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ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE AND SEMANTIC CONTENT

ABSTRACT. Illocutionary force and semantic content are widely held to occupy utterly different categories in at least two ways: (1) any expression serving as an indicator of illocutionary force must be without semantic content, and (2) no such expression can embed. A refined account of the force/content distinction is offered here that (a) does the explanatory work that the standard distinction does, while, in accounting for the behavior of a range of parenthetical expressions, (b) shows neither (1) nor (2) to be compulsory. The refined account also motivates a development of the “scorekeeping model” of conversation, helps to isolate a distinction between illocutionary force and illocutionary commitment, and reveals one precise respect in which meaning is only explicable in terms of use.

1. WITTGENSTEIN’S BOXER AND THE CHEMICAL ANALOGY

Students of language in the tradition of Frege, Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle sometimes use a chemical analogy as a guide to the relation between propositional content and illocutionary force. In chemical parlance, a *radical* is a group of atoms normally incapable of independent existence, whereas a *functional group* is the grouping of those atoms in a compound that is responsible for certain of the compound’s properties. Analogously, a *proposition* is itself communicatively inert; for instance, merely expressing the proposition that snow is white is not to make a move in a “language game”. Rather, such moves are only made by putting forth a proposition with an *illocutionary force* such as assertion, conjecture, command, etc. The chemical analogy gains further plausibility from the fact that just as a chemist might isolate radicals held in common among various compounds, the student of language may isolate a common element held among ‘Is the door shut?’, ‘Shut the door!’, and ‘The door is shut’. This common element is the proposition that the door is shut, queried in the first sentence, commanded to be made true in the second, and asserted in the third. According to the chemical analogy, then:

Illocutionary force : propositional content :: functional
group : radical

Further, just as the grouping of a set of atoms is not itself another atom or set of atoms, so too the forwarding of a proposition with a particular



illocutionary force is not itself a further component of propositional content. One can, for instance, assert a proposition without saying that one is doing so. The chemical metaphor can also be developed consistently with the existence of so-called free radicals, which can occur outside of any compound. For one who utters an indicative sentence on stage expresses a proposition, but rather than calling actors professional liars we may construe them as merely pretending to perform speech acts in the course of playing their parts. So construed, thespians express propositions but do not put them forth with any illocutionary force, and this corresponds to chemical radicals existing outside of any compound.¹

The chemical analogy is a useful guide for our account of communication. It helps to guard against the notorious “ing/ed” ambiguity in such concepts as judgment, belief, statement and question. It also highlights the importance of speech acts for linguistic inquiry, and enables us to see not only that language can be put to a variety of purposes other than to assert what is the case, but also that a single bit of contentful language may subserve a variety of communicative tasks. The aim of this essay is to consider whether on the strength of the chemical analogy or any other relevant considerations, it can be shown that contentful language is essentially “forceless”. A proposition’s aptness to be put forth with any of a variety of illocutionary forces has been thought by some to imply that a bit of contentful language cannot help determine the force with which the sentence in which it occurs is forwarded; otherwise, that expression’s occurrence would evidently constrain the variety of forces with which that sentence can be conveyed. For instance, contrary to initial appearances, ‘I assert that’ does not help determine the force with which ‘I assert that S’ is put forth; if it did then one could not wonder whether one asserts that S, nor suppose that one does so as in ‘If I assert that S, then someone does’.² It would seem instead that if an expression, or group of features such as initial capital, final period, and certain non-syntactic features of the context of utterance, indicate the force with which a proposition is being put forth, then that expression or group of features cannot also have semantic content. If they did, then their content would appear to contribute to the content of the proposition of which they are a part; in that case the question would then arise, with what force is that embedding proposition being put forth?

¹ This point is further developed in Green 1997.

² In what follows, unless indicated otherwise I shall adopt the following nomenclature: S, S', etc., are sentences; A, B, A_i, B_i etc., are propositional contents; α , β , etc., are speakers.

Stenius (1967) formulates this line of thought elegantly. First he calls to mind Wittgenstein's example of the picture of a boxer: The showing of the picture may have an indicative function (of indicating how a certain man stood in a certain situation), an imperative function (of indicating how a person ought to stand), or an interrogative function (of presenting the person to whom it is shown the task of deciding whether it obtains). Next Stenius argues that if we were to imbue a force indicator (what he calls a "modal element") with meaning, that expression would make a contribution to the semantic content of the sentence in which it occurs, "... forming an element of it as a picture. But then there ought to be an additional modal element to show the function of this picture" (1967, 258–259). This line of reasoning suggests that no part of speech can simultaneously have semantic content and indicate force.

2. SPEECH-ACT ANALYSES AND FREGE'S "POINT"

The foregoing conclusion appears to receive independent support in light of the difficulty of providing an account of a locution's meaning in terms of some speech act, or at least non-locutionary act, that that locution is often or typically used to perform. Borrowing terminology from Searle (1969, 137), I shall call a *speech-act analysis of a locution* φ any view that may be expressed thus:

to say φ is, *inter alia*, to γ

where γ is a non-locutionary act other than assertion. (Among such acts are expressing approval or disapproval, granting authority, and opening up or closing off a range of possibilities.³) '*Inter alia*' is included here to leave open the possibility of other actions being performed as well. Philosophers have propounded speech-act analyses of causal locutions, agentive expressions, epistemic verbs in the first person present indicative active, 'good', 'valid', 'true', 'probable', 'possible', and of many other expressions.⁴ Yet

³ We accordingly say, 'non-locutionary act other than assertion' rather than 'speech act' because it is unclear that, say, expressing an attitude is a speech act according to the technical sense of that expression as given it by such authors as Vanderveken (1990). Expressing an attitude by means of an utterance is nevertheless the achievement of an extralinguistic end; this is why we require that the act in question be non-locutionary.

⁴ On causal locutions see Ryle (1963); on agentive expressions see Hart (1951); on epistemic verbs see Austin (1946); on 'good' see Hare (1952); on 'valid' see Urmson (1953); on 'true' see Strawson (1949); on 'probable' see Toulmin (1956); on 'possible' see Fogelin (1967).

because speech-act analyses were usually put forth as shedding light on the meaning of φ ,⁵ proponents of such analyses must face a dilemma: 'To say' in the above definition is ambiguous, meaning either 'to utter in the course of some speech act' or 'to assert'. If 'to say' is taken only to mean 'to utter in the course of some speech act', then speech-act analyses would appear in general to be false.⁶ For each of these locutions can occur in an embedded clause in such a way that the speaker is not performing the act in terms of which the locution is being analyzed. (Whereas asserting 'Keeping promises is good' may well express approval or endorsement of the keeping of promises, asserting 'John wonders whether keeping promises is good' does not appear to do so.) If, on the other hand, the infinitive 'to say' is taken to mean 'to assert', then a speech-act analysis of φ would appear to be of insufficient generality to shed much light on the meaning of φ . One might, for example, wish to suppose φ for the sake of argument, or query φ , and we should want some account of what is being thus supposed or queried.

While some have attempted to grapple with the second horn of the above dilemma,⁷ the first horn has seemed to many to be lethal with respect

⁵ For instance, Hare (1970) writes, "... the meaning of a certain word can be explained, or partly explained, by saying that, when incorporated in an appropriate sentence in an appropriate place, it gives to that whole sentence the property that an utterance of it would be, in an appropriate context, a performance of a certain kind of speech act". As Searle (1969, 137), observes, it is difficult to tell whether Austin's remarks commit him to a semantic doctrine concerning 'I know'.

⁶ Some proponents of extreme forms of speech-act analyses may deny that the locution for which they offer an analysis can really embed. For instance Ayer (1936) writes,

If I now generalize my previous statement and say, "Stealing money is wrong", I produce a sentence which has no factual meaning – that is, expresses no proposition which can be either true or false. It is as if I had written, "Stealing money!!" – where the shape and thickness of the exclamation marks show, by a suitable convention, that a special sort of moral disapproval is the feeling which is being expressed. It is clear that there is nothing said here which can be true or false. (p. 107)

It is difficult to tell whether Ayer means merely to draw an analogy between "Stealing money is wrong", and "Stealing money!!", or whether he takes it that somehow the logical form of the former is really that of the latter. Be that as it may, proponents of this second kind of view would deny that a sentence such as "Stealing money is wrong", can in fact embed, and so be unmoved by the remark that in embedded occurrences sentences such as this do not express an attitude of disapproval. They would therefore not find the dilemma now being formulated to be dangerous. On the other hand they are faced with the considerable task of explaining why so many apparently competent speakers err in embedding sentences such as this one.

⁷ An early attempt along these lines was Urmson (1968). For more recent studies see for example Price (1994), as well as Blackburn (1984) and many of the essays collected in Blackburn (1993).

to all but a few expressions. Granted, such traditional parts of speech as interjections may be amenable to speech-act analyses, since it may for instance be true that to say (in the sense of 'utter') 'Oh!' is to express shock, horror or surprise at some salient state of affairs. This claim is not undercut by embedding arguments of the kind just considered, since it does not appear to be grammatical to embed 'Oh!' in, say, the antecedent of a conditional. But this observation seems irrelevant to all but a narrow range of expressions in natural language. For the case of 'Oh!' suggests an appropriate generalization. I shall take as understood the notion of an embedded sentence; a part of speech is embedded just in case that expression occurs in some sentence that is itself embedded.⁸

Frege's Point

If φ is either a part of speech or a sentence, and it is grammatical to embed φ , then there is no speech act γ such that to utter φ is, *inter alia*, to γ .⁹

In support of Frege's point one might suggest that if φ is a sentence that embeds, then just as one can assert φ so too one can query it, deny it, and entertain it for the sake of argument; likewise if φ is a subsentential expression it may occur in a sentence used in any of these ways. Assuring ourselves that Frege's Point is not an overgeneralization from the failure of traditional speech act analyses, however, requires the further claim that there can be no speech act γ such that, whatever else one does, one performs γ in the course of each illocution in which φ is used. The possibility of such a γ is not ruled out just by the fact that φ may be put to a variety of communicative tasks. Further, if there could be such a γ then the mere possibility of embedding φ would be insufficient to show that it fails to admit of a speech act analysis.

