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Grice without the Cooperative Principle

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Title: Grice without the Cooperative Principle

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1. Introduction.

H. P. Grice's published work on language and communication offers two (related) accounts of the rational structure of ordinary conversational practices. One approach reflects on communication from a macro or global perspective. Working at this level, Grice has articulated a Cooperative Principle (*CP*) and associated Maxims, which attempt to represent how conversations are rationally organized with respect to goals and objectives accepted by participants. Grice's other account adopts a micro-focus on what is essential to an utterance's having meaning in the context of a particular effort to communicate. This latter approach offers an analysis of our ordinary concept of saying and meaning something. Both the *CP* and the analysis of utterance-meaning attempt to represent critical respects in which our practices of saying things to one another are not "merely something that all or most do *in fact* follow" but are "something that it is *reasonable* for us to follow, that we *should not* abandon" (Grice 1989, p. 29).

Grice's work on these two topics occurs in connection with distinct philosophical problems, and although there are obvious connections between both attempts to articulate the rational constitution of serious communication, Grice's macro-level account of the *CP* and his micro-level analysis of utterance-meaning are rarely discussed in relation to one another. Argumentation theorists have devoted considerable attention to the *CP* and associated Maxims, but they have hardly noticed Grice's analysis of utterance-meaning. This pattern of attention and neglect is unfortunate. There are serious difficulties with Grice's discussion of both topics, but as, I argue below, his analysis of utterance-meaning is open to repairs which, in turn, leave the *CP* flawed and unnecessary.

2. The Cooperative Principle and Its Sorrows.

Grice's Cooperative Principle reflects a deep insight into the rational structure of communicative endeavors, *viz.*, the capacity of communicative acts to, e. g., convey information, provide explanations, give directions, offer reasons and so on, according to which it depends critically on the commitments persons incur in conjunction with their ostensible reasons for participating in conversations. In its simplest form this insight grows out of an intuition regarding the value of veracity and relevance and, perhaps, economy and perspicuity in communicative enterprises. Other things being equal, these virtues are so important to the possibility of successful communication, that a person's willingness to participate in a serious conversation must, it seems, depend on a commitment to these virtues taken up by conversationalists as they accept the goals and objectives of this or that serious communicative endeavor. Grice initially tried to flesh out this insight by explicating communicative relationships in terms of commitments incurred by partners in cooperative undertakings, but, as we will see, this effort to represent serious talk as a species of cooperation turned out to be unsatisfactory.

Regarding communicative endeavors from a macro perspective. Grice observes that characteristically “each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. This purpose or direction may be fixed from the start (e. g., by an initial proposal of a question for discussion), or it may evolve during the exchange; it may be fairly definite, or it may be so indefinite as to leave very considerable latitude to the participants (as in a casual conversation).” And as a rule, Grice observes, persons do try to make their conversational contributions “such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange” (1989, p. 26). While endeavoring to make appropriate and productive communicative contributions, Grice suggests, conversationalists presume each other will follow certain Maxims.

Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the talk exchange); do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Maxim of Quality (supermaxim): Try to make your contribution one that is true. Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation: Be relevant.

Maxim of Manner: Avoid obscurity of expression, ambiguity, prolixity, and disorder (1989, p. 26-27).

The expectation that fellow conversations will conform to these Maxims amounts to the supposition their talk will have the virtues of economy (Maxim of Quantity), veracity (Maxim of Quality), relevance (Maxim of Relation) and perspicuity. Conversationalists, Grice suggests, rely upon something like these Maxims in interpreting what each other say.

These practices of coordinating conversations around mutually recognized objectives and expecting speakers to observe certain Maxims, Grice maintains, are not merely conventional or arbitrary, they are rational. His initial macro-level attempt to explicate the rationality constitutive of ordinary conversational practices relied on the idea that talk exchanges “are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts” (1989, p. 26). In thinking along these lines Grice took certain kinds of conversations, those in which, e.g., information is *exchanged* or persons influence *each other*, as being typical or representative of serious and productive talk (1989, pp. 28 & 30). “For a time,” Grice reports, he was attracted by the idea that the purposive organization of *talk exchanges* “could be thought of as a quasi-contractual matter, with parallels outside the realm of discourse” (1989, p. 29). Thus, he was inclined to suppose that productive talk exchanges “exhibit, characteristically, certain features that jointly distinguish cooperative transactions.”

- 1) The participants have some common immediate aim, like getting a car mended; their ultimate aims may, of course, be independent and even in conflict. . . . In characteristic talk exchanges, there is a common aim even if, as in an over-the-wall chat, it is a second-order one, namely, that each party should, for the time being, identify himself with the transitory conversational interest of the other.
- 2) The contributions of the participants should be dovetailed, mutually dependent.
- 3) There is some sort of understanding (which may be explicit but which is often tacit) that, other things being equal, the transaction should continue in

appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate. You do not just shove off or start doing something else (1989, p. 29).

So Grice came to identify the expectation that *S* is to make her conversational contribution “such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange” as the “Cooperative Principle.”

