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# Indexicality and context-shift

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## 1. Preliminaries

### 1.1 *Indexicality and semantic under-specification*

Indexicals are expressions whose semantic value systematically depends upon the context of utterance, and whose linguistic meaning somehow encodes this dependency upon the context of utterance. Thus I do not count as indexical in the strict sense those expressions whose semantic value depends upon the context merely because they are *semantically under-specified* and function as free variables to which a value must be contextually assigned. Whenever an expression is indexical in the strict sense, its linguistic meaning encodes a *token-reflexive rule* which tells us how, for each particular token of the expression, we can determine the content carried by that token as a function of the circumstances of utterance.<sup>1</sup> Thus the meaning of ‘I’ is the rule that a token of that word refers to the producer of that token, the meaning of ‘today’ is the rule that a token of that word refers to the day on which the token is produced, the meaning of ‘we’ is a rule that a token of that word refers to a group that contains the speaker, and so on and so forth.

Note that its being indexical in the strict sense does not prevent an expression from *also* being semantically under-specified. Thus ‘we’ is both indexical (the encoded rule is token-reflexive) and under-specified (the ‘group’ which is the referent of ‘we’ is not uniquely determined by the encoded rule ; further contextual specification is required to determine the semantic value of ‘we’ in context).

It is a matter of debate which words are indexical (token-reflexive) and which are merely context-sensitive. Some people, for example, hold that third person pronouns like ‘he’ and ‘she’ are indexical ; others treat them as free variables associated with a non token-reflexive presupposition (to the effect that their semantic value has to be a male or female individual, as the case may be). I will not go into this debate here. For demonstratives too, there are two options, but I will assume the indexical analysis, according to which the meaning of a demonstrative like ‘this’ or ‘this car’ encodes a token-reflexive rule (see §1.2 below).

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<sup>1</sup> Indexical may themselves be construed as free variables, if one wishes, but then a token-reflexive presupposition constraining the contextual assignment of value to the variable has to be associated with them. On this view what distinguishes indexicals from the other expressions construed as free variables is the nature of the presupposition associated with them. The expression counts as indexical only if the presupposition is token-reflexive.

## 1.2 The role of speaker's intentions

Whether an expression is indexical or merely context-sensitive, its content depends upon some feature of the context of utterance. Merely context-sensitive expressions are such that their content uniformly depends upon *the speaker's intention* (or at least, the intention which it is reasonable, in the context, to ascribe to the speaker). Thus when I use a genitive as in 'John's car', I refer to the car that bears a certain relation *R* to John, which relation is determined in context as a function of the speaker's intentions. In contrast, indexical expressions are such that *their content in each case depends upon a designated feature of the context of utterance*. That feature which, following Nunberg, I call the 'index', is specified by the token-reflexive rule associated with the indexical. For the first person pronouns 'I' and 'we' the index is the person producing the utterance. For 'you' it is the addressee. For the tenses and temporal adverbs like 'today', 'tomorrow' etc., it is the time of utterance. In each case, the reference of the indexical is determined as a function of the contextual index.<sup>2</sup>

Two special cases are worth discussing at this point. First, when an expression is both indexical and semantically under-specified (as 'we' is) its content depends both upon the designated index *and* the speaker's intentions. Thus, as we have seen, the semantic value of 'we' is a group containing *the speaker* among its members. Here the speaker is the index (so 'we' has the same index as 'I') but we also need the speaker's intentions to fix the relevant group which is not fully determined, but merely constrained, by the linguistic meaning of 'we'. In contrast, the meaning of 'I' or 'tomorrow' fully determines the content of the word as a function of the index : once the index is contextually identified, the referent is eo ipso identified.

Another interesting case is that of demonstratives like 'this' or 'this car'. If we treat them as indexical expressions, as I am doing here, what will be the contextual index ? The index here is standardly considered to be the *demonstratum*, i.e. the entity to which the speaker using the demonstrative draws the hearer's attention by means of a pointing gesture or by any other means.<sup>3</sup> There is an ongoing debate regarding the determination of the demonstratum itself : is it determined by the speaker's intentions, or is it determined by objective factors such as which entity of the relevant sort first intersects the straight line emanating from the speaker's pointing finger ? I side with the 'intentionists' in this debate : I take the index to be what *the speaker* demonstrates, i.e. the entity such that the speaker makes manifest to the hearer his or her intention to bring it to the hearer's attention by means of the hearer's recognition of this intention (where 'this' reflexively refers to the whole, complex intention, as in standard Gricean analyses). On this view, the speaker's demonstrative intention *is* the crucial aspect of the context on which the reference of a demonstrative depends — it is (constitutive of) the index.

The situation is complicated by the fact that demonstratives too are semantically under-specified in their own fashion. According to Nunberg, the *relation* between the index and the referent is not linguistically specified in the case of demonstratives (contrary to what

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<sup>2</sup> According to Nunberg (1993), indexicals encode three types of information : 'deictic' information relative to the index, 'descriptive' information relative to the referent, and information pertaining to the relation between index and referent. Thus 'tomorrow' takes the time of utterance as index (deictic information), it takes a day as referent (descriptive information), and it also encodes the information that the referent immediately follows the day containing the index.

<sup>3</sup> Alternatively, one may equate the index with the demonstrated *place* (in such a way that 'this car' refers to the car at the indicated place) (Lyons 1975, Recanati forthcoming). In what follows I assume the standard position.

happens with pure indexicals like ‘I’ or ‘tomorrow’). If I demonstrate my car keys while saying to the valet ‘This is parked out back’, the demonstratum (index) is the set of keys, according to Nunberg, but the referent is the car to which the demonstrated keys belong. In other cases, perhaps, the referent will be the index, and the relation will be that of identity. So we need the speaker’s intentions to fix the relation because it is semantically under-specified, but we also need the speaker’s demonstrative intention since it is constitutive of the index in the first place. This suggests that the speaker’s intentions are playing two roles here: they are both the feature of the context which the meaning of the demonstrative (i.e. the associated token-reflexive rule) invites the hearer to consider in order to determine the value of the demonstrative as a function of the index, and they are what makes it possible to overcome the under-specification of the token-reflexive rule, which itself involves something like a free relation variable. On this picture the meaning of a demonstrative is the rule that *the demonstrative refers to the entity that bears relation R to what the speaker is demonstrating*. The speaker’s intentions are required both to determine *what* the speaker is demonstrating (index), and to determine the relevant relation *R* such that the referent is the object, or an object, which bears *R* to the index. (If the referent is ‘an’ object bearing *R* to the index rather than ‘the’ object bearing *R* to the index, then the speaker’s intentions will also be needed to single out the relevant object.)

### 1.3 The context of utterance

So far I have talked of ‘features of the context’, including among such features both the speaker’s intentions and more objective aspects of the situation of utterance such as who speaks, when, where, and so forth. Now what is a ‘context’? For a situation to count as a context, an utterance must take place in that situation. That means that there must be an agent *a* and a language *L* such that *a* utters an expression *e* of *L*, thereby performing, or attempting to perform, what Austin calls a ‘locutionary act’; an act which requires on the part of the agent certain beliefs and intentions. A context, in that sense, is not an abstract object — a sequence of features — as Kaplanian ‘contexts’ are. It’s a concrete situation with a particular individual in it endowed with complex mental states (e.g. beliefs and intentions). ‘Improper’ contexts in Kaplan’s sense — e.g. contexts in which the agent does not exist at the time of the context — are obviously ruled out,<sup>4</sup> but so are ‘proper’ kaplanian contexts in which no utterance is made or no language exists or the agent is unable to think or talk. Still, nothing prevents us from analytically extracting a set of ‘features’ that all contexts must possess, or from listing the features of contexts (the ‘indices’) on which the reference of indexical expressions depend (whether or not such features are necessary features of contexts).

The issue I am specifically interested in in this paper is that of *context-shift*. Since the semantic value of an indexical depends upon the context, shifting the context results in shifting the value of the indexical. But to what extent is it possible to shift the context? Does the language itself provide means for doing so? Is not the context *given* to us pre-semantically? As we shall see, the answer to these questions depends both upon the relevant feature of the context — some are more shiftable than others — and also on the nature of the shift. My main topic in the paper will be the varieties of context-shift and the necessity of drawing distinctions between them.

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<sup>4</sup> See §3.3 for qualifications.

## 2. Alleged context-shifts in complex sentences

### 2.1 Bound indexicals

Let us first consider a group of cases that have been the focus of much attention in the linguistic literature : the cases in which an indexical appears to be bound. Actually there are two sorts of cases that one ought to distinguish : the Heim cases and the Partee cases.

Heim's original example was 'Only I did my homework', but following Rullmann (forthcoming) I will change the example so as to deal with the first person pronoun 'I' rather than the possessive 'my' :

- (1a) Only I got a question I understood  
 (1b) I got a question I understood ; and so did John

Like (1b), (1a) has two readings. On one of the two readings, the second occurrence of 'I' works like a bound variable. On the reading in question (1a) says that I am the only  $x$  such that  $x$  got a question  $x$  understood. (On the other reading, (1a) says that I am the only  $x$  such that  $x$  got a question  $I$  understood.) Similarly, on the so-called 'sloppy' reading of (1b), the first conjunct says that I am an  $x$  such that  $x$  got a question  $x$  understood, and the second conjunct says that John too is such an  $x$  (i.e. he too got a question *he* understood).

