Slurs:

Their Use and Cognitive Impact

by

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Abstract

Since Kaplan's seminal (unpublished) 2005 manuscript, "The meaning of 'Ouch' and 'Oops'", derogatory language came to the philosophy of language forum. One of the main questions concerns how the distinction between a slur like "Boche" and its neutral counterpart "German" enters the semantics/pragmatics debate. In this thesis, I will attempt to capture the offensiveness conveyed by the utterance of a slur using Grice's notion of pragmatic implicatures. Slurs will be explained in exploiting Grice's notion of generalized conversational implicatures within the pluri-propositionalist framework inspired by Perry. Along this line, we can maintain a clear-cut distinction between semantics and pragmatics phenomena.

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Contents

1. Introduction

Slurs and slurring expressions present a challenge to a traditional referentialist account. According to the referentialist tradition, synonymous terms like coreferential names, such as 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus', are truth-conditionally equivalent. "Hesperus is a planet" and "Phosphorus is a planet" express the same (singular) proposition having Hesperus and Phosphorus and the property of being a planet as constituents. The same with 'adult unmarried man' and 'bachelor'. They are synonymous and can be substituted *salva veritate* in extensional contexts. Thus, "John is an adult unmarried man" and "John is a bachelor" express the same (singular) proposition, having John and the property of being an adult unmarried man as constituents.

One of the main questions we face concerns how the distinction between a slur like 'Boche' and its neutral counterpart 'German' enters the semantics/pragmatics debate. Along this line, the question boils down to whether the truth conditions of utterances like (1.1) and (1.2) are the same:

(1.1)   Max is a German.

(1.2)   Max is a Boche.

When uttering "Max is a Boche", the speaker does not merely offend Max, he also offends the whole German community. In this respect, slurs differ from insults. In saying "Max is a bastard" one only offends Max, while in saying "Max is a fag", rather than "Max is homosexual", on top of offending Max one would also offend the entire gay community. A slur's ability to offend seems also to be intentional and context

independent. Even with the best intentions one is still able to offend, and the mere mentioning of a slur in any situation can elicit offence.

In Grice's terminology, the question concerns whether with (1.1) and (1.2) a speaker says the same thing and, therefore, whether (1.1) and (1.2) are truth-conditionally equivalent. If so, the difference between the slur 'Boche' and the neutral 'German' ought to be captured in pragmatics terms (for example, through Grice's notion of pragmatic implicature). In that case, a further question arises: Is the distinction captured by Grice's conventional implicature or by conversational implicature? In the latter case, does it belong to the category of generalized or particularized conversational implicature?

If one accepts the Gricean pragmatic/semantic divide and argues, along with Bach (1999) and Corazza (2012), that conventional implicatures belong to semantics, then a slurring word can be explained either semantically (entering into what the speaker said and thus affecting the truth conditions), or it ought to be explained as a conversational implicature. An example can illustrate the Gricean distinction between conventional and conversational pragmatic implicatures. Consider:

(1.3)   Jeff is British but he is brave.

Grice (like Frege) would analyze the above as being semantically equivalent to:

(1.4)   Jeff is British and he is brave [P & Q].

(1.4) would, nonetheless, conventionally implicate that there is a contrast between being British and being brave (that is, a contrast between the antecedent and the consequent of the two disjuncts).

According to Bach (1999), on the other hand, the speaker would (semantically) express two distinct propositions:

(1.5)   That Jeff is British and he is brave.

(1.6)   That there is a contrast between being British and being brave.

With a slur, we can now ask whether in uttering (1.2) a speaker would say (semantically express) two propositions:

(1.7)   Max is German.

(1.8)   Germans are despicable [or add the stereotypical negative connotations associated with 'Boche', like being cruel, savage, . . .]

As we will see, though, there is a problem with the stereotypical "translation" (see Potts (2007) and Vallée's (2014) criticism of Williamson's (2009) account). Instead of conveying specific stereotypes, a slur would convey something along the lines of: Max is German and pragmatically implicate that Germans are despicable. The same information would be conveyed by many other slurs, like 'chink' in "Yan is a chink". The slur 'chink' would convey that Chinese are despicable.

If we accept, like Frege and Grice, the treatment of the difference between 'and' and 'but', a slur like 'Boche' does not affect the truth conditions of (1.2). (1.2) is truth conditionally equivalent with (1.1). If we take this approach, and accept Bach's argument that Grice's conventional implicature belongs to semantics, slurs should be accounted for through what Grice characterized as conversational implicature. As conversational implicatures, we must then decide whether slurs are to be treated as generalized or

particularized conversational implicatures. To illustrate the distinction between generalized and particularized conversational implicatures we can consider the following examples. If, at a party, Jane asks:

(1.9)   What time is it?

and John replies:

(1.10) Most of the guests already left.

John would conversationally implicate two things: (i) that not all the guests have left (generalized conversational implicature) and (ii) that it is late (particularized conversational implicature). If at the very same party (and situation) Jane asks:

(1.11) Where is Sue?

and John answers by uttering (1.10), he would conversationally implicate two different things as well: (i) that not all the guests have left (generalized conversational implicature) and (ii) that Sue may have left (particularized conversational implicature). While in both scenarios, the generalized conversational implicatures are the same, the particularized ones differ. As far as I can see, if slurs should be explained as conversational implicatures, then they belong to the category of generalized conversational implicatures, or so I will argue in the last chapter. This point is further illustrated by the fact that whatever the situation is surrounding the conversation, by using a slur one is likely to convey a derogatory attitude toward some group (I will show that in some situations, though, a slur can be used, in opposition to Anderson and Lepore (2012, 2013), in a non-derogatory way; such as through testimony, reportage, re-appropriation, and more).

One of the first questions I will investigate is whether this line of thought can be explained using Frege's notion of tone. Frege claimed that 'dog' and 'cur', while expressing the same sense (thus being semantically equivalent) differ in tone, illumination, or colouration [Färbung, Beleuchtung]. Therefore, if (i) Frege's notion of tone ought to be understood through Grice's pragmatic implicature, and (ii) we assume, along with Bach, that conventional implicatures are a myth (for they belong to semantics), then (iii) slurs must be explained through the notion of conversational implicature. In other words, if we accept Bach's view (as I believe we should), that conventional implicatures are a myth (that is, they are semantic in nature, and as such, contribute to what is said), we have two choices concerning the linguistic contributions of slurs: Either their contribution affects the semantic content (and thus affect the truth conditions of the sentence uttered) or they belong to pragmatics. In the latter case, they ought to be classified as conveying generalized conversational implicatures. Thus, along with Frege's notion of tone, the linguistic contribution of a slurring term should be explained using Grice's framework and his notion of generalized conversational implicatures (for a detailed discussion of generalized conversational implicatures within a neo-Gricean framework, see Levinson (2000) and Huang (2000) who explain generalized conversational implicatures as inferences on stereotypes). If we consider Grice's famous example, "Mr. X is going out with a woman tonight", we are implying that Mr. X is not going out with his wife, sister, or mother. If we consider "The nurse/secretary/dental hygienist/ . . . is happy because *she* won the lottery", we use the anaphoric 'she' because of the stereotype (or bias) that nurses, secretaries, and dental hygienists are female. On the other hand, with "The despot/general/pilot/mechanic/ . . . is happy because *he* won the

lottery", we use the anaphoric 'he' because of the stereotype (or bias) that despots, generals, pilots, and mechanics are male.

In framing this debate within a pluri-propositional framework which, as we will see in chapter five, is independently motivated (for example, by problems pertaining to communication, cognitive significance, same-saying, and others), we must investigate whether slurs can be captured by an utterance's reflexive content and how the latter helps to classify both the speaker's motivation in using a slur, as well as the audience's reaction. I will also examine and untangle how a communicator's intentions contribute to the use of slurring expressions. This should help us to understand the role played by a speaker when he or she engages in a communicative interaction.

Offensive language, the kind we find when one uses slurs, has also triggered a great deal of attention from those attempting to redefine and bolster our understanding of the semantics/pragmatics boundaries on the one side (see, for example, Hom (2008), Jeshion (2013), Camp (2013)), and for those hoping to bolster and strengthen the case for a clear-cut distinction between semantics and pragmatics (see, for example, Williamson (2009), Bach (2014), Blakemore (2014)). As a result, the very distinction between what is semantically conveyed and what is pragmatically imparted enters the picture. In other words, one can go along with a clear-cut distinction between semantic facts and pragmatic ones and, with Grice, argue that what is said (semantics) differs from what is entailed (pragmatics). On the other hand, if one rejects Grice's distinction, one is likely to accept that pragmatic processing interferes with semantic processing. As I have already mentioned, the classical example is the difference between 'and' and 'but'. In saying "John is rich but he is honest" one says that John is rich and that he is honest, and one

pragmatically entails that there is a contrast between being rich and being honest, that is, that rich people tend to be dishonest. On the other hand, some philosophers and linguists (that is, so-called contextualists, like Carston (2004), Sperber and Wilson (1986), and Recanati (2004)), champion the view that pragmatic phenomena interferes with semantics. We have pragmatic intrusion (expansion or enrichment) into semantics. That is, instead of truth conditional semantics we have truth conditional pragmatics. In this case, the traditional Grice-inspired semantic/pragmatic boundaries come under question. According to contextualists, in uttering "Jane got married and she got pregnant", one would end up saying that Jane got married and *then* she got pregnant. The temporal order of the two events is semantically conveyed. If so, unlike Grice, "Jane got married and she got pregnant", would not be truth-conditionally equivalent with "Jane got pregnant and she got married". In short, the current discussions around offensive language also affects the debate concerning the pragmatic/semantic interface.