Notice that the *CP* reflects the insight that the rational structure of communicative endeavors identified above (the capacity of communicative acts to, e. g., convey information, provide explanations, give directions, offer reasons and so on) depends critically on the commitments persons incur on the basis of their ostensible reasons for participating in conversations. Grice’s initial idea was that speakers, as participants in a talk exchange share a common conversational objective (e. g., exchange of information), the realization of which is mutually dependent on their respective contributions. And this “cooperative” pattern of objectives carries with it a certain commitment: “other things being equal, the transaction should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate.” A commitment, that is, to the *CP* and its Maxims. So Grice’s initial view that (serious) conversations are fundamentally cooperative enterprises tried to identify how the ostensible reasons speakers (and addressees) have for communicating with one another are related to the commitments speakers incur: it holds that those commitments arise out of the quasi-contractual nature of cooperative relationships, where there is a mutually recognized and mutually beneficial objective the realization of which is seen to depend on dovetailing contributions.

However, Grice himself abandoned this effort to represent the obligations typically incurred by serious speakers as quasi-contractual commitments undertaken on a cooperative basis (1989, p. 29). There are good reasons for this decision.

First, as Grice and others have noted, some important kinds of talk exchange are patently non-cooperative. Some exceptions manifestly involve a degree of coercion which precludes cooperation; in others one party is plainly indifferent to the objectives, goals, etc. of the other. Grice recognizes quarrels as falling in this latter category. But to that must be added much institutional discourse, in which bureaucrats proceed on the basis of the regulations established by their organizations and with notorious indifference to the goal orientation of their clients (Sarangi and Slembrouck 1992). Accusations represent a range of cases involving coercion. The accuser typically impugns the accused’s conduct, manifestly intending to render the accused unable to effectively deny the accuser’s allegations and to impose on him an obligation to answer for what he is charged with doing (Kauffeld 1998).

These exceptions raise the very serious question of whether the kinds of conversation which Grice initially took to be central to human communication, conversation in which information (or reasons) is *exchanged*, are typical or representative of human communication. As Dennis Stampe notes, ordinary asking and telling does not generally involve an exchange of information (1967, p. 24). If *A* asks *S* for the time, the question may do its work even though *A* is in no position to provide *S* with a corresponding bit of information (or other reward), and typically *A* is not expected to do so. Nor can it be argued that exchanges of information are representative of communication in which speakers and addressees presume things which correspond to Grice’s Maxims. The presumption that *S* is to comply with the Maxim of Quality (i. e., conform what

she says to the requirements of veracity) is certainly not restricted to or uniquely applicable in conversations which involve an *exchange* of information.

Second, the *CP*, as initially interpreted by Grice, does not square with what Strawson calls our “reactive attitudes” toward reprehensible violations of key Maxims (1968). A satisfactory account of the expectations conversationalists form about each others’ contributions should fit the caliber of the resentment and/or disappointment they direct toward reprehensible violations of those expectations. In this regard Grice, himself, recognizes that the *CP* as initially interpreted does not provide a satisfactory foundation for the Maxim of Relation. “In any case,” he observes, “one feels that the talker who is irrelevant or obscure has primarily let down not his audience but himself” (1989, p.29). Here we have a key intuition. If *S*’s remarks miss the point or are obscure, we may resent the fact that she has wasted or abused our time and attention, but we also have a deeper sense of *S*’s failure in these circumstance, *viz.*, that she has not lived up to a standard which she set for herself. The *CP*’s failure to square with our reactive attitudes is even clearer in cases where *S* fails to fulfill the expectation that she will make a responsible effort to speak the truth. A critical problem for the idea that the “Cooperative Principle” articulates the rational principle underlying the Maxim of Quality arises from the caliber of the criticism we direct at mendacity and falsehood. As Dennis Stampe observes.

... the sins and virtues proper to cooperative behavior, *viz.*, such species of (un)fairness as failure to do one’s part, take one’s turn, etc., are not those characteristic of communicative behavior (Dishonesty is not a species of unfairness.) One who lies is only in special circumstance accused of unfairness—circumstances, for instance in which, information, say space technological information, is being exchanged. The peculiarity of cooperative behavior, I think, is that partners expend themselves in the understanding those cooperating will do likewise. There is not *generally* anything of this sort in ordinary asking, telling, etc. (1967, p. 24).

Were the expectation that *S* is to speak truthfully grounded in the supposition that *S* and *A* are engaged in a cooperative enterprise, we should expect that lying and mendacity would be criticized as species of unfairness; instead, we regard lies as deliberate attempts to induce us to believe potentially harmful false beliefs, and we apportion our resentment accordingly.

Difficulties along these lines have led Grice to abandon the notion that the *CP* is straightforwardly grounded in the cooperative (quasi-contractual) nature of communication and have left Grice inclined toward a somewhat broader and more tentative interpretation of the *CP*.

I would like to be able to show that observance of the Cooperative Principle and maxims is reasonable (rational) along the following lines: that anyone who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication (such as giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the Cooperative Principle and the maxims. Whether any such conclusion can be reached, I am uncertain (1989, p. 30).

This passage represents a considerable retreat from Grice's original construction of the *CP*. It is important to notice from what he does and does not retire.

