

# Précis of \*Oratio Obliqua, Oratio Recta: an Essay on Metarepresentation

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Précis of  
***Oratio Obliqua, Oratio Recta :***  
***An Essay on Metarepresentation***

(Bradford Books/MIT Press, 'Representation and Mind' series)

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Utterances and thoughts have content: They represent (actual or imaginary) states of affairs. Those states of affairs consist of entities having properties and standing in relation to other entities. Among the entities which can be linguistically or mentally represented in this manner are linguistic and mental representations themselves. This is the phenomenon known as *metarepresentation*. Thus we can think or talk about speech or thought, whether our own or someone else's, as in the following example:

(1) John believes I want to stay

This sentence describes John as believing something. This is a metarepresentation because the belief which is described itself possesses a content and represents a state of affairs (viz. the fact that I want to stay). So we must distinguish two representations. John's belief is the *primary* representation. Sentence (1) represents John's belief and is therefore the *metarepresentation*. Note, however, that the primary representation is not so absolutely, but relatively. If we analyse it we see that it itself is a metarepresentation. The belief represents a state of affairs involving a certain person (myself) having a certain desire (the desire to stay). Now a desire, as much as a belief, is a representation endowed with content. We therefore have three levels of representation in the sentence. At the bottom level I am represented as staying. This state of affairs is the content of the desire which is ascribed to me. My having that desire is a second state of affairs, which is the content of the belief ascribed to John. John's holding that belief is a third state of affairs, which is the content of the sentence.

The complexity revealed by the analysis of such examples contrasts with the ease with which we process and understand them. Many take this as evidence that humans are endowed with a specific metarepresentational faculty which enables them, in particular, to ascribe mental states to others and to explain (or predict) their behaviour on that basis. A lot is known concerning the development of that alleged faculty, and there is an active debate in psychology and the philosophy of mind concerning the relation of metarepresentation to pretense and simulation. But it seems clear to me that not much theoretical progress can be made in this area until we know more about the very structure of metarepresentations. That is what *Oratio Obliqua*, *Oratio Recta* is specifically about.

There are three main trends in the book. First, there is a set of ideas concerning ‘situations and the structure of content’ (to borrow the title of a previous article of mine). Those ideas form the bulk of Part II, on ‘circumstance-shifting’. Based on those ideas, there is a set of claims about the structure of metarepresentations. From those claims it follows that metarepresentations, e.g. belief reports and sentences/thoughts having the same kind of structure (*oratio obliqua*, metafictional sentences like : ‘In the picture, Mary is tall’, etc), are fundamentally transparent and represent what the representations they are about (e.g. the reported beliefs) are themselves about. Third, there is an attempt to meet the obvious objection that metarepresentations are opaque, or at least susceptible of opacity. The objection is met by appealing to a range of phenomena that includes quotation, *oratio recta*, deference, free indirect speech, and so forth. Such quotational phenomena, which I analyse in terms of ‘context-shift’, often interact with metarepresentations, and when they do they induce opacity ; but the opacity in question, I argue, is extraneous — it is not intrinsic to metarepresentations.

## **I. Situations and the structure of content**

### *1.1 Situated representations*

Representations, whether mental or linguistic, always concern a situation, namely the situation which is relevant to their evaluation as correct or incorrect. Thus if I say (or think) ‘It is raining’, the content thereby articulated — the description of the weather as being thus and so — is relative to a particular place, and is true iff it is raining at

that place. The overall meaning of such a representation depends upon two factors : its content in the narrow sense (what is explicitly represented), and the situation it concerns. We need the situation parameter because the situation a representation concerns need not (though it may) be the 'actual world' in its entirety. It may be partial rather than total (e.g. it may be a spatial and/or temporal location *in* the world, as in the rain example) and it may also be counterfactual rather than actual (as when we imagine a possible situation, and entertain thoughts concerning it). Every representation therefore expresses what Barwise used to call an 'Austinian proposition', consisting of a situation and a content to be evaluated in that situation.

