttered. Both accounts agree that we are not dealing here with cases of encoded polysemy (of 'jump', 'cough') and both accounts wind up with much the same conceptual structure (in the one case, a phrasal concept, JUMPED REPEATEDLY; in the other case, an atomic concept JUMPED*, which can be paraphrased as 'jumped repeatedly'), but differ with regard to the system taken to be doing the work.

Consider a few more examples:

- (27) a. John sang until the bell rang.
 b. John sang the scale until the bell rang.
 c. John sang the aria until the bell rang.
 d. John sang the protesters' slogan until the bell rang.
 e. John sang Handel's *Messiah* until the bell rang.

Jackendoff (2002: 391) discusses (27a), which has the single continuous activity interpretation, and (27b), which has the repeated activity interpretation, as providing evidence against any kind of lexical encoding account of the single versus repeated action meanings. I see this as pointing all the more strongly in the direction of a pragmatic rather than linguistic semantic account, especially when we add more examples, involving the singing of compositions of varying length (single line lyrics, ditties, chants, operas, and so on). The interpretation swings one way or the other, entirely depending on one's general knowledge: (27c) is probably taken as continuous (but maybe not if it's a very short aria), (27d) as repeated (most protest slogans are a single line which is sung or shouted over and over), (27e) as one continuous activity, given that we know Handel's *Messiah* is a very long work (surely this isn't lexically encoded information!) and people are unlikely to sing it several times over as a single event.

The familiar case of metonymically-used noun phrases such as 'the ham sandwich', which have been widely discussed as a matter of pragmatics, are seen as another instance of lexical coercion by Culicover and Jackendoff (2005: 227-30):

- (28) [One waitress says to another:]
 The ham sandwich over in the corner wants another coffee.
 [= The *person contextually associated with a ham sandwich* wants another *cup of coffee*]

They claim that the processes responsible for the non-syntactically realised meaning structure, shown here in italics, are cases of language-internal semantic coercion rather than pragmatics: a semantic restriction on the subject argument of the verb 'want' coerces the first structural change shown and a [count] feature on the determiner 'another' triggers the second one. These are conventionalised linguistic processes, according to Culicover and Jackendoff, yet some parts of their discussion make them sound rather pragmatic:

[a coercion] is a piece of meaning that can be left overtly unexpressed, leaving it up to the listener to reconstruct it [...] it is an extra piece of meaning that can be optionally inserted into the interpretation in order to help it make sense (ibid.: 228).

and indeed they acknowledge a 'sense in which it [coercion] is pragmatic'. Note also that a speaker could use the sentence 'The ham sandwich is disgusting' to express the proposition that the guy who ordered the ham sandwich is disgusting and, in that case, there can be no question of a linguistic coercion process being at work. But, then, whatever pragmatic process accounts for this case would account equally well for (28). The reason that Culicover and Jackendoff give for not favouring an all-out pragmatic account of coercion processes is that 'they contribute material that makes the *sentence* semantically well-formed and that plays a role in the *sentence's* truth-conditions' (ibid.: 228, my emphasis). This presupposes that there is a distinct 'sentence' semantics (in addition to lexical meanings, syntactic constraints and pragmatics) and that sentences have truth conditions. I would disagree on both counts and have argued against the latter in detail (Carston 2002). One thing seems fairly clear, though: the specific take one has on these sorts of cases is almost entirely informed by one's basic theoretical commitments. Any final resolution of the question will require examination of whole theories along with considerations of

theoretical economy (can it all be done by syntax and pragmatics alone or do we need a meaning-enriching semantic component as well?), offset, as ever, by a concern for psychological plausibility (how well does it mesh with intuitions, with people's real-time on-line processing, with human memory capacities, and so on?).³⁸

My preliminary response to Vicente Cruz's interesting points, then, is twofold. First, supposing for the moment that the interpretive data she cites does indicate a semantic component at work in the language faculty (partially independent of the syntactic component), this would not wipe out any role for free pragmatic processes in the derivation of explicature. Semantic coercion does not seem to bear on many of the central cases of free pragmatic processes, such as the *ad hoc* concept cases discussed in section 4, or even some of the unarticulated constituent cases discussed in section 3 (for example, the location constituent often provided for 'it was dark/hot/raining', or the causal enrichment of 'and'-conjunctions). Second, it remains doubtful to me that, given the resources of a relevance-based pragmatics together with familiar formal grammatical constraints (binding, control, and so on), there is any need for a linguistic semantic component. For instance, the performance-oriented Dynamic Syntax account of Ruth Kempson and colleagues provides for an intimate interaction of linguistic and pragmatic constraints during the incremental on-line process of constructing an utterance interpretation, without any need for an intervening structure-building semantic component (see Cann et al. 2005: chapter 9; Kempson et al. forthcoming).

While the issue of giving the language code its due is important and linguists are right to urge pragmaticists to take proper heed, there is another kind of evidence, that is, non-verbal communicative gestures, which speakers often provide to point their hearers in the right interpretive direction and this is largely ignored by philosophers and linguists alike. The most extensive study of non-verbal communication within RT is by Tim Wharton (2009), who discusses a wide range of cases, both those that are entirely non-verbal and those where paralinguistic, vocal and facial/bodily gestures accompany a linguistic expression to form a composite ostensive stimulus. Focussing just on the latter here, these can be used by a speaker to communicate an attitude or feeling, but they can also have an effect on the explicitly communicated content (explicature). Consider the following (based on examples from Wharton 2009) and assume a face-to-face speaker-hearer interaction in each case:

- (29) a. Speaker [*with a frowning taut facial expression, an aggressive tone of voice and emphatic gesticulation*]: You're late again!
 b. Speaker [*overtly faking a smile*]: How kind and thoughtful Sally is!
 c. Speaker [*shivering ostensively*]: I'm cold.