The Partee example goes like this :

- (2) Whenever John comes to my place with a friend, we play trios : otherwise we play duets

The reading we are interested in is the reading in which the first occurrence of 'we' has three 'antecedents', as indicated in

Whenever  $John_i$  comes to  $my_j$  place with a friend $_k$ ,  $we_{i,j,k}$  play trios ; otherwise  $we_{i,j}$  play duets

The first occurrence of 'we' refers to a group which includes, along with John and the speaker, a friend of John who varies from case to case : this variation is due to the fact that 'a friend' occurs in the restriction of the quantifier phrase introduced by 'whenever'. As a result the indexical 'we', which takes 'a friend' among its antecedents, is bound by the quantifier phrase in the sense that its own values (the groups to which 'we' refers in the substitution instances for the quantified statement) vary with the cases introduced by the quantifier (i.e. the situations in which John comes to the speaker's place with one of his friends). With respect to each such situation, 'we' refers to the group constituted by John, the speaker and the friend. (2) can therefore be paraphrased as :

For every situation  $s$  such that, in  $s$ , there is an individual  $x$  such that  $x$  is a friend of John and John comes to my place with  $x$ , there is an extension  $s'$  of  $s$  such that, in  $s'$ , *John, myself and  $x$*  play trios

The Heim and the Partee examples show that sometimes the value of an indexical can be made to vary with the cases introduced by a quantifier. This strongly suggests that the context shifts in such examples ; for how can we systematically shift the value of an indexical without shifting the context, on which the value of the indexical depends ? Yet I think the suggestion should be resisted, for a very simple reason. A context-shift requires two contexts

– the input context (the context before the shift) and the output context (the context after the shift). But (1a) and (2) involve only one context of utterance in the sense in which I am using that phrase. The context in question is *that in which (1a) or (2) are uttered*. There is no other context in sight as far as (1) and (2) are concerned.

How, then, can we account for the fact that in each example the indexical is bound? In the case of (1a), one may argue that the second occurrence of ‘I’ is a *dummy* indexical, just as ‘it’ in ‘it’s raining’ is a dummy subject. Just as a dummy subject has to be used in English for syntactic reasons, the dummy indexical ‘I’ has to be used for morphological reasons (because there must be ‘agreement’ in gender, number *and person* between an anaphoric pronoun and its antecedent). From a semantic point of view, the second occurrence of ‘I’ is best construed as a bound variable, *without* the token-reflexive presupposition that characterizes the genuine indexical ‘I’. This line of thought seems to be prominent among the linguists who deal with (1a), so I feel confident that we don’t have to pay too much attention to such examples in theorizing about indexicals.

The case of (2) is different. Here we do have a genuine instance of the indexical ‘we’, but, I would argue, no context shift is required to account for the fact that it is bound. The value of the indexical depends upon a feature of the context of utterance (the index, namely the speaker) but *that feature stays constant even though the value of the indexical systematically shifts in this quantificational example*: all the groups in the course of values of the bound indexical contain the speaker (the speaker of the context) as member, as well as John and a third person (John’s friend  $x$ ) who varies from case to case. So we can maintain that there is a *single* context of utterance here (the context in which (2) is uttered) such that the value of the indexical at any point in its course of values is a function of one particular feature of *that context*. For there to be a context-shift, there would have to be at least two contexts, and the contextual index (i.e. the feature of the context of utterance on which the value of the indexical depends) would itself have to be shifted.

## 2.2 Circumstance-shifting operators

According to David Lewis, it is often the case that « the truth of a sentence in a context depends upon the truth of some related sentence when some feature of the original context is shifted » (1998 : 27). There is context-shift, for Lewis, whenever we can isolate a sentential operator  $O$  such that the truth of any complex sentence consisting of that operator  $O$  applied to some sentence  $p$  is systematically related to the truth of  $p$  when some feature of the original context (the context of the complex sentence) has been shifted. The contextual features which may be shifted in this sense are few in number, Lewis says : he mentions the time, the place, and the world of the context, plus the standards of precision in force in the context. The first three features can be shifted because temporal, spatial and modal operators are such that the truth of any complex sentence  $Op$  consisting of one such operator  $O$  applied to some sentence  $p$  is systematically related to the truth of  $p$  when the time, place or world of the original context (the context in which  $Op$  is uttered) has been shifted. Thus ‘There have been dogs’ is true now if ‘there are dogs’ is true at some time before now ; ‘somewhere the sun is shining’ is true here if ‘the sun is shining’ is true somewhere ; and so on and so forth.

Before considering the standards of precision, which Lewis takes to be the fourth (and ultimate) shiftable feature of the context in what he admits is a ‘short list’, let me say why I think it is misleading to talk of context-shift in connection with the phenomenon discussed by Lewis. Lewis describes a feature-shifting process that takes place in the course of evaluating the complex sentence  $Op$  : starting from the initial situation  $s$  in which the complex sentence itself is being evaluated, we shift some feature of  $s$  and evaluate the embedded sentence  $p$  with respect to the distinct situation  $s'$  resulting from the shift induced by  $O$ . I have two

reasons for denying that the shift here is a *context* shift. First, I am not certain that the initial situation  $s$  — that in which the complex sentence  $Op$  itself is evaluated — has to or can be equated with the ‘context’ of  $Op$  ; so I am not certain that the situation that serves as input to the shift qualifies as context. Second, and more importantly, I am certain that the output situation  $s'$  — that which results from the shift — does not qualify as context. So I agree that a shift takes place in the course of evaluating the complex sentence  $Op$ , but I take the shift in question to affect what Kaplan calls the circumstance of evaluation (and what Lewis himself calls the ‘index’) rather than the context of utterance.

Let me start with my doubts regarding the input situation. I grant that a context always includes a time, a place and a world feature (simply because any utterance is bound to take place somewhere, at a particular time, and in a particular world). I also grant that a temporal, spatial or modal operator  $O$  shifts the time, place or world of the initial situation  $s$  in which the complex sentence  $Op$  is being evaluated, and thereby determines the (distinct) situation  $s'$  in which the sentence  $p$  it operates on has to be evaluated in the course of evaluating  $Op$ . What I deny is that the initial situation  $s$  in which the complex sentence is evaluated has to be identified with the context in which that complex sentence is uttered and interpreted. Or, to put it another way : I deny that the time, place and world with respect to which the complex sentence is evaluated — the time, place and world which the operator systematically shifts — is the time, place, and world of the context of utterance. It need not be : there is a principled difference between, say, the place of the context of utterance, and the place with respect to which the uttered sentence is evaluated. Take ‘it’s raining’. To evaluate that sentence we need a place ; but that need not be the place of the context (i.e. the place where ‘it’s raining’ is uttered). It may be any place which the speaker is currently considering and talking about. Similarly, the time and world with respect to which we evaluate a sentence need not be the time and world of the context in which that sentence is uttered. This is undoubtedly the most common and the simplest case, but this is only a particular case nevertheless. The place, time and world with respect to which we evaluate a sentence are features of *the situation talked about in uttering that sentence* ; and the situation talked about need not be identical to the situation of utterance.

The point I have just made is quite tentative. For I admit that the theory is simpler if we can identify the initial situation and the context of utterance, as Lewis does. And in the case of temporal locations (in contrast to spatial locations) it is tempting to say that a present tense sentence— which I take to be counterpart of ‘it’s raining’ in the temporal order — describes a situation at the time of utterance, rather than any situation serving as reference time (see §5.1 for discussion of this point). So perhaps we should accept Lewis’s point regarding the input situation. As I said, I am uncertain about this issue and content myself with raising doubts.

With respect to the output situation, however, I have no doubts. The situation resulting from the shift is not a context ; nor does Lewis claim that it is one. The output situation need not possess any of the constitutive properties of a context : it need not contain a speaker, an utterance, nor a language. Of course, it may possess such features : nothing prevents the sentence  $p$  in the scope of the circumstance-shifting operator from describing a situation in which someone says something. Thus in the sentence ‘Someday, someone will stand up and say something’ the operator ‘someday it will be the case that’ takes us to a shifted situation  $s'$  that is located in the future, and which happens to be a situation of utterance : a situation in which someone says something. Even in that sort of case, however, the output situation cannot serve to fix the value of the indexicals that occur in the sentence  $p$  which is to be evaluated with respect to that situation. The values of the indexicals that occur in the embedded sentence  $p$  are fixed by the context in which the complex sentence  $Op$  is uttered. Thus if the complex sentence is ‘Someday, someone will stand up and say something about

the clothes I am wearing today’, the values of the indexicals ‘I’ and ‘today’ (as well as that of the present progressive) will not be determined by the features of the future situation in which someone stands up and says something. ‘I’ will not refer to the person who speaks in that situation, and ‘today’ will not refer to day of that situation ; nor will the present progressive refer to the time of that situation (even though the time of the original situation has been shifted). Rather, ‘I’ will refer to the speaker in the original context of utterance (that in which the complex sentence is uttered), and ‘today’ and the present tense will have their values determined as a function of the time of that same context.

### 2.3 *Shifting ‘intentional’ features of the context*

The only case in which it seems that something like a context-shift occurs is the last one mentioned by Lewis : the ‘standards of precision’. Let’s assume that we start with a context in which certain standards of precision are in force — say, loose standards. In such a context ‘hexagonal’ has a certain content, in virtue of which it truly applies to France. This is distinct from the content the same word has in a context in which stricter standard of precision are in force (as is shown by the fact that, under those stricter standards, ‘hexagonal’ does *not* apply to France). I suggest that we construe the standards of precision as an aspect of the *language* spoken in the context : in the first context the language spoken is loose, in the second context it is strict. The important point is that, like the dependence of the content of words upon the language to which those words belong, the dependence of the content of ‘hexagonal’ upon the context is a ‘pre-semantic’ form of context-dependence : a form of context-dependence that is not, and cannot be, *encoded* in the meaning of the words whose content thus depends upon the context (in contrast to what happens with indexicals). As Kaplan (1989, p. 559) writes : « Given an utterance, semantics cannot tell us what expression was uttered or what language it was uttered in. This is a presemantic task. »

Even though the language-dependence of content is not, and cannot be, encoded, in contrast to the context-dependence of indexicals, still, according to Lewis, there are semantic rules for shifting the aspect of the context on which the content of words like ‘hexagonal’ depends. By using an expression like ‘strictly speaking’, one turns a context in which a loose language is spoken into a context in which a strict language is spoken. As a result, « ‘Strictly speaking, France is not hexagonal’ is true even under low standards of precision iff ‘France is not hexagonal’ is true under stricter standards » (Lewis 1998 : 27).