On this view the situation a representation concerns is always *contextually* determined. There is the content that is explicitly articulated, on the one hand, and the situation in which it is meant to be evaluated, on the other hand. The situation is external to the content — it is not articulated as part of it, but contextually provided. This claim is, undoubtedly, controversial. Can it not be argued that, sometimes at least, the situation a representation concerns is made explicit in the representation itself and becomes an aspect of its content ? Instead of simply saying (or thinking) 'It is raining', we can say : 'In Paris now, it is raining'. This is true if and only if, in Paris now, it is raining. The situation of evaluation is explicitly represented here : there is rain, it is said, in a certain place and at a certain time. The content of the utterance is sufficient to determine its possible-worlds truth-conditions — we don't have to start searching the context for some relevant situation. Since that is so, why generalize to all representations what is true only of some, namely those that are somewhat elliptical or context-dependent, like 'It is raining' ?

I reply that even the complex representation 'In Paris now, it is raining' concerns a situation which is not articulated as part of its content. That is not the same situation as the situation <Paris, now> which is relevant to the evaluation of the *simple* representation ('It is raining') which occurs embedded within the complex representation. To evaluate the complex representation 'In Paris now, it is raining', we need a bigger situation than just <Paris, now>. We need a situation in which Paris contrasts with other possible places, and the present time contrasts with other possible times. A representation such as 'In Paris now, it is raining' makes sense only relative to such a 'big' situation extending over several places and times, while 'It is raining' makes sense relative to a smaller situation consisting of a single place at a single time. I conclude that we can, indeed, make explicit the situation which a

representation concerns, by prefixing that representation with a situation-indicator like 'In Paris' (or 'In Paris now') ; but in so doing we construct a more complex representation which itself concerns a situation (*another* situation) that can only be contextually provided.

Complex representations such as 'In Paris, it is raining' I call  $\delta$ -structures. They have two parts : the prefix, or situation-indicator ('in Paris'), and a simpler, embedded representation ('it is raining') to be evaluated in the situation which the prefix indicates.

## 1.2 Where do $\delta$ -structures come from ?

In the book I distinguish three stages in the development of our capacity to represent the world :

- In the *egocentric* stage, every representation which the subject entertains concerns the hic-et-nunc situation, i.e. the subject's experiential situation. Perceptual representations typically belong to that stage : A perception is true, iff the situation around the subject at the time of perception (the hic-et-nunc situation) fits the content of the perception. Perceptual representations automatically concern the subject's experiential situation because the perceptual processes from which they result are themselves anchored to that situation : what's perceived is what's going on here and now.
- *Simulation* enables us to go beyond the egocentric stage. Simulation is the process whereby representations are produced which do not result from perceptual processes, and do not concern the hic-et-nunc situation. In simulation one entertains a representation decoupled from the hic-et-nunc situation. According to Karl Bühler, simulation is involved whenever we think or talk about a situation that is not given to our senses. It may be an imaginary situation, but it may also be a situation distant in space or time.
- The third stage is reached when the subject simulatively entertains a representation decoupled from the hic-et-nunc situation, *while at the same time representing the situation which the simulative representation concerns*. The simulative representation is thereby 'tagged' as as a representation of the situation in the next room, or of the

situation two days ago.<sup>1</sup> Instead of being used directly to provide information concerning what is going on in the hic-et-nunc situation, the simulative representation is used indirectly as a building block in the construction of a more complex representation (which itself provides information concerning what is going on). Thus take the complex representation: 'Three miles from here, there is a blue castle with a high tower'. The complex representation purports to describe the world around the subject. The representation is true iff, three miles from where the subject is, there is a blue castle with a high tower. But the primary representation 'there is a blue castle with a high tower' does not purport to describe the world around the subject. There is no blue castle where the subject is. The primary representation purports to describe a situation *distinct from* the subject's egocentric situation. It is decoupled from the latter. The tag 'three miles from here' indicates which situation is being described.