In (29a), the speaker's non-verbal gestures will affect the degree of anger she is taken to be communicating; I take it that she is strongly *implicating* that she is extremely angry with the addressee. In (29b), the overtly fake smile provides a clue that the speaker does not endorse the proposition expressed in which kindness and thoughtfulness are attributed to Sally. Together with accessible contextual information (perhaps including the fact that Sally has just treated the speaker very shabbily), the facial gesture may indicate an attitude of dissociation toward the proposition expressed, thereby communicating a higher-level explicature along the lines of (30a), as is typical in cases of irony. On that basis, the proposition expressed is not communicated (is not an explicature), but there may be one or more implicitly

communicated propositions (implicatures), including most clearly the thought that Sally is not a kind person. In the case of (29c), by recruiting her natural behaviour of shivering into her communicative act, the speaker indicates to the hearer the degree (quite high) and nature (an uncomfortable bodily sensation) of her coldness, evidence he can use in recovering the *ad hoc* concept she communicates as a component of her basic explicature, as shown in (30b):

- (30) a. S DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT SALLY IS A KIND AND THOUGHTFUL PERSON.
b. S IS COLD*

In chapter 13 of this volume, De Brabanter looks at a rather different range of nonverbal gestures interacting with uttered linguistic expressions and suggests that not only can they have effects on the content communicated but they can actually be thought of as having a linguistic function. While Wharton is primarily interested in the way that natural behaviours like frowns, smiles and shivers can be used communicatively, De Brabanter's examples involve utterances in which acts of mimicry and miming are produced in a temporal sequence with linguistic expressions. For instance, in his example given in (31a), he takes it that the speaker's act of mimicry described in the brackets (a combination of facial and vocal gestures) can contribute a constituent of content to the definite description, making it something like THE FRIGHTENINGLY GRUMPY WOMAN, or perhaps THE WOMAN* (where WOMAN* denotes a particular kind of grumpy woman).

- (31) a. I didn't see the [*imitation of frightening grumpiness*] woman today.
b. You don't want to end up [*demonstration of bumping one's head and collapsing*]

I take it that something similar applies to (31b), which is an adaptation of another example De Brabanter mentions briefly. It is not clear, though, whether we should think of the intended explicature as wholly conceptual, so that, in this example, something like the conceptual content BUMPING YOUR HEAD AND COLLAPSING is inferred from the demonstration, or rather there is meant to be an element of iconic (imagistic) representation incorporated into the explicature. Either way, these would seem to be instances of linguistically unarticulated constituents of explicitly communicated content, that is, components of explicature that are recovered by pragmatic inference aided by the strong gestural evidence provided.

The immediate intuitive view, I think, is that these are multi-modal ostensive stimuli which combine linguistic and non-linguistic elements, both of which provide vital evidence on the basis of which the hearer/receiver pragmatically infers the explicature. But De Brabanter takes a different, more radical, position: he argues that these demonstrated vocal and/or bodily gestures play the role of *linguistic* constituents, phrasal or lexical, that is, they are linguistically recruited into the sentence uttered. According to him, the grammar includes rules like 'AdjP → [Dem]_{AdjP}' where the Dem element in (31a) is instantiated by an act of imitating some sort of bad-temperedness. This is an intriguing idea, for which De Brabanter makes an interesting case, although he is well aware that much more remains to be said before the issue is settled. I make just two observations here. First, the way in which the components (verbal and non-verbal) are combined and produced in the examples appears to be regulated by grammatical constraints (in (31a), the imitation of frightening grumpiness precedes the noun 'woman', as required by English

grammar), so the linguistic system does seem to be exerting some control over the non-verbal element. On the other hand, though, it doesn't seem that producing the imitative gesture after uttering the word 'woman' would result in *ungrammaticality* or cause any interpretive difficulty. Second, from a wider theoretical perspective, whether one favours the linguistic account or the multi-modal account will depend on the weight one gives to sentential meaning and to sentences as the crucial vehicle of verbal communication. From a communication-oriented perspective, what matters are propositional forms – they are the kind of thing that speakers intend to communicate and that hearers try to recover from utterances – so word meanings and grammatical constraints seem to be all that's needed from the linguistic side. On a dynamic, incremental account of online interpretation (for instance, Cann et al. 2005), there seems to be little, if any, role for a notion of sentence meaning, and it's to be expected that utterances could consist of linguistic expressions (words, phrases) and nonverbal gestures, appropriately put together by the speaker to ensure the hearer's ease of access of the intended propositional content. It may end up that some cases (for instance, (31a)) are shown to go the sentential way, while others (for instance, (31b)) are multi-modal. The issue remains wide open.

6. Concluding thoughts: contextualism or pragmaticism?

The final question I would like to touch on concerns the right way to construe a theory like relevance theory that acknowledges free pragmatic processes such as those discussed in this chapter, that is, pragmatic processes that contribute to what a speaker is taken to have explicitly communicated but which are not triggered or required by any linguistic property or feature of the utterance. Such theories are generally taken to fall under the label of '(radical) contextualism', an approach to natural language semantics according to which virtually any (open class) element of the language is context-sensitive. Semantic minimalists like Borg (2004) and Cappelen and Lepore (2005) place relevance theory squarely in the radical contextualist semantic camp and, given the usual stark opposition between minimalism and contextualism, this seems right. But, upon reflection, I am not so sure that it is the best way to characterise RT nor that this distinction between *semantic* theories is central to what RT is all about. Relevance theory is first and foremost a theory of communication and interpretation, and its advocacy of the free pragmatic processes at issue is entirely motivated by the aim of providing an account of how it is that speakers can succeed in communicating contents that diverge in a range of ways from the meaning encoded in the linguistic expressions they employ. In what follows, I will suggest that the theory is, strictly speaking, neither 'contextualist' nor 'semantic' (though it may well be 'radical').

On the RT view, virtually any expression can be used by a speaker and understood by a hearer to express (to explicitly/directly communicate) a meaning that is different from that which the expression (type) encodes. So a speaker can use the word 'butterfly' to communicate a concept whose denotation includes certain human beings, or the word 'bachelor' to communicate a concept whose denotation includes some married men and excludes some unmarried men. This seems to be a rather different phenomenon, involving a different property of the words concerned, from the context-sensitivity of indexical words, which arguably do not encode a concept to start with but rather a variable with certain indications about the kind of value that variable should receive. Cappelen and Lepore have some quite effective tests for distinguishing this latter class of linguistic expressions from the rest and it comes as

no surprise that there are such discriminatory tests: there are strong pre-theoretic intuitions that indexicals are special and quite different from words like ‘butterfly’ or ‘bachelor’.