I have no doubt that, in that case, the shifted situation to which the operator ‘strictly speaking’ takes us qualifies as a context of utterance. The words that follow ‘strictly speaking’ *are* uttered in a context that differs from the original context in that the language feature of the original context has been shifted : we started with a context in which a loose language was spoken, and wind up in a context in which a strict language is spoken. The words that are uttered after ‘strictly speaking’ are interpreted according to the rules of the strict language, in force in the shifted context. This is analogous to what happens in the following example :

As the French say, *on n’est pas sortis de l’auberge*.

Here we start with a context in which English is spoken, but, after the phrase ‘as the French say’, the language feature of the context shifts from English to French.

So I agree that the context shifts in the standards of precision cases discussed by Lewis. Lewis says that this is a matter of rules : the operator ‘strictly speaking’ has a certain context-shift potential determined by the semantic rules of the language. But this explanation can be challenged, and a pragmatic account provided instead.



The pragmatic account I have in mind relies on a distinction I have already alluded to between two sorts of contextual feature. Some features of the context essentially depend upon the speaker's intentions. Thus whom the speaker is addressing, or to what he is referring when he uses a demonstrative, or how his words are to be taken (strictly or loosely, say), all this to a large extent depends upon the speaker's intentions. When an aspect of the context depends upon the speaker's intention in this way, it is possible to shift that feature of the context by making one's intention to do so sufficiently explicit. This, I claim, is what happens with 'strictly speaking'. By using that expression one indicates one's intention to speak strictly in the bit of discourse that follows. Expressing that intention is enough to actually determine how one's words ought to be taken, for the following reason: how the speaker's words are to be taken is an aspect of what the speaker means, and speaker's meaning works by getting itself to be recognized, i.e. by letting the hearer know what the speaker's communicative intentions are. The speaker's communicative intentions have the distinctive property that their recognition leads to, or possibly constitutes, their fulfillment, as many authors in the Gricean tradition have suggested. So, to make John my addressee, I have simply to make clear that it is him I intend to address. Thus I may say, 'You, John...', or I may look at him while speaking, or use whatever means are available for making my intention sufficiently manifest. In this way I may easily shift the addressee feature of the context. Imagine I start by addressing a crowd. At some point in my discourse I may shift the addressee feature of the context by making sufficiently explicit that, from now on, I am addressing John. This is similar to the shift in standards of precision described by Lewis, and in both cases what makes it possible to shift the context is not a semantic rule assigning a specific context-shift potential to some expression, but simply the fact that one is making one's intention manifest, in an area where the speaker's intentions are the crucial factor.<sup>5</sup>

When an aspect of the context does *not* depend upon the speaker's intention, but is fixed by some objective fact, one simply cannot shift that feature of the context by making explicit one's intention to do so. Who the speaker is or when the utterance takes place is an objective fact independent of the speaker's intentions. Such features of the context of utterance cannot be shifted at will. Thus the word 'I', in the mouth of S, will of necessity refer to S, who happens to be the speaker, even if the speaker intends to refer to Napoleon, and makes manifest his intention to do so (Barwise and Perry 1983 : 148). This is different from a demonstrative like 'that country' whose reference depends upon what the speaker intends to refer to. Here the relevant aspect of context – the speaker's reference – is up to the speaker

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<sup>5</sup> In this light we can reconsider an example of language shift briefly discussed by Stalnaker in 'Assertion' (Stalnaker 1999 : 80). Stalnaker's example is the familiar riddle: 'If you call a horse's tail a leg, how many legs does a horse have?' There are two possible interpretations, one of which is more salient than the other. On the nonsalient reading the speaker asks the hearer to imagine a situation in which a horse's tail is called a leg, and asks how many legs a horse has in such a hypothetical situation. As Stalnaker says, calling a tail a leg does not change the number of legs a horse has, so the answer has to be '4'. This reading is nonsalient precisely because the antecedent is irrelevant to the consequent, in such a way that the question (thus interpreted) hardly makes sense. On the other reading, the speaker asks the hearer to make a temporary assumption, to the effect that the language feature of the context is changed as far as the interpretation of 'leg' is concerned. The question that follows ('how many legs does a horse have?') is meant to be interpreted in the shifted context, in which horse tails count as legs. The correct answer is now '5'. What makes the context shift possible here is simply the fact that the speaker's intention in asking the hearer to assume that horse's tails are called legs is taken to be an intention to shift the context for the interpretation of the question that follows.

and can be fixed by him at will ('that country, I mean France...'). The speaker can *stipulate* what his words 'that country' refer to ; but the speaker cannot stipulate that  $x$  is the speaker, or that  $t$  is the time of utterance. This is simply not in his power.

### 3. Pretending that the context is different from what it is

#### 3.1 Imaginary contexts

I have just said that only features of the context which are 'up to the speaker' can be shifted by expressing one's intention to do so. The other features of the context are given as a matter of objective fact and cannot be shifted. Thus the speaker has no way, in speaking, to shift the reference of 'I', or of 'today'.

This conclusion must be qualified, however. The objective features of the context of utterance are indeed 'given' and, to that extent, they cannot be shifted. But what the speaker can do is *pretend that the context is different from what it is*. If the pretense is mutually manifest, it will be part of what the speaker means that the sentence is uttered in a context different from the actual context  $c$ . In such a situation a context shift does occur : there are two contexts, the actual context  $c$  in which the sentence is produced, and the pretend context  $c'$  in which the utterance presents itself as being produced.

Such a dual context situation, based on pretense, is very common in the literary realm. Thus a novelist can write:

It's been three years since we left the Earth. A couple of weeks after the Last Day, we lost track of the other spaceships. I still don't know what happened to my twin brother Henry. If he is alive, he probably thinks I died in the collision.

Let's imagine that this is the first paragraph of a novel. What is the context for those sentences? Clearly, two sorts of 'context' are relevant here. First, there is the actual context of utterance: the novelist writes those sentences at the beginning of her novel. But that is not the 'context' in the ordinary sense, that is, what determines the reference of indexicals. The word 'I', in the third sentence, does not denote the person who, in the actual context, issues the sentence (the novelist); rather, it purports to denote a character *in* the novel: the narrator, distinguished from the actual author. In a perfectly good sense, then, the context for those sentences is not the actual context, but an imaginary context. In that imaginary context, the speaker is on board of a spaceship, he or she has a twin brother called 'Henry', there has been a collision, etc.<sup>6</sup>

As Ducrot pointed out many years ago, we need something like the author/narrator distinction to deal with a number of cases of language use in which the actual utterer is not the person whom the utterance itself presents as the speaker ; and we need similar distinctions for the other features of the context (Ducrot 1980 : 35-36, 1984 : 193-203). A simple case of that sort involves a spokesperson reading a speech for someone else, say the President of the company. The word 'I' in the speech will refer to the President, even if the utterer is the spokesperson. Don't object that the President has written the speech, for that need not be the case. The speech may well have been written by the President's aide, and the President need not even have seen and endorsed it. What counts is only that the utterance, as part of its meaning, presents itself as issued by the President. The President is the speaker (hence the

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<sup>6</sup> This example and the paragraph about it are borrowed from Recanati 2000 : 171.

referent of 'I'), not because he is the utterer in the actual world, but because he is the utterer in all the worlds compatible with the ongoing pretense.

What must be qualified, then, is the idea that the context is 'given' when it comes to the objective, non-intentional features listed above, such as who the speaker is or when the utterance is made. It turns out that those features themselves are determined by the meaning of the utterance (or of the discourse), which meaning to a large extent depends upon the speaker's intentions. Since they depend upon the speaker's intentions (insofar as the latter are made manifest in the overt manner characteristic of Gricean communication) those features can be shifted through pretense. What the author does in his novel, any language user can do in ordinary discourse.

### 3.2 *Direct speech (or thought) reports*

The most significant area in which the utterer/speaker distinction can be fruitfully applied is that of direct speech reports. According to the traditional analysis, in an utterance like

(3) ... and then John said, 'I'm fed up with all this !' And he walked away.

the sentence 'I'm fed up with all this' is not used, but mentioned. As a result, the words do not carry their normal semantic values, and in particular 'I' does not refer to the speaker (Bill, say). What is being referred to is the sentence 'I'm fed up with all this', which contains the word 'I' ; but the word itself does not refer, nor does the sentence in which it occurs say anything in this context. Only the complex, embedding sentence says something : it identifies what John said and states a relation between John and the sentence 'I'm fed up with this'.

Like Ducrot (1984 : 197-199), I take this view to be deeply misguided. The sentence 'I'm fed up with all this' is actually used (which is not to say that it is not 'mentioned' as well). As for the word 'I', it keeps its normal semantic function, that of referring to the speaker. But the speaker is not Bill. To be sure, it is Bill who utters 'I'm fed up with all this' in the course of reporting John's speech. But in uttering this sentence Bill is overtly *playing John's part* : he temporarily pretends that he is John at the time of the reported speech, and utters the sentence 'I'm fed up with all this' accordingly (Clark and Gerrig 1990). The pretense is constitutive of the meaning of the utterance, which presents itself as uttered by John at that time. This is enough to confer to John the status of 'speaker', and to the time of the reported speech the status of 'time of utterance'. In this framework we can maintain that, in the quoted sentence, 'I' refers to the speaker, namely John, and the present tense refers to the time of utterance. (3) therefore displays a context shift : the complex sentence is interpreted against a context in which Bill, the utterer, is the speaker and  $t^*$  is the actual time of utterance, but the quoted material within the complex sentence is interpreted with respect to a shifted context in which John is the speaker and the time of utterance is some time  $t$  such that  $t < t^*$ , namely the time of the reported speech act.