Grice does not withdraw from the deep insight that productive communication is guided by mutually recognized objectives which somehow commit speakers to acting in conformity his Maxims. Veracity, relevance, perspicuity, and economy are (obviously) so important to serious productive talk, in Grice's view, that somehow acceptance of the purposes of such talk must commit speakers to conforming their utterances to the Maxims. This insight, it seems, is supported by a transcendental deduction of sorts based on the clear pragmatic importance of veracity, relevance, perspicuity, and economy to serious communication, together with the idea that persons could not be expected to undertake serious communicative objectives without some commitments which enable conversational "partners" to presume that each other will conform to Gricean Maxims.

However, in reconsidering the *CP* Grice has, at least temporarily, given up the effort to articulate any rational principle which might connect, on the one hand, a speaker's (and addressee's) undertaking a conversational objective with, on the other hand, her (and his) commitment to veracity, relevance, economy and perspicuity. Grice's original idea connected (i) mutual recognition of conversational objectives to (ii) speaker commitments (and addressee expectations) by reason of (iii) the quasi-contractual nature of cooperation, but the latter linkage does not survive his reconceptualization of basic communication Principles. It is hard to see how Grice's revision of the *CP* retains any robust connection to *cooperation*. Someone extracting answers from a prisoner by means of torture might recognize, and act on, the idea that the inquisition will be profitable only on the supposition that the prisoner is to make his conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which both are engaged, and the inquisitor might well be willing to compel answers conforming to Gricean Maxims. But we should hardly be inclined to say that in complying with the inquisitor's threats, the poor prisoner was *cooperating*. Surely, Michael Bratman is right when he argues that cooperative relationships are not based on coercion (1999, p. 100).¹ Nor will it do to say that interrogation under coercive conditions does not involve "goals that are central to conversation/communication (such as giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others)." The point here is that, as reconstructed, Grice's conversational Principle no longer even purports to identify a rational

¹Intuitions may vary as to whether coercion precludes describing a relationship as cooperative. But plainly where coercion is the predominant consideration cooperation loses the quasi-contractual character on which Grice relied in his initial construction of the *CP*. It would be silly to describe the prisoner interrogated under threat of torture as bound to continue "in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate." The prisoner is not bound to continue nor does the interrogation respect what is agreeable to him. He is forced to continue at the mercy of the interrogator. Notice that as revised by Grice, the *CP* no longer satisfies the conditions van Eemeren and colleagues regard as optimal for cooperation: "The Cooperative Principle optimally presumes *joint activity*. People are presumed to be helpful, not just taking account of one another's purposes, but actually taking them up" (Eemeren, Grootendorst et al. 1993, p. 7).

It would be infamous to say that in complying with the demands of torturers, prisoners were actually taking up the conversational purposes of their interrogators.

basis which links mutually identified conversational objectives with a speaker's commitment to veracity, relevance, economy and perspicuity.

The retreat implicit in Grice's reconsideration of his basic conversational Principle is considerable. To take only one, but perhaps the most important of Grice's Maxims, that of Quality, our ordinary expectation that a speaker is to make a responsible effort to speak the truth is plainly framed in terms of what the speaker is committed to, given what she has said (Vlach 1981, pp. 368-69, 382-83). And this idea, that a speaker's veracity is a matter of commitment to her utterance, is deeply rooted in our intuitions about the reasons we have, *ceteris paribus*, for responding to others' communicative projects in ways that fit with their ostensible objectives. In a project devoted to explicating the rationality which constitutes our communicative practices, it should be possible to articulate how recognition of *S*'s (ostensible) aims is related to her commitment to the veracity of her utterances. For a more adequate Gricean perspective on this problem we should now turn to our philosopher's micro-level analysis of utterance-meaning.²

3. *The Practical Constitution of Utterance-Meaning.*

Where the *CP* and associated Maxims apply globally to conversations, Grice's studies of utterance-meaning provide a micro-level analysis of our concept of the ordinary act of saying (and meaning) something, the primary act out of which conversations and other communicative undertakings are built (1989, pp. 25 and 87). This shift from a macro to micro-level study of communication requires some adjustment in Grice's conceptual apparatus. At a macro-level Grice thinks in terms of the common set of purposes or mutually accepted direction recognized by participants in a conversation, but when approaching talk at a micro-level, he focuses on the intentions speakers manifest in saying something and on the reasons addressees have for responding as speakers manifestly intend. And this finer attention to the primary communicative act of saying and meaning something throws the virtue of veracity into high relief, pushing relevance, etc., to the background. But Grice's analysis of utterance-meaning reflects his continuing interest in the rational structure of communication.³ While we will find it necessary to supplement Grice's analysis with a richer interpretation of its underlying pragmatics, here at a micro-level of study we can make out the rational connections between a speaker's manifest intentions (*S* ostensible communicative objective), what those intentions commit her to, and *A*'s reasons for acceding to the speaker's manifest intentions and responding as intended.

The most defensible version of Grice's analysis of utterance-meaning holds that it will be true that some speaker (*S*) means something by an utterance (*u*), if and only if, *S* produces *u* with the following complex intention.

² Some of Grice's associates seem to regard his analysis of utterance-meaning as his sole effort to represent the rational structure of communication, see Grandy and Warner 1986.