One way of responding to these facts is to say, as some contextualists have done (for instance, Bezuidenhout 2006), that there are various kinds of context-sensitivity, indexicality being just one of these kinds. Another, and to me preferable, sort of response is to make a distinction between inherent context-sensitivity, on the one hand, (and agree that it is confined to pretty much the cases that Cappelen and Lepore cite and which pass their various tests), and what could be called ‘*pragmatic susceptibility*’ (or perhaps ‘pragmatic amenability’), on the other hand. What I mean by this is that virtually every linguistic element can be used by us to express/communicate meaning that departs in certain ways from the meaning that it encodes (its expression type meaning) and this is because of our pragmatic interpretive capacities (which include an acute sensitivity to relevant contextual factors). Linguistic expressions are tools with certain inherent properties (phonological, syntactic and semantic) that we, as normally functioning adult humans, can employ very flexibly for our communicative purposes by virtue of certain characteristics of our psychological makeup (specifically, our ‘theory of mind’ capacities, and, in particular, our attunement to each other’s communicative intentions and our expectations of each other as rational speakers and hearers). Thus, while there is a limited degree of context-sensitivity built into linguistic systems, pragmatic susceptibility is a pervasive feature of language as employed by us in ostensive communication.

This is one respect in which I find ‘radical *pragmaticism*’ a better description of relevance theory than ‘radical *contextualism*’: it is us, the users of language, that are sensitive to context, and, as rational communicating/interpreting agents, we are able, by exploiting this sensitivity in each other, to get linguistic expressions to do a lot more than simply express their standing linguistic meaning.³⁹ This is perhaps more a difference of emphasis and orientation than of essential substance, but I do think that the shift of perspective makes for a clearer and more accurate view of the kind of theory that RT is.

There is another way in which a contextualist and a pragmaticist orientation might be contrasted with regard to the role of context. Recall that while Grice’s account of the derivation of conversational implicatures employed a hefty component of theory-of-mind type reasoning, when it came to the pragmatic processes required for a full identification of what a speaker has said (explicitly communicated) he spoke of ‘context as a criterion’. It seems that he thought of disambiguation and indexical reference assignment as a matter of contextual best fit, rather than as involving conversational maxims or processes of reasoning geared to the recovery of what the speaker m-intended (see Grice 1989b: 25, 222). In this regard, Recanati, although a strong advocate of free pragmatic processes of enrichment and modulation in recovering what a speaker has said, is a true Gricean. For him, while the ‘secondary’ pragmatic processes of conversational implicature derivation are construed as maxim-guided, reflective reasoning, including premises concerning speakers’ mental states (beliefs and intentions), the ‘primary’ pragmatic processes that contribute to the recovery of explicature (or the enriched ‘what is said’, in his terms) are not. Rather, these are a function of an automatic, dumb (non-inferential) cognitive mechanism responsive to differential degrees of activation of candidate interpretations, such that the most highly activated one wins out. It is context (both linguistic and extra-linguistic) that does the work here and contextual coherence that

provides the criterion of correctness (Recanati 2004: chapters 2 and 3). To take a very simple case: which of the various candidate meanings for ‘bank’ (the two encoded meanings and various unencoded ‘ad hoc’ possibilities) is the most highly accessible depends on the spread of activation from concepts that have already been decoded or otherwise accessed in the on-line course of utterance comprehension and from conceptual representations of broader aspects of the utterance situation and topic (we need money, the economy is close to collapse, we want to sit in the sun, we are going to feed the ducks, and so on).

In this regard, Recanati’s contextualism is quite different from RT’s pragmaticism. On his account:

the interpretation that eventually emerges [...] results from a blind, mechanical process, involving no reflection on the interpreter’s part. The dynamics of accessibility does everything and no ‘inference’ is required. In particular, there is no need to consider the speaker’s beliefs and intentions. (Recanati 2004: 32)

According to relevance theory, on the other hand, the whole utterance interpretation process is a matter of (non-demonstrative) inference, and taking account of the speaker’s mental capacities (including her epistemic states) and preferences (her desires, intentions, interests) may be required for carrying out any of the pragmatic tasks involved (including lexical concept adjustments, disambiguation, fixing of indexical reference). Along with the propositions communicated (explicatures, implicatures), the context for the interpretation falls under the speaker’s communicative intention and the hearer selects it (in the form of a set of conceptual representations) as part of his search for an interpretation that satisfies his expectations of relevance.⁴⁰ For discussion and some assessment of the two accounts (contextualist and pragmaticist) of the pragmatic processes that contribute to explicature derivation, see Carston (2007).

Just as central to the contextualist stance as the view that most, if not all, words are context-sensitive is the position that it is not sentences but utterances (or speech acts) that have truth conditions. As Recanati says:

Natural language sentences *per se* don’t have truth-conditions, they only have conventional meanings in virtue of which they can be *used* to say things that are true or false. What has content primarily is the speech act (or the thought act) (2006: 69).

This is where the talk of contextualism as a *semantic* theory comes into the picture: ‘semantic’ content here is synonymous with ‘truth-conditional’ content and it is what speakers say by their utterances/speech acts that has this important property. In trying to position RT appropriately here, there are two points to consider, one concerning the meaning/semantics of sentences (as linguistic expression types), the other concerning the status of explicature as a semantic entity. The contextualist view that natural language sentences don’t encode propositions (truth-conditional contents) is held by most relevance theorists: we think of encoded sentence meaning as merely providing a schema or template for the pragmatic construction of propositions and, like Recanati, take it to be a category mistake to think of sentences as bearers of truth conditions. But suppose it were to turn out that we are wrong about this, that actually many sentences do encode propositions, as Borg (2004) maintains, would that be a

devastating blow to the central tenets of RT? I don't think so. The propositions concerned would usually be very weak/general or absurdly strong, often either truisms or obvious falsehoods (think for instance, of the proposition that might be encoded by 'He is ready', or by 'Every bottle is empty'). As the minimalists recognise, these propositions would almost never be the sort of contents that speakers want to communicate, so the central pragmaticist aim of RT – to account for how rich speaker meanings are communicated on the basis of quite impoverished linguistic meanings – together with most of the existing concrete details of the account would remain in place.⁴¹