This approach to quotation and direct speech has been pursued by a number of authors, to whom I refer the interested reader (see in particular Clark and Gerrig 1990, Clark 1996, Recanati 2001). Before closing this sub-section and turning to a related issue, let me mention a type of example of potential interest to linguists :

(4) 'I'm going to see the dean', he said ; and he did.

Note, first, the use of the parenthetical 'he said'. According to Benoît de Cornulier (Cornulier 1978 : 85-89), parenthetical clauses such as 'he said' can be used only if the quotation they are appended to is an autonomous piece of mimicry. Thus in (4) the quotation 'I'm going to see

the dean' is offered as a picture or replica of the reported utterance, a picture whose relation to the depicted target is implicitly 'asserted' by the very fact of ostensibly producing that piece of mimicry. Since the depictive relation to the target is part of the meaning of the quotation *qua* piece of mimicry, it cannot be denied without inconsistency. Thus, Cornulier points out, we cannot say

\*'I'm going to see the dean', he did not say.

The other interesting thing in this example is the 'and he did'. This is elliptical and shows that the elided material ('see the dean') is actually available for copying. This availability lends some support to the idea that the quoted material is used, and not merely mentioned, in the quoted sentence. We could hardly say :

?« see the dean » is a verb-phrase ; and John did.

### 3.3 Recorded messages

A well-known example possibly amenable to treatment in terms of context-shift is

(5) I am not here now

recorded on an answering machine. By 'now' the speaker refers to a time *later than* the moment of utterance, namely the time when someone will listen to the recorded message. This type of example raises a *prima facie* difficulty for the view that 'now' is an indexical, referring to the time of utterance (or, more accurately, to a time interval including the time of utterance). That view is indeed controversial, as we shall see (§5.2-3), but the difficulty I am now talking about is not specific to 'now' : we can achieve exactly the same effect with the use of 'today', if we imagine that the speaker wrote 'I am not here today' the day before the day referred to by 'today' and left the note on his office door.

To handle this type of example we have at least three options (Recanati 1995). First option: we can appeal to the notion of a *shift in point of view* or *deictic shift*. In certain modes of communication (deferential communication in some languages, written communication in many others) one may shift the 'deictic center' for indexicals from the utterance point to the reception point. Thus in Latin correspondence one had to use the past tense to refer to the time of writing. We find something similar in the use of the past tense to refer to the utterance time in recorded messages (in French we say things like 'Je t'appelais pour te dire que...', using the imparfait). Note that such shifts may be possible only in the special mode of communication at issue. In the normal mode the language may well forbid that sort of shift. (See Fillmore 1997 : 122 on deictic shifts in Thai.) So the first option consists in *acknowledging* the possibility of deictic shifts in certain modes of communication, in a stipulative manner and without otherwise modifying the semantics of indexicals.

Second option : we can reformulate the token-reflexive rule governing the use of indexicals so as to allow a certain freedom in the interpretation of the rule in cases of delayed communication. For example we can reformulate the rule for 'now' as the rule that 'now' refers to the time at which the message is *delivered*. In a normal situation of (face to face) communication the time of delivery is the time of utterance. But in a situation of delayed communication, the notion of 'delivery' becomes vague and equivocal. Is the message delivered when it's issued or when it's received? Both interpretations are legitimate. It follows

that 'now' can refer either to the time of utterance or to the time of reception (and 'today', either to the day of utterance or the day of reception), depending on the speaker's intentions.<sup>7</sup>

The third option mentioned in Recanati 1995 involves the notion of context-shifting pretense I used earlier in this section. To handle shifted uses of temporal indexicals in recorded messages one may argue that the speaker pretends that the utterance takes place at the time at which it is received.

This last option raises an immediate problem when it comes to examples like (5) ; for what the speaker of (5) says ought to be *false* on the intended interpretation. If, in the pretense, the speaker of (5) is supposed to be saying what he is saying (or writing) at the time at which the hearer is receiving the message, then the speaker ought to be in the place of utterance at that time, contrary to what he is saying. However, in a paper about those issues, Stefano Predelli argues that the difficulty can be avoided. He claims that an utterance such as (5) is interpreted with respect to an *improper context* in which the agent of the context is *not* located in the place of the context at the time of the context in the world of the context (Predelli 1998 : 410). Schlenker also says that we need improper contexts to handle certain cases of context-shift, involving the historical present (Schlenker 2004 : 298-99 ; see also Schlenker 2003 : 73n). I will not take a stance on this delicate issue, but I think the general approach to recorded utterances based on the idea of context-shifting pretense ought to be pursued, and its consequences explored ; for the sort of shallow pretense it posits is commonplace and informs a lot of our talk in situations of delayed communication. Thus, in a recorded message meant to be listened to only after his death, a billionaire may say :

I am dead, my dear children, and you are rich

The billionaire arguably pretends to be speaking from the grave ; it is with respect to that imaginary context that the utterance is meant to be interpreted. Or consider the following example, analysed in Recanati 1995 :

I have your letter in front of me me, and what you're reading is my point-by-point response

Once again, this is a situation of delayed communication : the speaker is writing his response to the letter in front of him much before the addressee can read the response in question. Still, the two conjuncts are in the present tense, and if we take seriously the idea that the present tense refers to the time of utterance, this suggests that the utterance is meant to be interpreted with respect to an imaginary context in which the act of communication is instantaneous rather than delayed. In other words, the writer speaks as if he was talking to the addressee in a normal, face-to-face communication situation.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. Two types of context and two types of context-shifting pretense

##### 4.1 *Displayed assertion*

Another form of context-shifting pretense is at work in examples like the following :

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<sup>7</sup> One problem with this solution is that it does not extend easily to cases of deictic shift in 'deferential language', as in the Mazahua language of Mexico mentioned by Fillmore (1997 : 122).

<sup>8</sup> As I point out in Recanati 1995, the first and third options can be integrated within a unified account.

(6) *John to Bill* : Okay, I am stupid and I don't understand the matter. Why do you ask me for advice, then ?

Here, presumably, John is echoing Bill's words – perhaps exaggerating them – in the first part of the utterance. The sentence 'I am stupid and I don't understand the matter' is not asserted by John, not even in a concessive manner. What the sentence expresses is something that John puts in the mouth of his addressee, Bill. It is Bill who is supposed to think or say that John is stupid and does not understand the matter ; and his so saying or thinking provides John with a reason for asking the question in the second part of the utterance : 'Why do you ask me for advice, then' ? In a nutshell, the first part of the utterance *displays Bill's assertion*, in an echoic manner. In saying what he says, John is playing Bill's part.

We may describe that sort of case by saying that the speaker engages in a form of pretense and assumes Bill's point of view — puts himself in Bill's shoes. But note how different this sort of pretense is from that illustrated by direct speech reports such as (3). In (6) the indexical 'I' refers to John, not to the person whose view is being expressed or assumed (Bill). Bill himself, if he were to express the view in question, would not say 'I am stupid and I don't understand the matter', but 'You are stupid and do not understand the matter'. So John does not pretend that Bill is *uttering* the sentence, in this example (as opposed to the previous one). It follows that Bill is not 'the speaker', i.e. the person who is presented as uttering the sentence. John, the actual utterer, is the speaker in this example. Still a form of pretense is at work, for John, qua speaker, does not express his own point of view but that of Bill.

A similar phenomenon occurs in irony. In irony the speaker says something without actually asserting what she says or 'makes as if to say' (Grice). The point of view expressed by the utterance is not that of the speaker, but that of another (actual or potential) agent whom the speaker attempts to ridicule by displaying his view in a context in which it is likely to seem dramatically inappropriate (Sperber and Wilson 1981 : 308-310). For example, just after having shown great ingenuity in solving the difficult problem at hand, John can say to Bill : 'Remember, I am stupid and I don't understand the matter'. In saying this John attempts to ridicule Bill : he expresses his view (the view Bill is supposed to have voiced at an earlier point in the conversation) at a time when it is pretty clear that that view dramatically conflicts with the facts. By showing how inept the view is, given the circumstances, the speaker often manages to convey the opposite of that view – but that is not definitive of irony : it is merely a likely consequence of the basic mechanism, involving 'pretense' (Clark and Gerrig 1984) or 'echoic mention' (Sperber and Wilson 1981).

Let us use the label 'displayed assertion' for the type of case I have illustrated : the cases in which the utterer does not pretend that someone else is uttering the sentence but where, nevertheless, a form of pretense is at work because the speaker expresses the view of someone else rather than his own. In such cases, as we have seen, the reference of 'I' does not shift : in (5), 'I' refers to John, who utters the sentence, rather than to Bill, whose view is being expressed. Tenses also take their normal, unshifted values in such cases. So imagine John is reporting his exchange with Bill, several months later. He can say :

(7) He kept disparaging my contributions. I was stupid, I did not understand the matter. He would be better off if I stopped helping... — I wasn't discouraged, and I managed to solve the problem.