Thus far, the analysis has focused on slurs carrying "contempt and hatred toward their targets" (Hom 2008: 416); as being "the most rhetorically powerful and insidious expressions" (Camp 2013: 330); a project directed towards finding the answer to "[w]hat explains slurs' deep offensiveness, their capacity to derogate, to dehumanize?" (Jeshion 2013: 232). The current analysis discards the idea of words as simple (semantic) tools, instead finding hidden weapons in the lexicon "used to express contempt for members of a socially relevant group" (Jeshion 2013: 240). This analysis has been interesting, and some of it quite compelling. One such idea is that words can be tools to trigger offence in people, and the use of slurring words are socially prohibited forms of speech (see Anderson and Lepore 2012, 2013). If indeed words are weapons of offence, we need to

revaluate our theories surrounding communication. It seems, though, that a word is no more a weapon than a Swiss Army knife, a multi-functional tool that I can carry to peel off the skin of an apple, to drive screws, or to pop a cork. It is possible that one can use such a knife to scare a person they may encounter while walking down a street late at night. But in such a case the analysis would not fall on the knife, and it would be fallacious to call for the prohibition of a useful tool. What seems more pertinent are the intentions of the knife-wielder, he or she is perhaps blameworthy in this case (as opposed to the knife) and it should be he or she who the police arrest and charge. A similar story may be told about slurs. Along this line, we might understand how slurs can be appropriated by a minority, like a variation of the N-word, 'niggah', that is often used within the African-American community. As Wittgenstein would say, a word, like a tool, can be used to make different moves in variegated language games.

2. Frege: Sense vs. Tone

For Frege, a word or sentence can be broken down into two components, its sense/thought [Sinn/Gedanke] and its tone [Beleuchtung-Färbung]. (see Dummett 1973: 2). The tone conveyed by an utterance does not contribute to its overall truth value, but instead provides an (extra-semantic) aesthetic value to what is being said. Frege illustrates this difference by pointing out that 'and' and 'but' differ in tone and, although their use can alter the meaning of a sentence, the sense remains unaffected. In short, 'and' and 'but' can be interchanged without affecting the truth value of the thought expressed. If a thought captures what is said by the utterance of a declarative sentence, the utterance, "John is rich and he is honest", and "John is rich but he is honest", would say the same thing and can, from a semantic viewpoint, be represented by the schema P & Q. Two speakers can be classified as same-sayers if they express the same thoughts. Thus, if Mary utters "John is rich but he is honest", and Sue utters "John is rich and he is honest", we can report that Mary and Sue said the same thing, that John is rich and he is honest— yet, they said the same thing in quite different ways. The difference, according to Frege can be explained using the notion of tone.

In *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*, Frege introduces the sense/reference distinction to deal with the problem of cognitive significance (or cognitive value). How is it, he asks us, that a statement of the form $a = a$ is trivial (and known *a priori*), while a statement of the form $a = b$ is not. The latter, unlike the former, helps us to extend our knowledge. When the Babylonians came to realize that Hesperus is Phosphorus they made a substantial advancement in their scientific knowledge. They always knew that Hesperus is Hesperus

and that Phosphorus is Phosphorus. To illustrate Frege's sense/reference distinction let us consider:

(2.1)   Hesperus is a star.

(2.2)   Phosphorus is a star.

According to Frege, each name comes equipped with a sense, or mode of presentation. Since the sense associated with the proper name enters the thought expressed by (2.1) and (2.2), these sentences both express different thoughts. It would be easy for someone hearing the above utterances for the first time to mistake them as referring to two distinct objects, when in fact, 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' designate the same object, Venus. 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' express different senses and, since senses are thought constituents, (2.1) and (2.2) express different thoughts. The thought expressed is the bearer of cognitive significance (or cognitive value) and is the primary bearer of truth value.

Frege provides another example of co-designative terms in logic, 'dog' and 'cur'. And these Fregean considerations are what will bring us to the beginning of a fruitful analysis of slurring terms. Let us consider:

(2.3)   The dog howled the whole night.

(2.4)   The cur howled the whole night.

In (2.3) and (2.4) the thought expressed, Frege tells us, is the same. Given that a thought is what is expressed by an utterance, (2.3) and (2.4) express the same thing. Furthermore,

if the thought expressed is what is said, (2.3) and (2.4) say the same thing[1]. Yet, in (2.4) the word 'cur', unlike 'dog' has unpleasant associations. This, though, according to Frege, does not affect the truth conditions and the truth value of (2.4)[2]. To deal with this feature Frege proposes the distinction between tone and assertoric force: "It makes no difference to the thought whether I use the word 'horse' or 'steed' or 'nag' or 'prad'. The assertoric force does not cover the ways in which these words differ" (Frege 1918: 331).

According to Frege, tone, like ideas, belongs to the sphere of the subjective and psychological. And, like ideas, tone is private and incommunicable. Ideas associated with a given word vary from person to person, and can even vary from sentence to sentence. Even two occurrences of the same word in the same sentence are likely to be associated with different tones. To illustrate the sense/reference and sense/idea distinctions Frege invites us to consider the word 'horse':

> And even with the same person the word 'horse' does not always conjure up the same idea. Here a great deal depends on the context. We may compare e.g. the sentences 'With what joy he rides his gallant horse' and 'I just saw a horse stumble on the wet asphalt'. So there can be no question of the same idea always

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[1] "[D]ifferent expressions quite often have something in common, which I call the sense … we must not fail to recognize that the same sense, the same thought, may be variously expressed; thus the difference does not here concern the sense, but only the apprehension, shading, or colouring of the thought, and is irrelevant for logic" (Frege 1892b: 46).

[2] "[I]n virtue of its sense such a word will excite a certain idea in us, but by itself it is far from determining this idea completely . . . it is useful for the poet to have at his disposal a number of different words that can be substituted for one another without altering the thought, but which can act in different ways on the feelings and imagination of the hearer. We may think e.g. of the words 'walk', 'stroll', 'saunter'. Those means are also used to the same end in everyday language. If we compare the sentences 'This dog howled the whole night' and 'This cur howled the whole night', we find that the thought is the same. The first sentence tells us neither more nor less than does the second" (Frege 1897: 240).

being associated with the word 'horse'. (Frege 1897: 240)

In hearing the word 'horse', the idea we would associate varies considerably from person to person, and from utterances of the same word. For example, the ideas associated with 'horse' would vary widely from person to person given that the word itself does not provide any clue to the horse's colour, its current state of motion, or its spatial positioning. In other words, the word 'horse' carries with it particular ideas, but what the word excites in each individual is going to depend on their personal or subjective experience.

As for the notion of sense, Frege argues that a rational person who accepts identity claims of the form $a = a$, may reject claims of the form $a = b$ even if the names 'a' and 'b' are coreferential. One who accepts "Tully is Tully" as true may reject or doubt "Tully is Cicero". The information needed to determine the referent is not part of language, but is an empirical fact needing to be discovered.

If we turn to the example (2.3) and (2.4) above, the words 'dog' and 'cur' do share a sense. Thus, they contribute in the expression of the same thought. If a speaker's mastery of the language is explained by his or her capability of associating senses with words, a speaker or hearer who were to affirm or accept (2.3) and deny or doubt (2.4) would not master the language and should hence be deemed as being linguistically incompetent. Yet, from an intuitive viewpoint, it seems possible that one may not know that the term 'Boche' is the derogatory term for Germans and thus that 'Boche' and 'German' would express, following Frege, the same sense. In short, we can grant to Frege that it may be plausible to claim that one who doesn't know that 'bachelor' and 'adult unmarried man' are synonymous can be deemed as manifesting some form of linguistic

incompetence. The same intuition, though, does not seem to hold when considering slurs and their neutral counterparts. Consider:

(2.5)   Max is German.

(2.6)   Max is a Boche.

For Frege, an utterance of (2.5) and (2.6) would express the same thought. If linguistic competence is explained through the capacity to grasp the thought expressed, it follows that one would fail the linguistic competence test if one did not know that 'German' and 'Boche' express the same sense and are, therefore, coextensive. This is, to say the least, puzzling. In other words, for one to master the term 'vixen' one needs to know that it is synonymous with 'female fox'. Does the same happen with slurs and their neutral counterparts? To begin with, a slur is not said to be synonymous with its neutral counterpart. The problems of slurring words seem to transcend the problem of synonymy.

If we go back to Frege's sense/tone distinction[3], 'and' and 'but' are truth conditionally equivalent. Their difference is accounted at the level of tone. Yet, if one doesn't know that 'but' unlike 'and' conveys some sort of contrast between the two conjuncts one may be labeled as linguistically incompetent. After all it is a convention of language that 'but', unlike 'and', triggers a contrast between the antecedent and the consequent. For this reason, Grice introduced the distinction between what is

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[3] "The difference between a translation and the original text should properly not overstep the first level [of ideas]. To the possible differences here belong also the colouring and shading which poetic eloquence seeks to give to the sense. Such colouring and shading are not objective and must be evoked by each hearer or reader according to the hints of the poet or speaker" (Frege 1892a: 61).

semantically conveyed and what is pragmatically imparted. In uttering "John is rich but he is honest", on top of stating (semantics) that John is rich and that he is honest, one pragmatically entails that there is a contrast between being rich and being honest. Such an entailment cannot be dismissed (or cancelled), for it is conventionally driven. If one says, "John is rich but he is honest and all rich people are honest", one would contradict oneself. Thus, according to Grice, we have a pragmatic implicature, and the latter belongs to the category of conventional implicature which must be distinguished from conversational implicature. The latter are cancellable, while the former are not.

In the next chapter I will discuss an attempt to handle slurring expressions using Grice's notion of conventional implicature.

3. A Gricean Account

Williamson (2009) provides what he calls an "alternative account" of slurring expressions. Such an account resolves many of the tensions found in the semantic accounts of slurring expressions. Williamson's strategy is to build on Grice's distinction between what is said (semantics) versus what is pragmatically implicated. According to Williamson, the implicature triggered by a slur belongs to the category of conventional implicatures[4].

Williamson recognizes that the problem of slurs can be traced back to Frege's problem of reference (extension): the slurring term 'Boche', from the standpoint of a lexicographer would have the same extension as 'German'. The difference from a Fregean standpoint is that the two terms, although they express the same sense and therefore coextensive, convey some difference. The latter, as we saw, is handled by Frege using the sense/tone distinction. In considering the difference between the neutral 'German' and the slur 'Boche', the question is raised whether the difference in tonality is what causes a response from the hearer. According to Williamson, Frege's category of tone is "too miscellaneous to take us very far in the analysis of the example" (2009: 149). If we deal with the differences between 'sweat' and 'perspire', we can explain it in terms of a difference in tonality. We are unable to pin down what the difference amounts to if we were to follow Frege and explain it along the line of subjective ideas. According to Frege, 'German' and 'Boche' express the same sense and thus refer to the same concept.