In chapter 6 of this volume, Barry C. Smith resists the contextualist stance that a sentence can have a different truth-conditional content (hence different semantics) in different contexts (thinking here of such well-known cases as 'The leaves are green' as discussed by Travis 1997). The semantics of the sentence doesn't change, says Smith: rather, what goes on is that speakers and hearers focus on (selectively attend to) just one of the ways in which it can be made true and ignore others. Whether or not we accept his view of sentence semantics as truth-conditional, I think he is right that whatever content is given by the semantics of the *sentence* remains invariant across contexts. However, moving from issues of sentence semantics to matters of verbal communication, the proposition that comprises the content that is explicitly/directly communicated by a speaker (the explicature) and grasped as such by the hearer can, and frequently does, differ from context to context. In uttering the sentence 'The leaves are green', sometimes a speaker communicates that the leaves are naturally green (GREEN*), another time she communicates that the leaves are painted green (GREEN**), yet another that the leaves (by nature russet) are GREEN***, which is, let's suppose, a sickly shade of green brought about by the incursion of a swarm of aphids, and so on. Call this 'selective focusing' on one or another way in which leaves can be green, if you like, but from the communicative standpoint (the pragmaticist stance) what matters is which of the 'green' concepts the speaker intended to make manifest to the hearer. Subsequent thoughts of the speaker and hearer about those leaves, aspects of their ongoing discussion about them, inferences they may draw concerning them, possible actions they may take with regard to them (buying paint-remover or aphid-annihilator) depend on what they take to be (and mentally represent and store as) the content of the speaker's claim about the leaves. In most cases, this will not be that they have the very general property denoted by the encoded concept GREEN, but that they have one or another of the more specific properties picked out by GREEN*, GREEN** OR GREEN***. So while Smith's linguistic semantic point seems right, what is said/asserted by a speaker and recovered as such by the hearer just is the enriched content which pragmatics enables them, in his terms, to converge on selectively attending to.

According to the contextualist stance, the explicature of an utterance, which, unlike the sentence uttered, has truth-conditional content, is the semantics of the utterance of the sentence in a particular context. Perhaps there is no harm in this way of talking, but I can't see much use in it either. For some time now, it has seemed clear that there are two kinds of semantics, captured for some by the Kaplanian character/content distinction, for others by a distinction between encoded meaning (whether meaning conventions, concepts, pro-concepts, procedures, rules for use) and truth-conditional content (which comprises a claim about the world, on the basis of which it can be judged true or false). Linguistic expressions clearly have the first kind of semantics and thoughts clearly have the second kind. Thus *communicated*

thoughts have the second kind of semantics, that is, both explicatures and implicatures have truth-conditional content (like any other propositional entity). So, from the pragmaticist point of view that I'm taking, there doesn't seem to be anything much to gain from thinking of the explicature of an utterance as its semantics rather than as – simply – its explicature, with whatever properties explicatures have that distinguish them from implicatures (of which having truth-conditional content is not one). We get saddled with this rather dubious notion of 'utterance semantics' only if we accept the minimalists' terms of engagement, that is, that in describing linguistic meaning we *must* deal in truth-conditional content, so that, if it's not sentences that have this property, then it must be some plumped up version of them.

Summing up, the radical pragmaticist stance of relevance theory has the following characteristics which, I claim, distinguish it from radical contextualism: (a) while only a few words in the language are inherently context-sensitive, the vast majority of words are susceptible to the pragmatics of the speaker-hearer interaction such that they can be used to communicate an indefinite range of different concepts; (b) it's not context acting on language that is somehow doing the work of determining explicature content, but, just as for implicatures, it is the exercise of rational speaker-hearer mutual mind-reading capacities; (c) the primary speaker meaning (explicature) is not in any useful sense a semantic content of anything (a sentence, a sentence token in a context, an utterance). It has truth conditions (as do implicatures, thoughts, propositional entities generally) but it's not the truth-conditional content *of* anything.

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Notes

¹ The workshop on *Explicit Communication* (June 2006), organised by Belén Soria and Esther Romero, where the contributions to this volume were first presented, was a pleasure from beginning to end – excellent talks and discussions in the beautiful setting of Carmen de la Victoria, Granada, ending with a wonderful conference dinner in the Alhambra. Many thanks to all the participants for both the intellectual challenges they presented and their friendly good will.

In the interim, I have also gained much from discussions with Deirdre Wilson, Alison Hall, Catherine Wearing, Vladimir Žegarac, Mark Jary, Stephen Neale, Kent Bach, Emma Borg, Richard Breheny, Thiago Galery, and Ingrid Lossius Falkum. At very short notice, Deirdre, Catherine and Vlad read the pre-final draft and gave me thoughtful and encouraging comments. I am especially grateful to Belén and Esther for their meticulous editing and their singular patience in coping with my delays. Finally, I would like to acknowledge two sources of funding which have supported me during the writing of this chapter: the CSMN at the University of Oslo, and the Leverhulme Trust (Research Fellowship RF/6/RFG/2008/0548).

² Many of the authors in this volume address problems, advance criticisms, or raise new points concerning work on lexical semantics/pragmatics and free enrichment within relevance theory (both mine and that of others). I endeavour to respond to them where the issues they raise clearly mesh with the themes of the chapter. Inevitably, but regrettably, several do not receive here the attention they deserve.

³ Another way of putting it is to say that Grice's 'what is said' was intended to meet two distinct criteria for centrality of signification which he discussed in his *Retrospective Epilogue* (Grice 1989a: 359-68): 'dictiveness' and 'formality' (for relevant discussion of how these criteria can pull in opposing directions, see García-Carpintero chapter 5 of this volume).

⁴ Bach (chapter 8 of this volume) reiterates the point that his semantic notion of 'what is said' is equivalent to the content of a 'locutionary' act, in the terms of J.L. Austin (as opposed to the 'illocutionary' or 'perlocutionary' acts). I find this confusing, since it seems pretty clear that Austin intended the content of the locutionary act to include occasion-specific sense and reference, both of which involve consideration of speaker intentions and wide context (that is, full-blooded, non-algorithmic pragmatic processes) – not just the fixing of values of pure indexicals, allegedly achieved via narrow semantic context, which is all that Bach wants to allow (Bach 1997, 2001). If anything, Austin's locutionary content matches up better with the Gricean minimal proposition view of 'what is said' (as expressed in Grice 1975: 44).