Frege's Point is inferentially connected with another thesis that it will be more convenient to scrutinize here. For the speech-act analysis formula 'To utter φ is, *inter alia*, to γ ', will be true just in case φ contains some indicator f of illocutionary force, namely the force associated with speech act γ .¹⁰ It is not enough for f to be a force indicator in the present sense

⁸ Quoted occurrences of an expression are not here to be counted as genuine occurrences of that expression. Also, interrogatives embed, as in, 'If John is here, then where is Sue?' although it is not the case that the interrogative 'Where is Sue?' can be denied or entertained for the sake of argument. It is best, then, to understand 'embedding' as meaning 'embedding arbitrarily deeply'.

⁹ I borrow the name 'Frege's Point' from Geach (1965). The present discussion of the dilemma facing speech-act analyses owes much to Ziff (1960), Searle (1962), and Geach (1960, 1965).

¹⁰ The containment need not be proper.

that it indicate the force associated with γ in *some* of the contexts in which f occurs. ('I assert, is not an indicator of (assertoric) force in this sense, since it embeds within conditionals such as 'If I assert that S, then S', wherein the locution does not indicate the force with which either the antecedent or the entire conditional is being put forth.) f must instead indicate the force associated with γ no matter where φ occurs. On the other hand, we should not require that f indicate force in any *utterance* in which it occurs. Some have contended that no genuine force indicator is possible on the ground that any putative such force indicator would be employed by, say, actors on stage to heighten the realism of their performance; but, since actors only pretend to perform speech acts, their utterances would frustrate the aspiration of any expression to be a force indicator.¹¹ This, however, is consistent with the possibility of an expression's indicating force in any *speech act* in which it occurs. (We shall see in a moment that this account is not circular.) Let us say, then, that f is a force indicator if and only if it indicates force in any speech act in which it occurs. This gives us a

Condition for Speech-act Analyses

If φ is either a part of speech or a sentence, then there is some true speech-act analysis of the form 'to utter φ in the course of some speech act is, *inter alia*, to γ ', iff φ contains some indicator f of illocutionary force.

Suppose now that φ is either a part of speech or a sentence, and that φ contains some indicator f of illocutionary force: It would appear that φ cannot be embedded in any arbitrary sentential context. If φ contains an indicator of assertoric force it may be hard to see how φ could embed within the context, 'Is it the case that _?' If φ contains some indicator of interrogative force it may be hard to see how it could embed within the context, 'It is a fact that _'. One might accordingly offer the following generalization:

Embedded Force Exclusion (EFE)

If φ is either a part of speech or a sentence, and φ contains some indicator f of illocutionary force, then φ does not embed.¹²

¹¹ The argument is persuasively formulated in Davidson (1979), and developed in Kenny (1995, Chapter 7).

¹² I borrow the name of this thesis from Price (1994), who characterizes it thus: "Force modifiers cannot occur in embedded contexts" (p. 137). Zimmerman (1980) offers a similar thesis, which he calls the Embedding Thesis: "Illocutionary forces cannot attach to embedded clauses" (p. 216). See also Pendlebury (1986, 362) and Hare (1989, 35).

The Condition for Speech-act Analyses and Embedded Force Exclusion together entail Frege's Point. Establishing Embedded Force Exclusion, however, requires that we be confident that the above uses are unintelligible. More exactly, it requires showing that we are justified in accepting Embedded Force Exclusion in addition to

Illocutionary Tolerance of Force Indicators (ITFI)

If φ is either a part of speech or a sentence, and φ contains some indicator f of illocutionary force, then if φ occurs embedded in sentence S then φ does not constrain the variety of forces with which S (or its semantic value) may be put forth.

Illocutionary Tolerance of Force Indicators is self-evident: As has already been observed it seems impossible that there should be a semantic value that can only be, say, asserted but not queried, commanded to be made true, or supposed to be true for argument's sake. ITFI does not imply but is implied by the (therefore stronger) thesis EFE, which absolutely bans occurrence of a force indicator within an embedded context. Our question is then what reason we have for going beyond ITFI to acceptance of EFE.

In what follows it is argued that no compelling reason seems to be available for holding EFE in addition to the unexceptionable ITFI, and further that we have evidence against EFE. It will also be shown that ITFI, together with a corresponding modification of Frege's Point, give us all we need to accommodate and explain the essential features of the relation between force and content. In aid of this argument an analysis is offered, in Section 3, of a range of parenthetical constructions in natural language that, in spite of appearing to blur the boundary between force and content, can be accommodated while retaining a refined account of that boundary. Such an accommodation is achieved without recourse to either Frege's Point or EFE. After responding, in Section 4, to an objection to the analysis offered for these parentheticals, this refined account of the force/content distinction is then located, in Sections 5 and 6, within a modified version of the "scorekeeping" model of communication.

3. VARIETIES OF FORCE INDICATOR

Even after disambiguation, assignment of context-sensitive contents and other pragmatic determinations of what is said, speakers often fail to convey the force with which their indicative sentences are uttered. Dialogues such as the following are for this reason not uncommon:

- (1) α : You'll be more punctual in the future

β : Is that a prediction or an order?

Speakers sometimes preface their remarks with clarificatory material to forestall questions such as β 's. α might, for instance, have prefaced his words with 'This is a prediction'.¹³ However, because this prefatory remark is itself an indicative sentence and thus might be put forth with other forces than assertion, prefacing one indicative sentence with another free-standing indicative sentence cannot be relied upon to clarify the illocutionary force of the former. It would thus behoove speakers to employ a force elucidating device whose own illocutionary status is not itself up for question.

Some writers concerned with this problem have suggested that certain constructions in natural language *show* rather than *say* what the force is of a remark to which they are appended.¹⁴ On a suitable characterization of the distinction between saying and showing, this claim may permit a view of certain expressions as reliably indicating the force of the remarks to which they are appended. However, it is by no means clear that saying and showing are mutually exclusive activities. For instance, parenthetical expressions often serve to indicate the nature of a speaker's attitude or commitment toward a proposition she has elsewhere expressed, and they

¹³ A propos this topic Strawson writes:

The speaker...not only has the general authority on the subject of his intention that any agent has; he also has a motive, inseparable from the nature of his act, for making that intention clear. For he will not have secured understanding of the illocutionary force of his utterance...unless his complex intention is grasped. Now...for the enterprise to be possible...he must find means of making the intention clear. If there exists any conventional linguistic means of doing so, the speaker has both a right to use, and a motive for using, those means. One such means...would be to attach, or subjoin, to the substance of the message what looks like a force-elucidating *comment* on it, which may or may not have the form of a self-ascription. (1964, 451–452)

As examples of force-elucidating comments, Strawson has in mind cases such as 'This is a warning' and 'This is only a conjecture' prefacing indicative sentences.

¹⁴ Urmson, for instance, discussing parenthetical expressions such as 'as I conjecture' and 'as I fear', writes:

parenthetical verbs are one of the sets of devices that we use in order to deal with these matters [of clarifying the illocutionary force of one's remarks], though not the only set. By them we prime the hearer to see the emotional significance, the logical relevance, and the reliability of our statements. This we do not by telling him how we are moved or how he should be moved by them...but by the use of warning, priming, or orientating signals; we show rather than state. (1952, 197)

do so in such a way that their own illocutionary status does not need to be made clear. Consider, for instance,

- (2) If snow is white, as I believe, then grass is green.

One who asserts (2) makes clear among other things that she believes that snow is white, and as we shall see in more detail presently her parenthetical remark can only be taken as indicating her commitment rather than, say, conjecturing it or querying it. On the other hand, by means of that parenthetical remark the speaker also *says* that she believes snow to be white, and the speaker would have said something different had she instead uttered

- (3) If snow is white, as John used to think, then grass is green.

As a result, just to invoke a distinction between saying and showing does not suffice to account for how some ways of showing indicate or express commitment reliably whereas others do not. We require an account of how some ways of showing can reliably indicate the force of the comments to which they are appended in spite of having semantic content of their own, which content, as argued in Sections 1 and 2 above, is essentially capable of being put forth with any of a variety of illocutionary forces.

3.1. *Strong illocutionary force indicators*

To clear the ground for such an account, let ' Δ ' be, syntactically, a function from sentences into sentences, chosen from a set C of connectives such that each element of C is in the domain of a function IF , whose range comprises illocutionary forces. This allows us to speak of 'the force associated with connective ' Δ '. Then let us say that ' Δ ' is a *strong illocutionary force indicating device* (hereafter *strong IFID*) iff for all sentential complements S , the utterance of ' $\Delta(S)$ ', outside of quotation marks, is the putting forth of S with the illocutionary force associated with ' Δ '. Let us also adopt the policy that utterance of a sentence that contains ' $\Delta(S)$ ' as a proper part is also an utterance of ' $\Delta(S)$ '. This definition is thus meant to include embedded as well as free-standing occurrences of the uttered expression (quotation marks excepted). It is not clear that there are, or even could be, any strong IFIDs in an actual or possible language. Davidson (1979), for instance, has argued that no expression could be a strong IFID, on the ground that any expression purporting to be a strong IFID could be used by actors on stage to heighten the realism of their performances; in

such uses, however, no speech act is performed even though the actor may be making as if to perform a speech act.¹⁵

3.2. *Illocutionary force and illocutionary commitment*

Davidson's challenge to the possibility of a strong IFID is cogent but does not show the notion of force indicator to be theoretically useless. For another notion of force indicator not susceptible to Davidson's criticisms is available. With a view to developing such a notion let us observe that being committed to a semantic content A under mode Δ is not to be identified with performing a speech act having force Δ and content A. One who asserts A, for instance, is committed to all that follows logically from A even though it is doubtful that she has *asserted* all those propositions. As discussed further below, we do have good grounds for taking assertion to distribute over conjunction, so that one who asserts A&B asserts A and asserts B. However, because asserting A seems to require in the very least that the speaker intend that the addressee form the belief that he, the speaker, believes that A, it does not seem that one can be said to assert unrecognized logical consequences of what one asserts. For this reason it does not appear plausible that assertion is closed under logical consequence. On the other hand, lest it be impossible to criticize someone who asserts propositions that jointly imply, say, a contradiction, we must preserve the idea that one is *committed* to all that follows from what one asserts. The notion of illocutionary validity developed below is intended precisely to track such commitments. This notion allows us to express the idea that one who asserts A is committed to all that follows from A, but without our thereby implying that the speaker has also asserted any of the propositions deducible from A. Similar remarks apply to commitments to contents that arise from speech acts other than assertion.