In (7) we find sentences which express John's point of view ('he kept disparaging my contributions', 'I wasn't discouraged, and I managed to solve the problem') and sentences which express Bill's point of view ('I was stupid, I did not understand the matter', 'he would

be better off if I stopped helping'). Even in the latter, however, the pronouns and the tenses take features of the actual context of utterance as indices : the referent of 'I' (the speaker) is John, the referent of 'he' is Bill, and the time of the exchange between John and Bill is presented as past, that is, as anterior to the time of utterance of (7). All this suggests that the context of utterance does not shift in this type of case.

Still, we cannot straightforwardly conclude that no context-shift takes place, for there are plenty of indexicals (e.g. the demonstratives, 'today' and 'tomorrow', 'here' and 'now') whose value is likely to shift when they occur in a displayed assertion. This sort of shift is very common in 'free indirect speech' (a form of displayed assertion to be found in certain literary narratives). What follows is a made up example :

(8) The butler came back with the answer. Tomorrow, Lady B. would see me with pleasure ; but she was too busy now.

Let us assume (8) is uttered in a context *c*, with John as speaker and *t\** as time of utterance. The first person pronoun 'me' in (8) refers to John, and the past tense to a time anterior to *t\**, as expected. But 'tomorrow' refers to the day following the day of the reported speech act, rather than to the day following the day on which (8) is uttered. Similarly, 'now' refers to the time of the reported speech act, not to the time of utterance.

#### 4.2 *Locutionary vs illocutionary context*

Schlenker says that what shifts in such cases is not the context of utterance but the *context of thought* (Schlenker 2004). Even though John is the speaker (the agent of the context of utterance), the thinker (the agent of the context of thought) is Bill ; and a similar distinction can be made with respect to the other features of the context : the time of thought is distinct from the time of utterance, etc. In our example, however, Bill need not really think, or have thought, the thought that is in question (to the effect that John is stupid and does not understand the matter). We can imagine that Bill was insincere, and perhaps overtly so, when he said, or implied, that John was stupid and incompetent. Still John can use (7) to describe the situation. So the notion of 'context of thought' is not quite appropriate. Of course, there are many cases in which a sentence in free indirect speech pictures a *thought act* rather than a speech act. But in all cases the act on display is an act of *assertion* or *judgment* or more broadly an expression of attitude<sup>9</sup> (whether sincere or insincere, public or private). The act of assertion is precisely what the speaker does *not* perform when she says that *p* ironically ; rather, she plays someone else's part and *mimics* an act of assertion accomplished by that person. She does so not by pretending that that person is speaking — if that were the case, 'I' would refer to that person under the pretense – but by herself endorsing the function of speaker and saying that *p*, while (i) not taking responsibility for what is being said, and (ii) implicitly ascribing that responsibility to someone else, namely the person whose act of assertion is being mimicked.

I conclude that the distinction we need is a distinction between the *locutionary context* (the context of utterance, whose agent is John), and the *illocutionary context* (the context of assertion, whose agent is Bill).<sup>10</sup> In the traditional framework of speech act theory, there is no room for such a distinction. An illocutionary act is taken to be performed *in* performing a locutionary act (Austin 1975), in such a way that there is a single context, and two

<sup>9</sup> Among the 'expressions of attitude' I include expressions of affective attitudes (as in exclamations, curses, etc.)

<sup>10</sup> I use 'illocution' in an extended sense, to cover thought acts as well as speech acts.

possibilities. Either the agent of the locutionary act (the speaker) performs the illocutionary act (e.g. seriously asserts the proposition he is expressing) or he does not. If he does, the speaker is the agent of the assertion, the time of speech is the time of the assertion, and so on. So there is a single context, and two acts (the locutionary act and the illocutionary act) performed in that context. If the speaker does not perform the illocutionary act, then, again, there is a single context, but this time there is a single act performed in that context : the locutionary act.

To account for displayed assertion, a revision of the standard framework has been suggested (Ducrot 1980 : 33-56, Recanati 1981/1987 : 233-35). Remember that the ‘context of utterance’ in the sense that is relevant to the analysis of indexicals is determined by the meaning of the utterance : the utterance, in virtue of its meaning, presents itself as uttered by  $x$ , at time  $t$ , etc. The speaker (i.e. the reference of ‘I’, distinguished from the actual utterer) is the person the utterance presents as uttering it. We can extend this idea and say that it is also part of the meaning of the utterance that a certain illocutionary act (e.g. the act of asserting that John is stupid) is performed : but instead of saying, as traditional speech act theory does, that an utterance presents a certain illocutionary act as being performed *by this very utterance* (hence in the context of utterance), we can say that the utterance presents a certain illocutionary act as performed by  $y$  at time  $t'$  and place  $l'$  in possible world  $w'$ . That is, we drop the assumption that the context of assertion can only be the context of utterance. Normally, of course, the two contexts will coincide ; but, in view of utterances like (6)-(8), one should make room for the possibility of a divergence between them.

When the two contexts coincide, the speaker who performs the locutionary act will be said to have performed also the corresponding illocutionary act. Not so when the two contexts do not coincide, as in irony or free indirect speech. In such cases the illocutionary act is not actually performed, but is merely displayed, represented.

The distinction between the two contexts enables us to account for the different behaviour of the pronouns and the tenses on the one hand, and the remaining indexicals on the other hand (Schlenker 2004). The latter can have their value determined by features of the illocutionary context, while tenses and pronouns strictly depend upon the (locutionary) context of utterance. (I say ‘can have their values determined by features of the illocutionary context’, because I believe that in case of divergence between the two contexts, it is still possible for e.g. ‘here’, ‘now’, ‘today’ and ‘tomorrow’ to be controlled by the context of utterance, rather than by the illocutionary context. Or at least, contrary to Schlenker, I do not want to rule out this possibility.)

#### 4.3 *Shifting the two contexts simultaneously*

The historical present is a narrative device by means of which we ‘presentify’ the scene we are reporting. By using the present tense in reporting a past scene, as in (9) below, the speaker or writer gives the reader or hearer the impression that the scene described is presently happening before them. According to Schlenker, that effect is achieved by shifting the context of utterance, i.e. by speaking as if the act of speech was simultaneous with the scene described.

(9) Fifty years ago to this day, on January 22, 1944, the Germans attack Vercors

Schlenker concludes that the historical present is the ‘mirror image’ of free indirect speech. In free indirect speech only the ‘context of thought’ shifts, in such a way that the tenses — whose values depend upon the context of utterance — keep their normal values ; in the historical present, only (the time feature of) the ‘context of utterance’ shifts, so the values of



the tenses shift, but the values of the other indexicals (including time adverbials such as ‘fifty years ago’) remain unshifted. Schlenker suggests that, in direct speech report, as in (3) above, repeated below, both contexts shift.

(3) ... and then John said, ‘I’m fed up with all this !’ And he walked away.

I agree with Schlenker that the two contexts (the locutionary and the illocutionary context, in my framework) can shift independently, and also that they can shift simultaneously, as in direct speech reports. Other cases in which the two contexts simultaneously shift can easily be imagined. For example, one can put the example of displayed assertion I discussed above in the historical present, as in the following dialogue. (The passages in the historical present are in italics while the displayed assertions are printed in bold type. The relevant passages involving displayed assertion *and* the historical present are in bold italics.)

(10)

- What happened then ?

- Nothing during a week. But *one day, I meet him in a bar. We talk, and he keeps disparaging my contributions. **I am stupid, I do not understand the matter. He would be better off if I stopped helping...*** This did not discourage me, however.

The difference between this sort of case (displayed assertion with historical present) and a case of direct speech report like (3) is that the pronouns do not shift their values : ‘I’ still refers to the utterer in (10), while in (3) ‘I’ refers to the person whose speech is reported. This is due to the fact that in (10), as in (9) (the other example in the historical present), the only feature of the context of utterance that shifts is the time feature. In contrast to what happens in direct speech reports, the speaker in the shifted context is the same person as the utterer in the actual context.

## 5. Perspective point vs utterance point

### 5.1 *Are the tenses indexical ?*

Schlenker’s analysis of the historical present explains the ‘presentification’ effect. The speaker pretends that the utterance act takes place at the same time as the described event ; he therefore pretends (and gives the hearer the feeling) to be witness to the event as it unfolds.

An alternative analysis of the historical present is possible, however — one that treats the present tense not as an indexical properly speaking but as a ‘perspectival’.<sup>11</sup> Whether or not this analysis can be sustained, the notion of a ‘perspectival’ is an important one to discuss in connection with the topic of indexicality and context-shift.

On the alternative analysis, we deny that the present is token-reflexive and refers to the time of utterance, and hold instead that it refers to an arbitrary ‘reference time’ serving as perspective point. That reference time typically is but need not be the time of utterance. (Similarly, the future will refer to a time posterior to the reference time, and the past to a time anterior to the reference time.) This makes it possible to use the present to talk about a past event, if the reference time is set to the time of the event. The presentification effect is now

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<sup>11</sup> In Recanati 1995, I sketched a similar analysis, based on the idea that the present tense is ‘temporally neutral’.

explained by the fact that the event is viewed from a temporal vantage point which is that of the event itself.

Whether or not this is a sustainable analysis depends upon how we deal with the complex semantic facts involving tenses. The token-reflexive analysis of tenses seems to be dominant among linguists, and there probably are good reasons for that. But one prominent argument often cited in favour of that analysis of tenses seems to me unconvincing. This argument, presented in e.g. Kamp and Reyle 1993 : 496-7, is based on the following example :

(11) John said that Mary is pregnant

In this sentence, the present in the embedded clause cannot be merely anaphoric on the time mentioned in the matrix clause (the time at which John talked about Mary's pregnancy) ; the time the present tense refers to here must include the time of utterance, which means that Mary must still be pregnant when the speaker utters (11) (Fillmore 1981 :156-7). This example, and similar ones involving the future, are often taken to show that tenses have their values determined with respect to the time of utterance rather than with respect to an arbitrary reference time.