⁵ Chaves (chapter 7 of this volume) argues that a Gricean minimal 'what is said' *must* play a role in the relevance-theoretic account and so be psychologically real, since 'The [relevance-theoretic comprehension] strategy computes all possible interpretations according to logical form. The contents postulated by minimalist tendencies are possible interpretations which must be rejected, according to RT, by the cognitive system.' This is a misconception: in fact, it would run directly contrary to the way the theory has been formulated if all (or, in fact, more than one or two) possible interpretations had to be computed (see Sperber and Wilson 1986/95: 163-70); not only is this unnecessary, but it would defeat the fundamental tenet of the theory that processing effort is to be kept to a minimum (other things being equal, relevance decreases as processing effort increases). A minimal proposition is not

computed, except in the relatively infrequent instance in which it happens to be identical to the explicature of the utterance.

⁶ García-Carpintero gave these examples in his 2006 presentation in Granada, on which his chapter in this volume is based. Putting it a bit more technically, what we have here are ‘diagonal propositions’ in Stalnaker’s (1978) sense, propositions that are directly determined by semantic character rather than by ‘content’, as usually construed (see Kaplan 1989). García-Carpintero’s discussion reminds me of some helpful clarifying exposition in Predelli (2005), who emphasises the distinctness of two kinds of language-centred projects: (i) the provision of an account of verbal communication, in which ‘utterances’ and ‘contexts’ (occasion-specific entities with a dynamic temporal dimension) play a central role, and (ii) the formal enterprise of investigating the logical properties of linguistic entities (for example, demonstratives), in which it is ‘clauses’ and ‘indices’ (static timeless entities) that are central.

⁷ This is particularly pressing in the case of those higher-order propositions which involve a speech act description (‘S is telling A to P’, ‘S is asking A to tell her whether P’). Together with Mike Harnish, Bach has developed a very detailed account of different illocutionary acts, both conventional ones and communicated ones (the relevant category here), though how their category of communicated illocutionary acts relates (if it does) to the (later introduced) notion of implicature is unclear to me (see Bach and Harnish 1979).

⁸ The thoughts on higher-level explicature presented in this section have been developed in discussion with Deirdre Wilson (see Wilson 2000; Wilson and Sperber 2004: 623).

⁹ Neale, always meticulous in his interpretation of Grice, takes an admissible cancellation to be one that goes through ‘without literal contradiction, or at least without linguistic transgression’ (Neale 1990: 77).

¹⁰ Here is what Grice says about this case in that early paper: ‘There is a sense in which we may say that it [the implication of a contrast] is non-cancellable; if someone were to say “she is poor but she is honest, though of course I do not mean to imply that there is any contrast between poverty and honesty”, this would seem a puzzling and eccentric thing to have said’ (1961: 136). Levinson, in his textbook introduction of the diagnostics for conversational implicatures, takes it as obvious that conventional implicatures are not cancellable ‘because they do not rely on defeasible assumptions about the nature of the context’ (Levinson 1983: 128-9). See also Neale (1990: 107n20).

¹¹ He makes the point again in very much the same terms in Grice (1981: 187) and gives there an example where the existential implication standardly carried by negated definite descriptions doesn’t arise because of contextual assumptions shared by the speaker and hearer (*the loyalty examiner* case).

¹² What’s going on here looks very much like a form of what is known as ‘semantic blindness’ in the contextualism literature, where it presents particular problems for a contextualist account of attributions and denials of knowledge (see, for instance, DeRose 2006).

¹³ Capone, who agrees with Burton-Roberts that explicatures cannot be cancelled, has some qualms about taking this further step: ‘It is amazing, to say the least, that Grice who seemed happy about coupling his notion of conversational implicature with his notion of intentionality did not notice the impasse that the two notions [speaker intention and cancellation] were leading to’ (Capone 2009: 60). Yes,

amazing and, in my view, just not credible. There is no impasse once one drops the peculiar idea that the cancellability test is something carried out by speakers as part of their communicative endeavour.

¹⁴ Another test or diagnostic in Grice's tool-bag is that of the (non-)detachability of an aspect of meaning (1975: 58), conventional implicatures being detachable and conversational implicatures being non-detachable. This test requires a consideration of other utterances which 'say' the same thing as the original and provides a procedure that theorists can use to discern whether some element of utterance meaning (outside of what is said) can be detached or not. Clearly, it makes no sense to attribute any such practice to individuals in their role as speakers or communicators. Thus the term '(non)detachability' doesn't lend itself to the kind of sliding from one sense to another that 'cancellability' apparently does.

¹⁵ I have sought here to engage with Burton-Roberts on his own terms and so to address (and counter) his arguments against the applicability of the cancellability test to explicature. However, my position is that, for reasons not discussed here, passing the test is neither necessary nor sufficient to establish that an element of utterance meaning is pragmatic rather than semantic and it should probably be abandoned (see Carston 2002: 138-40).

¹⁶ Chaves (chapter 7 of this volume) supports the view that explicatures (unlike the Gricean 'what is said') are cancellable and suggests that this follows from a fundamental difference between the relevance-theoretic and Gricean projects: while the speaker's action of saying that P carries with it firm commitment (lacking in the case of implicated propositions), this is not the case with explicatures (which are 'simply developments of the logical form'). While I don't think this is quite right, it does raise some interesting issues concerning speaker commitment and its relation to pragmatically inferred versus linguistically encoded content. Recall that, in his *Retrospective Epilogue* (1989a), Grice allowed for dictiveness (which appears to amount to a high degree of speaker support for a thought he is expressing (ibid.: 367)) without formality (that is, without conventional linguistic meaning). His key example was of an utterance of 'He's just an evangelist' where the speaker means/endorsees 'He is a sanctimonious, hypocritical, racist, reactionary, money-grubber.' There are two ways of interpreting this category of 'dictiveness without formality': as instances of conversational implicature(s) which carry high speaker commitment, or as a move on Grice's part toward a pragmatically enriched notion of 'what is said' (an explicature). Either way, then, it is not obvious that the grounds for the cancellability of implicatures (or explicatures) are simply low speaker commitment. Nor would this mesh well with the apparent *noncancellability* of conventional implicatures. Nevertheless, the issue of speaker commitment and its relation to the explicature/implicature distinction is certainly something which calls for further thought.