Not only is commitment to a proposition distinct from assertion of that proposition, commitment to a proposition that one has asserted is one among various sorts of propositional commitment. Assertion of A differs from, for instance, a conjecture that A in that one who asserts that A is liable to be challenged to provide adequate grounds for believing what he asserts (Williamson 1996). Often we express such a challenge with the words, "How do you know?" In contrast, it is inappropriate to respond to one who merely puts forth A as a conjecture with the question, "How do you know?" While decisive grounds for the falsity of A do require one who conjectures A to retract that conjecture, her inability to respond to a challenge to establish A does not oblige her to relinquish her conjecture.

¹⁵ As argued in Green (1997), neither Hare (1989) nor Dummett (1993) succeeds in countering Davidson's challenge.

Just as the nature of commitment undertaken in assertion of A differs from the nature of commitment undertaken in conjecture that A, so too it appears that one who asserts A is committed to A's logical consequences in a manner different from the way in which one who conjectures A is committed to its logical consequences. For reasons such as this, in propounding the notion of illocutionary validity it is insufficient merely to describe speakers as committed to propositions and other semantic contents; accuracy requires also tracking the mode of that commitment by adverting to the force of the speech acts that engendered it. The concept of illocutionary validity is designed to track the mode as well as the content of speakers' commitments.

3.3. *Illocutionary validity and weak illocutionary force indicators*

Let S be an arbitrary speaker, $(\Delta_1 A_1, \dots, \Delta_n A_n, \Delta B)$ a sequence of force/content pairs;

then:

$(\Delta_1 A_1, \dots, \Delta_n A_n, \Delta B)$ is *illocutionarily valid* iff speaker S is committed to each A_i under mode Δ_i , then S is committed to B under mode Δ .¹⁶

Let V_S be a verb taking a sentence nominalization as complement, and where S is a sentence let S^* be the nominalization thereof, namely 'that S'. Let $[[\delta]]^c$ denote the semantic value, relative to context of utterance c, of δ . Let ' $_$, as NP V_S ,' be, syntactically, a function from sentences to sentences. We observe that 'as' in ' $_$, as NP V_S ', is a prosentence, anaphorically dependent, typically, on an S that occurs in the argument place of ' $_$, as NP VP'.¹⁷ Consequently, where this prosentence is anaphorically dependent on S_i , $[[[as]_i \text{ NP } V_S]]^c = [[\text{NP } V_S \text{ } S_i^*]]^c$. Let ' \vdash ' denote assertoric commitment. Then we say that ' $_$, as NP V_S ', is a *weak indicator of assertoric*

¹⁶ This definition is close to the definition of weak illocutionary commitment given in Searle and Vanderveken (1985, Chapter 4). An argument is illocutionarily sound just in case it is both illocutionarily valid and all its premises are such that their conditions of satisfaction are met. Developing a related notion of Kearns' (Kearns 1997), say that ' ΔB ' is illocutionarily necessary iff every sequence of force/content pairs having ' ΔB ' as its terminal element is illocutionarily valid. Although it is beyond the scope of the present study to provide one, a fuller account of illocutionary validity would employ further distinctions. For example, we could distinguish among the different possible objects of commitment, since there is nothing to rule out being committed to a question or to an imperative. See Harrah (1980, 1994) for discussion of assertoric, erotetic, and projective commitment.

¹⁷ The word 'as' is thus a proform of the same category as 'true' and 'so'. Grover et al. (1975) formulates a view of these words as proforms taking indicative sentences as antecedents; Grover (1992) further develops the approach.

commitment just in case for all illocutionary forces f and sentences S , the inference

$$\langle f[\dots S_i \dots, \text{as}_i \text{ NP } V_S, \dots], \vdash \llbracket \text{NP } V_S S_i^* \rrbracket^c \rangle$$

is illocutionary valid. According to this inference, a speaker committed under any mode to the semantic value, relative to context of utterance c , of a sentence in which ‘ $S_i \dots, \text{as}_i \text{ NP } V_S$ ’, occurs, is also undertaking assertoric commitment to $\llbracket [\text{as}]_i \text{ NP } V_S \rrbracket^c$, that is, to $\llbracket \text{NP } V_S S_i^* \rrbracket^c$. (Her doing so is compatible with her putting forth S with other forces as well. It is also compatible with her intending any of various perlocutionary effects.) For instance, ‘ $\underline{\quad}$, as John contends’, would be a weak indicator of assertoric commitment just in case anyone committed under any mode to the semantic value, relative to context of utterance c , of a sentence in which ‘ S , as John contends’, occurs, is thereby assertorically committed to $\llbracket \text{John contends } S^* \rrbracket^c$. (Hereafter where there is no danger of confusion I shall omit the qualification ‘relative to context of utterance c ’ as understood.)

Some V_S ’s name attitudes and speech acts such that if one is assertorically committed to the proposition that she V_S ’s that S , then she is also undertaking commitment, under a mode characteristic of that V_S , to S . That is, some V_S ’s are such that the inference

$$\langle \vdash \llbracket \text{NP } V_S S^* \rrbracket, f_\Delta \llbracket S \rrbracket \rangle$$

is illocutionarily valid. (For instance, one who undertakes assertoric commitment to $\llbracket \text{I assert that } S \rrbracket$, also undertakes assertoric commitment to $\llbracket S \rrbracket$ whether or not it is also true that she asserts that $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.) Where V_S participates in an illocutionary validity of the above form, where ‘ $\underline{\quad}$, as $\text{NP } V_S$ ’, is a weak indicator of assertoric commitment, and where f_Δ is the mode of commitment characteristic of verb V_S , V_S thus generates the following *derived* illocutionary validity: for all illocutionary forces f and sentences S , the inference

$$\langle f[\dots S_i \dots, \text{as}_i \text{ NP } V_S, \dots], f_\Delta \llbracket S_i \rrbracket \rangle$$

is illocutionarily valid. I shall call any illocutionarily valid inference having this form a *weak-IFID elimination inference*, and will call any expression of the form ‘ $\underline{\quad}$, as $\text{NP } V_S$ ’, and participating in a weak-IFID elimination inference a *weak IFID*. Were there any weak IFIDS, then although their presence in an utterance would not purport to answer the question *whether* the utterer is performing a speech act, it would provide at least a partial answer to the question *what* commitments the utterer is

undertaking and under what mode.¹⁸ Finally, let us say that a weak IFID is *robust* if and only if it has embedded occurrences.

3.4. *Parenthetical attitudinatives as robust, weak IFIDS*

We are now in a position to argue that certain parentheticals containing attitudinatives or speech act verbs are robust, weak IFIDS. (A related thesis concerning non-restrictive relative clauses also is defensible, but the elaboration and defense of this further thesis would take us too far afield.) As an example of the first of these consider

- (4) If snow is white, as I suppose, then grass is green.

One who asserts (4) is: (i) claiming that if snow is white then grass is green, and (ii) indicating that she takes snow to be white.¹⁹ ('Suppose' here most likely means 'believe' rather than 'suppose for the sake of argument'.) The latter act is performed even though the parenthetical clause is embedded in the antecedent of the conditional. There appears to be no more than a stylistic difference between (4) and either of the following:

- (5) If snow is, as I suppose, white, then grass is green.

If, as I suppose, snow is white, then grass is green.

Instead of surrounding the parenthetical remark with commas, one may use parentheses, and in some cases one may instead use dashes.²⁰ Each sentence in (4) and (5) is radically different both semantically and pragmatically from

- (6) If I suppose that snow is white, then grass is green.

¹⁸ We are now able to see, therefore, that the notion of a weak IFID is not circular. Also, Davidson's scepticism about the possibility of a strong IFID does not carry over to the possibility of a weak IFID. For further discussion see Green (1997).

¹⁹ I suggest that an agent indicates her intentional state *I* just in case she overtly and intentionally manifests her state *I*. Since manifesting (a form of showing) is not a species of testimony, indicating one's intentional state does not require reflexive communicative intentions of the sort that Grice's notion of non-natural meaning purports to elucidate. For a fuller discussion of the importance of indication as here construed to the general theory of communication, see Green ms.

²⁰ The present approach will not attempt to discern semantic or pragmatic distinctions among these different devices. Further, I shall treat the first of the two sentences in (5) as having an LF corresponding to that of (4); in this respect I adopt an approach to transformationally relating these two sentences espoused by Emonds (1976, Ch. 2.9). I shall in the sequel refer to this as the Emonds Transformation.

Unlike each example in (4) and (5), an utterance of (6) in a speech act need not engender assertoric commitment to \llbracket I suppose that snow is white \rrbracket , and unlike each example in (4) and (5) the antecedent of (6) can be true without \llbracket Snow is white \rrbracket being true. Further, consider the connective: ‘ $_$, as I suppose’, taking sentences as inputs and yielding sentences as outputs. (I shall identify this version with its variants.) When the placeholder is filled with a complement clause this connective can occur syntactically embedded arbitrarily deeply within conditionals, conjunctions, disjunctions, negation, modals and attitudinatives. Pragmatically, this connective indicates that the speaker takes the complement to be true, and it does this regardless of how deeply embedded this connective is. Yet it does so by virtue of the meaning of the words of which it is composed, as is shown by the fact that a different although analogous role is played by such connectives as ‘ $_$, as I presume,’ ‘ $_$, as I once held’, and ‘ $_$, as many people think,’.