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[4] See also Schlenker (2007) and Lasersohn (2007) for a similar handling under which the negative attitude expressed by a slur is treated as a presupposition.

Hence, there can be no difference to the way in which the terms contribute to the truth conditions of sentences in which they appear. Intuitively, though, an additional element ought to be considered that we can use to explain how slurring expressions differ from their neutral counterparts if they are, following Frege, truth-conditionally equivalent.

Having rejected an explanation derived from an understanding of Frege's notion of tone, Williamson turns to Grice (1989) and his conception of conventional (pragmatic) implicatures as the solution to resolving our intuitive understanding of the difference between slurring expressions and their neutral counterparts. Continuing with the German/Boche dichotomy, Williamson provides the following example:

(3.1)   Lessing was a German.

(3.2)   Lessing was a Boche.

If we accept that (3.1) and (3.2) are truth-conditionally equivalent, someone who does not have negative attitudes towards Germans would refuse to assert (3.2) given "that to assert 'Lessing was a Boche' would be to imply that Germans are cruel . . . it's both false and abusive" (Williamson 2009: 149). He goes on to argue that the slur 'Boche' in (3.2) triggers the conventional implicature that Germans are cruel. He further postulates, as evidence for the triggering of a conventional implicature, the fact that (3.2) is both detachable and not easily cancellable, "for someone who says 'Lessing was a Boche, although I do not mean to imply that Germans are cruel' merely adds hypocrisy to xenophobia" (2009: 150). Adding further weight to his thesis, Williamson holds that this implicature is lexically driven and conventional rather than conversationally given, for the "norms of conversation would not generate any difference in implicature between

'Lessing was a Boche' and 'Lessing was a German'" (2009: 150). The difference between 'German' and 'Boche' should, therefore, be accounted for the same way Grice treats the difference between 'and' and 'but'.

Vallée (2014) raises several objections to the view that slurs trigger conventional implicatures as proposed by Williamson. Vallée's critique focuses on Williamson's suggestion that 'Boche' is capable of conveying, through an implication, the negative attitude that 'Germans are cruel': "We certainly learn what 'but' means and conventionally implicates when learning English. In learning a slur, however, we do not learn a very specific negative feature conventionally implicated by that word". (Vallée 2014: 88). Furthermore, Vallée notes the additional concern that in hearing a slur, one does not try to identify the specific, if any, negative feature conventionally implicated by that term. Williamson never backs up the suggestion that a slur conventionally conveys well-defined, specifiable descriptive content as is the case with what 'but' conventionally implicates. Vallée, in turn, argues that there is support in the literature (see Potts 2007) that a slur has descriptive ineffability[5]. For, when speakers are asked about what negative features or stereotypes are conveyed using a slur, they are unable to furnish strict definitions. This suggests that no paraphrase of 'chink', for example, can be furnished, and that no unique specific negative content can plausibly be given for what "Yan is a

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[5] This view was criticized by Geurts (2007) who claims that ineffability is not a peculiarity of slurring words, but rather pervades the whole language. According to Geurts, 'the', 'at', 'because', 'languid', 'green', and 'pretty' are all descriptively ineffable, and this means that descriptive ineffability cannot be used to draw the line between descriptive and expressive language as Potts (2007) had argued. Blakemore (2011) argues that not all the expressions mentioned by Geurts are descriptively ineffable in the same sense. In particular, the descriptive ineffability of a word such as 'languid' must be distinguished from the descriptive ineffability of words such as 'well' and 'damn'.

chink" conventionally implicates. Furthermore, Vallée points out that several slurs appear to be lexically 'empty' terms, but makes clear that from the standpoint of the speaker's intention they convey hatred and negative attitudes toward the minority or group they designate. Vallée's rejection of Williamson's treatment of slurs as conveying conventional implicatures provides a challenge: rectifying a slurring term (for example, 'chink', a slur that appears to be semantically or lexically 'empty'), while at the same time provide an explanation for our intuitive understanding of slurs as being able to convey hatred and negative attitudes. This picture is confounded by the great variety of uses of slurs, the variety of speaker's intentions, and the variety of hearer's reactions. Slurring utterances can generate a great deal of contradiction that standard models of language are often unable to explain. For example, a speaker may not intend to offend, while a competent audience can be offended. Williamson's approach, as is the standard in philosophy of language and linguistics, involves ideal speaker and hearers. Yet problems arise when offence is added to this already complicated picture. An ideal speaker knows that a word like 'wood' is polysemous ("Bring me some wood for the chimney" versus "Let's go to the woods"). An ideal speaker may not know what the relevant (negative) stereotypes are associated with a particular slur. All he or she may know in the best of circumstances is that the word is a slurring expression used to denigrate a particular group or minority. It would impractical to expect that a speaker associates all relevant stereotypes to a given slur. On the other hand, an ideal speaker easily associates determinate features to a given word. An ideal speaker knows that 'German' characterizes an individual belonging to Germany (a nation in Europe). An ideal speaker knows that a cat is a mammal with a four legs and fur. In the idiolect of an ideal speaker,

it does not seem that common words and slurs have similar enough lexical entries. The lexical entry of a common word is rich, while the entry for a slur may be virtually empty.

Williamson's account does not address the question whether a picture of language relying on an ideal speaker can capture and explain real, varied, politically, and emotionally charged elusive cognitive phenomena such as emotional reactions to language. In short, it seems to ignore the expressive dimension of language. Having said that, though, it seems natural that to explain the offensiveness of slurs, we first need an account of how a slur differs from its neutral counterpart (for example, 'Boche' versus 'German') and how that information is conveyed or transmitted. This, I reckon, should be the starting point for an exhaustive picture concerning slurring expressions.

In the case of the utterance "Lessing is a Boche", Williamson would have us believe that the utterance triggers the negative idea (conventional implicature) that Germans are cruel. This negative attitude is what triggers offence in the hearer. Nonetheless, one can imagine a situation where the slur being used is more ambiguous, such as 'chink' referring to a Chinese person. In either of the above cases it would be incorrect to attribute a specific negative attitude toward the speaker. While one may associate the negative attitude one would express by 'Germans are cruel' to the slur 'Boche', someone else may associate the negative stereotype that "Germans are arrogant", and so on and so forth. With the slur 'chink' one may be aware that it conveys a negative attitude towards Chinese people, yet be unable to specify which negative stereotypes are associated with the slur. The speaker picks up the relevant class of individuals independently of the descriptions he has in mind. The slur, like a description used referentially, is simply a tool used by the speaker to assert something about an

individual or class of individuals. In referring to Germans as Boches one may have no negative attitude (or intent) in one's mind—still picking up the relevant class (or group) independently of what one may be able to articulate in his or her own mind. In either case, offence may still be triggered. Even more peculiar is that someone who holds bigoted beliefs (and uses slurring expressions) may not have any ill will or may not intend to offend the slurred group. What he or she has in mind could perhaps be something like a distorted worldview where one group of people is believed to be inferior to another—fallacious beliefs about a group of people arrived at perhaps through improper education, negative experiences, or a political climate that tolerates or even promotes such belief systems. It does not appear that in any of these cases there is ill will or offence meant on behalf of the speaker. The speaker may be innocently naïve or uneducated. One may have never learned, because of the closed, bigoted community where he or she grew up, that a given word is a slur. Yet a slurring word (even in the mouth of an innocent toddler) carries the ability to offend. A tolerant and non-bigoted bystander would, no doubt, perceive the offence. One way to understand how a hearer can become offended by a slur is that there is an implicature triggered when spoken, an implicature that seems independent of the speaker's intentions. Williamson argues that such an implicature is triggered by the slur itself. As such, it belongs to the category of conventional implicatures. For this very reason, it cannot be cancelled.

Cancellability poses, according to Vallée, some problems for Williamson's account. Think, for instance, of Lennon's famous quote "Women are the niggers of the world" or:

(3.3)   Lessing is not a Boche, he is German.

In uttering (3.3) one does not seem to appropriate or use the slur. One may simply react to a racist using the slur. In such a case, we face what is known as meta-linguistic negation. If one says, for instance, "Mary is not a doctor, she is a pediatrician" or "Mary is not intelligent, she is brilliant", one is not contradicting oneself, that is, expressing a contradiction of the form *P and ¬P*. What one says would be that Mary is better characterized as a pediatrician than as a doctor and as brilliant rather than merely intelligent. Along this line, (3.3) should be paraphrased or understood as "Lessing should not be addressed using 'Boche' but using 'German'". In such a case the speaker explicitly expresses his contempt regarding the use of the slur.

We can further put Williamson's slurs as conventional implicatures to the test using Bach's (1999) indirect quotation (IQ) test. Bach's test allows us to determine whether elements of an utterance belongs to what is said or should be explained through various pragmatic approaches. Bach defines the test as follows:

> (IQ test): An element of a sentence contributes to what is said in an utterance of that sentence if and only if there can be an accurate and complete indirect quotation of the utterance (in the same language) which includes that element, or a corresponding element, in the 'that'-clause that specifies what is said. (Bach 1999: 340)

The test itself deals with "what is said" by following Grice's strict definition, and as a result pertains only to "indirect quotations that respect the constituent structure of the utterance being reported" (Bach 1999: 340), and does not apply to mixed quotation. Furthermore, the test "only excludes elements that do not contribute to what is said in the

sense of propositional content" (Bach 1999: 340). If we accept Bach's notion that alleged conventional implicature devices (ACIDs) contribute to what is said, then the devices themselves do not belong to pragmatics. Bach provides the following examples:

(3.4 a.) Shaq is huge but he is agile.

(3.4 b.) Marv said that Shaq is huge but that he is agile.

(3.5 a.) Shaq managed to make four out of nine free throws.

(3.5 b.) Marv said that Shaq managed to make four out of nine free throws.

In example (3.4 a.) 'but' contributes to what is said. Two things are said:

(3.4 c.) That Shaq is huge and that Shaq is agile.

(3.4 d.) That there is a contrast between Shaq being huge and Shaq being agile.

In example (3.5 a.) 'managed' contributes to what is said as well. Two things are said:

(3.5 c.) That Shaq managed to make four out of nine free throws.

(3.5 d.) That Shaq made four out of nine free throws.