¹⁷ In the last sections of her paper, Martí appears to reject the need for optional covert variables, at least for the two examples she discusses: 'It is raining' and 'I have eaten'. She concludes that the covert location variable in the former case is obligatory and that intransitive 'eats' always gets the existentially closed interpretation, so there is no variable. I agree with Recanati that, although a location of raining is recovered in most contexts because of its generally high relevance, there are cases (such as those mentioned above) where it is not obligatory. And a possible case where there is an unarticulated object constituent for intransitive 'eat' is the following: a frustrated mother has just placed a plate of food in front of her fussy

child and says to him 'Eat!'. Whatever the final decision on these particular cases, Martí has presented and defended a novel position on the unarticulated constituent issue, one which I assume she would seek to apply to any case which the pragmaticist presents as involving free pragmatic enrichment, so it is worth considering the arguments for it and its consequences.

¹⁸ There are broadly two construals (or varieties) of free enrichment, a semantic one and a syntactic one (see Recanati 2002: 339-42 and chapter two of this volume). On the semantic construal, the output of free pragmatic processes is a proposition or truth condition or state of affairs, that is, a semantic object, rather than a representation. On the syntactic construal, the output is a mental representation, a structured string of symbols. For relevance theorists, importantly, it is a conceptual representation, a sentence of Mentalese, the representational medium in which we think and store our beliefs, as distinct from those syntactic representations which are specific to our linguistic systems (our I-languages, in Chomsky's terms). If we suppose, surely quite reasonably, that hearers process utterances so as to recover the speaker's meaning (her explicatures and implicatures), which they go on to integrate with their existing assumptions (representations) about the world, then the so-called 'syntactic' (or representational) construal seems inescapable.

¹⁹ The arguments here apply, *a fortiori*, to a position on which metaphorical or metonymic interpretations, also viewed by many nowadays as contributing to the propositional content of utterances, are claimed to be underpinned by an optional covert operator in the linguistic form (for example, Stern 2000). Such covert operators are in an even worse evidential position than Martí's optional covert indexicals in that they do not have overt counterparts in the linguistic system.

²⁰ Discussions with Alison Hall have played an important role in shaping my arguments here. For a more detailed critique of the 'optional covert structure' view, see her PhD dissertation, Hall (2008b). In forthcoming work, we will attempt to provide a more fully worked out version of the processing argument against optional covert linguistic elements, paying closer attention to current models of online parsing and its interface with pragmatic processes (Carston and Hall (in preparation)).

For another account of syntactically/semantically optional constituents (adjuncts), which, like Martí's, sees them as inevitably present in logical form, but which is more sensitive to the pragmatic issues, see Vicente Cruz (chapter 4 of this volume), who cites the work of Groefsema (2006).

²¹ In the discussion of Martí's account, I have assumed that natural language and the language of thought (conceptual representation) are distinct systems. In his survey of positions, Recanati (chapter two of this volume) considers the possibility that they are not distinct, that thought is nothing but 'inner speech'. I very much doubt this, but won't review the arguments (many given by Jerry Fodor in his original work on the language of thought (Fodor 1975)), and Martí herself (p.c.) believes that, while the linguistic system and the conceptual system interface, they are distinct representational domains. However, even on the view that our thinking *is* conducted in natural language sentences, the redundancy argument given above against optional covert variables seems to hold: the derivation would proceed from the natural-language sentence uttered, say, 'It is raining', via pragmatic processes, to another natural-language sentence, say, 'It is raining in Granada', without the need for any mediating linguistic form containing a covert location variable.

²² In a recent paper, Neale makes the following interesting observation about those he describes as 'heavy-handed semanticists': (a) they claim that 'heavy-handed

pragmatics invokes magic [while they] invoke only well-understood semantic mechanisms' (Neale 2007: 79), but (b) contrary to this rhetoric, every semanticist, no matter how much syntactic/semantic complexity he or she goes in for, appeals to 'pragmatic magic' in determining the propositions speakers express (Neale *ibid.*: 80, 126-7).

²³ Elsewhere I have speculated that encoded word meaning might be better construed as, quite generally, not a matter of full-fledged concepts but something much more schematic and abstract, not a component of thought as concepts are (Carston 2002: 359-64). Clearly, any such position would have significant ramifications for pragmatics – for instance, the process of *ad hoc* concept formation would become perfectly general and obligatory in comprehending words in context, and it would not be a 'free' pragmatic process because it would no longer be entirely pragmatically motivated. I set the idea aside for the purposes of this paper, but it has a great deal going for it, in my view, and seems to be gaining ground, albeit in various guises (see, for instance, Bosch 2007; Pietroski 2008; and Pritchard 2009).

²⁴ Fodor (2008) adopts the metaphor of mental 'files' which seems to be pretty much equivalent to relevance theorists' talk of conceptual addresses, which give access to various kinds of information. For instance, he says: 'When you are introduced to John [...] you assign him a Mentalese name and you open a mental file, and the same Mentalese expression (M(John)) *serves both as John's Mentalese name and as the name of the file that contains your information about John*; [...] according to this story, *we think in file names*; tokens of file names serve both as the constituents of our thoughts and as the Mentalese expressions that we use to refer to things we think about.' (Fodor 2008: 94-5, emphasis in the original).

²⁵ It is on this point that RT and Fodor part company. Although early Fodor (as in Fodor 1975, J.D. Fodor et al. 1975, and Fodor et al. 1980) advocated conceptual inference rules (or meaning postulates) for capturing the validity of arguments such as 'X kill Y \rightarrow Y die' and 'X red \rightarrow X coloured', later Fodor (since at least the early 1990s) renounced these, along with any other kind of conceptual/inferential role semantics (see, in particular, Fodor 1998: 108-12). On this later view, content is constituted wholly by nomological relations between mental symbols and the world (entities or properties) and, as shown by Quine, there is no principled analytic/synthetic distinction. Within relevance theory, on the other hand, the logical/encyclopaedic distinction has been robustly defended by Horsey (2006), using both evolutionary considerations and developmental work on concept acquisition (following ideas set out by Sperber 1994, 1997). Thus, this is a psychological distinction and does not coincide with the (probably untenable) philosophical analytic/synthetic distinction.