Our hypothesis for explaining the pragmatic features of the expression ‘ $_$, as I suppose’, shall be that it is a robust, weak IFID in any utterance of which the speaker undertakes assertoric commitment to the semantic value of its complement. For first of all, for all illocutionary forces f , the sequence $\langle f, \llbracket \dots S_i \dots, \text{as } i \text{ suppose, } \dots \rrbracket, \vdash \llbracket \text{I suppose } S_i^* \rrbracket \rangle$ is illocutionarily valid. What is more, treating ‘suppose’ as here having the sense of ‘believe’, and assuming that one who undertakes assertoric commitment to \llbracket I believe that S \rrbracket undertakes assertoric commitment to S , it follows that for all illocutionary forces f and sentences S , $\langle f \llbracket \dots S_i \dots, \text{I suppose, } \dots \rrbracket, \vdash \llbracket S_i \rrbracket \rangle$ is illocutionarily valid. This is just to say that ‘ $_$, as I suppose’, is a weak IFID. Because it embeds arbitrarily deeply, it is also robust. The hypothesis that ‘ $_$, as I suppose’, is a robust, weak IFID accounts for the fact that one who utters any of the sentences in (4) or (5) in a speech act undertakes assertoric commitment to \llbracket Snow is white \rrbracket . Analogous hypotheses suggest themselves for other first-person attitudinatives such as ‘ $_$, as I presume.’ and ‘ $_$, as I conjecture.’. Likewise for speech-act verbs in the first person, e.g., ‘ $_$, as I assert.’. For brevity ‘parenthetical attitudinatives’ will in what follows be used to denote the class of parentheticals of the form, ‘ $_$, as NP V_S ,’ where V_S is an attitude or speech act verb.²¹

²¹ The class of parenthetical attitudinatives as defined here is meant to exclude two kinds of expression whose importantly different properties might not be immediately apparent. First, ‘ $_$, according to NP’, is not on our view a weak indicator of assertoric commitment, and is just a stylistic variation on ‘NP V_S S*’, where V_S is ‘holds’, ‘believes’, ‘contends’, etc. Second, constructions of so-called free indirect style, such as are found in ‘What a pleasant surprise, she giggled,’ and ‘I don’t particularly, he rapped’ do contain weak indicators of assertoric commitment. However, as observed by Reinhardt (1975), parentheticals

Two parenthetical attitudinatives can occur in a coordinate position, and one can embed within another. In both cases the parenthetical attitudinative behaves in the manner our approach would predict. As an example of the first kind of case we have

- (7) If [snow is white]_i, [as]_i John thinks, and [as]_i Mary denies, then grass is green.

The thesis that ‘_i, as John thinks’, is a weak indicator of assertoric commitment explains why one putting forth the displayed sentence in a speech act undertakes assertoric commitment to [[John thinks that snow is white]]. Ignoring the complication presented by the connective ‘and’ in the second parenthetical, the thesis that ‘_i, as Mary denies,’ is a weak indicator of assertoric commitment explains why one putting forth (7) in a speech act undertakes assertoric commitment to [[Mary denies that Snow is white]].

As an example of one parenthetical attitudinative nesting within another, we have,

- (8) If [snow is white]_i, [[as]_i John, [as]_{ii} we all know, thinks]_{ii}, then grass is green

In light of the Emonds Transformation (see Note 20), we take it that [[NP, as NP' V_s, VP]] = [[NP VP, as NP' V_s]], whence

$$f \text{ [[...If [snow is white]}_i, \text{ [[as]}_i \text{ John, [as]}_{ii} \text{ we all know, thinks]}_{ii}, \text{ then grass is green ...}]] = f \text{ [[...If [snow is white]}_i, \text{ [[as]}_i \text{ John thinks]}_{ii}, \text{ [as]}_{ii} \text{ we all know, then grass is green ...}]].$$

The hypothesis that ‘_i, as John thinks’, is a weak indicator of assertoric commitment explains why a speaker uttering (8) in a speech act undertakes assertoric commitment to [[John thinks that snow is white]]. The hypothesis that ‘_i, as we all know’, is a weak indicator of assertoric commitment implies that a speaker uttering (8) in a speech act undertakes assertoric commitment to

[[We all know that [as]_i John thinks]].

But as we have observed, [[as]_i John thinks]] = [[John thinks that snow is white]], whence a speaker uttering (8) undertakes assertoric commitment to

[[We all know that John thinks that snow is white]].

such as these do not embed arbitrarily deeply. For this reason such expressions are not robust.

3.5. *Semantics for parenthetical attitudinatives*

The present account of parenthetical attitudinatives may be enhanced by consideration of certain semantic properties of sentences containing them. McCawley (1981) has contended that sentences containing another species of parenthetical expression, namely non-restrictive relative clauses, have no truth conditions in spite of having parts that do. Bach and Harnish (1979) appear to propound a similar approach. In application at least to sentences containing parenthetical attitudinatives, however, this is the approach of last resort, since it requires relinquishing the thesis that all meaningful indicative sentences have truth conditions. Further, this thesis appears to be justified in application to the present range of cases since it seems both grammatical and pragmatically appropriate to assert such sentences as

- (9) It is obviously true that if, as John claims, snow is white, then grass is green.

A natural interpretation of (9) is that it attributes truth to the semantic value of the complement of 'It is obviously true that'. If this natural interpretation is correct, however, then that complement sentence must have truth conditions. We thus have reason for preserving the view that indicative sentences containing parenthetical attitudinatives have truth conditions. An approach that allows us to preserve this view has it that the truth conditions of a sentence containing a parenthetical first person attitudinative as its major operator are the same as those of a sentence just like it except bereft of the parenthetical expression. That is, where c is a context of utterance, f , t , w are an assignment of values to variables, a time, and a world, respectively, we claim that

$$\llbracket S_i, \text{as}_i \text{ NP V}_S \rrbracket^{\text{cfw}} = T \text{ iff } \llbracket S_i \rrbracket^{\text{cfw}} = T$$

where this biconditional does not impose any restriction as to whether 'S_i, as_i NP VP', is free standing or embedded. As a matter of its contribution to the truth conditions of the sentence in which it occurs, then, the parenthetical clause works in the way that 'It is true that' works for a complement such as 'snow is white'. In light of this account, the two sentences 'Snow is white' and 'Snow is white, as I claim', have the same truth conditions, namely snow's being white.²² '_, as I claim', in spite of having a semantic content does not contribute that content to the truth conditions of sentences

²² This is not to say that $\llbracket S, \text{as NP V}_S \rrbracket^c = S^c$; if this identity held then its two sides would participate in all the same illocutionary validities. One way of distinguishing $\llbracket S, \text{as NP V}_S \rrbracket$ from $\llbracket S \rrbracket$, and thereby of following Stenius' observation that if we imbue

in which it occurs. That content rather discharges its function via the mechanism of a weak-IFID elimination inference. As a result, two sentences just alike except for the parenthetical remarks they contain, may, in spite of having identical truth conditions, differ radically in the way in which they commit their utterer to propositions via the weak-IFID elimination inferences in which their parenthetical material participates. One virtue of the present semantical approach to the pragmatics and semantics of parenthetical attitudinatives is that it helps preserve the thesis that all meaningful indicative sentences have truth conditions. Another is that it is consistent with the principle ITFI, for it allows force-indicating expressions to have semantic content and to take embedded occurrences without thereby constraining the variety of forces with which the proposition(s) expressed by the sentences in which they occur may be put forth.

4. PARENTHETICALS AS CONJUNCTS

Thus far it has been argued that English contains at least one kind of robust, weak IFID. If this contention is correct, then Embedded Force Exclusion is not true, for parenthetical attitudinatives are expressions that embed in spite of admitting of a speech-act analysis. Further, if Embedded Force Exclusion is false, then given the truth of the Condition for Speech-Act

a “modal element” with meaning, that expression will contribute to the content of the sentence in which it occurs, would be to see $\llbracket S, \text{as NP } V_S \rrbracket$ as identical to an ordered pair of Russellian propositions. On the Russellian conception, $\llbracket \text{NP VP} \rrbracket = \langle \llbracket \text{NP} \rrbracket, \llbracket \text{VP} \rrbracket \rangle$. A way of taking the semantic value of a sentence containing a parenthetical attitudinative at face value would accordingly be:

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket \text{NP VP} \rrbracket_i, [\text{as}]_i \text{NP}' V_S \rrbracket &= \langle \langle \llbracket \text{NP} \rrbracket, \llbracket \text{VP} \rrbracket \rangle, \llbracket \text{NP}' V_S \text{NP VP} \rrbracket \rangle \\ &= \langle \langle \llbracket \text{NP} \rrbracket, \llbracket \text{VP} \rrbracket \rangle, \llbracket \langle \text{NP}' \rrbracket, \llbracket V_S \text{NP VP} \rrbracket \rangle \rangle \end{aligned}$$

Here the second element of the sequence represents the semantic value of the parenthetical expression, and is, of course, itself an ordered n-tuple. This pair of propositions is what is expressed in a speech act containing a parenthetical expression. Nevertheless, this approach preserves the view that any propositional content can be put forth with any of a variety of forces.

This suggestion concerning the semantic value of sentences containing parenthetical attitudinative does not require the introduction of any new theoretical entities, since ordered pairs of propositions are set-theoretic constructions out of entities already posited by the Russellian approach to propositions. Also, the present suggestion does not presuppose a Russellian conception of propositions. Analogous modifications could be made to the conception of propositions as sets of possible worlds (as defended in Stalnaker 1999), as well as to the view of propositions as “Russellian Annotated Matrices” as propounded by Richard (1990). I will not take the space to develop those modifications here.

Analyses, so is Frege's Point.²³ One may, however, deny the contention that parenthetical attitudinatives are robust, weak IFIDS and suggest an alternative account of the examples that have been presented in its support. To see this consider the following two inferences.