Representations at the third stage are  $\delta$ -structures. They involve two situations. One is explicitly mentioned as relevant to the evaluation of the embedded representation, while the complex representation constructed out of the embedded representation and the situation-mentioning prefix is itself evaluated with respect to another situation — the 'exercised situation' — that is contextually provided rather than explicitly mentioned.

### 1.3 *Metarepresentations as $\delta$ -structures*

I see metarepresentation as a special case of that simulation-and-tagging mechanism. In metarepresentation, however, the situation the simulative representation concerns is not a portion of the actual world distinct from the subject's own egocentric situation. It is an *imaginary* situation, that is, a situation belonging to a 'possible world' that need not be actual (the world of the book, John's belief world, etc.). This feature is not specific to metarepresentations. Thus consider conditionals: 'If he comes, I will leave' talks about an hypothetical situation — a situation in which

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<sup>1</sup> The suggestive notion of a 'tag' comes from Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, 'The Evolution of Decoupling', in Dan Sperber (ed.), *Metarepresentation: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, Oxford University Press 2000, pp. 53-115. As Sperber notes in his introduction, the view put forward by Cosmides and Tooby is similar to mine.

he comes — and characterizes it as a situation in which I leave. The consequent is the (simulative) representation of what happens in a certain hypothetical situation, specified by the antecedent ; a situation which may but need not be actual. Similarly, a metafictional sentence such as ‘In the book, Bush marries Sadam Hussein’s daughter’ consists of a tag (‘in the book’) and a primary representation (‘Bush marries Sadam Hussein’s daughter’), which representation is simulatively entertained as a representation of the imaginary situation specified by the tag (viz. the situation described by the book). Belief sentences can be analysed in the same way, I hold. ‘John believes that’ is the tag, and the embedded sentence that follows is the primary representation, describing the world as seen by John.

## **II. Circumstance-shifting and the transparency of meta-representations**

### *2.1 Context and circumstance*

The structures I am talking about are familiar from modal logics. Consider, for example, tense logic. In tense logic an utterance such as ‘He will come’ is represented as

It will be the case that + He comes

The complex sentence is true at a time  $t$ , if and only if the embedded sentence ‘he comes’ is true at a time  $t'$  such that  $t < t'$  (where ‘ $<$ ’ is the relation of anteriority). The time  $t$  functions here as the exercised situation — it is the contextually provided situation (typically, the time of utterance) with respect to which the complex representation is meant to be evaluated. The time  $t'$  is the mentioned situation : the situation with respect to which we are explicitly asked to evaluate the embedded representation ‘he comes’, in the course of evaluating the complex representation with respect to  $t$ .

Modal operators such as ‘it will be the case that’ or ‘possibly’ at the beginning of a sentence  $S$  (‘It will be the case that  $p$ ’, ‘Possibly  $p$ ’) are circumstance-shifters. If  $S$  is evaluated in a circumstance  $c$ , the operator shifts the circumstance with respect to which the embedded sentence in its scope must be evaluated : it shifts the circumstance of evaluation from  $c$  to some distinct circumstance  $c'$  bearing some

relation to  $c$  (e.g. the relation of posteriority). I suggest that we generalize this idea to situation-mentioning prefixes and  $\delta$ -structures. What a  $\delta$ -structure says is that, in some situation  $s$ , it is the case that  $p$ . To evaluate the  $\delta$ -structure in some situation  $s'$  we need to go from  $s'$  to  $s$ , following the instruction provided by the prefix, and evaluate the embedded representation there.