But the examples do not show that, or at least, not conclusively. For even if we take the present tense to refer to an arbitrary reference time, which in this example may be either the time of utterance (indexical reading) or the time referred to in the matrix clause (anaphoric reading), we can still explain why the present in (11) can only be understood indexically. We know that there is a rule of temporal 'agreement' (sequence of tense) which applies when there is an anaphoric relation between the time referred to in the complement clause and the past time referred to in the matrix clause. In (11) the rule is not applied. This suggests that the present in (11) does not merely pick out the time of John's utterance, referred to in the matrix clause, for if that were so then the speaker should have applied the rule and said

John said that Mary was pregnant

On this analysis the indexical reading imposes itself through a kind of 'blocking' effect ruling out the other, anaphoric reading ; and the apparent unavailability of the latter reveals no deep fact regarding the semantics of the present tense.

## 5.2 *Alleged context-shifts involving 'here' and 'now'*

In his paper 'Utterance, Interpretation, and the Logic of Indexicals' (Predelli 1998), in which he discusses recorded-message examples, Stefano Predelli gives further examples in which 'now' and 'here' are used in a way which seems to violate the token-reflexive constraint:

(12) In the summer of 1829, Aloysia Lange, née Weber, visits Mary Novello in her hotel room in Vienna... Aloysia, the once celebrated singer, *now* an old lady of sixty-seven... gives Mary the impression of a broken woman lamenting her fate

(13) If an entire neighborhood could qualify as an outdoor museum, the Mount Washington district would probably charge admission. *Here*, just northwest of downtown, are several picture-book expressions of desert culture within a few blocks.

As Predelli points out,

'now' in the passage on Aloysia refers neither to the time of encoding (when the book was written) nor to the time of decoding (when I read it), and 'here' in [the other passage] picks up neither the author's home nor the location of the reader. (Predelli 1998: 407)

The only available solution in such cases seems to be to appeal to the notion of context-shift. Indeed, if we look at the first example, we notice the use of the 'historical present' which, on Schlenker's analysis, involves a (locutionary) context shift. If, through locutionary pretense, the time of the context of utterance is shifted and made contemporary with the described scene — if therefore we pretend that the scene described is presently happening — it is natural to use 'now' to refer to the time of the scene.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in the other example, the speaker speaks as if he was in the place he is talking about (possibly in the company of the addressee). The place is spatially presentified by the use of 'here' just as, in the other example, the event is temporally presentified by the use of 'now' (and the present).

Yet it is important to realize that similar uses of 'now' can occur even in the absence of the historical present. Thus we may replace the present tense in Predelli's example by the past tense throughout without any problem:

(14) In the summer of 1829, Aloysia Lange, née Weber, visited Mary Novello in her hotel room in Vienna... Aloysia, the once celebrated singer, now an old lady of sixty-seven... gave Mary the impression of a broken woman lamenting her fate

The dramatization introduced by the historical present is no longer there. The whole scene is reported using the past tense, which suggests that the locutionary context, or at least the time feature of that context, is not shifted in contrast to what happens in (12). Still, 'now' is used. How are we to explain this fact ?

One may argue that in free indirect speech also we find occurrences of 'now' in conjunction with the past tense, referring to what was the present at the time in the past when the reported episode took place. (8) is an example. But it would be a mistake to consider an example like (14) as an instance of free indirect speech. Mary Novello need not have thought of Aloysia as '(now) an old lady of sixty-seven' : that qualification may reflect entirely the point of view of the writer, rather than the point of view of one of the characters (Mary Novello). If we understand the passage in this way, as *not* an instance of free indirect speech, 'now' still makes sense. This use of 'now' therefore raises a significant challenge for the view we have developed so far : for in this sentence, on the suggested interpretation, there seems to be no locutionary context shift (as shown by the behaviour of the tenses), and there seems to be no illocutionary context shift either (as shown by the fact that the point of view is that of the narrator all along).

There is another problem with those alleged examples of context-shift involving 'here' and 'now'. In free indirect speech, a context-shift is operative so that one can e.g. use 'tomorrow' to refer to the day following the reported scene (rather than the day following the report). One can hardly find such shifted uses of 'tomorrow' outside very specific literary settings. But — according to Marcel Vuillaume (p.c.) — allegedly shifted uses of 'here' and 'now' such as those in (12) and (13) can be found all over the place, and this asymmetry must be accounted for.

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<sup>12</sup> Natural, but inconsistent with Schlenker's claim regarding 'now' : according to him, 'now' is controlled by the context of thought, not by the context of utterance. (At the end of §4.2, however, I suggested that the indexicals which shift in free indirect speech can be controlled either by the locutionary or by the illocutionary context.)

To account for the asymmetry between 'today' and 'now' in terms of their potential shiftability (or apparent shiftability), while honoring the fact that (14) involves neither the historical present nor free indirect speech, we may consider an alternative approach to the allegedly shifted uses of 'here' and 'now'. On this approach, the relevant uses of 'here' and 'now' do not really involve a context-shift, whether locutionary or illocutionary.

### 5.3 'Here' and 'now' : indexicals or perspectivals ?

The reason why we feel compelled to say that the context shifts in (14) is that 'now' refers to a time which is clearly not the (actual) time of utterance. The alternative approach which I think should be explored consists in getting rid of the idea that 'now' is an indexical, referring to the time of utterance (or to a time interval including the time of utterance). We should rather think of it as a 'perspectival' referring to an arbitrary reference time treated as perspective point. Note that Kamp and Reyle, who defend an indexical analysis of the present tense, adopt precisely this approach towards 'now'.<sup>13</sup>

Take the *Encyclopedia Britannica* or any similar corpus. Check all occurrences of 'here' and 'now'. Many will be *prima facie* counterexamples to the claim that 'here' refers to the place of utterance and 'now' to the time of utterance. One possible explanation (put forward in Recanati 2001b) is that 'here' can refer to a place *l* distinct from the place of utterance if *l* is contrasted with another place considered as more remote for one reason or another. Similarly for 'now': it can refer to any period, provided it stands in contrast to another, more distant period. On this view, 'here' essentially contrasts with 'there', and 'now' with 'then'. When considering two times, or two places, if one is thought of as closer than the other, we can refer to the closer one as 'now' or 'here'. Thus in the above example what is relevant is the contrast: "Aloysia, the *once* celebrated singer, *now* an old lady of sixty-seven..." In Predelli's Mount Washington district example, a place is referred to as 'here' presumably in contrast to the other places that were previously mentioned in the guide before that one came to the fore.

On this view, the constraint on the reference of 'here' and 'now' is weaker than the standard indexical analysis suggests: the only constraint is that the place or time referred to be *close*, in a sense which need not be absolute but may be as relative as you wish. The place of utterance and the time of utterance have this feature *par excellence*; and whenever we engage in mental simulation and pretend that some place or time is the place or time of utterance, the place or time in question thereby acquires the relevant feature of proximity. But any place or time, if it is closer than some other place or time in a relevant contrast pair, can be referred to by 'here' or 'now'. It will be 'close' in a relative sense, and that is enough. For example, we can contrast two times, say one million years ago and two hundred million years ago. In that context, it will be possible to refer to the former as 'now':

(15) Two hundred million years ago, such and such was (or: had been) the case. Now the situation was completely different.

At this point it may be doubted that the new analysis we arrive at is a genuine alternative to the indexical analysis. What does 'close' mean, if not 'close to us', that is, close to the speaker (or, perhaps, to the hearer)? Is not the proximity constraint a token-reflexive constraint?

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<sup>13</sup> They argue that the constraint on the reference of 'now' is not that the described eventuality must overlap with the utterance time, but that it must overlap with what they call the 'temporal perspective point' (Kamp and Reyle 1993: 595-99).

But we do not have to analyse proximity in this manner. Consider the well-known contrast between 'come' and 'go'. It is often taken to be part of the meaning of 'come' that the target place (the destination) must be where the speaker is, but this is not quite right. One does not want to treat as special or deviant an utterance of 'I will come to your party' in which the hearer's point of view predominates. (The notion of context-shift is trivialized if we apply it here.) Nor will it be sufficient to say that 'come' denotes a movement toward the place where the speaker or the hearer is, for there are cases in which the point of view imposed by the use of 'come' is that of an arbitrary character. One should rather say: 'come' denotes a movement to a place which is proximal in the sense of 'close to the perspective point'. The perspective point in question need not coincide with what Austin used to call the 'utterance point', i.e. the location of the speaker/hearer. We have such flexibility in varying the perspective point in speech that it is better to treat the perspective point as an independent parameter, distinct from the parameters relevant to the evaluation of indexicals.

David Lewis gives the following example of a shift in perspective point involving the verb 'come':

When the beggars came to town, the rich folk went to the shore. But soon the beggars came after them, so they went home.

The perspective point is first located in town; but in the second sentence the perspective point has followed the rich folk out of town. It is, therefore, their perspective that is expressed in this two-sentence passage. As Lewis points out, "in third-person narrative, whether fact or fiction, the chosen point of reference may have nothing to do with the speaker's or the hearer's location" (Lewis 1983: 243). Similarly, the sort of 'proximity' that is involved in the analysis of the pairs 'here/there' and 'now/then' (and possibly 'this'/'that') may be understood as closeness to the perspective point, rather than as closeness to the utterance point. Closeness to the utterance point is only a special case, that in which the utterance point and the perspective point coincide.