- (10) If, as Mary supposes, snow is white, then grass is green.

Mary supposes that snow is white.

- (11) If, as Mary supposes, snow is white, then grass is green. Snow is white.

Grass is green

There appears to be something intuitively valid about both (10) and (11). Concerning (10), however, it might not be clear how one becomes committed to a clause that occurs in the antecedent of a conditional just by asserting that conditional. Further, it might not be clear how to account for the validity of (11), since it may seem that the antecedent of the first premise is a conjunction (of 'snow is white', and 'Mary supposes that snow is white'), and the second premise only gives one of those conjuncts.

²³ We have already seen that Illocutionary Tolerance of Force Indicators may be preserved in the absence of Embedded Force Exclusion. In place of Frege's Point we say that if ϕ is a part of speech or a sentence, and it is grammatical to embed ϕ , then there is no speech act γ such that ϕ can *only* be used to perform γ . This is consistent with the possibility of ϕ being used to perform γ in every speech act in which it occurs. Davidson (1979), after propounding what he calls the Autonomy of Linguistic Meaning ("Symbolic representation necessarily breaks any close tie with extralinguistic purpose") draws the corollary that there cannot be a form of speech which, solely by dint of its conventional meaning, can only be used for a given purpose. The analogy of this corollary with Frege's Point should be clear. Further, we are now in a position to distinguish two readings that this corollary may take:

- I There cannot be a form of speech F and purpose P such that, solely by dint of the conventional meaning of F, for all non-locutionary acts S, if F is used in S then F is used only to bring about P.
- II There cannot be a form of speech F and purpose P such that, solely by dint of the conventional meaning of F, for all non-locutionary acts S, if F is used in S then F is used to bring about P.

Although I appears to be true, we have argued that II is false: parenthetical attitudinatives are forms of speech belying that claim.

4.1. *A naïve conjunctive reading*

A natural way of attempting to explain the validity of the above two inferences is indeed to take parenthetical-containing sentences as conjunctions.²⁴ As has just been suggested, however, one formulation of the suggestion that sentences that contain parentheticals are to be understood as conjunctions, may be ruled out. This is the formulation according to which ‘S, as I claim’, is to be understood as having the form, ‘S, and I claim that S’, regardless of whether the explicandum is free standing or embedded. This formulation would have us construe inference (11) as

- (12) If both snow is white and Mary supposes that snow is white, then grass is green. Snow is white.

Grass is green

and would therefore count (11) as invalid. Further, the formulation would have it that

- (13) If, as I claim, snow is white, then grass is green

is equivalent to

- (14) If both snow is white and I claim that snow is white, then grass is green.

These two are not equivalent, however: As inference (10) shows, one who asserts (13) is committed to \llbracket Snow is white \rrbracket but this is not the case with assertion of (14).

4.2. *A wide scope conjunctive reading*

A more plausible formulation of the suggestion that parentheticals should be read conjunctively would have it that those conjuncts containing what superficially appear to be parentheticals always take widest scope. Accordingly, one might suggest that (13), when it occurs free-standing, is to be explicated not in terms of (14) but rather in terms of

- (15) If snow is white then grass is green, and I claim that snow is white.

²⁴ This suggestion is implicit in Ayer’s (1936) treatment (p. 76) of ‘My friend has stopped writing to me’, and in Blackburn’s (1984, 148) discussion of ‘Kraut’. Rodman (1976) offers a view of this form for the semantics, but not the syntax, of non-restrictive relative clauses. A formulation of a conjunctive account, also of non-restrictive relative clauses, that does not distinguish carefully among possible types of scope for the putative conjuncts is Thompson (1971).

Call this the Wide Scope Conjunction reading. As a claim about LF for sentences of natural language, this reading might begin with a syntactic convention according to which if Ψ is a sentence and Θ is a sentence, then $\Theta[\Psi]$ is a sentence as well; here the sentence within brackets represents the parenthetical clause.²⁵ Taking the notion of *the n th occurrence of the parenthetical clause $[\Psi]$ in Γ* as understood, let us also use ' $\Gamma - [\Psi]_k$ ' to denote the result of removing the k th occurrence of the parenthetical $[\Psi]$ from Γ , where $k \geq 1$. We may now formulate the conjunctive idea as a grammatical principle:

(WConj) If Γ is free-standing and contains at least k occurrences of the parenthetical $[\Psi]$, then Γ has as its LF: $\Gamma - [\Psi]_k \ \& \ \Psi$.

Here it does not matter how deeply buried $[\Psi]$ is within Γ . Yet we must require that Γ be free-standing, since otherwise we will get predictions that run counter to the Wide Scope Conjunction suggestion. Thus, how Γ is to be explicated depends upon where Γ stands. If Γ is free-standing and has the surface syntax of ' $\Theta[\Psi]$ ', then (WConj) tells us to explicate it as ' $\Theta \ \& \ \Psi$ '. If, on the other hand, Γ occurs as a disjunct of a sentence that is superficially a disjunction, say ' $\Gamma \vee \Omega$ ' (itself free-standing), and Γ has the surface syntax of ' $[\Psi]$ ', then (WConj) pronounces only on the explication of the entire disjunction, telling us to read it as ' $(\Theta \vee \Omega) \ \& \ \Psi$ '.

If the Wide Scope Conjunction reading is correct, then that will undermine our contention that parenthetical attitudinatives are counterexamples to Embedded Force Exclusion and Frege's Point. The reason is that sentences whose LF is conjunctive can evidently be read as a series of sentences, where each element of the series corresponds to a conjunct. Such a construal would imply that at least for purposes of semantic analysis, embedding of parenthetical attitudinatives is apparent only.²⁶

The Wide Scope Conjunction reading will seem familiar from discussions of definite descriptions, which are commonly said to take primary, secondary, tertiary, etc., occurrence.²⁷ However, the two approaches differ in that the Wide Scope Conjunction reading needs to be supplemented with a further postulate explaining why speakers performing speech acts in uttering parenthetical-containing sentences invariably undertake assertoric

²⁵ I here assume the LF Hypothesis of Larson and Segal (1995, 105), according to which the level of LF is where syntactic representation is interpreted by semantic rules.

²⁶ Mittwoch (1979) proposes that certain parenthetical containing sentences be analyzed as pair of sentences, rather than as sentences that are conjunctive in form. This view would, of course, also deny that parentheticals embed. The remarks to follow about the Wide Scope Conjunction approach will apply to Mittwoch's proposal as well.

²⁷ See for instance Kaplan (1972).

commitment to the contents of their parenthetical clauses. One using a definite description in the course of a speech act does not invariably undertake such commitment, as shown by such familiar examples as

- (16) I am not looking for the present King of France because there is no such person.²⁸

Nor is that commitment undertaken in contexts in which the description occurs in a sentence that is, say, supposed for the sake of argument. On the other hand a Russellian approach to description can account for at least some cases in which the speaker undertakes commitment to the existence and uniqueness conditions associated with the description on the hypothesis that assertion distributes over conjunction.²⁹ (We need not here take a stand on whether this will be adequate for explaining the commitment that is undertaken in such cases as, ‘Will the present King of France be coming to dinner?’ and ‘Send the present King of France a letter’.)

The proponent of the Wide Scope Conjunction reading must, then, account for the fact that a speaker who utters a parenthetical-containing sentence in the course of a speech act invariably undertakes assertoric commitment to the content of the parenthetical clause. Just to treat that clause as a conjunction at the level of LF does not explain this. For a speaker may perform a speech act in which she utters a sentence that is conjunctive in form without thereby asserting either conjunct. She might, for instance, put forth that conjunction as a supposition for the sake of argument. In this case the speaker will not be undertaking assertoric commitment to the conjunct corresponding to the parenthetical. On the other hand, even in a case in which one supposes a parenthetical-containing sentence one undertakes assertoric commitment to the content of the parenthesis.

4.3. *The Wide Scope Conjunction and robust, weak IFID approaches compared*

To be plausible, then, the Wide Scope Conjunction reading must be supplemented with a pragmatic component to the effect that the conjunct corresponding at LF to the parenthesis is invariably put forth in such a way as to engender assertoric commitment in any speech act in which the parenthetical-containing sentence is uttered. Further, in light of the fact that the Wide Scope Conjunction reading requires a departure from

²⁸ See Neale (1990, Chapter 1), for fuller treatment of examples of this kind.

²⁹ See Williams (1996), and Green forthcoming for defenses of the claim that assertion distributes over conjunction. These discussions make clear that the thesis that assertion distributes over conjunction is independently motivated by its use in explaining what is paradoxical in such utterances as “P but I don’t believe it”.

surface syntax, our question is not whether this approach is coherent – it appears to be – but instead whether a more parsimonious alternative to it can be found that would account for the same range of data. Denying that the apparent syntactic structure of a sentence mirrors its form at LF can be justified on such grounds as that taking the apparent syntax of a sentence as appropriate for semantic analysis leads to fallacious inferences or metaphysical puzzles. However, one needs good reason to depart from appearances in this way. It is only if each of the available alternatives is untenable that we should postulate, at LF or for that matter elsewhere, a departure from surface form as here contemplated.³⁰

In Section 3 we offered a tenable such alternative approach that makes use of the following ideas:

1. *Logic*: Illocutionary validity, independently motivated by the need to account for inferential relations among non-indicatives and indicatives put forward with non-assertoric force.
2. *LF*: With the exception of sentences susceptible to the Emonds Transformation (see Note 20), the LF of sentences containing parenthetical attitudinatives mirrors their surface syntactic form.
3. *Semantics*: Parentheses are treated as one-place extensional operators; parenthetical-containing sentences express ordered n-tuples of propositions.
4. *Pragmatics*: Parenthetical attitudinatives are weak indicators of assertoric commitment; some are also robust, weak IFIDS.