Following Kaplan, though in an utterance-based framework at variance with his own views, I distinguish context and circumstance. The reference of indexicals depends upon the context of utterance, not the circumstance of evaluation. Thus if I say 'I will quit smoking', this is analysed as

It will be the case that + I quit smoking

The prefix tells us that 'I quit smoking' is to be evaluated in a future circumstance. Still, 'I' refers to the person who speaks in the context of utterance, not to the person who speaks in the future situation to which the prefix directs us. To evaluate the utterance we look for a future situation in which *the person who speaks in the present situation* (the situation of utterance) quits smoking. We are not concerned with what happens to the person (if any) who happens to be speaking in the future situation to which the prefix directs us. Similarly, the meaning of 'smoke' (*smoke tobacco, smoke marijuana*, or whatever) is the meaning which the speaker assigns to this word in the context of utterance ; it is not the meaning which would be assigned to this word by an hypothetical speaker in the future situation to which the prefix directs us.

## 2.2 Transparency

From what I have said it follows that the content of the primary representation is not affected by the circumstantial shift. The content of the representation (determined by the meaning of words and the reference of indexicals, in the linguistic case) is *what* we evaluate for truth or falsity. What is affected by the shift only is the circumstance with respect to which the content is evaluated, and, of course, the value (truth or falsity) which the representation takes when evaluated with respect to that circumstance.

This approach has important consequences as far as metarepresentations are concerned. Since it contains the primary representation (along with the circumstance-



shifting prefix), and since the circumstance-shift effected by the prefix does not affect the content of that representation, the metarepresentation can only be transparent : it cannot but represent what the primary representation represents. So we must reject standard views according to which metarepresentations are opaque and do not represent what the primary representations represent. On the contrary we are bound to accept the principle of Semantic Innocence (according to which semantic content is not affected by metarepresentational embedding) and its correlate, the 'Inheritance Principle' (according to which any representational failure in the primary representation will determine a corresponding failure in the metarepresentation). Thus I side with Prior, against Quine. According to Prior, it is a mistake to analyse *oratio obliqua* on the pattern of *oratio recta*. Quotational contexts are not innocent ; they violate the Inheritance Principle. If I say « 'elephant' starts with an e », I do not talk about elephants, but about words. And if I use a nonword, as in « 'ephant' starts with an e », that does not affect the grammaticality of my utterance. But *oratio obliqua* is simply one form of compounding among many others. The embedded words mean what they ordinarily mean ; and the meaning of the whole is a function of the meanings of the parts. 'John believes that' is like 'It will be the case that'. There is no mystery here.

### 2.3 *Extensional substitution failures*

To be sure there are substitution problems. From 'Philip believes that Tegucigalpa is in Nicaragua', it seems that we cannot infer that he believes that the capital of Honduras is in Nicaragua, even though Tegucigalpa *is* the capital of Honduras. Philip may be mistaken as to the location of Tegucigalpa, without holding the crazy belief that the capital of one country is located in another country. According to Frege, Russell and Quine, substitution fails to be truth-preserving here because the word 'Tegucigalpa' is not used in a purely designating manner to refer to Tegucigalpa. The speaker is not talking about the city Tegucigalpa, but rather about Philip's representation of the city. But this is the view I reject. In my framework (as in Prior's) the speaker who says 'Philip believes that Tegucigalpa is in Nicaragua' talks about Philip, Tegucigalpa, and Nicaragua, and says that they stand in a certain relation. Embedding the words 'Tegucigalpa is in Nicaragua' under 'Philip believes that' does not affect the reference of 'Tegucigalpa' or 'Nicaragua', nor the content of the

sentence 'Tegucigalpa is in Nicaragua'. Only the circumstance of evaluation changes.