That our mental apparatus must contain *some* inference rules is clear (they are what make it tick), but whether these have to be construed as content-constitutive is less clear (though Horsey argues that they must). If we do away with any substantive logical/encyclopaedic (content/belief) distinction and treat all information associated with concepts as mental representations of belief/knowledge, the question then becomes: what inference rules are there, what provides the engine for the system (is it just *modus ponens*, or *modus ponens* and a few/many others)? It's not clear what the answer is, or even how to go about finding an answer, but this is essentially an engineering question without too much theoretical weight. For interesting discussion of other issues raised by the logical/encyclopaedic distinction, in particular how it impacts on the notion of explicature content, see Groefsema (2007).

²⁶ Using a quite different framework, Bosch (2007) outlines a rather similar picture involving lexical concepts and what he calls ‘contextual concepts’. He explicitly aligns his lexical concepts with the very meagre contents of Fodor’s ‘disquotational’ lexicon and talks of processes of reasoning at the conceptual (non-linguistic) level as giving rise to the many different, albeit related, context-specific concepts that can be communicated on different occasions by the use of one and the same lexical concept. He calls the process of computing phrasal, and ultimately propositional, meaning ‘compositional pragmatics’.

²⁷ It is perhaps worth pointing out that there are two distinct but related notions of ‘polysemy’ (that is, the word ‘polysemy’ is itself polysemous – in one sense or the other). As Vicente and Martínez-Manrique use the term, within the context of a discussion of my view that semantic underdeterminacy (context-sensitivity) is quite general, ‘polysemy’ has to be understood as a pragmatic phenomenon and that phenomenon is not at odds with lexical atomism (the disquotational lexicon hypothesis, DLH). However, there is a perhaps more common use of the term ‘polysemy’, where it is taken to mean the linguistic *encoding* of several related senses of a word (semantic polysemy), often envisaged as occurring within, or generated by, a single (hence complex) lexical entry. This is more of an issue for the DLH, as witness Fodor and Lepore’s (1998, 2002) discussion of the two senses of ‘bake’ (‘bake a potato’ versus ‘bake a cake’) – it looks as if the ‘solution’ to this is to treat any apparent cases of encoded polysemy as really no different from instances of homonymy (for example, ‘bank’, ‘coach’, ‘bug’), hence as involving multiple distinct lexical entries, each of them atomic and disquotational (with a distinguishing mark of some sort: BAKE-1, BAKE-2). I can see reasons for not being totally happy with this move, though I doubt that it is a major problem (if need be, there are any number of technical solutions for marking a difference between polysemies and homonymies) but, interestingly, a raft of experiments reported by Klein and Murphy (2001) suggest that there are, in fact, few, if any, representational differences between homonymy and encoded polysemy. In any case, encoded polysemy is not the issue here – *ad hoc* concept formation, which underlies the polysemy phenomena under discussion, is a pragmatic process of meaning *construction*, not a matter of simply selecting between concepts stored in the lexicon.

²⁸ Obviously, Jackendoff’s view deserves much more sustained scrutiny than is possible here. There are two points, in particular, that shed further light on the sort of position he is developing: (1) He denies the intentionality of language and thought, and defends a view of semantics as on a par, in this respect, with phonology and syntax, that is, as a purely internalist, system of (non-intentional) representations: ‘Semantic/conceptual structure does not *have* a semantics, it *is* the semantics for language’ (Jackendoff 2002: 279). (2) Although not definitional, lexical meanings are fully (de)compositional in that their necessary but not sufficient conceptual components are ‘completed’ by abstract image structures, so, for instance, while ‘red’ would share the component concept COLOUR with all other colour terms, it would be distinguished from them by its own particular imagistic component (*ibid.*: 345-50). This proposal is certainly interesting but, as with Pustejovsky’s (1995) proposed *qualia* structures for lexical items, could be reinterpreted in RT terms as providing formulations of some of the material to be found in the encyclopaedic entries of lexicalised atomic concepts.

²⁹ Fodor himself does not seem to make explicit this point about concepts in thought outstripping those encoded in language and Sperber and Wilson (1998)

attribute to him the view that that there is a *bidirectional* one-to-one mapping between lexical items and atomic concepts. But, given his support for each of the points just made (that is, innate concepts, and concept possession by prelinguistic humans and certain nonhuman animals) together with his more recent espousal of a strong form of the linguistic semantic underdeterminacy thesis (Fodor 2001), it seems that he must see the mapping as *unidirectional* only (that is, each natural language word maps to a single atomic concept, but not vice versa).

³⁰ The metarepresentational *ad hoc* proto-concepts that I am positing here are likely to be similar, in at least some respects, to Sperber's (1997) 'reflective' concepts, which (as distinct from 'intuitive' concepts) also depend on the human metarepresentational ability.

³¹ It's noticeable that the phenomenon most apt to draw one in the direction of phrasal *ad hoc* concepts is extended metaphor. Carston (2002: 359) mentioned this possibility briefly and Vega Moreno (2007: 179-82) discusses some interesting examples (for instance, 'I'll work hard to sell the new product but I'm not *cleaning anybody's shoes*'). Other (non-metaphorical) cases of loose use don't seem to have the same propensity to project beyond the lexical level. In Carston (forthcoming), I consider metaphors that extend over, not just phrases or sentences but, whole stretches of discourse/text and suggest that understanding these may not be a matter of forming *ad hoc* concepts but a different kind of pragmatic process altogether.

³² The role of phrases in *ad hoc* concept formation is just one half of Romero and Soria's advocacy of 'phrasal pragmatics'. The other half concerns cases of unarticulated constituents which are required at a phrasal level, for example, a definite description such as 'the table' might require a completion along the line of 'the table in Mary's room'. There are, of course, a number of different accounts of how 'incomplete' descriptions (and quantifiers more generally) are understood, of which the 'free' pragmatic process of recovering an unarticulated domain constituent is but one. Assuming for the moment that it is correct, again it does not follow that there is any need for a specifically 'phrasal' pragmatics. As far as I can see, this sort of case does not entail any new phrase-level mechanism or construct, but rather proceeds in the same way as clause-level enrichments (for example, the causal enrichment of 'and'-conjunctions, the provision of a location constituent for 'It's raining').