#### 5.4 *The perspectival system*

I have just described a possible position regarding the semantics of 'here' and 'now' — one that explains their problematic uses (as in (12)-(15) above) without positing a context-shift. But the facts turn out to be vastly more complex than the position suggests. Even though apparently shifted uses of 'here' such as (13) are more common than shifted uses of 'today' or 'tomorrow', still 'here' is far from flexible in terms of the values it can take. For example, as Fillmore points out (1997 : 83), 'here' differs from 'come' in that 'here' cannot easily refer to the place where the hearer is (unless the speaker is also there). Thus we cannot say 'I'll come here'. This clearly conflicts with the perspectival treatment of 'here'. Another reason not to construe 'here' as a perspectival is that one cannot say things such as

(16) When I came back to Rome after my six-month stay in Tokyo, I greatly enjoyed the food one could find \*here/there

Sentence (16) is unfelicitous when 'here' refers to Rome even though, as the use of 'come' indicates, Rome *is* close to the perspective point, in the relative sense (i.e. closer than Tokyo).<sup>14</sup> All this suggests that we may need to treat 'here' as an indexical after all. And this means that examples like (13) will have to be handled by saying that, in such uses, the

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<sup>14</sup> This example is due to Philippe Schlenker (p.c.).

speaker pretends to be located at the very place of which he is speaking, thereby generating a spatial version of the presentification effect.<sup>15</sup>

Even ‘come’ cannot be treated as unambiguously perspectival. In his detailed study of the topic, Fillmore concludes that ‘come’ has two distinct uses, which should be given two distinct semantic treatments. On one use ‘come’ is an indexical which denotes a displacement to the place where either the speaker or the hearer is at either utterance time or reference time.<sup>16</sup> On this use there can be an intrasentential shift of the contextual parameter (speaker/hearer, utterance time/reference time) from one occurrence of ‘come’ to the next. On another use, illustrated by the Lewis example, ‘come’ is a perspectival. On that use no intrasentential shift of perspective is possible. One cannot say :

\*After John came to Bill’s house, Bob and Bill together came over to Mary’s house.

What about ‘now’ ? Insofar as I can tell, there is no decisive objection to treating that adverb as a perspectival rather than an indexical (at least on some uses). Since, by doing so, we can account for examples like (14) or (15), for which no explanation in terms of context-shift is readily available, I tentatively conclude that ‘now’ is a perspectival, or at least, that it has perspectival uses.

Be that as it may, my point is not that this or that expression should be treated as a perspectival, but rather that *the question may arise*, for any expression that is standardly treated as an indexical, whether it is not, in fact, a perspectival. My suggestion is that there is, in the language, a perspectival system, in virtue of which, when a scene is described, it is described from a certain point of view — a point of view which need not be that of anyone in the situation of utterance. The perspectival system is distinct from the indexical system, in virtue of which the reference of certain expressions is a function of features of the situation of utterance. Treating an expression as a perspectival rather than an indexical has consequences for the alleged instances of context-shift. If an expression is a perspectival rather than an indexical, then we do not need to posit a context-shift to account for uses in which the relevant perspective point is distinct from the utterance point.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This sort of pretense was pervasive in nineteenth-century novels. See Vuillaume 1990 for an in-depth study.

<sup>16</sup> By ‘reference time’ Fillmore means the time of the described eventuality.

<sup>17</sup> It may be that the perspectival system evolved from the indexical system. Prototypically the perspective point and the utterance point coincide. Deviations from the prototype, that is, cases in which they do not coincide, may be explained diachronically in terms of context-shift. One can project oneself into someone else’s shoes, hence adopt the perspective of some other agent. But what may have started as an ‘extended’ use of the indexical system has arguably stabilized as an independent system: the perspectival system. As a result, there is nothing special or deviant about e.g. the use of ‘now’ to refer to a time in the past, no need to appeal to pragmatic mechanisms such as context-shifting to account for such uses. In contrast, there is admittedly something special about using ‘today’ or ‘tomorrow’ to refer to a day in the past.

## VI. Shiftable indexicals

### 6.1 *Summing up*

So far I have distinguished between four types of cases. For ‘intentional’ indexicals we can shift the context at will. What can be shifted in this way includes — *inter alia* — the addressee feature of the context, the language feature of the context (including the standards of precision), or the reference of demonstratives. For other indexicals we can shift the context through pretense. Following a number of authors, I have distinguished two types of context-shifting pretense. The first type of context-shifting pretense is illustrated by direct speech reports, recorded utterances (on one analysis), the historical present (again, on one analysis), and the presentifying uses of ‘here’ which are the spatial counterpart of the historical present. The second type of context-shifting pretense is illustrated by various sorts of displayed assertion (nonquotational echoes, irony, free indirect speech) and, again, by direct speech reports insofar as they involve the two types of shift simultaneously. The fourth type of case is that of expressions which are not really indexical, but perspectival, and for which we do not need to appeal to the notion of context-shift in order to account for their shifty behaviour. In this category I have placed the adverb ‘now’, and the verb ‘come’ in one of its uses ; I have also mentioned a possible treatment of the English tenses as perspectival rather than indexical.

The question arises whether all this complexity is needed. Maybe this is too much and some category can be dismissed as superfluous. But another possibility is that this is still not enough. Indeed there is a notion of context-shift that has been prominent in the recent literature on indexicality and which I have not dealt with yet. To make room for it it seems that we need a fifth category.

### 6.2 *Shiftable indexicals in attitude reports*

Twenty years ago, Anderson and Keenan pointed out that in some languages the indexicals occurring in the embedded portion of a report can have their values determined not by the context of utterance of the report but by the context of the reported utterance (Anderson and Keenan 1985 : 00). A similar observation was reported in Partee 1984 and 1989, and credited to Emmon Bach. In Amharic, Partee notes, « the first person pronoun [can be] used as a logophoric pronoun coreferential with the subject of a verb of saying or believing » (Partee 2004 : 278 n. 2).<sup>18</sup> In ‘A Plea for Monsters’, Schlenker has used this and related facts to motivate a drastic revision to the standard, Kaplanian approach to indexicals (Schlenker 2003). According to Schlenker, the value of an indexical depends upon the context, but if the indexical is embedded in a report the relevant context need not be the context of utterance of the report but may be the context of the reported utterance or thought. Or at least, some indexicals — those which Schlenker calls ‘shiftable indexicals’, e.g. the Russian present tense — allow for this possibility, while other indexicals (‘matrix indexicals’) can only be evaluated with respect to the actual context of utterance. Schlenker argues that logophoric pronouns belong a third category of indexicals that can only be evaluated with respect to the context of the reported utterance/thought.

Let us assume that the typologists are right and that, in some languages, the indexicals (or some of them) are shiftable in speech or thought reports. Are there shiftable indexicals in English or French? Schlenker says that there are, while Kaplan famously claimed that there aren’t : embedded in a report, Kaplan argued, our familiar indexicals automatically scope out,

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<sup>18</sup> Partee points out that the logophoric use of Amharic ‘I’ makes it similar to Castañeda’s quasi-indicator ‘he\*’ (Partee 2004 : 177 n. 23).

in such a way that they can only be interpreted with respect to the context of utterance of the report (Kaplan 1989 : 510).

In support of his view, Schlenker gives as examples temporal adverbials such as ‘two days ago’ or (French) ‘dans deux jours’. If, last week, John said to me : ‘I was sick two days ago’, I can report his utterance as follows :

(17) Last week, John told me that he had been sick two days ago

Here the indexical ‘two days ago’ is evaluated with respect to the context of the reported speech act. This is not possible if we replace ‘two days ago’ by ‘the day before yesterday’ :

(18) Last week, John told me that he had been sick the day before yesterday

In contrast to ‘two days ago’, the phrase ‘the day before yesterday’ can only be evaluated with respect to the context of the actual speech act. Schlenker concludes that ‘two days ago’ is a shiftable indexical, while ‘the day before yesterday’ inherits the unshiftable of the matrix indexical ‘yesterday’. But to so conclude one must first rule out the eventuality that ‘two days ago’ might be a perspectival rather than an indexical. A shiftable indexical shifts only in speech or thought reports, while a perspectival may be evaluated with respect to any salient perspective point, even if the perspective in question is not that of a person whose speech or thought is being reported.

To rule out the possibility that ‘two days ago’ might be a perspectival, Schlenker argues that (19) below is ‘degraded’, while it ought to be perfectly acceptable if ‘two days ago’ were a perspectival (Schlenker 2003 : 65).

(19) I met John last week. Two days ago he was sick.

But the reason why (19) is degraded may have to do with the choice of tense, which arguably affects the selection of the temporal perspective point. The following seems to me (more) acceptable :

(20) I met John last January. Two years ago he had been very sick, but now he looked much better.

In (20) the temporal perspective point, referred to by ‘now’, is set to the time of the January meeting. ‘Two years ago’ refers to a time two years before that meeting, as one might expect if ‘two years ago’ is a perspectival rather than an indexical.

Schlenker himself considers the facts involving ‘two days ago’ as less clear than the facts regarding French ‘dans deux jours’, but there are also examples in which ‘dans deux jours’ seems to work like a perspectival rather than a shiftable indexical. Schlenker’s case for the existence of shiftable indexicals in English or French is therefore not fully convincing.

I believe that a better case can be made for Schlenker’s claim, based on the English verb ‘come’. In ‘Pragmatics and the Description of Discourse’ and elsewhere, Fillmore argues that ‘come’ is an exception to the generalization that English indexicals are not shiftable in reported speech :

In a sentence like

(21) *He asked her to come to his party*



the word *come* can be understood as the word HE would have used, not necessarily the word I would use if this were not an instance of reported speech. To show that this is so, we can juxtapose to this last sentence one in which the choice of *come* or *go* must be made from the point of view of the speaker of the outer sentence.