Why, then, is it not possible to apply the Substitutivity Principle ? My answer is that the principle does apply, but within predictable limits. We can replace 'Tegucigalpa' by a referring expression with the same extension. For example, we can go from 'Philip believes that Tegucigalpa is in Nicaragua' to 'Philip believes that this city [pointing to Tegucigalpa on a map] is in Nicaragua'. We can also substitute 'the capital of Honduras' for 'Tegucigalpa' and preserve truth, provided we give the description wide scope and read 'Philip believes that the capital of Honduras is in Nicaragua' as 'Philip believes of the capital of Honduras that it is in Nicaragua'. What we cannot do is give narrow scope to the description. The reason for that restriction is straightforward, however. If the doxastic operator takes scope over the description, the description will be evaluated (and its extension determined) with respect to the *shifted* circumstance introduced by the operator. But the substitution-licensing statement 'Tegucigalpa is the Capital of Honduras' only holds with respect to the current circumstance (i.e. the circumstance with respect to which the complex sentence 'Philip believes that...' is evaluated). Tegucigalpa is the capital of Honduras in reality, not in Philip's belief-world. It follows that the substitution is licensed only if the description is evaluated with respect to the current circumstance, that is, if it is given wide scope.

### III. Opacity

#### 3.1 *Intensionality*

According to Quine, a linguistic context is opaque if substitution of identicals is not truth-preserving in that context. Now there are two sorts of 'substitution of identicals', hence two sorts of substitution failure and two sorts of opacity. One sort, which we have just dealt with, involves the interchange of expressions with the same *extension*. To account for that sort of substitution failure, it is, I claim, sufficient to invoke the phenomenon of circumstantial shift. When we say that two expressions (e.g. 'Tegucigalpa' and 'the Capital of Honduras') « have the same extension », what we mean is that they have the same extension *in the current circumstance*, that is, at the present time and in the actual world. But the tag in a meta-representation  $\delta S$

indicates that the internal sentence *S* must be evaluated with respect to a circumstance *c'* distinct from the current circumstance *c* in which the metarepresentation itself is being evaluated. Hence it is only normal that we can't always substitute an expression for another one in the internal sentence even though they have the same extension *in the current circumstance*; for the current circumstance is irrelevant when we evaluate the internal sentence and the expressions it contains. What is relevant to evaluating the internal sentence is not the current circumstance *c*, but the shifted circumstance *c'*.

The form of 'opacity' I have just mentioned is displayed by all sentences introduced by a circumstance-shifting prefix (e.g. tensed sentences). We may call it 'intensionality' instead of opacity. The other form of opacity, sometimes called 'hyperintensionality', is found when we cannot freely substitute expressions with the same *content* (rather than expressions with the same extension). That form of opacity characterizes metarepresentations as opposed to other sentences introduced by circumstance-shifting prefixes, and it raises a genuine problem for my framework.

### 3.2 *Hyperintensionality*

If two expressions have the same content, they should be interchangeable *salva veritate*, even if the sentence is headed by a circumstance-shifting tag: for the content of an expression is not circumstance-dependent in the way in which its extension is. The content of an expression is *what* we evaluate in or at a circumstance; hence it is determined prior to the encounter with the circumstance. For example, the content of the description 'the President' (or 'the President of the US', or 'the President of the US in 2002') can be construed as a function from situations to individuals. Once an appropriate circumstance is given, the function determines the extension of the description in that circumstance, that is, the individual who is the value of the function. The value of the function is circumstance-dependent, but the function itself is not.

In metarepresentational contexts, however, substituting an expression for another one with the same content possibly affects truth-value. 'Ophthalmologist' and 'eye-doctor' are synonymous, hence they have the same content (a function from situations to sets of individuals). It follows that the content of a sentence in which one expression occurs will remain the same after substituting the other expression for it.

That will be so whether or not a circumstantial shift occurs, since the content of an expression is not circumstance-dependent. Now if the content of the sentence remains the same, its truth-value also will remain the same. Despite all this, it is intuitively evident that substituting 'ophtalmologist' for 'eye-doctor' in (2) can change truth-value: it is possible for John to believe that Peter is an eye-doctor and to disbelieve that he is an ophtalmologist. In other words, (2) and (3) can both be true.