As against this approach consider that of the Wide Scope Conjunction reading:

1. *Logic*: Nothing new, but we note that the notion of illocutionary validity will still be needed for other purposes.
2. *LF*: Sentences containing parenthetical attitudinatives are conjunctions at LF.
3. *Semantics*: Parentheses are treated as conjunctions, and so as extensional operators; parenthetical-containing sentences express propositions.

³⁰ It is instructive to compare the dialectical situation here with that concerning Russellian treatments of descriptions. Neale, in his defense of such an approach to descriptions, goes to considerable lengths to show how recent developments in formal semantics do not require taking sentences of natural language to have a radically different syntactic structure from what they appear to have. He recognizes that in the absence of such developments the Russellian theory would, all else being equal, be at a disadvantage relative to alternatives (see Neale (1990, Chapter 2).

4. *Pragmatics*: A speaker uttering a parenthetical-containing sentence in the course of a speech act undertakes assertoric commitment to the conjunct corresponding to the parenthetical.

On the issues of logic and pragmatics, it does not appear that either approach involves stronger commitments than does the other. On the issue of semantics, the robust, weak IFID approach invokes ordered n-tuples of propositions whereas the Wide Scope Conjunction construal does not. We have already observed that ordered n-tuples of propositions are not new theoretical entities, but they are a semantic category not commonly employed. At the same time, on the issue of LF the Wide Scope Conjunction thesis involves more violence to the phenomena than does the “robust, weak IFID” approach. It would seem, then, that overall on the four criteria above, the robust, weak IFID approach is *no less* parsimonious than the Wide Scope Conjunction reading. What is more, the robust, weak IFID approach invokes only ITFI to account for the relevant aspects of the relation of force to content. By contrast, the primary point of the Wide Scope Conjunction reading is evidently to preserve EFE (and thereby Frege’s Point) while accounting for the relevant features of the relation of force to content. Recalling that EFE is logically stronger than ITFI, it follows that the robust, weak IFID reading plus ITFI is more parsimonious than is the Wide Scope Conjunction reading plus EFE. It is for this reason difficult to see what could justify acceptance of the latter approach when we have an explanatorily adequate alternative to it (the weak, robust IFID approach plus ITFI) that is also more parsimonious.

4.4. *Objections to the Wide Scope Conjunction reading*

Not only does the weak, robust IFID approach plus ITFI appear to be more parsimonious than the Wide Scope Conjunction approach plus EFE, we also seem to have independent evidence against the Wide Scope Conjunction approach. For, first of all, there appears to be no plausible account available to the proponent of this approach of how speakers undertake assertoric commitment to the putatively wide conjunct. The obvious hypothesis is that speakers invariably assert that conjunct. Yet the behavior of tag-questions suggests that the wide conjunct cannot be being put forth with assertoric force. Conjunctive sentences in which both conjuncts are put forth assertorically allow the addition of a tag-question, in which the utterer requests agreement with the entire conjunction, as in,

- (17) John is tall and Mary is short, correct?

The tag-question queries the entire conjunction, whereas in

- (18) John, whom you met last week, was the winner of the lottery, right?

the tag-question only appears to query whether John won the lottery. Similarly, in a parenthetical attitudinative such as

- (19) John, as Mary claims, won the lottery, correct?

the tag-question queries all but the parenthetical material. This is evidence that one who asserts a parenthetical-containing sentence should not be construed as asserting two conjuncts.

Perhaps it will be suggested instead that the conjunct may be put forth with the force of a presumption or presupposition, and that when a conjunctive sentence is put forth, one conjunct with the force of an assertion and the other with the force of a presumption or presupposition, the tag question only queries the former. The difficulty with this suggestion is that one can use a tag-question to query propositions put forth with the force of a presumption, as in:

- (20) Mary is a genius and John is, as I presume, a fool, correct?

Here the parenthetical contains a locution that indicates that the conjunct, 'John is a fool' is being put forth with the force of a presumption. Yet its being so put forth is no bar to its being one of the conjuncts that are queried with a tag-question. Similar examples can easily be constructed for the case of presupposition and other illocutionary forces having word-to-world direction of fit, and there would seem in general to be no tenable account of the force with which wide conjuncts are put forth that would square with the behavior of tag-questions.

The Wide Scope Conjunction Reading also seems to make an incorrect prediction for sentences in which, at the surface level, the parenthetical already has widest scope. For instance, assertion of

- (21) That house is, (as) I conjecture, very old

seems to be a way of putting forth the proposition that the house in question is very old as a conjecture rather than as an assertion. The "robust, weak-IFID" approach would account for this by construing the parenthetical as participating in a weak IFID elimination inference to the effect that anyone uttering the above-displayed sentence in a speech act undertakes or expresses assertoric commitment to \llbracket I conjecture that that house is very

old]], by virtue of which she undertakes commitment to [[That house is very old]] as a conjecture. This approach does not predict that the speaker asserts or undertakes assertoric commitment to the proposition that that house is very old, and if it did the fact would be a strike against the robust, weak IFID approach. The very point of the parenthetical remark is to qualify the remainder of the sentence so that it is put forth not as an assertion but rather as a conjecture. (Doing so will forestall the question, ‘How do you know?’, and a speaker’s indicating that such questions are out of order will add to the efficiency of her communication.)

On the other hand, it appears that the Wide Scope Conjunction Reading does predict that the utterer of the above sentence asserts that the house in question is very old. For if the above sentence is asserted, then by Assertion-distribution and the Wide Scope Conjunction Thesis we have that the speaker asserts ‘that house is very old’ in addition to asserting that he conjectures that the house is very old. Hence on the Wide Scope Conjunction Reading it is predicted that the speaker both asserts and conjectures that the house in question is very old. As a result, it is predicted that it is appropriate to reply to a speaker who utters the above-displayed sentence in a speech act with the challenge, “How do you know?” However, as we have seen it seems clear that part of the point of using the parenthetical in that sentence is to forestall just such a challenge.

5. PARENTHETICALS AND PRESUPPOSITION

According to the construal of parentheticals propounded here, the contents of such parentheticals are not put forth with assertoric or any other illocutionary force. Rather, according to the present approach, when these parenthetical expressions occur in a speech act they effect the undertaking of assertoric commitment to their contents. In particular, they engender assertoric commitments in much the way that an assertion of A effects an assertoric commitment to all that follows logically from A. In both types of case, what commitments are undertaken depends neither upon the speaker’s awareness of these consequences nor upon her illocutionary intentions regarding these consequences.

If the approach offered here is correct, then it allows for a synthesis between the views of Strawson and Urmson cited in Section 3. For on the present approach, so long as it is clear that a speech act is taking place there is no question of the force with which the parenthetical expression is being put forth. On the other hand, as a result of the assertoric commitments that use of these expressions engender, we have an account of how they serve to indicate the way in which the contents on which they comment are put

forth. As we have seen, one who undertakes assertoric commitment to, say, $\llbracket I \text{ presume that } S \rrbracket$ (by means of tokening ‘...S, as I presume ...’ in a speech act), undertakes commitment to $\llbracket S \rrbracket$ as a presumption. (This is not to say that she puts forth $\llbracket S \rrbracket$ with the force of presumption, any more than an assertoric commitment to $\llbracket S \rrbracket$ is an assertion of $\llbracket S \rrbracket$.) This view preserves Strawson’s insight into the “force elucidating” nature of certain remarks, while still recognizing the semantic value of the words occurring within parentheses rather than ascribing to them, as Urmson seems to do, a purely expressive role.

One who asserts a proposition puts it forth as appropriate for entry into the conversational record as defined above.³¹ As we have seen, this is part of the reason an addressee is entitled to respond to an assertion by challenging the speaker to provide grounds for accepting what has been asserted. If the speaker making the assertion is unable to respond to this challenge, then the content of her assertion will remain out of the conversational record until such time as this challenge can be met. In addition to providing the means for making assertions it adds to the flexibility and thus utility of a language if it also allows speakers to *manifest* their commitments without thereby proffering those commitments as to be shared by their addressees. One might, for instance, wish to express one’s belief without wishing to call upon others to share that belief, and on the approach defended here of parenthetical attitudinatives, natural language provides a means of doing precisely this. For the use of such a parenthetical as ‘... , as I believe’, permits the speaker to undertake assertoric commitment to a content without asserting it. Doing so can enable the addressee to understand the speaker’s peculiar commitments without the speaker having to shoulder an unwanted argumentative burden.³²

In this light, the behavior of parentheticals is usefully contrasted with another notion sometimes discussed under the rubric of the “background” of communication, namely presupposition.³³ As commonly understood, a

³¹ Building upon Lewis (1979), this view is defended in Brandom (1983) and developed further in Green (1995) and Green (1999).

³² The contrast in pragmatic function between an asserted indicative sentence and a parenthetical attitudinative that it contains might, in this light, be described in terms of a contrast between foreground and background. This metaphor has no obvious application to the task of delineating among various kinds of assertion. On the other hand, whereas “foreground” utterances are those that are proffered for entry into conversational record, at least some utterances may be described as “background” by virtue of their ability to indicate the speaker’s attitude towards other material that she has expressed, but where this attitude is not proffered for entry into the conversational record. (Compare with Huddleston (1984, 399).)

³³ An early statement of the view that a cognate range of expressions, non-restrictive relative clauses, falls under the rubric of presupposition is Keenan (1971).

speaker who presupposes that A does not also assert A. In this respect parentheticals as here understood are similar, since on the account defended here speakers do not assert the contents of parentheticals but rather undertake or express assertoric commitment to those contents. Nevertheless, if the phenomena under discussion here are really instances of presupposition, this will tend to defuse the threat they pose to such doctrines as Frege's Point and Embedded Force Exclusion. Neither thesis is directly challenged by the phenomenon of presupposition, at least as it is commonly treated today, since, as we shall see presently, according to a wide consensus presuppositions are essentially cancelable. Frege's Point and Embedded Force Exclusion, on the other hand, quantify over only expressions that admit of a speech act analysis and over force indicators, respectively, and the putative pragmatic function of either such expression is performed in each speech act in which it occurs. Hence if the parenthetical expressions under discussion here are best understood as presupposition triggers, they pose no direct threat to the target theses of this essay.