³ Grice's conception of utterance-meaning embraces the full range of meaningful expressions used in human communication, including gestures, inscriptions, etc., but it is fair to say that his analysis focuses on the primary communicative act which we ordinarily describe using indirect speech reports of the form 'speaker says that *p*', where *p* represents what the speaker means (Strawson 1964, p. 449; Grice 1989, pp. 86-88).

S 's primary communicative intention (I_1): S intends₁ that some addressee (A) respond (r) that p (or at least act as if S intends₁ that A r that p);

S 's second communicative intention (I_2): S intends₂ that A recognize S 's primary sub-intention (or at least acts as if S intends₂ that A recognize I_1);

S 's third communicative intention (I_3): S intends₃ that A recognize S 's secondary sub-intention (or at least act as if S intends₃ that A recognize I_2); and

S 's fourth communicative intention (I_4): S intends₄ that A 's complex recognition of S 's communicative intentions provide A with at least part of A 's reason for *ring* that p (or at least act if S were speaking with this intention).⁴

According to this analysis it will be true that Mary has said that Uncle Bill is ill, if she has uttered something A is to take as semantically equivalent to 'Uncle Bill is ill', and if this utterance is part of a complex effort on her part to get A to, e.g., believe that Uncle Bill is ill, and if that effort includes an attempt to get A *both* to recognize that she is trying to secure that belief *and* to recognize that Mary wants A to recognize that she is trying to get him to believe that Uncle Bill is ill, and if this complex effort is designed to provide A with reason to believe that Uncle Bill is ill (or Mary at least acts as if it is so designed). In executing these intentions, S deliberately (I_2) and openly (I_3) gives A to believe that S is trying to get A to, e. g., believe that p .

On its face, Grice's analysis of utterance-meaning casts some light on how conversational objectives come to be mutually recognized and accepted by participants in conversations. Of course, the objectives for conversations become established on a wide variety of bases, many of which have little to do with the nature of talk and everything to do with what we talk about, institutional procedures, etc. But Grice's analysis of utterance-meaning suggests something about how conversational objectives come to be established on the basis of resources inherent in talk.

According to the fourth condition in the analysis, S intends⁴ that A 's complex recognition of S 's intentions provide A with at least part of A 's reason for *ring* that p . Presumably, we would not have a stable concept of seriously saying something which is predicated on the strategy evident in S 's fourth communicative intention, if that strategy were not routinely efficacious, at least in favorable circumstances.⁵ Assuming that to be so, we may reasonably infer that in favorable

⁴The conditions which Grice sets out as necessary to utterance-meaning have grown in complexity with successive publications. My remarks use a formulation of intermediate complexity drawn from "Utterer's Meaning and Intention" (Grice 1969, pp. 154-157). This formulation has origins in P. G. Strawson's "Intention and Convention in Speech Acts" (1964, pp. 439-460), and in Stampe's work (1967; 1975).

⁵ Some non-trivial assumptions are necessary at this point. Grice's analysis is, after all, an analysis of our concept of seriously saying something; whereas, our interest is in the rational structure of actual conversations. However, we do truthfully give reports of the form 'S said that p . If Grice's analysis is sound, it shows the conditions which must, at a minimum, obtain in order for such reports to be true. So, supposing the analysis to be

circumstances speakers do manage to provide addressees with reason to suppose, e.g., that *S* is saying something worthy of *A*'s belief; accordingly, (in favorable circumstances) *A* would have basis for identifying and accepting *S*'s primary intention as an objective of the conversation. Likewise, supposing that Grice's analysis points to a potentially efficacious strategy, we see that *S* would have good practical reason to take her primary intention as her ostensible communicative objective; she would reasonably expect (*ceteris paribus*) that by deliberately and openly manifesting that intention, she would realize its objective. Although we have focused on cases in which *S*'s aim is to induce belief, it is possible to identify parallel strategies for a wide range of other addressee-responses, such as inducing *A* to consider whether *p*. Thus, it seems that a variety of conversational objectives might come to be mutually recognized and accepted on the basis of Gricean communicative intentions.

However, two crucially important matters remain obscure. First, while the analysis suggests that in favorable circumstances *S*'s manifest intentions do provide *A* with reason to respond as *S* primarily intends, it is far from obvious how just that *could* happen. And, second, the more widely received Gricean accounts of the pragmatics of utterance-meaning do not adequately explain the essential components of seriously saying something, leaving us with an unsatisfactory picture of the contribution which suppositions about *S*'s veracity make to the efficacy of serious utterances.

The first of these problems arises from the fact that the practical function of the reflexive speaker intentions posited by Grice is not adequately explicated by his analysis. According to the analysis these communicative intentions (I_2 and I_3) are supposed to have a pragmatic function, *viz.*, they are (ostensibly) designed to serve as part of *A*'s reason for responding as primarily intended. But as Alfred F. MacKay and others have argued, it is not obvious that getting *A* to recognize *S*'s intention to, e. g., induce *A* to believe that *p* could possibly provide *A* with reason to so respond (1972). And it must be acknowledged that this objection seems at first to have merit. Suppose that as a good Gricean speaker, I succeed in getting you to recognize that I want you to know that I am trying to get you to, e. g. believe what I am saying. How could that recognition ever provide you with reason to believe it? And if that is problematic, how could I reasonably expect that by manifesting my communicative intentions, I might secure the response I openly seek. This difficulty is not addressed by the analysis itself. The analytical motivation for Grice's definition of utterance-meaning does not show how the conditions posited could function practically from the point of view of the speakers and addressees. Andreas Kemmerling nicely summarized this point.