(2) John believes that Peter is an eye-doctor

(3) John does not believe that Peter is an ophtalmologist

This seems to raise an insuperable problem for my account. If 'ophtalmologist' and 'eye-doctor' have the same content, the sentences 'Peter is an eye-doctor' and 'Peter is an ophtalmologist' express the same proposition. Now I claim that the proposition expressed by a sentence is not affected when we embed it under 'John believes that'. Sentence (2) should therefore entail

(4) John believes that Peter is an ophtalmologist

But (4) is the negation of (3), and we have just said that, intuitively, (3) is compatible with (2). It shouldn't be if, as my account predicts, (2) entails (4).

### 3.3 *Hyperintensionality and free enrichment*

This difficulty can be solved, and my account saved, by appealing to the notion of free enrichment. That notion is independently needed to account for examples like the following:

(5) She took out her key and opened the door

The fact that the door was opened with the key is not linguistically specified, yet it is certainly part of what we understand when we hear that sentence. It is an aspect of the meaning or content of (5) which is provided through free enrichment. John Perry calls that sort of thing an 'unarticulated constituent' of what is said; and he and Crimmins (among others) hold that modes of presentation of the objects of belief are

unarticulated constituents of the propositions expressed by opaque belief reports. I agree with the spirit, if not the details, of that analysis. I claim that, on the opaque reading 'John believes that S' is enriched into 'John believes that S *in such and such a way*' — just as 'she opened the door' is enriched into 'she opened the door *with the key*'. A particular 'way of believing', involving contextually provided modes of presentation of the objects of belief, is implicitly ascribed to the believer. The transparent/opaque ambiguity for belief reports is therefore an ambiguity between the minimal reading and a contextually enriched reading of the sentence. In this framework the expressions in the scope of the metarepresentational prefix have their normal contents; but the content of the global utterance is enriched by incorporation of a pragmatic suggestion. As free enrichment is a highly context-sensitive process, substitution failures are easy to account for. Substituting an expression for another one with the same content changes the context for the interpretation of the sentence — since the words used by the speaker are as much part of the context of utterance as anything else. That change in the context of utterance may have an effect on the aspect of meaning generated through free enrichment.

At this point we may usefully borrow from the standard analysis of hyperintensionality in terms of covert quotation. To account for the intuitive acceptability of (3), we may follow Quine and assume that in (3) the word 'ophthalmologist' is somehow *mentioned*, as if the speaker had said

(3\*) John does not believe Peter to be an 'ophthalmologist'.

In (3\*), by drawing the hearer's attention upon the word 'ophthalmologist' which he uses, the speaker actively conveys a specific suggestion regarding the relevant way of believing under which John is said not to believe that Peter is an ophthalmologist. The same suggestion is conveyed in (3), without active help from the speaker: like (3\*), (3) denies that John believes Peter to be an ophthalmologist (i.e. an eye-doctor) *under a mode of presentation involving the word 'ophthalmologist'*. That is compatible with John's believing Peter to be an ophthalmologist under another mode of presentation ('eye-doctor').

Note that enrichment can proceed from several sources. One likely source is the linguistic expressions which the speaker uses in reporting the belief or utterance. It is that source which is tapped when the speaker herself demonstrates an

expression while using it, as in (3\*): she thereby suggests that that expression captures the ascriber's way of thinking or speaking. As we have just seen, the words used by the speaker may also carry such a suggestion by themselves — and do so in (3) — without any active demonstration on the part of the speaker. The words used in phrasing the report need not even play a critical role : the extralinguistic context may be sufficient by itself to make manifest what the ascriber's way of thinking/speaking is. It is examples of the latter sort that have been focussed on by Richard and Crimmins and Perry in their insightful discussions of belief reports.