The great variety of theories and conceptions of presupposition precludes showing exhaustively that the parentheticals under discussion here are not best understood in terms of presupposition. Discussion will instead be restricted to logical and expressive presupposition, as well as to some pragmatically oriented conceptions of presupposition and presupposition projection. It will be argued that (1) the phenomena under discussion here cannot be assimilated to logical or expressive presupposition, and (2) the phenomena under discussion here run counter to the predictions of some of the better-known pragmatically – oriented conceptions of presupposition and presupposition projection.

5.1. *Parenthetical attitudinalives, logical presupposition, and expressive presupposition*

Traditional grammarians characterize parenthetical material as capable of being deleted from the sentence in which it occurs with no loss to the intelligibility of what remains. It might have as easily have been said that the *truth* of that material is not required for the intelligibility of what remains. To see this, we observe that logical presupposition is standardly defined as follows:

A proposition A *logically presupposes* proposition B iff for all possible circumstances w, if A is true or false in w, then B is true in w. (Soames 1989, 556)

The suggestion that a parenthetical-containing sentence presupposes rather than asserts the content of the parenthetical expression it contains, is not

borne out by the notion of logical presupposition. If it is agreed that parenthetical-containing sentences are capable of being true, then it does not seem intuitively to be the case that

(22) If, as Fred holds, snow is white, then grass is green

requires, in order to be either true or false, that Fred hold that snow is white. Indeed, according to the truth conditions we have offered for parenthetical-containing sentences, the above has a truth value determined entirely independently of the truth of the parenthetical. Further, even if, contrary to the arguments of the previous section, the Wide Scope Conjunction analysis of parentheticals is adopted, it will still turn out that such sentences do not satisfy the definition of logical presupposition, for on that analysis such sentences will be *false* (rather than neither true nor false) when the conjunct corresponding to the parenthetical fails to be true.

Expressive presupposition may be defined thus:

Sentence *S* *expressively presupposes* proposition *A* relative to a context of utterance *C* iff the truth of *A* is necessary for *S* to semantically express a proposition in *C*. (Soames 1989, 562)

It is not plausible that the parenthetical-containing sentences under discussion here conform to this definition: A speech act is performed, and a proposition is thus expressed, in an assertion of, 'If, as Fred holds, snow is white, then grass is green', even if Fred does not in fact hold that snow is white.

It was suggested above that parentheticals such as those considered here do not seem to put any "pressure" on interlocutors to accept the contents of those parentheticals as true. Instead, and unlike, for instance, assertions, they indicate the speaker's state of commitment without calling upon the addressee to undertake that commitment as well. Because the speaker's state of commitment to such a thing as the antecedent of a conditional need not be discerned for her assertion of that conditional to succeed (that is, for the assertion to be made and for the conditional to be accepted into the conversational record), it is clear why a locution indicating that commitment should be dispensable for purposes of the success of her assertion.

5.2. *Parenthetical attitudinatives and pragmatic presupposition*

The dispensable nature of parenthetical attitudinatives is also germane to the viability of a conception of them in terms of pragmatic presupposition, to which we now turn. Interlocutors contribute to an ever-evolving conversational background. Rather than requiring speakers to contribute

propositions one by one by means of speech acts such as assertion, conjecture, and supposition, however, natural languages have developed means for speakers to contribute proposition that facilitate the comprehension of their speech acts without those facilitating propositions being asserted, conjectured, supposed, etc. Roughly, pragmatic presuppositions are those requirements that speech acts place on the conversational record if the speaker's communicative intentions are to be fulfilled (Soames, 566). In a given case, the conversational record might already satisfy those requirements (by, for instance, already containing a particular proposition) or, alternatively, addressees might *accommodate* the speaker by updating the conversational record with the required proposition(s). On one definition, the conversational record is to be understood as follows: The *conversational record* at a time *t* is the set of propositions *A* such that at *t* the conversational participants believe or assume *A*; and recognize this about each other.

In light of a cognate notion Soames (1989, 573) offers the following definition:

utterance presupposition: An utterance *U* presupposes *A* iff one can reasonably infer from *U* that the speaker accepts *A* and regards it as uncontroversial, either because (a) α thinks that *A* is already part of the conversational record at the time of *U*; or because (b) α thinks that the conversational participants are prepared to add *A*, without objection, to the conversational record.³⁴

This definition seems not to include all speech acts in which the speaker utters a sentence containing a component of the form 'S, as Fred claims.'. In such a speech act the speaker undertakes assertoric commitment to the proposition that Fred claims that S, but his utterance does not allow us to infer that he accepts this proposition and regards it as uncontroversial. We sometimes make assertions with no expectation that what is said will be agreed to by our addressee, if only because sometimes our primary aim is to take a stand and/or to be provocative.³⁵ As a result, it might be clear to the addressee that the speaker regards the proposition that Fred claims that *A* as controversial but is expressing commitment to it in order

³⁴ This definition does not rule out the possibility of an assertion of *P* presupposing *P*. Ruling out this possibility can, however, be achieved by restricting the definition to pairs $\langle U, P \rangle$ such that the content of *U* does not logically imply *P*. Because one force/content pair can illocutionarily imply another without the content of the former logically implying the content of the latter, this revision does not beg any questions concerning the presuppositional status of parentheticals.

³⁵ This point is defended in Williams (1996).

to stake out his position. In such a case it cannot reasonably be inferred that the speaker accepts this proposition and regards it as uncontroversial, because it will be obvious to all that the speaker does not regard it as uncontroversial. Soames' characterization of utterance presupposition, then, is incompatible with the view that the parentheticals under consideration here are pragmatic presuppositions.

The reason parentheticals do not fit within the above framework for pragmatic presupposition appears to be that they do not in general impose requirements on the conversational record that must be met if the speaker's communicative intentions are to be fulfilled. To see this contrast

(23) If S, as is the case, then S'

with

(24) Since S, S'

One who asserts either sentence commits herself to the truth of S. However, in (24) the speaker also asserts S' whereas in (23) she does not do so, but instead merely undertakes assertoric commitment to S'. Further, if the speaker of (24) is to achieve her illocutionary purposes, among which are the adding of $[[S']]$ into the conversational record, that record will in general need to contain $[[S]]$, either prior to the speech act or by virtue of conversational accommodation. By contrast, the speaker of (23) asserts a conditional while indicating her commitment to the antecedent, and the success of neither of these acts requires the presence in the conversational record of either $[[S]]$ or $[[\text{It is the case that S}]]$.³⁶

Intuitively, it does not seem that parentheticals of the sort considered here fall under any familiar rubric for presupposition. However, the proliferation of theories for presupposition in recent years has tended to detach that notion from its intuitive basis, and 'presupposition' appears now to be a term of art. Nothing, therefore, can prevent a writer from coining a usage for this word under which the parenthetical phenomena discussed here fall. However, doing so would go against current patterns of usage of this technical term, and so would raise the question of the purpose of such a coinage. The reason is that one theme uniting theories of presupposition projection offered by such disparate writers as Gazdar (1979), Soames (1989), Atlas and Levinson (1981), Stalnaker (1972, 1973, 1974), Karttunen (1973, 1974), Van Der Sandt (1988), and Beaver (1997) is

³⁶ For a related argument against construing non-restrictive relative clauses as a species of presupposition, see Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet (1990, 282–283).

that presuppositions can be canceled either by features of the context of utterance or by features of the syntactic context in which the presupposition trigger occurs.³⁷ In particular, if the conversational record already contains propositions conflicting with a potential presupposition, then that presupposition is not generated by utterance of a sentence in which the presupposition trigger occurs. Thus in the discourse

- (25) There is no present King of France. Therefore, the present King of France is not bald

the speaker's second sentence does not presuppose the existence of a unique King of France because she explicitly disavowed that commitment in her previous utterance. By contrast,

- (26) Snow is not white. Therefore if, as is the case, snow is white, then grass is green

is simply bizarre unless construed as expressing a mid-utterance change of mind, for in the absence of such a construal the speaker seems to be committing herself to an explicit contradiction. As a result, if the parenthetical of (26) is a presupposition trigger it is not one that is blocked in the way that all other recognized presupposition triggers appear to be. Rather than widen the concept of presupposition to cover the case of parenthetical attitudinatives at the cost of weakening the explanatory power of the concept of presupposition, a theoretically more conservative yet explanatorily adequate course is to construe parenthetical attitudinatives as weak, robust IFIDS.³⁸

6. FORCE, CONTENT AND COMMUNICATION

Cognate with the ability of the parenthetical expressions under consideration here to effect the undertaking assertoric commitments, and thereby of other modalities of commitment as well, is a distinctive way in which these parentheticals contribute to a conversation. As contended in Section

³⁷ For our purposes it will not be necessary to attend to important distinctions within the range of theories of presupposition projection, such as that indicated by Guerts (1996) in his distinction between the "satisfaction theory" and the "binding theory".

³⁸ We note as well that widening the concept of presupposition to include parenthetical attitudinatives will imply that it is no longer the case that presuppositions are essentially cancelable. As a result, on such a widened usage the thesis that parenthetical attitudinatives are presupposition triggers will not by itself defuse the threat these expressions pose to Frege's Point and Embedded Force Exclusion.

5, an assertion of A calls upon the addressee to accept A or not. In the latter case the addressee might challenge the assertor to provide some ground for acceptance of A or for a resolution of some ambiguity or unclarity in her words. In the former case A is entered into the conversational record with the result that interlocutors may presuppose A's truth in their subsequent speech acts. In either case, the assertion of A has made a claim upon the addressee's assent.³⁹ By contrast, one who verbally expresses her commitment on an issue does not *thereby* make a claim upon her addressee's assent.