Both (3.4 a.) and (3.5 a.) pass the IQ test, or to put it another way, elements in the utterances cannot be explained through conventional implicature. What would typically be thought to trigger an implicature belongs to what is said as evidenced through indirect quotation.

Bach also provides some examples of utterances that fail the test:

(3.6 a.) *Moreover*, Bill is honest.

(3.6 b.) * John said that *moreover*, Bill is honest.

(3.7 a.) * *Now that you mention it,* New York is a great place to visit.

(3.7 b.) * John said that *now that you mention it*, New York is a great place to visit.

The italicized words in (3.6 a.) and (3.7 a.) are what Bach calls "utterance modifiers". They fail to contribute to what is said. Instead these utterance modifiers enable second-order speech acts. For example, 'moreover' and 'now that you mention it' are being used to signal something to the audience. 'Moreover' modifies the utterance that follows, signaling to the audience that the next utterance spoken contains additional information about what had been spoken earlier. 'Now that you mention it' also modifies the utterance that follows, signaling to the audience that the utterance about to be spoken is connected to part of a previous discussion. Utterance modifiers that fail the IQ test indicate something about what is said. Yet, they fail to contribute semantically.

Putting Williamson's examples to Bach's IQ test reveals that slurs cannot be explained as conventional implicatures. They pass the IQ test and, as such, contribute into what is said. Let us assume that (3.2 a.) is uttered by John and (3.2 b.) is an indirect quotation of (3.2 a.):

(3.2 a.) Lessing was a Boche.

(3.2 b.) John said that Lessing was a Boche.

Since the slurring expression passes the IQ test it is not a device of conventional implicatures. It should belong, according to Bach, to semantics. Thus, with the utterance of a sentence like (3.2) the speaker would end up saying two things:

(3.2 c.) That Lessing was a German.

(3.2 d.) That Germans are [cruel or other associated negative features].

If 'Boche' contributes to what is said, then a proper account of slurs must explain how (3.2 d.) is conveyed as something said by the speaker. As we saw, following Vallée (2014) and Potts (2005), there is a difference between 'but' and a slur. A speaker who does not know that 'but', unlike 'and', triggers a contrast, lacks some linguistic competence. On the other hand, a speaker may know that 'Boche' is a slur used to denigrate German people without knowing what stereotypes, if any, are associated with the slur.

In the final chapter I will look to Levinson's idea of the default interpretation triggered by similar utterances for a potential solution. So far, we can accept with Bach that slurs, like ACIDs, pass the IQ test and, as such, cannot be explained using Grice's notion of conventional implicatures. Whether the slurring aspects of slurs ought to be captured semantically is still another question. As we will see in the last chapter, though, there is a way to deal with slurs in a pragmatic way. To anticipate, if we accept along with Bach that conventional implicatures are a myth, and that slurs ought to be accounted for in a pragmatic way, we then must characterize them as conversational implicatures. The picture I will defend in the last chapter has the merit to handle slurs along with other pragmatics phenomena such as vocatives like 'hurray' and 'alas' (which by the way, do

not pass the IQ test). In reporting John saying, "Hurray Mary got promoted", one cannot report "John said that hurray Mary got promoted". If the narrator were to instead report, "Hurray, John said that Mary got promoted", he or she would express his or her own attitude while saying that Mary got promoted. He or she would not attribute the positive attitude to John.

Before further discussing how slurs can be addressed within a Gricean framework that appeals to pragmatic implicatures, I turn to discuss an attempt to explain slurring expression by appealing to extra-linguistic considerations.

4. An Extra-Linguistic Account

As we saw so far, the use of slurring terms presents several perplexing challenges. One of the difficulties we face is how to rectify coextensivity and semantic value between a slurring term and its neutral counterpart. Besides, it seems that pragmatic implicatures are limited in their applicability, and cannot, on their own, explain a slurring term's ability to offend a group while also functioning as a sign of endearment (such as when a slur is appropriated by a group, like, for instance, the variation of the N-word 'niggah' used among some African-American communities). Slurs offer a formidable challenge to a traditional understanding of language use, leaving philosophers to debate whether the edifice of philosophy of language can support an explanation of slurs, or whether philosophers need to look externally for a better explanatory framework. Orthogonal to the problem of slurs in language is the problem of slurs in society at large; a topic offering investigative fodder for moral and political philosophers, sociologists, and political scientists. While a slur can, at times, seem as simple as a speech act, the repercussions of the use of a slurring term is as broad as reinforcing centuries of discrimination, racism, sexism, and other ills that plague society.

Given the offensive and emotionally-charged use of slurring terms, Anderson and Lepore (2012, 2013) observe that slurs are prohibited words. Anderson and Lepore argue against content-based accounts of slurs, providing an alternative explanation for how slurs cause offense, and how slurs can be re-appropriated. To make their (2012) case, Anderson and Lepore base their intuitions about slurs in practical examples and in real world use, supporting their analysis with an account of slurs in quotation. In the process,

Anderson and Lepore make an important distinction, noting the difference between a slur and an act of slurring. By taking a non-content-based approach to slurs, and looking at factors external to a model of communication, Anderson and Lepore provide a clearer view of offence, a phenomenon which does not seem to be easily captured in ideal speaker and hearer models, or in semantic or pragmatic frameworks. By committing themselves to a non-content-based account of slurs, Anderson and Lepore's strategy rests on extra-linguistic factors such as taboos, social edicts, and group membership. An important maneuver Anderson and Lepore make to connect their social story of slurs with their account of language is the claim that slurs always scope out both of quotation and attitude reports. In reporting "John said that Max is a Boche" the speaker can be accused of being racist. This is the claim I wish to challenge and, in so doing, I will attempt to undermine their account.

Anderson and Lepore provide an explanation for how appropriation, reclamation, and re-appropriation happens for slur words, a feature of slur words that had been insufficiently captured by previous expressivist accounts. To make their case, the distinction between slur words and the act of slurring is made to help identify slur words, but also because "Slurring as a speech act can be performed with expressions that are not themselves slurs" (Anderson and Lepore 2012: 3). One can derogate a group normally targeted by a slur without using a slur word. The example provided shows that 'those people' seen in (4.2) can be used to slur Mexicans despite the fact that 'those people' is not a slur word:

(4.1) A: Carrie's Mexican gardener asked her on a date.

(4.2) B: I hope she said no. She can't possibly find *those people* attractive.

With stress and emphasis placed on 'those people', the speaker of (4.2) successfully derogates Mexicans without resorting to using a slur meant to directly target Mexicans such as 'wetback' or 'beaner'.

The distinction between a slur word and a slurring act helps shed light in situations where neutral terms are used to slur, and perhaps begin a movement towards becoming a slurring word. Also, the distinction helps us better understand how a slur word can be used in non-pejorative ways, offence is decoupled from the word and act and is instead located outside of language in line with the previous discussion of Frege's sphere of subjective ideas.[6]

Anderson and Lepore (2012) examine two curious aspects of slurs: first, why slurs vary in offence across groups; secondly, how do slurs admit of non-offensive uses (didactic context, quotation, re-appropriation). Underlying Anderson and Lepore's examination is the assumption that slurs are to be understood outside of the negative content they convey (for example, expressing negative attitudes towards target groups), and instead are always prohibited because of "relevant edicts surrounding their prohibition" (Anderson and Lepore 2013: 1). Given the divergence from content-based examinations of slur words, Anderson and Lepore look to the interface between language

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[6] The work of Anderson and Lepore suggests more work can be done to see how Frege's notion of tone, as truth-conditionally irrelevant (non-content-based) and belonging to the sphere of the psychological (emotional), helps us to better understand words that trigger negative emotions toward a group or a minority. The interface between the psychological, social, and cultural and our understanding of language has been poorly studied. The traditional philosophy of language, resting on semantics and pragmatics, is poorly equipped to deal with the emotional aspects of language.

and culture, noting that slurring terms differ from their coreferential and coextensive expressions, "regardless of its past associations, once relevant individuals declare a word a slur, it becomes one" (2013: 2). Such a declaration acts as a sufficient but not necessary condition that explains how a slur enters the language. Anderson and Lepore note that the relevant individuals gain legitimacy from their membership within a targeted group, coupled with authority derived from the assent of the other members of the group. They further note that a group has a right to self-determination. This necessarily includes a right to decide the referential status of certain words: using an unapproved name would then result in insult. To make their point, Anderson and Lepore look to the Gay-Straight Alliance for a definition of slurs: "any offensive, insulting remark or comment that is meant to ridicule someone based on their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, class, etc." (2012: 4). Such a definition is dismissed, according to the authors, as it fails to distinguish slurs from slurring. Ultimately, Anderson and Lepore, in supporting a non-content-based conception of slurs, align a slur's negative features with something similar to a taboo—what they call "prohibitionism".

To provide evidence of prohibitionism, Anderson and Lepore abandon the use/mention distinction, as traditionally conceived, as a reliable guide to deal with the possibility that slurs can be used without a slurring intent or, simply, to account for situation when the uttering of a slur is acceptable. According to them, merely mentioning a word under quotation is equally as offensive as using it (which, anecdotally seems to be the case). Therefore, it is treated as prohibited, they argue. To advance this they propose the following example:

(4.3)   'Kike' means kike.

(4.4)   'Kike' is a derogatory word.

For Anderson and Lepore, both examples are a violation of the prohibition and provide a directive:

> We have a responsibility to see to it that certain violations of the prohibition are prevented or, in the event that a violation does occur, to report it, or at least voice opposition to it. (Anderson and Lepore 2012: 6)

Anderson and Lepore further examine and dismiss objections to prohibitionism, while providing further analyses of three positions they find lacking (externalism, that is the view that semantic content is determined by social institutions; expressivism, that is the view that words express the attitude of the speaker, and inferentialism, that is the understanding that words license inferences).

At first sight, it seems that Anderson and Lepore's extra-linguistic account of slurs does wider damage to our understanding of language by failing to respect an element of speech, the use/mention distinction as traditionally conceived. By failing to preserve the use/mention distinction, they risk impairing our understanding of acts such as testimony, reporting, and quotation.