³³ A further distinctive RT claim is that while metaphorical use involves a quite radical broadening of denotation, it is on a continuum with other cases of loose use, including approximations and hyperbolic uses, and there are no sharp cut-off points between these uses of language (consider 'Her husband is a saint' – is it hyperbolic, metaphoric or both?). Thus metaphors are not to be thought of as a natural kind or as having any special distinctive properties. This continuity view is distinct from the idea that metaphorical use involves *ad hoc* concept construction and it is quite possible to advocate either one of them without the other. Unlike the relatively recent *ad hoc* concept account of metaphor, the continuity view has been around since the early days of RT in the 1980s; for a recent vigorous defence of the claim, see Sperber and Wilson (2008). Since it is not central to the concerns of this chapter, I leave it aside here but look at it more closely in Carston (forthcoming).

³⁴ In fact, contrary to the intuition being entertained here, there is empirical evidence that people interpret metaphors and similes rather differently. Glucksberg and Haught (2006) found that experimental participants made different judgements about the acceptability/aptness of corresponding metaphors and similes and that their

interpretations of metaphors were more likely to involve emergent properties (that is, properties that are not directly associated with either the metaphor topic or vehicle) than their interpretations of the corresponding similes. O'Donoghue (2009) points out that there are instances of similes which simply have no direct metaphorical counterpart (and vice versa) and she makes a persuasive case for there being certain contexts in which similes are a more effective communicative device than their corresponding metaphors. Both of these studies support accounts, such as the RT one, which take the concept explicitly communicated by metaphors and similes to be different. Finally, it's worth noting that autistic people who find metaphorical uses difficult to understand seem to be much less troubled by similes (see Happe 1993), although exactly what they understand as communicated by the simile cases is something that needs closer investigation.

³⁵ Pilkington takes the emergent property question to be closely tied to another issue which he has been grappling with for some time (see Pilkington 2000), which is how such a cognitively-oriented approach as RT can account for the evocation of phenomenal states (sensory and/or affective) by certain uses of language, including metaphor. He has long taken issue with the RT claim that affective effects of language can be reduced to cognitive effects, that the apparently non-propositional mental effects associated with the expression of attitudes and feelings can be explained in terms of weakly communicated implicatures (see Sperber and Wilson 1986/95: 222-4). He seems to think that mental imagery lies at the heart of the answer to this second question too but, while this might be right, I doubt that it provides a full explanation, since the image of Robert as a bulldozer or my maths teacher as a dragon doesn't seem to evoke much in the way of feeling (or 'phenomenal impact'). The metaphor has to have some further characteristic(s) of being creative, novel, apt, and/or poetic (whatever these amount to).

³⁶ Metonymic uses of language raise new issues since they are plainly not cases of lexical/phrasal narrowing or broadening (for example, '*The twinset and pearls* seems to be offended', 'No comment from *Buckingham Palace*', 'She married *a free ticket to the opera*'). There seems to be a fairly regular pragmatic process of using a highly salient characteristic of a person or persons as an abbreviatory means of referring to them. Many of these are familiar and routine ('Downing Street', 'The White House', 'The Guardian', and so on), but other, more novel, cases can have a range of more or less striking effects. Exactly how (and even whether) they are to be analysed within the general lexical pragmatic approach remains to be seen. Romero and Soria (chapter 12 of this volume) advocate an account of metonymy in terms of 'adding mandated unarticulated constituents of concepts at a phrasal level', an 'enrichment' process triggered by the semantic or contextual anomaly of the literal meaning. This would be a very unorthodox case of an unarticulated constituent since, rather than the usual process of modifying a linguistically articulated head constituent (for instance, providing the relevant domain for a definite description, as in 'The table is broken'), the postulated process would be supplying the head constituent for a modifier that has been linguistically articulated, for instance, 'The ham sandwich *customer*', as they put it, in the case of 'The ham sandwich is waiting for his check'.

³⁷ Unsurprisingly, this kind of 'lexical coercion' analysis tends to go hand-in-hand with a decompositionalist account of lexical meaning. Vicente Cruz attributes the particular case of 'aspectual coercion' discussed here to meaning features internal to the lexical items involved, such as [-duration], [+dynamic], [+telic], etc. It seems unlikely that there are cases of allegedly language-internal coerced semantic

structure-building that do not depend on assuming some sort of complexity in lexical entries.

³⁸ The classic work on lexical coercion and its role in semantic compositionality is by Barbara Partee, as in, for instance, Partee (1995, 2007). For very interesting discussion on the interplay of linguistic coercion and pragmatic modulation, see Recanati (forthcoming).

Note that, because coercion is standardly invoked as a mechanism for ensuring the ‘semantic well-formedness’ of sentences (as in the quotation from Culicover and Jackendoff above), on those grounds, a great many cases of metaphorical use could be thought to involve linguistic coercion, yet almost no-one advocates this. (See Recanati’s discussion of ‘The city is asleep’ in the reference just given).

³⁹ I have opted for the term ‘pragmaticism’ rather than ‘pragmatism’ since the latter is very well-established as the name of a philosophical movement whose concerns are quite distinct from the communicative issues being discussed here and some of whose tenets – anti-realism, instrumentalism – are at odds with the philosophical leanings and cognitive underpinnings of relevance theory. In accordance with this decision, I have referred throughout the chapter to practitioners of radical pragmatics as ‘pragmaticists’ rather than ‘pragmatists’.

⁴⁰ As Bach (2005: 36-8) nicely puts it, there is no ‘context *ex machina*’ which somehow determines what is said or meant; what a speaker means and what a hearer takes her to mean are a matter of the workings of their internal pragmatic capacities, whose alertness to relevant contextual factors makes for strong constraints that greatly facilitate successful communication.

⁴¹ See Borg (2004, 2007) who makes, in my view, the strongest case for the semantic output of the language faculty being propositional (truth-conditional). Since both she and the other minimalists agree that this semantically expressed proposition is seldom among the communicated contents of an utterance, it is hard to see what (other than long tradition) is motivating their trenchant allegiance to a propositional semantics for natural language sentences. For further discussion, see Carston (2006, 2008).