An illuminating approach to the progress of conversation, particularly for theorists of presupposition, implicature and indexicality, is what we may call the *scorekeeping model*. On this model, speakers uttering indicative sentences have those sentences entered into the conversational record unless there is a demurrer from an addressee, and once in the record the content of those sentences may be used as fodder for future inference as well as be presupposed by their speech acts.⁴⁰ This model has been further developed in the direction of dynamic *intrasentential* semantics to account for how conversational score can change even in the course of a speaker's uttering a single sentence. Thus, it is explained how

(27) John has children, and all of his children are asleep

differs from

(28) All of John's children are asleep, and John has children

³⁹ Norms governing assertion and its interaction with the conversational record are developed more fully in Green (1999). In that work, it is argued that where *S*, addressing *H*, asserts that *A*, then

- a H is obliged to indicate her acceptance or non-acceptance of A. (This may be indicated by non-verbal means, and may be preceded by requests for clarification of the content of S's words.)
- b S is committed to giving reasons for A if presented by H with a legitimate challenge,
- c If no legitimate challenge to A has been raised and gone unmet, then A is entered into the conversational record;
- d If a legitimate challenge has been raised and gone unmet, then S is obliged to retract A.

S is not obliged to respond to an illegitimate challenge, but if such a challenge is raised then until H's acceptance is secured the asserted content will remain off of the conversational record. Also, if case (b) arises then S's task is to convince H of A, adhering to the norms for debate. If S succeeds in securing H's acceptance of A, then that debate is complete and the disputed content is entered into the conversational record. If S does not succeed, then case (d) applies. Further, clauses (c) and (d) make no specific mention of H because other addressees may pose challenges as well.

⁴⁰ See Stalnaker (1972, 1973, 1974), Lewis (1979) for the basic studies. Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet (1990) synthesizes much of this work.

in that utterance of the first conjunct of (28) presupposes that John has children, whereas utterance of the second conjunct of (27) does not presuppose this (see Beaver (1997)).

The scorekeeping model has not been much developed to take account of indicatives put forth with other than assertoric force. One route of potential development involves appreciating “expressive” uses of indicative sentences such as have been discussed above. Such uses are not proffered for entry into the conversational record, but, as argued in Section 5, are instead aimed at the manifesting of a speaker’s commitments to contents under various modes. (As the definitions of conversational record given in Section 5 and to be reformulated presently make clear, one can manifest one’s commitments without those commitments being part of the conversational record; publicity does not imply common knowledge.) While a detailed construction is beyond the scope of the present study, a development of the scorekeeping model to represent the expressive uses of indicative sentences would advert not only to a concept of conversational record, but to idiosyncratic commitments, some of which will be publicly available, as well. Manifesting one’s idiosyncratic commitments will facilitate communication in part by making clear an interlocutor’s dialectical status, that is, it will help make clear to other interlocutors what sorts of utterance an interlocutor is likely to accept or, on the other hand, to challenge. Similarly, it will make clear what sorts of questions an interlocutor is apt to reject or, alternatively, to endorse and attempt to answer. For the comparatively simple case of dialogue between speakers α and β , this will therefore involve a construction that keeps “score” on the commitments of α , of β , and of the conversational record. (For the more complex case of more than two interlocutors, there will in principle be many sets of commitments to keep score on as there are non-empty subsets of the set of all interlocutors in the conversation.)

Let Σ_i be a commitment store for interlocutor i , containing all those propositions to which interlocutor i is committed, together with a register of the mode under which each such commitment is held. Σ_i is thus a set of force/content pairs $\langle \Delta, A \rangle$ such that for each pair $\langle \Delta, A \rangle \in \Sigma_i$, i is committed to A under mode. (Each such pair represents a commitment undertaken in the course of the conversation or following from such an undertaking, or is a commitment with which the interlocutor entered the conversation.) In line with the argument of Section 3 that commitment is deductively closed, we stipulate that commitment stores are closed under the relation of illocutionary validity (of which deductive validity is a special case).⁴¹

⁴¹ Deductive validity is a special case of illocutionary validity in the following sense: If A deductively entails B , then the sequence, $\langle \vdash, A \rangle, \langle \vdash, B \rangle$ is illocutionarily valid.

The notion of conversational record may be arrived at as a construction from that of the commitment store.⁴² According to the present treatment conversational record will be construed as that set of pairs $\langle \Delta, A \rangle$ such that all parties to the conversation are committed to A under mode Δ , and to the very thesis that they are so committed. More exactly, where $1, \dots, n$ are interlocutors, we may define $\Sigma_{1 \cap, \dots, \cap n}$ as $\Sigma_1 \cap, \dots, \cap \Sigma_n$. If $c \in \Sigma_{i \cap j}$, it does not follow that c is in the conversational record of i and j , for neither may have any commitments with regard to the other's commitment to c . Rather, where s_1, \dots, s_n are a group of interlocutors, and where ' \vdash ' denotes assertoric commitment, we say that

c is in the conversational record among s_1, \dots, s_n (written $c \in \Sigma_{1 \dots n}$) iff (a) for all $s_i \in \{s_1, \dots, s_n\}$, $c \in \Sigma_i$, and for all $s_i \in \{s_1, \dots, s_n\}$, $\langle \vdash, (a) \rangle \in \Sigma_i$.

$\Sigma_{1 \dots n}$ will in general be a proper subset of $\Sigma_{1 \cap, \dots, \cap n}$. We note that although speakers' commitment stores are closed under illocutionary validity, $\Sigma_{1 \dots n}$ is not.⁴³

A few examples of how the above notions conspire to help account for the behavior of parenthetical attitudinatives in conversation may be useful.

1. Suppose that utters 'S, as I conjecture' in a speech act. Because ' $_$, as I conjecture', is a weak indicator of assertoric commitment, $\langle \vdash, \llbracket \text{I conjecture that S} \rrbracket \rangle \in \Sigma_\alpha$. Further, $\langle \vdash, \llbracket \text{I conjecture that S} \rrbracket \rangle$ illocutionarily implies $\langle \Delta_{\text{conjecture}}, \llbracket \text{S} \rrbracket \rangle$, and commitment stores are closed under illocutionary validity, whence $\langle \Delta_{\text{conjecture}}, \llbracket \text{S} \rrbracket \rangle \in \Sigma_\alpha$. Even if 'S, as I conjecture', is uttered in a speech act, none of the principles endorsed here implies that the speaker is undertaking assertoric commitment to S. Rather, by means of her utterance, α undertakes commitment to S as a conjecture, thereby priming her addressee β to, for instance, withhold his challenge that α establish S.
2. Recurring to inference (10) from Section 4, suppose now that α asserts that inference's premise, namely 'If, as Mary supposes, snow is white, then grass is green'. On the hypothesis that ' $_$, as Mary supposes', is a weak indicator of assertoric commitment, the result is that $\langle \vdash,$

⁴² In this respect the present work is influenced by Hamblin (1970, 1971). Others who have followed Hamblin in taking the notion of commitment as a central concept in understanding conversation, and who stress the importance of idiosyncratic commitment stores in addition to that governing the conversational record, are Walton and Krabbe (1995).

⁴³ For further discussion of the reflexive conception of the conversational record employed here see Barwise (1989) and Clark (1996).

$\llbracket \text{Mary supposes that snow is white} \rrbracket \in \Sigma_\alpha$. α is accordingly entitled, as she does in inference (10), to express her assertoric commitment to the proposition that Mary supposes that snow is white. In the absence of any demurrer from β , assertion of the premise of (10) will have the result that $\langle \vdash, \llbracket \text{If snow is white, then grass is green} \rrbracket \rangle \in \Sigma_{\alpha\beta}$, but it will not have the result that $\langle \vdash, \llbracket \text{Mary supposes that snow is white} \rrbracket \rangle \in \Sigma_{\alpha\beta}$. Consequently, if α puts forth the conclusion of her inference as an assertion, rather than just as an expression of her own assertoric commitment, β is not obliged to accept it merely as a result of accepting her premise.

3. α asserts the two premises of (11), ‘Snow is white’ as well as ‘If, as Mary supposes, snow is white, then grass is green.’ On the assumption that one who asserts a parenthetical-containing sentence asserts that sentence bereft of its parenthetical(s), it follows that she has also asserted, ‘If snow is white, then grass is green’. Suppose further that α ’s addressee, β , does not challenge α ’s assertions of ‘Snow is white’ and ‘If snow is white, then grass is green’. Then, in light of our conception of assertion discussed above, it will follow that $\langle \vdash, \llbracket \text{Snow is white} \rrbracket \rangle \in \Sigma_{\alpha\beta}$ and $\langle \vdash, \llbracket \text{If snow is white, then grass is green} \rrbracket \rangle \in \Sigma_{\alpha\beta}$. We have observed that $\Sigma_{\alpha\beta}$ is not closed under illocutionary validity. However, in asserting her conclusion, ‘Grass is green’, α is proffering it for entry into $\Sigma_{\alpha\beta}$, and in the absence of a demurrer from β , there it will go. Should β challenge this conclusion α can defend it by adverting to information already in $\Sigma_{\alpha\beta}$.

In case [3] above we see how our account of the semantics and pragmatics of parenthetical attitudinatives does not obscure our view of how reasoners can carry out argumentation with extra-parenthetical material. Case [2] illustrates how our approach explains what is cogent, as well as what is potentially fallacious, about reasoning that shifts back and forth between parenthetical and non-parenthetical material. In addition, case [1] illustrates how our account of parentheticals explains their role in facilitating communication by making clear what we earlier referred to as an interlocutor’s dialectical status.

The technical refinements required for the above elaboration of the scorekeeping model of communication are not themselves radical, and they involve elaboration of an apparatus that has proved itself explanatorily fecund. Further, enough has been said thus far to make it plausible that these refinements enable us to articulate a conception of linguistic meaning according to which (a) a single bit of contentful language can serve

any of a variety of communicative tasks, while (b) the meaning of certain expressions can only be properly elucidated in terms some extralinguistic purpose that their utterance subserves. Thus developed, the scorekeeping model will permit an explication of certain sorts of expressions in terms, in part, of their use without jeopardizing a systematic and rigorous treatment of their meaning.⁴⁴

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