Curiously enough, in another contribution Lepore (Cappelen and Lepore 2012) championed the use/mention distinction and put forward some ideas that, as I understand them, gives us the tools to dismiss Anderson and Lepore's account of slurs. In discussing how quotations work Cappelen and Lepore provide a more unified picture of quotation that follows a set of internally-coherent rules. Of interest is Cappelen and Lepore's

attempt to review and explain mixed use of quotation. Although not explicitly using examples of slurs, this mixed use of quotation is often what is found in cases of reporting and testimony. Let us consider:

(4.5)   Peter: "Mary said that Boches are unreliable".

(4.6)   Peter: "Mary said 'Boches are unreliable'".

While (4.5) is a case of indirect quotation, (4.6) is a case of direct quotation. As I understand them, Cappelen and Lepore's theory about mixed quotation is reminiscent of Davidson's paratactic theory. Davidson (1968) proposes an interesting solution to Frege's problem concerning attitude reports, based on the notion of same-saying. His famous paratactic theory runs, roughly, as follows. In reporting Galileo's utterance "The Earth moves" (actually, Galileo uttered the Italian "Eppur si muove"), we would ordinarily say:

(4.7)   Galileo said that the Earth moves.

Yet, given that the Earth is the planet inhabited by President Trump we cannot report:

(4.8)   Galileo said that the planet inhabited by President Trump moves.

Galileo was unaware of Trump's existence, let alone of Trump being the actual president of the U.S.A. Thus, following Davidson, we cannot substitute the 'the Earth' with the coreferring 'The planet inhabited by President Trump' when reporting what Galileo said. Davidson's solution to the substitution of coreferring terms into reports of the form "A said that . . . " is, no doubt, ingenious. Yet, it comes with a high price. For, Davidson argues that 'that' in (4.7/4.8) is not actually a complementaizer, but a demonstrative, like

'this' or 'that' in: "This/that is my car". What Davison proposes is, therefore, a divorce between the grammatical form and the logical form when dealing with reports like these. In a sentence of the form "A said that . . . ", 'that' is a demonstrative picking up the direct object of 'said' and not the subordinate clause "that the Earth moves". The subordinate clauses in (4.7) "that the Earth moves" and in (4.8) "that the planet inhabited by President Trump moves" disappear and become two independent clauses, that is, two new sentences. These new sentences are what the demonstrative 'that' refers to. In short, Davidson proposes that, from a logical point of view, (4.7) comprises the utterance of two distinct sentences:

(4.8)   Galileo said that.

The Earth moves.

Or

(4.9)   The Earth moves.

Galileo said that.

The grammatical connection between "Galileo said that" and "The Earth moves" is disrupted. In (4.8/4.9) 'that', by virtue of being a demonstrative, refers to the narrator's utterance of "The Earth moves". The narrator and Galileo are, following Davidson's paratactic theory, same-sayers.

Along this Davidsonian line of thought, in reporting "Mary said that Boches are unreliable" Peter is classified as being a same-sayer with Mary. Thus, Peter somewhat says the same thing that Mary had said. If so, he endorses the use of the slur 'Boches' made by Mary. For the report is of the form:

(4.10) Mary said that.

Boches are unreliable.

In uttering "Boches are unreliable", Peter and Mary are same-sayers.

A question springs to mind: What does it mean for two people to be same-sayers? How can Galileo and the reporter be classified as saying the same thing? In particular, how can we classify them as same-sayers without appealing to them expressing the same proposition? One could appeal to the notion of translation and claim that the narrator's utterance "The Earth moves" translates Galileo's utterance "Eppur si muove" or, simply that the English sentence translates the Italian one. But how could we claim that two sentences (or utterances) in different languages translate one into the other without appealing to the fact that a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for two sentences to translate is for them to have the same semantic content, that is, to express the same proposition. The fact that the utterance of two sentences express the same proposition is not sufficient when saying the two translate into one another. The English sentence "Tully is Roman" and the Italian sentence "Cicerone è romano" express the same proposition, yet an accurate translation would match 'Tully' with 'Tullio' and not with 'Cicerone'. Furthermore, Tully's utterance "Sono Romano" [I'm Roman] and my utterance "Tully is Roman" express the same proposition without translating one into the other.

If one rejects Davidson's paratactic theory, Cappelen and Lepore's notion of mixed quotation loses most of its appeal. Many philosophers who worked on attitude ascriptions (see for instance Perry 2001/2012, Corazza 2004, Recanati 1993, Salmon

1986, to name only a few) argue that a that-clause picks up a proposition. If we consider the latter to be a singular (or Russellian) proposition then in uttering "The Earth moves", Galileo expressed the proposition having the Earth as a constituent and the property of moving. In reporting Galileo's utterance in saying "Galileo said that the Earth moves", the narrator relates Galileo with the proposition that the Earth moves. If we consider that 'Boches' and 'Germans' are coextensive, then an utterance of "Boches are unreliable" and "Germans are unreliable" would express the very same proposition. And a report like "Mary said that Boches are unreliable" and "Peter said that Germans are unreliable" would correlate Mary and Peter with the same proposition. As such they could be classified as same-sayers. Yet Peter and Mary express this proposition in quite a different way. The notion of same-saying is quite tricky, for people can be classified as same-sayers if they express the same proposition or if they utter the same words (and in so doing may not end up expressing the same proposition). Consider:

(4.11) Galileo: "I was born in Pisa".

(4.12) Marina: "I was born in Pisa".

(4.13) Marina: "Galileo was born in Pisa".

(4.14) Vincenzo: "Galileo was born in Pisa".

Did Galileo and Marina in (4.11) and (4.12) say the same thing? Did Galileo in (4.11), Marina in (4.13), and Vincenzo in (4.14) say the same thing?

If same-saying means uttering the same words, then Galileo and Marina in (4.11) and (4.12), like Marina and Vincenzo in (4.13) and (4.14), say the same thing for they both used the same sentence (for argument's sake let's forget issues pertaining to time).

If, on the other hand, same-saying means to express the same content (or proposition), then Galileo in (4.11), Marina in (4.13), and Vincenzo in (4.14) said the same thing, that is that Galileo was born in Pisa. This last position seems to be the received, direct-reference view. Galileo in (4.11), Marina in (4.13), and Vincenzo in (4.14) said the same thing insofar as they expressed the same singular (or Russellian) proposition with Galileo and the property of being born in Pisa as constituents (see Kaplan 1977). This position seems, on the face of it, supported by the intuition that if we were to report what one said, we would use a locution of the form:

(4.15) A said that . . . .

with the that-clause picking out the proposition expressed by A. Thus reports like:

(4.16) Marina said that Galileo was born in Pisa.

(4.17) Vincenzo said that Galileo was born in Pisa.

capture the intuition that Marina and Vincenzo are same-sayers: they both said that Galileo was born in Pisa. We can thus correctly report:

(4.18)   Both Marina and Vincenzo said that Galileo was born in Pisa.

The story, though, isn't that simple. For, if we consider (4.11) and (4.12) and the way they fit into a schema like (4.15), we would have reports like:

(4.19) Galileo$_1$ said that he$_1$ was born in Pisa.

(4.20) Marina$_1$ said that she$_1$ was born in Pisa.

(4.19) and (4.20) suggest that Galileo and Marina didn't say the same thing, for

the that-clause in (4.19) expresses the proposition that Galileo was born in Pisa, while the that-clause in (4.20) expresses the different proposition that Marina was born in Pisa. Yet a report like:

(4.21) Both Galileo$_1$ and Marina$_2$ said that they$_{1+2}$ were born in Pisa.

is accurate and seems to suggest that Galileo and Marina said the same thing after all. Lewis (1980) pointed out that the notion of "what is said" is not univocal and can mean different things. For the purpose of this chapter I do not attempt to capture all that it can mean, I merely focus on the ambiguity between "what is said" understood as expressing the same Kaplanian content (proposition) and "what is said" understood as using the same (or similar) words.[7] One of my aims is to show that in adopting a pluri-propositionalist framework we can still use the notion of "what is said" as a reliable guide when characterizing how speakers can be classified as same-sayers. In so doing, we can counter some common skepticism concerning the notion of "what is said". As we will soon see, Vincenzo and Marina can be same-sayers because they express the same official content—roughly the same Kaplanian (minimal) proposition—or if they use the same words—and thus create the same (type-identified) reflexive content.

The anaphoric 'they' in (4.21) is ambiguous: it can mean either that Galileo and Marina both uttered "I was born in Pisa", or that they conjointly uttered "We were born in Pisa" with 'we' referring to Galileo and Marina. The anaphoric 'they' can have both a

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[7] "In every case, the proper naïve response is that in some sense what is said is the same for both sentence-context pairs, whereas in another—equally legitimate—sense, what is said is not the same … It can mean the propositional content … It can mean the exact words" (Lewis 1980: 41). For a detailed discussion of the notion of what is said and the problem it faces when dealing with 'I'-thought and *de se* assertions in general see Stojanovic (2011).

distributive or collective reading. Let us assume that (4.21) captures Galileo and Marina uttering "I was born in Pisa", that is, that it is an accurate report of what Galileo and Marina said with (4.11) and (4.12) respectively. In that case, we can say that there's a reading suggesting that with (4.11) and (4.12), Marina and Vincenzo said the same thing. To summarize, we have two interpretations of same-saying, the strict identity and the sloppy identity ones, just as in the following:

(4.22) a. Galileo$_1$ said that he$_1$ was born in Pisa.

b. Marina said that too.

where (4.22 b.) can mean either that Marina said that Galileo was born in Pisa (strict identity reading) or that Marina said that she (herself) was born in Pisa (sloppy identity reading). There are thus at least two ways in which two speakers can be classified as same-sayers: (i) if they express the same propositions and (ii) if they utter the same words (sentence). This suggests that 'saying' in a report like (4.22 b.) is ambiguous: it has either a *de re* or *de se* reading (roughly, a *de se* attribution is the one that attributes to the attributee an 'I'-thought, namely the thought the latter would express using the first-person pronoun).[8] Chierchia (1989) claims that with the strict inference (4.22 b.) the attribution to Marina is understood *de re* while, with the sloppy inference (4.22 b.), it must be *de se*.

The same phenomenon happens with so-called "Giorgione-sentences" as well:

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[8] For a detailed discussion about the distinction between *de re*, *de dicto* and *de se* attributions see Corazza (2004).