#### IV. Context shifting

##### 4.1 *An alternative analysis*

Suppose that on Saturday I say:

(6) John believes that yesterday was less busy than Friday

John, of course, does not realize that yesterday *was* Friday. If he did, the belief I ascribe to him would be irrational. To make sense of that sort of belief ascription, I invoke two distinct 'modes of presentation' under which the believer thinks of the object (here, a day) to which he ascribes contradictory properties. Those modes of presentation are contextually supplied, via free enrichment, in interpreting the report. But there is an alternative analysis, in terms of context-shift. We may suppose that words like 'yesterday' or 'Friday' *do not pick out their referent in the context of use, but in the 'belief world' introduced by the operator 'John believes that'*. If that is so, the words 'yesterday' and 'Friday' do not take primary scope in such examples. John is not said to believe, of a certain day *d* (which turns out to be both Friday and yesterday), that it is less busy than itself; rather, he is said to think 'Yesterday was less busy than Friday', yesterday and Friday being, *for him*, different days. (We may imagine that John *said* 'Yesterday was less busy than Friday', and that this utterance is all the evidence I have for the belief ascription.)

On this analysis, a metarepresentational operator like 'John believes that' not only shifts the circumstance (the world) with respect to which the appended sentence is to be evaluated, but *sometimes, it also shifts the context in which the sentence is*

*interpreted*: we are to interpret the sentence in the shifted circumstance of evaluation, instead of first interpreting the sentence with respect to the current context, and then evaluating it with respect to the shifted circumstance.<sup>2</sup>

A powerful argument in favour of the alternative analysis is provided by examples which my analysis so far cannot handle, e.g. attitude ascriptions involving empty singular terms. Suppose Jean, under a delusion, thinks there is a little green man named 'Marcel' in the kitchen. I can ascribe attitudes to her concerning Marcel even though Marcel does not exist. I can say: 'She believes that Marcel is sleeping', much as I can say 'My son believes that Santa Claus will come tonight'. How is that possible? In the context of use, 'Marcel' is an empty name: it does not refer to anything. The global utterance should, therefore, be neither true nor false in virtue of the Inheritance Principle. Yet the ascription seems to be true. One explanation is that a context-shift occurs, triggered by the operator 'John believes that': instead of using the current context to interpret the embedded sentence, we use the ascriber's 'belief world' (introduced by the operator) as context. In that world, Marcel exists, so that we can refer to it.

Or consider examples of 'mixed quotation' analogous to (3\*) in some respects but not in others :

(7) My son Antoine believes that I am a 'philosopher'

Since 'philosopher' is a nonword, the report should be devoid of content and truth-valueless, in virtue of the Inheritance Principle. Yet we understand the sentence readily. Again, we may say that the reporter shifts the context and uses Antoine's language instead of his own. In Antoine's language, presumably, the word means something.

#### 4.2 *The pervasiveness of context-shifting*

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<sup>2</sup> On this analysis metarepresentational operators are what Kaplan calls 'monsters' (context-shifting operators). Since my book was published, several proposals along those lines have been put forward. See e.g. P. Schlenker, 'A Plea for Monsters', *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26 (2003) : 29-120.

That it is indeed possible to shift the context is known from the study of various phenomena such as deference, *oratio recta*, echoic uses of language, and free indirect speech — phenomena to which several chapters are devoted in the second half of the book. Thus I can refer to some object, A, using the name of another object, B, in quotes, if in so doing I mimick a person who uses the name for B as a name for A. I may well say

(8) 'Quine' has not finished writing his paper

and refer, by the name 'Quine' in quotes, not to Quine but to that person whom our friend James mistakenly identified as Quine the other day. Any word can, by being quoted in this echoic manner, be ascribed a semantic value which is not its normal semantic value, but rather what some other person takes to be its semantic value. Here the language may be considered as the aspect of the context that is shifted (I am using James's language instead of my own), but other aspects can also be shifted, as in the following example of free indirect speech :

(9) After a while, she gave her response. Tomorrow, she would meet me with pleasure; but she was too busy now.

The speaker, say John, reports an utterance by Mary in response to John's earlier query. 'Tomorrow' refers to the day following that of the reported utterance, not to the day following that of the report; the context is shifted in interpreting 'tomorrow' (though 'me' refers to the utterer of the report, not to that of the reported utterance — in free indirect speech the context-shift is typically partial).