(22) *He asked her to come to his party. She said that she would, but in the end she decided not to go (\*come).*

(Fillmore 1981 : 156)

To be sure, the fact that ‘come’ may be interpreted from the point of view of the person whose speech or thought is being reported is not sufficient to show that it is a shiftable indexical. If the problem with ‘two days ago’ was that this expression may be a perspectival, or have perspectival uses, we clearly face the same problem with ‘come’, whose perspectival nature is well-established. I believe this may be the reason why Schlenker has not even tried to enroll ‘come’ among the putative shiftable indexicals. But we have seen that ‘come’ is, in fact, *both* an indexical and a perspectival. According to Fillmore (1997), ‘come’ has a perspectival use in third-person narratives, but otherwise it is an indexical, governed by a token-reflexive rule. The question that arises, therefore, is whether ‘come’ is an indexical or a perspectival in shifted uses of the type illustrated by (21). This question can be decided, because Fillmore has devised a test for distinguishing the perspectival uses of ‘come’ from its indexical uses.

The test, which I have already mentioned, involves the possibility (or impossibility) of intrasentential shifts. In third-person narrative, there can be only one perspective point in a given sentence. Thus we cannot say

\*After John came to Bill’s house, John and Bill together came over to Mary’s house

On the other hand we can say (on the ‘indexical’ use of come) :

If you come to see me tomorrow, I’ll come to see you after-tomorrow

Now, if we apply this test to utterances in which ‘come’ is interpreted from the point of view of the person whose speech or thought is reported, we see that intrasentential shifts *are* possible. We can say things like :

John told Mary that he would come to see her the next day, unless she preferred to come to his place later in the week.

Insofar as this is right, we can conclude that the shifted use of ‘come’ in reported speech is the indexical use ; whence it follows that ‘come’ is a shiftable indexical.

### 6.3 *Context-shifts in mixed quotation*

The really difficult question is that of the relation between the sort of shift that characterizes shiftable indexicals in attitude reports and the context-shifts mentioned earlier in this paper. I have said that direct speech reports (quotations) can be analysed as involving a form of context-shifting pretense. Now it may be that, when an indexical shifts in a report, as in the Amharic examples discussed by Schlenker, the same form of context-shifting pretense

operates ; in which case the reports in question are a mixture of indirect speech report and quotation.<sup>19</sup>

Such mixtures are not unheard of. A good deal has been written about the phenomenon of ‘mixed quotation’ in the recent philosophical literature. The standard example is Davidson’s :

(23) Quine said that quotation ‘has a certain anomalous feature’

This is a mixture of indirect speech report and direct quotation (hence the phrase ‘mixed quotation’, coined by Cappelen and Lepore in their 1997 article). In Recanati 2001a I argued that in mixed quotation the speaker uses, in reporting the content of an utterance, the very words that were used by the speaker of the original utterance, and by stressing those words (by displaying them in an ostensive manner) makes it manifest that those are the very words used by the ascriber. In other terms, the speaker reports the utterance using indirect speech in the usual manner, and at the same time mimics the speaker of the original utterance by ostensively using his own words. On this view (23) is analysed as follows : the speaker expresses the proposition that Quine said that quotation has a certain anomalous feature, and at the same time mimics Quine’s use of the words ‘has a certain anomalous feature’.<sup>20</sup> This is similar to what we find in the following examples, where, in the course of reporting the ascriber's speech act, the speaker mimics him or her by phrasing and/or pronouncing the complement sentence in a certain way:

(24) To which Mr Bailey modestly replied that he hoped he knowed wot o'clock it wos in general. (Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, cited in Clark and Gerrig 1990, p. 791)

(25) Une vieille femme... vint au seuil et me demanda *qué que j'avouais*, d'une voix traînante et hargneuse. (Barbey d'Aurevilly, *L'Enfermée*)

Here the speaker reports the ascriber's talk, using indirect speech in the normal way, and at the same time *shows* what that talk was like. The speaker might similarly gesture in a certain way to mimic the ascriber's own gestures.

In (24) and (25), arguably, the language feature of the context shifts through the pretense : the speaker does not merely use the ascriber’s own words, he uses the ascriber’s own language and manner of speaking. In Recanati 2001a I discussed other examples of mixed quotation in which the language feature of the context shifts :

(26) Paul says he's due to present his work in the 'paper session'

(27) James says that 'Quine' wants to speak to us

(28) Nicola believes that his father is a 'philosopher'

In (26) and (27) the expression within the quotation marks is not used with its standard meaning, but with the meaning it has *for the person whose use is being echoically simulated*. In (26) the speaker does not use the word 'paper' in its normal sense, that is, in the sense it has in academic English (where it means *article*), but in the sense it has in Paul's idiolect (where it means what 'poster' means in academic English). The same thing holds for the proper name

<sup>19</sup> Were this so, Schlenker’s attempted refutation of Kaplan would fail. For Kaplan’s claim is not that indexicals cannot be shifted, but that they cannot be shifted « without sneaking in a quotation device » (Kaplan 1989 : 511).

<sup>20</sup> Recanati 2001a : 00. See Stainton 1999, pp. 273-4 for a similar analysis.

'Quine' in (27): that name normally refers to Quine, but in (27) it is used ironically in the sense it has in James' idiolect, where it refers to Tim McPherson (whom James mistakes for Quine). So (26) expresses the proposition that Paul says he's due to present his work in what *he* calls the 'paper session', namely the poster session, and (27) expresses the proposition that James says that the individual *he* calls 'Quine', namely McPherson, wants to speak to us. Example (28), borrowed from Cappelen and Lepore 1997, is more complex : in ascribing a certain belief to the five-year old Nicola, the speaker uses a word from Nicola's idiolect. That word does not exist in English, even though it is etymologically derived from the English word 'philosopher'. (28) purports to express the proposition that Nicola believes his father has the property *he* (Nicola) associates with the word 'philosopher', whatever that property may be.<sup>21</sup>

Just as the language feature of the context can be shifted in the course of mimicking the ascriber, other features of the context can also be shifted. The following example comes from Cappelen and Lepore (1997, p. 429):

(29) Mr Greenspan said he agreed with Labor Secretary R.B. Reich "on quite a lot of things". Their accord on this issue, he said, has proved "quite a surprise to both of us".

The word 'us' here refers to Mr Greenspan and Mr Reich. It does not refer to a group including the speaker of (29). The first person pronoun 'us' in (29) is interpreted with respect to the shifted context of the reported speech episode. In that context, the speaker is Mr Greenspan himself (rather than the person who reports his utterance), so 'us' refers to a group including Greenspan rather than to a group including the reporter.

The Greenspan example comes from the *New York Times*. In the same newspaper I have found other examples, where the context-shift affects the reference of an indexical. What follows is an example involving the first-person pronoun:

(30) Levi Foster, in fact, is the great-great-grandfather of Gov. Mike Foster of Louisiana, who said recently on a radio program that it would be "news to me" if anyone in his family had owned slaves.

The first person pronoun 'me' in (30) refers to the ascriber, Mike Foster, rather than to the ascriber — the speaker of (30).

Here we find an interesting difference between what is permissible in the language of English-speaking newspapers and what is permissible in the language of French-speaking newspapers. The conventions governing mixed quotation in newspaper-writing turn out to be different in the two languages/cultures. In French, the indexicals are *not* allowed to shift in mixed quotation. Examples (29) and (30) would have to be rephrased as follows to comply with the French conventions :

(29') Mr Greenspan said he agreed with Labor Secretary R.B. Reich "on quite a lot of things". Their accord on this issue, he said, has proved "quite a surprise to both of [them]".

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<sup>21</sup> While in (26) and (27) we know what the relevant words mean in the relevant idiolects, in (28) it's hard to say exactly what the sense of 'philosopher' in Nicola's idiolect is. What makes this example complex (and interesting) is the fact that both Nicola's own use and the speaker's echoic use can be said to be 'deferential' in their own ways. Nicola defers to mature speakers of English in his use of what he takes to be an English word, while the speaker of (28) defers to Nicola's own use which he mimics.

(30') Levi Foster, in fact, is the great-great-grandfather of Gov. Mike Foster of Louisiana, who said recently on a radio program that it would be "news to [him]" if anyone in his family had owned slaves.

We can say either that French indexicals are not shiftable in mixed quotation in the language of newspapers, or (equivalently) that that language sets limits to the mixing of direct and indirect speech : the only feature of the context that can shift in mixed quotation is the language feature.

In light of this difference between English and French we might consider the possibility that some languages — e.g. Amharic — do not even draw a sharp distinction between indirect speech reports and direct quotation, and accept context-shifts in unmarked instances of indirect reports. Under this hypothesis, do we still need a 'fifth category', that of shiftable indexicals ? Or does the phenomenon discussed by Schlenker reduce to that of mixed quotation, hence, ultimately, to the form of context-shifting pretense I talked about in connection with direct speech reports ?

I believe we do need the fifth category, because (and to the extent that) in one and the same language, not all indexicals behave in the same way. Thus in Russian, Schlenker claims, the present tense is a shiftable indexical, but the first person singular is not. A distinction between the languages which maintain a sharp division between indirect reports and direct quotation and the languages which do not is therefore not sufficient ; with respect to a given language, we need to draw a further distinction between the indexicals which can shift in indirect discourse and those which cannot. Moreover, the fact that French (or rather, the language of French newspapers) does not allow the indexicals to shift in mixed quotation can be used to disprove the hypothesis that the phenomenon of 'shiftable indexicals' reduces to that of mixed quotation. Were this hypothesis right, there ought be no shiftable indexicals in French. But there is at least one : for what I have said of the English verb 'come' applies to French 'venir'. It follows that the shiftable indexicals in attitude reports does not reduce to the possibility of shifting the context in mixed quotation. This does not mean that the two phenomena are unrelated, however. The exact relation that holds between them is a crucial and difficult question, which future work ought to address.

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