(4.24) a. Giorgione$_1$ said that he$_1$ was so called because of his$_1$ size

b. Giorgino said that too

(4.24b) can have two readings, that is the strict identity one "Giorgino said that Giorgione was so called because of his size" or the sloppy identity one: "Giorgino said that he (himself) was so called because of his size".

Be that as it may be, whatever the story about same-saying we advocate, neither the direct reference received view nor Davidson's paratactic theory is the full story. As we will see in chapter five, we need to distinguish between the official content (roughly the proposition expressed) and the reflexive context associated with an utterance. It is at the level of the latter that people can be classified as same sayers when uttering the same words. And it is at this level that the derogatory aspect conveyed by slurring expressions ought to be dealt with.

If we go back to (4.5) that I repeat here:

(4.5) Peter: "Mary said that Boches are unreliable".

the question we face is whether Peter can be accused of being racist. In other words, whether in his report he endorses the slur 'Boches', as Anderson and Lepore argue. In other words, the questions that spring to mind is whether (i) (4.5) and (4.6) are to some extent equivalent and (ii) whether in reporting what Mary said, Peter can be accused of using derogatory language, and thus, of being a racist. If we stick to the traditional use/mention distinction, in mentioning the word 'Boche' Peter cannot be accused of being a racist. To be accused of that Peter should use the word 'Boche' and, in so doing,

refer to Germans in a derogatory way. If, though, as Anderson and Lepore argue, slurs scope out of reports and quotation marks, both in (4.5) and (4.6) Peter can be labeled as a racist. Let us now consider:

(4.25) Peter: "Mary said that Germans are unreliable".

(4.26) Peter: "Mary said 'Germans are unreliable'".

If 'Boche' in (4.5) and (4.6) scope out, then 'German' in (4.25) and (4.26) scope out as well. In other words, if 'Boche' and 'German' scope out, then Peter's report entails a *de re* reading insofar as Peter uses the words to characterize Germans. In the traditional understanding of the *de re/de dicto* distinction, in a *de re* reading the report is silent on the way the attributee refers (or thought) about the relevant class of people. In its *de re* reading (4.5) could be paraphrased as:

(4.27) Of Boches, Mary said that they are unreliable.

This report, though, is silent on the way Mary referred to Germans. Mary may have used the neutral 'German'. Therefore, Mary cannot be labeled and reported as being racist. In short, if reports like (4.5) and (4.6) label both the attributee, Mary, and the reporter, Peter as racists, the report ought to be both *de re* and *de dicto*. If so, the traditional use/mention distinction gets blurred. If this is the case, even in a court scenario, one cannot attribute the specific use of a slur to a racist accused of using slurring terms. The testimony would be labeled as racist as well. This is, it seems to me, an unwelcome consequence of Anderson and Lepore's account of slurs. Needless to say, in a court situation one could accuse someone of being racist in using a pharaphrase, claiming something along the

lines of "John characterized Obama using the N-word". Yet, not all slurring expressions have proper names like 'The N-word', 'The C-word', when referring to the slur. Thus, some more complex pharaprases would be needed.

Another way to test Anderson and Lepore's account is to appeal to the notion of same-saying. As we saw, two people can be classified as same-sayers in two different ways, that is, whether they utter the same words (and thus, may end up not expressing the same proposition), or whether they express the same proposition and in so doing may fail to utter the same words. What about, though, the utterance of sentences containing slurs? Can Mary uttering "Max is a German" and John uttering "Max is a Boche" be considered same-sayers? If we consider that 'Boche' and 'German' are coextensive, then John and Mary are same-sayers because they express the same proposition. If, on the other hand, we focus on the sentences they utter, they cannot be classified as same-sayers. Think again to our court scenario. If one reports John saying, "Max is a Boche", and in so doing testify against the accused person as being racist, one cannot report "John said that Max is German". He ought, it seems to me, to report John's use of the slur and come out with an attribution of the sort: "John said that Max is a Boche" (and the report must be understood as being *de dicto*). But if, in so doing, the reporter gets labeled as racist, he or she would be unable to contribute to the testimony against John. For these simple reasons, a solution that does not blur the use/mention distinction, as traditionally conceived, should be preferred. This is what I will attempt to put forward in chapter seven. Before doing that, though, I will present a plausible, relatively new theory of communication, pluri-propositionalism.

5. Pluri-Propositionalism

Perry (2012) advances a referentialist framework that sheds light on the relation between utterances and truth conditions. The framework proposed can be characterized as pluri-propositionalism. Perry's approach to linguistic meaning builds upon Kaplan's (1989) content/character distinction. Character (roughly the linguistic meaning of an indexical expression) can be represented as a function that takes as input an aspect of context and gives as output the content (referent). With indexical expressions the relevant contextual parameters are the agent (roughly the speaker or writer needed to fix the reference of 'I'), the time (needed to fix the reference of temporal indexicals like 'now' and 'today', the location (needed to fix the reference of 'here', the demonstration, or directing intention needed to fix the reference of demonstratives 'this' and 'that', and the possible world needed to fix the reference of 'actual'). Thus, the character of 'I' is something along the lines of 'the agent of this token'. It takes as a contextual input the agent, roughly the speaker or writer, and give as output the content (the speaker or writer). The character of 'today' would be 'the day of this token' that takes as input the relevant day and gives as output/content that very day. In short, character is what helps in fixing the reference and allows one to grasp the content of a sentence given its context. The content of an utterance (or sentence-in-context as Kaplan puts it) containing singular terms (such as indexicals and proper names) is a singular (or Russellian) proposition, having the referents of the singular terms and the properties referred to by the predicate as constituents. The content expressed by the utterance of "Cicero is Roman" would thus be the singular proposition having Cicero and the property of being Roman as constituents. In set theoretic terms, such a proposition can be represented by an ordered

couple like: <Tully; the property of being Roman>. Such a proposition is true if Tully instantiates the property of being Roman, and is false otherwise. Yet, following Kaplan's theory of evaluation, a proposition is evaluated in relation to a circumstance of evaluation (for example, possible worlds). The proposition that Tully is Roman is true in some possible worlds while false in others. The propositional content is then represented as a function that allows one to couple the content (that is, the proposition expressed, or what Grice characterizes as what is said) with the given circumstances of evaluation, and give as output the truth or falsity of the given sentence. Kaplan's distinction between propositions and circumstances of evaluation is motivated by the fact that the utterance of a sentence like the following:

(5.1)   I am here now.

is not necessary, although it is true each time it is uttered. I could not be here now after all. There are scenarios (circumstances of evaluation) where (5.1) is false. In short, the utterance of this sentence does not express a necessary proposition. "I could be silent", for instance, although it sounds counterintuitive for each time one speaks it, the fact one seems to contradict oneself is not a necessary proposition. For there are possible worlds (or circumstances of evaluation) in which the proposition expressed by (5.1) is false in the circumstance I may not be speaking. In adopting Kaplan's content/character distinction, the difference between context (as needed for indexical resolution), and his circumstances of evaluation we can now turn to analyze utterances of sentences like the following:

(5.2)   I am Tully. [Said by Cicero].

(5.3) I am Cicero. [Said by Cicero].

(5.4) You are Tully. [Said by Caesar addressing Tully].

Intuitively, in uttering (5.2) and (5.3) Cicero says the same thing. In uttering (5.4) Caesar said the same thing as well. They all expressed the same proposition. These propositions may be true or false in different circumstances of evaluation. Yet this proposition is expressed by uttering different words. In introducing himself, Cicero uses different names and although he says the same thing, he passes to his audience somewhat different information. With (5.2) he conveys to his audience that he is named 'Tully', with (5.3) that he is named 'Cicero'. Yet this information, given that 'Tully' and 'Cicero' are coreferential, cannot be captured by Kaplan's content, that is, the singular proposition that has Tully and the identity relation as a constituent. The relevant information is captured by focusing on the character of (5.1) and (5.2). In short, and intuitively, Cicero tells the audience that he carries the name 'Tully'. But how can this information end up in the content, or the proposition he expresses? (5.2), (5.3), and (5.4), following the referentialist tradition, express the very same proposition having Tully and the identity relation as constituents. The very same proposition that one would express by an utterance of:

(5.5) Tully is Cicero.

To deal with problems like this we can distinguish different content (propositions or truth conditions) associated with an utterance. In short, on top of expressing the proposition that Tully is Cicero, (5.2–5.4) convey relevant extra information. If we focus on the character, that is its token-reflexive linguistic meaning, these utterances can be

analyzed, roughly, as follows:

(5.2 a.) (i) In uttering (5.2) the speaker refers to him/herself

(ii) In uttering (5.2) the speaker refers to an individual named 'Cicero'

(iii) The individual named 'Cicero' = the speaker of (5.2)

This is not what Cicero had said. Yet it is the relevant information that the audience processes, allowing them to come to know that the one addressing him or her is Cicero, and so on and so forth (see Corazza, Hurry, and Rafferty (2016)). These propositions (or content) are what Perry characterizes as reflexive content (or truth conditions) and are distinguished from the referential content (or official content) expressed by an utterance. In computing the reflexive content the audience grasps relevant information. And a competent speaker can grasp the reflexive content even when he or she is unable to grasp the referential content. In reading graffiti of (5.2) a competent speaker can compute something along the lines of (5.2 a.). If one were to receive a postcard or an email saying, "I'm having fun now", without knowing who wrote or sent it, as a competent speaker of English, one can compute that whoever wrote it was having fun when he or she wrote it. To be able to reply, though, the audience must grasp who wrote it and thus grasp the referential content.

An important feature of this pluri-propositionalist framework is its ability to deal with the Fregean problems of cognitive significance as illustrated in examples like (5.5). An identity statement like (5.5) is, according to Frege, of the form $a = b$ and it differs in cognitive significance from a statement of the form $a = a$ (for example, "Tully is Tully").

According to referentialism, "Tully is Tully" and "Tully is Cicero" express the same proposition, having Tully and the identity relation as constituents. Yet they differ in cognitive significance. While the former is trivial, and, according to Frege known *a priori*, the latter is informative and often known only *a posteriori*. Pluri-propositionalism helps us to deal with this Fregean problem or puzzle. To illustrate this framework, let us consider the utterance of a simple sentence like:

(5.6)   Tully is Roman.