The suggestion that metarepresentational prefixes shift the context as well as the world fits nicely with the threefold distinction between extensional, intensional, and hyperintensional operators. Extensional operators permit the substitution of expressions with the same extension in the actual world. For intensional operators, that is not sufficient; in order to be substitutable within the scope of an intensional operator (e.g. 'It will be the case that'), two expressions must have the same intension, that is, determine the same extension in all possible worlds. Even that is not sufficient when the operator is *hyperintensional*: two expressions which have the same extension in all possible worlds — for example two synonyms, or two co-



referring proper names — are still not substitutable under e.g. an attitudinal like 'John believes that'. That fact can be accounted for by arguing that, in contrast to intensional operators, which induce a shift away from the actual world (and therefore defeat the principle of extensionality: that two expressions with the same extension in the actual world should be freely substitutable), hyperintensional operators also shift the context (and therefore defeat the principle of intensionality: that two expressions which have the same intension in the actual context should be substitutable).

#### 4.3 *How to have one's cake and eat it*

In the second half of the book I argue that we need not depart from the analysis presented in the first half, even if we grant (as I do) that context-shifting does occur in metarepresentations. That is, we need not follow Frege and Quine when they claim that the content of expressions in the scope of metarepresentational prefixes deviates from their normal content. Thus I maintain that metarepresentational prefixes are semantically innocent: they do not impose a special reading on the expressions in their scope. There is no difference in that respect between metarepresentational prefixes and other circumstance-shifting prefixes such as temporal operators. This claim seems to conflict with the observation that the second type of opacity characterizes metarepresentations as opposed to other circumstance-shifting environments; but it does not really. Metarepresentational prefixes, I argue, are like other circumstance-shifting prefixes from the *semantic* point of view: they shift the circumstance for the evaluation of the internal sentence, and do only that. What is specific to metarepresentations is the fact that they provide an environment hospitable to various pragmatic processes affecting the interpretation of the utterance. These processes often take place in connection with metarepresentations (as opposed to other circumstance-shifting environments), but they are not part of the semantic contribution of the metarepresentational prefix. If they were, they would always take place in metarepresentations, hence metarepresentations would always be understood as opaque. But that is not the case. Metarepresentations can be (understood as) fully transparent. Moreover, opaque readings are never imposed by the sentence itself, in virtue of its linguistic meaning. Even if it is wildly implausible, there is always the possibility of a transparent reading for a given metarepresentation.

Two pragmatic processes are, in my account, jointly or singly responsible for (the second sort of) opacity in metarepresentational sentences. The first one is free enrichment ; the second one is deference, which I analyse in terms of context-shift. In contrast to free enrichment, which brings about opacity without any violation of innocence, deference may bring about such a violation. By deferring to others we shift the context for the interpretation of some expression we use in the internal sentence. Unless the shift is 'vacuous' (i.e. unless the shifted context determines the same content for the expression as the actual context would), it will affect the content of the expression at issue. This results in a violation of semantic innocence ; yet that violation cannot be blamed on the metarepresentational prefix. Pragmatic processes such as context-shift and free enrichment, which I take to be responsible for opacity, are distinct and independent from the semantic process of circumstance-shifting effected by the metarepresentational operator. That they are independent is shown by the fact that they can take place in the interpretation of simple sentences as well as of sentences headed by a metarepresentational prefix.

To sum up the general thesis defended in the book, there are two distinct phenomena. On the one hand there is the phenomenon of *metarepresentational embedding* : by prefixing a representation with a metarepresentational tag we shift the circumstance of evaluation, but the content of the primary representation is not affected. A quite different, indeed orthogonal phenomenon is *opacity*. I say they are orthogonal because there may be opacity without metarepresentational embedding, and there may be metarepresentational embedding without opacity. Metarepresentational embedding *per se* is transparent, even if it provides an environment hospitable to the pragmatic processes responsible for opacity.