When he introduced them, Grice . . . justified (the ascription of) these intentions by way of counterexamples, but there was no explanation of why *S* had these intentions when all he wanted was, after all, to produce a certain reaction in his audience. A 'substantial'

sound, we may suppose that the conditions Grice posits as essential to our conception of saying something are, in fact, components of serious utterances. Moreover, and somewhat more problematic, we may suppose that our concept of saying something is the concept of an act which in favorable (or paradigmatic) circumstances can be successfully executed. If our concept of saying something were not constituted by a coherent and potentially efficacious practical calculation, one would doubt that the practice to which we refer when using the concept would have survived long enough for us to have formed a stable idea about its essentials.

justification would, at least, have to specify the further conditions which make *S*'s complex intentions plausible in the light of his basic desire to get *A* to do *r* (1986, p. 148).

The absence of a "substantial" justification leaves the practical rationality of the enterprise in the dark. So the analysis posits a rational link between *S*'s manifest intentions and *A*'s responding as *S* primarily intends, but the analysis does not identify a plausible reason or line of reasoning which might connect the two.

While Grice and associates have provided a compelling and highly regarded defense of his analysis of utterance-meaning (Avramides 1989, p. ix), for the most part the literature on this topic does not give the pragmatics of saying something the careful attention that topic requires and, so, fails to satisfactorily illuminate the reason(s) which might lead Grice's auditor to respond as his speaker primarily intends.

To be sure, defense of Grice's analysis has recognized the need for further elaboration of the rationale addressees might be expected to have for responding as *S* primarily intends. The most widely shared emendation suggests that a Gricean configuration of speaker intentions functions where it is assumed that *S* is trustworthy. Strawson puts the idea this way.

... it hardly seems too much to say that it is a part, though normally a subdued or submerged part, of the genuine communication intentions, that the audience's response to his performance should be governed by certain (normally subdued or submerged) assumptions regarding his (the communicator's) sincerity and reliability (1964, pp. 284-285).

This supplement brings us closer to an adequate account of the efficacy of serious utterances. If you can assume that I am trustworthy, i. e., that I believe what I am saying and have made a reliable effort to establish the truth of my expressed beliefs, then the fact that I apparently want you to believe what I am saying can (*ceteris paribus*) serve as reason for you to believe me. Accordingly, in this circumstances I could reasonably expect to generate a reason for you to give credence to what I say merely by manifesting my intention to secure your belief. Many theorists accept the idea that the practical efficacy of Gricean communicative intentions can be satisfactorily explicated on the (background) assumption that *S* is regarded as trustworthy (Strawson 1964, pp. 284-285; Bennett 1976, p. 145; Sperber and Wilson 1986, pp. 22, 163 & 195; Recanati 1987, pp. 186-187; Avramides 1989, p. 16; Grice 1989, p. 294).

However, merely adding a background assumption to the effect that *S* is trustworthy does not support a satisfactory account of the practical calculations which constitute a Gricean conception of saying something.⁶ First, assuming trust as a background condition does not afford an explanation in practical terms for why it is conceptually necessary for *S* to *openly* give it to believed that she is trying to get *A* to, e.g., believe what she is saying. If I can rely upon the supposition that you regard me as trustworthy and will, accordingly, take my apparent intention

⁶ Bringing trust in as a background assumption makes the confidence we have in what people say to us depend entirely on their reputations. While reputation is often an important component in a speaker's credibility, we often have satisfactory reason to believe speakers whose reputation for trustworthiness is unknown to us.

to get you to believe that p as evidence that p is the case, then practically I can provide you with reason for granting credence to my utterances merely by making it apparent that I want to you to believe that p . I do not need to openly intend that you also recognize that I am deliberately giving you to believe that I am trying to get you to believe that p . Second, Stawson's insertion of trust as a background assumption does not yield an account of S 's practical reasoning that squares with our reactive attitudes toward lying. Where a person acts as if she wants another to believe that p and assumes that the other party will regard her as trustworthy and thereupon will believe that p , but does so herself believing that p is false, our agent will have *misled* the party she is trying to influence. If our would-be-influencer has good reason to expect that her victim will respond on the basis of trust, then her effort is all the more reprehensible. Nevertheless, we do not have a case in which one person has lied to the other. This point is further reinforced by the fact that in accusations and in bargaining, serious utterances may function under circumstances in which speakers cannot reasonably expect their addressees to assume that they are trustworthy.

Missing from this widely received account of the Gricean speaker's practical reasoning is some idea of how S 's manifest intentions *commit* her to the veracity of her utterances and, so, provide A with reason to suppose that S is sincerely expressing beliefs the truth and adequacy of which she has made a responsible effort to ascertain (Vlach 1981, pp. 368-69, 382-83). Dennis Stampe gives, I will be arguing, a satisfying account of these connections. Stampe maintains that Grice's analysis of utterance-meaning identifies the rudimentary means that are practically necessary to openly engage S 's responsibility for the veracity of her utterances, thereby providing A with reason to respond as primarily intended.