Its reflexive content can be cashed out, following Perry, as follows:

(5.6 a.) There is an individual x and a convention C such that:

(i)   C is exploited by (5.6)

(ii)   C permits one to designate x with 'Tully'

(iii)   x is Roman

The referential content would correspond to the proposition (roughly, the intuitive what-is-said or Kaplanian content):

(5.7)   That Tully is Roman.

Along this line, Cicero's utterance of (5.2), "I am Cicero" can be analyzed as follows. Its reflexive content would be:

(5.3 a.) (i)There is an individual x who is the agent of (5.3) and in (5.3) 'I' refers to it

(ii) There is an individual y and a convention C such that:

(ii a.) C is exploited by (5.3)

(ii b.) C permits one to designate y with 'Tully'

(iii) x = y

Reflexive content helps us to handle Frege's insights concerning cognitive significance. Reflexive content or truth conditions, like propositions, are abstract entities. As such, they lack causal power. Yet we can consider them as classifiers of what goes on in one's mind when one processes utterances, that is, reflexive content helps us to classify speakers' mental states.

To further illustrate the value of pluri-propositionalism, it is useful to examine how the reflexive content is also able to capture speakers' intentions. In introducing oneself in an utterance like, "I am Cicero", for instance, the speaker's aim is to reveal his or her name to their audience. Imagine, for example, that a woman named 'Jane Smith' is going on a blind date. Jane could introduce herself to her date by saying, "My name is 'Jane Smith'" or more simply by "I am Jane Smith". The latter is an introduction providing information expressed by a statement of the form $a = b$. The very same proposition could be expressed by a statement of the form $a = a$, like "Jane Smith is Jane Smith". Of course, Jane is not aiming to provide equality claims, but rather just wants to let her audience know that she carries the name 'Jane Smith'. This feature is fully captured by the reflexive content of the utterance. As Russell puts it:

Let us begin with my name. We substitute 'B.R.' for 'I' or 'you' or 'he', as the

case may be, because 'B.R.' is a public appellation, appearing on my passport and my identity card. If a policeman says "Who are you?" I might reply saying "Look! this is who I am", but this information is not what the policeman wants, so I produce my identity card and he is satisfied. (Russell 1948: 101)

Communicative intentions can often be elusive and difficult to grasp for competent speakers of a language, but a pluri-propositional framework can reveal the various contents encapsulated within an utterance. Thus, Jane's utterance:

(5.8)   I am Jane Smith.

can be analyzed as follows. Its reflexive content would be:

(5.9)   (i) There is an individual x who is the agent of (5.8) and in (5.8) 'I' refers to it

(ii) There is an individual y and a convention C such that:

(ii a.) C is exploited by (5.8)

(ii b.) C permits one to designate y with 'Jane Smith'

(iii) x = y

An act of communication, as illustrated above, is analyzed at the level of reflexive content. A speaker's intention can be understood, in example (5.9) through (ii), or by the use of a convention. It becomes clear that Jane is not merely providing a statement of equality, but is intending to exploit the fact that she carries the name 'Jane Smith'.

The pluri-propositionalist framework is explained in pragmatics terms by Perry and Korta (2011) as a picture that helps us to illustrate the complex role intentions play in speech acts. Communication is expressed through three main ideas: language is action, or rather, as Austin claimed, that language is a way of doing things with words; language is goal oriented—speakers have a plan that is captured by their intentions; and that there is a separation between reflexive and referential truth conditions, or that an utterance, a tool to convey information, has varying levels of truth conditions or content.

By unpacking an utterance's reflexive content, we can provide a deeper analysis of a speech act. A simple referentialist system that uses a mono-propositionalist framework (a single proposition encapsulating all relevant information) will have difficulties, both in parsing problems of cognitive significance and in handling the variegated aspects involved in a communicative act. It will also make it difficult to capture the different levels of intentionality involved in a speech act. In some communicative situations, the speaker aim is for the audience to process the reflexive content. Imagine that John, while entering his home, hears some noises that he takes to be from intruders or robbers. To scare them away he may utter: "I'm a policeman with a loaded gun". In processing the reflexive content, roughly that the speaker is a policeman with a loaded gun, they may be scared and escape from the back door. If the robbers were grasping the referential content with John as a constituent (of the proposition expressed and or what is said), in knowing that John is an elderly man who never carries a gun, they may not be scared away. In such a case, it is better (and it is John's communicative aim) for the intruders to merely

process the reflexive content of the utterance.[9] Another example may help us to elucidate this important point in distinguishing how proper names differs from indexical expressions when we come to fulfill some speech acts. A simple example can illustrate their different roles in a communicative exchange. Imagine that while eating with a group of people I want some salt that is out of my reach. To fulfill my aim, i.e. to get the salt, I say to the one next to me:

(5.10) I'd like some salt, please.

I could have said, in the manner of DeGaulle:

(5.11) NN would like some salt, please.

In normal circumstances, that is everything being as expected, an utterance of (5.10) is more appropriate than an utterance of (5.11). After all, my audience may not even know my name, that is that I am NN:

> Here you are conveying to your hearer that a certain person would like the salt. The predicate 'like some salt' conveys what the person, to whom you refer, would like. The word 'I' conveys which person that is, but it does more than that. By producing your utterances so that it is heard, you provide the hearer a succession of cognitive fixes on the referent, that is the person of whom wanting the salt is being predicated. It is (i) the person who the speaker is referring to. Your choice of 'I' indicates that that person is (ii) the speaker of the utterance. In this particular situation, the hearer can see who the speaker is: (iii) the person next to

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[9] For a discussion along these lines see Korta and Perry (2006).

him. This puts him in a position to carry out the implicit request, and pass you the salt. (Korta & Perry 2011: 33)

In such a situation, my uttering of (5.10) is more natural and appropriate than the uttering of (5.11) in virtue of the audience's mastery of the meaning of the first person pronoun, I provide him or her with a perceptual cognitive fix on the referent, myself, a fix that may not be provided by the use of my name. This is what ultimately triggers my listener to fulfill my desire. My audience can pass me the salt, for he or she masters the meaning of 'I' and he or she "grasps" (5.10)'s reflexive truth conditions. This semantic knowledge, plus the context of the utterance, is what ultimately puts the audience in the position to identify the speaker. Had I uttered (5.11) instead, I would have put an unnecessary cognitive burden on the hearer. For I would have assumed that my audience knew that the speaker of (5.10) was NN.[10]

Slurs, as a type of speech act, have been elusive to philosophers of language due to their commitment to mono-propositionalism. They have been incapable of properly accounting for a speaker's intention in a slurring act, ineffective at grappling with the offensive dimension of a slur, and unable to explain, as we saw in chapter three, the fact that some slurs have ineffable content and may even be lexically 'empty'.

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[10] "To move back to our dinner party, suppose Bob Dole is at the dinner too. Bob Dole, the Republican candidate for President in 1996, has the habit of referring to himself in the third person. He says to the person next to him: 'Bob Dole would like some salt'. This may not work; he isn't well known as he once was. If instead he had said 'I'd like some salt', it would have worked. His choice of words puts an unnecessary cognitive burden on the hearer. It also sounds a bit pretentious. This is because his plan assumes that people will have a rich enough notion of Bob Dole to recognize him. And that's the sort of assumption most ordinary folk won't make, when there is a simpler way of getting the hearer to have the appropriate cognitive fix, by using the first person" (Korta & Perry 2011: 35).

6. Pluri-Propositionalism and Slurs

As shown so far, slurs present a variety of problems for linguists and philosophers of language. On the one hand, it appears that the intention of the speaker alone cannot be the sole carrier of offence. On the other hand, one can attempt to use a slur in an endearing way while still offending. Yet the words themselves are not the bearer of offence.

Words are simple tools and, as such, any word has the capacity to offend under the right circumstances. An example of the shifting landscape of slurs can be seen in their movement from being used neutrally, converted to be used as a slur, and re-appropriated. The word 'queer', for example, went from being a neutral term meaning strange, to a slur used to denigrate homosexual men, to a term that nowadays is used to denote, in a neutral way, sexual or gender identities that do not correspond to traditional norms. Finally, slurs are coextensive with their neutral counterparts, making it difficult to pinpoint the extra dimension that separates a slur from its neutral counterpart.

Furthermore, a slur cannot be a conventional implicature, as Williamson would have us believe. As I have already mentioned, Bach (1999) locates alleged conventional implicatures on the (semantic) side—they belong to what is said. In uttering a sentence containing ACIDs (alleged conventional implicature devices), the speaker expresses (says) two things—the speaker expresses two distinct propositions. One may be true and the other false. As mentioned in chapter three, Vallée (2014) further notes the lexical emptiness of slurs themselves, furthering the criticism of the idea that slurs operate through conventional implicatures:

In learning a slur, however, we do not learn a very specific negative feature conventionally implicated by that word. Moreover, hearing a slur, we do not try to identify the single negative feature conventionally implicated by that term. It is unclear to me, and it is not backed by any arguments in the literature, whether 'boche', or any slur for that matter, semantically conveys a well-defined, specifiable content as is the case with what 'but' conventionally implicates. (Vallée 2014: 88)

A plausible theory of slurs cannot be dissociated from a general framework of language and communication, one that enables us to capture variegated intentions, motivations, and the speaker's general communicative plan. As far as I can see, slurs go part and parcel with the rich subtleties (for example, irony, metaphors, loose talk, and others) surrounding communication. Thus, slurs, like other linguistic items, are best accounted for by adopting the pluri-propositionalist model. As Perry puts it:

I cannot accept that a semantic theory can be correct that does not provide us with an appropriate interface between what sentences mean, and how we use them to communicate beliefs in order to motivate and explain action. A theory of linguistic meaning should provide us with an understanding of the properties sentences have that lead us to produce them under different circumstances, and react as we do to their utterance by others. (Perry 2012: 9)

By accounting for our understanding of slurs within a pluri-propositionalist model of communication, we should be able to neatly preserve semantic phenomena and keep it insulated from pragmatic phenomena. As a result, we capture the speaker's plan (such as

his or her intentions and beliefs), and the conventions being exploited. By unpacking an utterance and revealing multiple levels of content, we can classify the linguistic interaction in different ways. This variety of content, or truth conditions associated with an utterance, can be reflexive or utterance-bound, with the utterance itself as a constituent. In other words:

> Any statement, whether or not it contains indexicals, has multiple reflexive contents associated with it, which will be grasped by a semantically competent listener and are necessary for an account of cognitive significance. . . . if we examine carefully what the problems that cases of co-reference and no-reference pose for semantic theory, we shall see that these problems can be solved at the level of reflexive content. (Perry 2012: 12)

Important to slurs is the understanding that these variegated contents expand from the purely reflexive to the referential, or official, content: They constitute a family of gradually less reflexive and less contextually dependent content. The content expressed by an utterance is, according to Perry, usually considered the referential content or official content and corresponds to the intuitive direct-reference concept of what is said (or Kaplanian content).