On Grice's account it is a necessary condition of meaning something by an utterance that the utterer intend his audience's recognition of his intention to produce a certain response to be a reason of some sort for his audience's responding as intended. I remarked that it was not obvious why it should be a reason. . . . But now we may reflect that in recognizing the primary intention the audience is, *eo ipso*, recognizing the speaker's responsibility for his (speech) act. Now the mere fact that I recognize you to be responsible for a certain matter by no means entails that I have any reason to trust your motives or rely on your word. So in intending you to recognize my intention and hence responsibility I therefore cannot yet be said to have given you reason to respond as intended. After all, you may think that you were *not* intended to recognize that primary intention and hence my responsibility--as if it were like a case of overseeing someone planting evidence or perceiving that someone is posturing. But if you recognize that *I intend* you to recognize what my intention is, you therein recognize my willingness to incur responsibility for what I do or say. And this means that I am apparently willing to brook adverse reaction if what I say is not well founded, not true, etc.; so that it is reasonable for the audience to believe what I say so long as he may reasonably suppose that I stand to gain no advantage from mendacity, duplicity, or the like, which outweighs the disapprobation, etc., which I may expect to ensue upon the realization that I lied (etc.). We may conclude from these considerations that a sound strategy for inducing belief would be to achieve audience recognition of the secondary intention, that the primary intention be recognized (1967).

Here Stampe fits the Gricean essentials of utterance-meaning into a coherent practical calculation on the part of the speaker. Within that calculation A is to be provided reason to presume that S is making a responsible effort to sincerely speak the truth and, hence, with reason for believing what S says. Moreover, this rationale is generated using just those means which

Grice's analysis shows to be essential components of our concept of saying and meaning something.

Consider the merits of Stampe's account of the practical constitution of saying and meaning something.

First, Stampe's interpretation of the pragmatics of seriously saying something shows how at the core of conversational practices *S* and *A* can have coordinated reasons for accepting mutually identified purposes. In the difficult case of belief-inducing utterance, where *S* primarily intends that *A* believe that *p*, *A* is provided with *reason to presume that S is trying to tell him something which may well be worthy of belief*. And we can now see the line of reasoning by which *A* may arrive at that presumption, given what *S* does in seriously saying that *p*. By deliberately and openly making known her primary intention, *S* openly takes responsibility for her attempt to secure the response she primarily seeks; she thereby patently ensures that she would be fully accountable for her effort to induce *A* to believe that *p*. *A* is then entitled to infer that *S* would not be manifestly willing to risk criticism, resentment and retribution for her communicative efforts were she not proceeding with regard for the requirements of veracity. Likewise, we can now see how *S* would have reason to suppose that by deliberately and openly manifesting her primary intention she may achieve its aim.

And this account of belief-inducing utterances can be extended to a wide variety of purposes which are intimately related to communicative means. A good indication of the versatility of Stampe's account of the pragmatics of utterance-meaning comes from the insight it affords into a range of illocutionary acts, i. e., acts which are necessarily performed in and by saying something. Illocutionary acts, it will be recalled, serve a variety of communicative purposes: *proposing* characteristically puts forward matters for consideration, *advising* typically directs an addressee's attention to matters involving his concerns, *accusing* imposes on addressees an obligation to respond to the speaker's allegations. These and similar speech acts are built on the resources inherent in saying and meaning something. They are constituted by practical calculations which require that *S* deliberately and openly undertake commitments which enlarge or focus or strengthen the core presumption that she is to speak the truth. Thus, in making a proposal a speaker not only commits herself (as a matter of veracity) to having made a reasonable effort to ascertain the truth of the beliefs she expresses but also to providing reasons which support the rational adequacy of the proposition she puts forward for consideration. A proposer can, thereby, generate reason to suppose that what she has to say on behalf of her proposal merits serious consideration (Kauffeld 1998). She can, that is, warrant commitment to a mutually recognized conversational purpose other than that of securing belief. In principle Stampe's account of the pragmatics of serious utterance can be extended to any communicative purpose which *A* can be brought to accept on the basis of some presumption generated by expanding, refining, strengthening, etc. the core presumption of veracity.

Second, Stampe's account explains in practical terms why the essentials identified by Grice's analysis are necessary components of our concept of seriously saying something. That is, Stampe shows the constituents of that concept to be practically necessary components of a coherent and potentially efficacious strategy for inducing belief (and other communicatively attainable responses) from addressees—a strategy which very plausibly underlies and constitutes our ordinary concept of saying something. In order to warrant the presumption that she is making a responsible effort to speak the truth, *S* must provide her addressee with assurance that *S*

expects to be fully accountable for the veracity of her utterance. To provide that assurance *S* needs not only to make available to *A* her intention₁ to get *A* to *r*, she must also make it apparent that she wants *A* to recognize her secondary communicative intention. Thus Stampe's account enables us to see both the rationality of *A*'s responding as *S* primarily intends and also the practical rationale for each component in the effort *S* expends trying to secure that response, including *S*'s attempt to get *A* to recognize communicative intention₂. Prevailing interpretations of the pragmatics of serious utterance, it will be recalled, fail to adequately account for that effort.

Third, it is apparent that Stampe's account of the practical syllogism underlying seriously saying something squares with our reactive attitudes toward mendacity. We hold speakers responsible for the veracity of what they say, expecting them both to express beliefs they actually hold and to have made a responsible effort to ascertain the truth of those beliefs. This expectation is nicely explained by the observation that in saying that *p* a speaker openly takes responsibility for the truthfulness of her utterance. As we have seen, the *CP* encounters difficulty on just this point.

Fourth, corroboration for Stampe's conjecture about the practical constitution of serious utterance can be found by observing the continuity between the strategy Stampe attributes to speakers and a large array of ordinary practices and inferences.⁷ In Stampe's view, the essentials of utterance-meaning are the elementary components of a practical strategy for generating a *presumption* of veracity on behalf of *S*'s utterance. We routinely and quite naturally call the expectation that a speaker ought speak truthfully a *presumption* (Llewelyn 1962, pp. 162-66; Stampe 1967, pp. 25-29; Grice 1975, p. 47; Stampe 1975, pp. 18-31; Recanati 1987, pp. 119, 186-87; Akmajian, Demers et al. 1990, pp. 316-18; Eemeren, Grootendorst et al. 1993, pp. 6-11). If we pause briefly to notice what presumptions are, we can see that the seemingly complex inference a Gricean speaker expects her addressee draw from her manifest intentions belongs to that large and familiar class of commonplace inferences.

Presumptions, in the plain sense of the term, comprise a species of inference. To presume something is to *take* it in the broad sense of *mentally taking* which embraces acts of *assuming*, *inferring*, *concluding*, etc. As inferences, presumptions are distinguished by the grounds on which they are available to be taken (Kauffeld 1995). To presume that *p*, a person must come to hold that *p* by reason of the supposition that some one has or will have made it the case that *p* rather than risk resentment, retribution, etc. for acting otherwise (Kauffeld 2001). A presumption is simply a conclusion which is held on this basis or is available on the back of such a reason. If Jones says that the game will begin at seven, we may presume that he has made a responsible effort to speak the truth in view of the risk he runs of criticism for failing to do so. Here what is presumed is the proposition that Jones has made a responsible effort to speak the

⁷ The seemingly intricate reflexive structure of speaker intentions which Grice posits has led some scholars to doubt whether his analysis reflects a realistic view of human communication (Black 1975, p. 118; Grandy and Warner 1986, pp. 8-13; Grice 1986, pp. 80-85; Avramides 1989, p. 14). However, consideration of the continuity between the strategy Stampe attributes to speakers and presumptions generally show Gricean reflexive speaker intentions to be the basis for very a ordinary and familiar mode of inference.

truth. But derivatively other propositions may also come to be presumed. Thus, presuming that Jones speaks the truth, we may also presume that the game will start at seven.

Presumptions make up a very large class of inferences, which encompasses a goodly portion of the expectations we have about how others will conduct themselves. We commonly use the expression ‘He/she would not dare to (do anything so outrageous as)’ to articulate presumptive inferences. We also mark out presumptions by expressing the expectation that a person will do *x* because she would not be willing to bear the guilt or remorse for acting otherwise. Where a person violates our expectations by behaving presumptuously (in the pejorative sense of the term), we say things like ‘how dare he act in such a high handed manner’. These familiar idioms remind us how widely we depend on presumptive inferences.

The strategy Stampe attributes to *S* utilizes the resources common to a major and especially interesting class of presumptions, which may conveniently be called *special presumptions*—presumptions which one deliberately generates by providing others with grounds to presume things favorable to one’s endeavors.⁸ Leaving a deposit in order to provide reason to believe that one will return a borrowed item is an example of acting so as to generate a special presumption. Likewise, when one tells a class that one docks late papers a full grade and accepts no excuses, one deliberately acts to strengthen the presumption that papers are to be turned in on time. Here one engages a special presumption by action designed to manifestly ensure that students will be held accountable for living up to their responsibilities.

Stampe’s speaker relies on a variant of this familiar *strategy for generating special presumptions by ensuring accountability*. By deliberately and openly giving *A* to believe that she is, e.g., trying to induce *A* to believe that *p*, *S* patently puts herself in a position where she cannot deny responsibility for her primary communicative effort. In short she manifestly ensures that she is fully accountable for her attempt to influence *A*’s beliefs. Her actions in this connection parallel those of the teacher who conspicuously lays down conditions designed to preclude the expectation that a student might be able to evade responsibility for turning in work as assigned. Both license an inference by patently ensuring that agents would be inescapably accountable for their conduct.⁹

I have been arguing that Stampe’s account of the pragmatics which constitute our concept of saying and meaning something makes good on Grice’s attempt to represent the respects in

⁸ Special presumptions are to be distinguished from *standing presumptions*, which are generally available on the supposition that prudent associates will act so as not to occasion foreseeable resentment and which are available without any special effort to generate or engage them.

⁹ Some scholars have expressed concern over the possibility that the configuration of reflexive speaker intentions posited by Grice may open out into an unbounded regress (Strawson 1964, p. 447; Schiffer 1972, pp. 18-26; Black 1975, pp. 117-18 & 137-38; Recanati 1987, pp. 191-207). Comprehension of the practical rationale underlying Grice’s configuration of speaker intentions ought to quiet fears that a regress threatens the analysis (Stampe 1967, p. 28). The mark of utterance-meaning is not just that *S* aims primarily at a response warranted by recognition of her effort to secure that response. Rather utterance acts on the order of saying that *p* are distinguished by *S*’s acting so as to openly take responsibility for her communicative effort and thereby warrant a presumption of veracity. The possibility of a regress in Grice’s analysis has opened as scholars have, without the support of an articulated understanding of presumptive inference, tried to distinguish complex cases of staged sign inference from cases of utterance meaning.

which our conversational practices of saying things to one another are not “merely something that all or most do *in fact* follow” but are “something that it is *reasonable* for us to follow, that we *should not* abandon” (1989, p. 29). Grice’s analysis of utterance-meaning provides support for the idea that the primary communicative act of saying that *p* is practically designed to provide to *A* with a reason to respond as *S* primarily intends. Stampe identifies the nature of this reason as a presumption and exhibits precisely how such presumptions are engaged by what *S* necessarily does in producing a meaningful utterance. We have seen that this account fits our intuitions about *S*’s commitment to veracity, that it may be expected to explicate how speakers and addressees come to mutually identify and accept a wide variety of communicative objectives, and that it shows the rationality of communicative practices to be part and parcel with the wide range of ordinary inferences which we ordinarily recognize as *presumptions*.

4. The Cooperative Principle Revisited

In light of Stampe’s interpretation of the pragmatics of utterance-meaning, what are we to make of Grice’s Cooperative Principle? The answer to this question, I think, is that, given Stampe’s account, in very important respects of the analysis utterance-meaning supercedes the *CP*.

Both the *CP* and the analysis of utterance-meaning attempt to explicate the rationality of serious communicative practices. Both reflect the basic insight that the capacity of communicative acts to, e. g., convey information, provide explanations, give directions, offer reasons, etc., depends critically on the commitments persons incur in conjunction with their ostensible reasons for participating in conversations. But working at a macro-level, Grice was unable to find a formulation of the *CP* which squares with the variety of non-cooperative communicative objectives speakers and addressees do, in fact, jointly pursue, which fits our reactive attitudes toward mendacity, and which identifies the rational connections between the commitments conversationalists undertake and their acceptance of mutually identified communicative objectives. His micro-level analysis of utterance-meaning, on the other hand, puts us in a position to understand the rational structure of seriously saying something. It identifies components which are practically necessary and, in favorable circumstances, sufficient to the core efficacy of seriously saying things. Stampe’s account of the pragmatics of this act shows how what is done in saying something can provide *S* and *A* with coordinate reasons for adopting mutually identified communicative objectives; it satisfactorily identifies the nature of the rational connectives which enable a manifest commitment to veracity to function in serious communication; and it provides an account of these connections which fits our intuitions about day-to-day presumptions.

Much still remains to be seen. My discussion of utterance-meaning has focused on the presumption of veracity and on utterances primarily intended to induce belief. I have said little about how such other communicative virtues as relevance, economy, and perspicuity are related to the commitments speaker’s undertake and the reasons addressees have for accepting conversational objectives. I have tried to indicate that Stampe’s account of the pragmatics of serious utterance can be extended to a wide range of illocutionary acts and, so, can illuminate the repertoire of strategies available for attaining a variety of objectives. As we better understand *proposing, accusing, advising, praising, etc.*, we may better comprehend the communicative sources of relevance. But it is not at all clear that our expectation that serious utterances are to

be economical and perspicuous are on par with our expectations regarding veracity and relevance (Grice 1989, pp. 26-27). So, it remains to be seen at a micro-level just how the Maxims of Quantity and Manner come into play.

Can a Gricean account of utterance-meaning support an account of conversational implicatures, i. e., can it do the work for which the *CP* was initially designed. This is a large and difficult question, complicated by the fact that it is not altogether clear that Grice's *CP* and associated Maxims support an adequate account of conversational implicature (Davis 1998). I inclined to suppose that a pragmatic account of utterance-meaning can do much of the *CP*'s work. Perhaps the *CP* could be replaced with a simpler formulation: make your conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the presumptions governing the talk exchange in which you are engaged. This "Principle" might be useful to scholars and teachers, but conversationalists would not have to rely upon that Principle in interpreting each others remarks, because the presumptions governing the conversation at any given point in time straight-forwardly commit participants to making appropriate contributions.

Finally, I have had little to say about how my interpretation of Grice's work on the rationality of communicative practices bears on studies of argumentation. That is a very large topic to be worked out over a period of time by various approaches to the study of argumentation. However, in common the various ways in which argumentation is currently studied suffer from the absence of an adequate and embracing account of how responsibilities and obligations are incurred in communicative acts. Grice's work is something like common text providing a well developed view of that topic—a text shared by various approaches to the study of argumentation. In this essay I have tried to clarify some of what we ought learn from that text.

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