To illustrate the difference between official and reflexive contents, let's suppose that Mary utters (6.1) while John utters (6.2):

(6.1)   I dislike Boches.

(6.2)   Mary dislikes Boches.

Approaching (6.1) and (6.2) from the perspective of a direct reference framework, the proposition expressed would be as follows:

(6.1/6.2 a.) That **Mary** dislikes Boches/Germans.

(Following Perry I will use boldface for content constituents, roman when the constituent is the object designated, and italics for an identifying condition following Perry's method of notation). (6.1) and (6.2) express the same singular proposition, with Mary and the property of disliking Boches as constituents. (6.1) and (6.2) have the same official content.

As we saw, an utterance's reflexive content helps us to deal with problems pertaining to cognitive significance. As Frege (1892) pointed out, one expands one's knowledge when one comes to realize that Hesperus is Phosphorus. For, although the referential or official content of "Hesperus is Phosphorus" doesn't differ from the one of "Hesperus is Hesperus", their reflexive contents differ.

A pluri-propositionalist account begins by distinguishing the reflexive content of an utterance, like (6.1). The reflexive content of (6.1) corresponds to what a hearer would understand, given his/her knowledge of English. This can be rendered by the following:

(6.1 b.) That *the speaker of* **(1)** dislikes Boches.

(6.1 b.) is reflexive content. It has (6.1), the utterance itself, as a constituent and is about (6.1) itself. (6.1 b.) is a proposition associated with (6.1) in virtue of the meaning of the sentence, of the type, "I dislike Boches". This reflexive content is given by the linguistic meaning of the type, independently of any contextual feature. Any competent speaker of

English grasps it, that is, grasps (6.1 b.). If one were to read (6.1) on a blackboard or in an anonymous letter without knowing who wrote it (that is, who the referent of 'I' is), a competent speaker would understand at least (6.1 b.). (6.1 b.), though, is not the content expressed, it is not what Jane said in uttering (6.1). Jane said that she dislikes Boches— she didn't say that the speaker of (6.1) dislikes Boches. To borrow Frege's terminology (6.1 b.) is not the subject matter of (6.1). Jane talked about herself (the subject matter); she didn't talk about the words she used. Yet (6.1 b.) plays a crucial role in Jane's communicative plan. Given that John understands (6.1) and notices that the speaker of (6.1) is the person sitting next to him, he can grasp the following:

(6.1 c.) That ***the person next to me*** dislikes Boches.

This is not the content expressed by (6.1); it is not what Jane said, but it's the relevant content that John should grasp for Jane's plan to succeed, that is, to offend John (assuming he is of German descent). It is this content and not the indexical or the referential content that accounts for the cognitive motivation and cognitive impact of (6.1). (6.1 c.) is understood because of the hearer's knowledge of English, namely (6.1 b.), the perceptual awareness of the context of utterance, who the speaker is, and where she is located. John grasps it through his perception of the utterance.

With proper names the situation is slightly different. The reflexive content of (6.3), uttered by David to John, would be the following (see Perry 2012: 122):

(6.3 b.) That ***the person the convention exploited by* (6.3) *permits one to designate with 'Mary'*** dislikes Boches.

John's mastery of English does not give him more than that. Without any hints about the naming convention the speaker is using to refer to a particular individual, John is not in the position to grasp the official content of (6.3), that is, he is cognitively blind about the content expressed. Furthermore, John will not get any other 'intermediate' content that could give him an idea about the referent picked out by David's use of 'Mary'. While (6.3 b.) directs the hearer, John, to an aspect of the context of the utterance, the speaker, (6.3 b.) does not lead John to any contextual aspect and, thus, to further less context-sensitive (or incremental, to use Perry's terminology) content.

Let us now imagine that in our scenario, John, unlike Jane, has no bad attitudes towards German people. John would not be keen to use the slur 'Boche'. John's understanding of English could even be incomplete, for example, he could be unaware of the fact that 'Boche' is a slurring term for Germans. In that case Jane would fail in her communicative plan to express her contempt towards Germans. In situations such as this one, the context or other nonverbal cues may help Jane succeed in her plan. For Jane's communicative plan to succeed, John must know that 'German' and 'Boche' are coextensive and that the latter, unlike the former, is a derogatory term.

The main question we face is how to capture, within the pluri-propositionalist model, derogatory aspects conveyed by the utterance of a slurring expression. Let us begin with the Kaplanian character. The character of an indexical expression directs us towards some aspect of context to fix the reference. The character of a common noun, say a count noun like 'apple', does not direct us to some aspect of context to fix its extension. The character of 'German' does not direct us toward some contextual input to fix its value (or extension) either. Common nouns come to us with a fixed character. Each

context of use provides the same value. If we consider that 'Boche' and 'German' are coextensive, their character give us, in each context, the same extension. Yet, 'Boche', unlike its neutral 'German', conveys a negative attitude toward a group of people. If we start by considering that 'German' and 'Boche' are coextensive, it seems that we should look at some pragmatic phenomena to deal with slurring expressions. The best place to look is towards Grice's conversational implicature. In using slurs, one may end up expressing the same proposition (saying the same thing in Gricean terms) as he or she would have done if using the slurs' neutral counterpart, but, the slur conveys a negative attitude. The latter should be captured by means of Grice's conversational implicature.

I will now try to show how offence is triggered via a conversational implicature using the Perry-inspired account of communication. Consider the utterances:

(6.4)   John is a Boche.

(6.5)   John is a German.

which could be understood, respectively, as follows:

(6.4/6.5 a.)   That ***the person the convention exploited by*** **(4/5)** ***permits one to designate with 'John' is a*** **German**.

while its official content would correspond to the proposition:

(6.4/6.5)   b. That **John** is a German.

Since (6.4), unlike (6.5), also conveys the negative attitude of the speaker regarding Germans, the reflexive content of (6.4) also encapsulates the agent of (6.4)'s prejudice,

namely,

  (6.4 d.) That *the agent of* **(6.4) has a negative attitude toward Germans**.

(6.4 c.) should capture the conversational implicature that that the agent of (6.4) has a negative attitude triggered by the slur 'Boche', targeting Germans in general. If Perry is right in arguing that reflexive content helps us to classify agents' attitudes (and, as such, allows us to deal with problems pertaining to cognitive significance), then the reflexive content triggered by the slur 'Boche' captures the attitude of the agent of (6.4).

  The question we now face is whether, within a Gricean framework, (6.4 d.) is triggered by a particularized or a generalized conversational implicature. Since the negative attitude triggered by uttering a slur is somewhat conventional it is rather difficult to cancel. As such, it is better explained along the lines of a generalized conversational implicature. For if it were a particularized conversational implicature it could be easily cancelled. If the utterer of (6.4) said, "John is a Boche, and I like Germans", he or she would contradict him or herself. Slurring utterances cannot be easily cancelled. It seems, therefore, that if we want to capture the negative attitude of the speaker, we are forced to look at Grice's generalized conversational implicatures. In so doing, we can capture the fact that the negative attitude is somewhat conventionally conveyed by the slur used. Here is what Grice says concerning generalized conversational implicatures:

    Sometimes one can say that the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the absence of special circumstances) carry such-and-such an implicature or type of implicature. Non-controversial examples are perhaps hard to find, since it is all too easy to treat a generalized conversational implicature as

if it were a conventional implicature. . . . Anyone who uses a sentence of the form X is meeting a woman this evening would normally implicate that the person to be met was someone other than X's wife, mother, sister, or perhaps even close platonic friend. (Grice 1967/87: 37)

Following Grice, a generalized conversational implicature can be presumed or presupposed independently of a context of the utterance. It constitutes, so to speak, the default interpretation a speaker would associate with an utterance. As such, it constitutes information that a competent speaker, all other things being equal, computes given a linguistic input. Importantly, a generalized conversational implicature is cancellable:

Since, to assume the presence of a conversational implicature, we have to assume that at least the Cooperative Principle is being observed, and since it is possible to opt out of the observation of the principle, it follows that a generalized conversational implicature can be canceled in a particular case. It may be explicitly canceled, by the addition of a clause that states or implies that the speaker has opted out, or it may be contextually canceled, if the form of utterance that usually carries it is used in a context that makes it clear that the speaker is opting out. (Grice 1967/87: 39)

If we take Grice's view on generalized conversational implicatures as being the information that one extracts from, say, an anonymous letter, we can deal with the conventional aspect associated with slurs, that is, the information that a competent speaker can infer in virtue of his or her mastery of the language. To illustrate how generalized conversational implicatures work and can be cancelled, let us consider, once

again, the classic party scenario. If, at his garden party, John asks Jane "Should we put out more to drink?" and Jane replies, "Most of the guests have already left", the particularized conversational implicature is that they should not bring out more to drink, while the generalized conversational implicature would be that not all guests have left. Both implicatures can be cancelled. To cancel the particularized conversational implicature Jane could add, "But all the people who are drinking are still here". To cancel the generalized conversational implicature that not all the guests left, he could add, "Actually all the guests left". To be sure, to cancel the generalized conversational implicature, Jane must somewhat flout the maxim of quantity, for she would say more than is required. If slurs are classified as devices triggering generalized conversational implicatures they should be cancellable as well. Yet, with the utterance of a sentence like "I have no prejudices against Germans but Max is a Boche" one does not seem to be cancelling his or her negative bias towards Germans. If someone utters, "I love Boches", or "Boches are my favorite people", one fails to erase the negative attitude he or she manifests in relation to Germans. The least we can say is that the negative attitude conveyed by a slur cannot be cancelled without difficulties.

Conventional implicature, according to Grice, cannot be cancelled, while generalized conversational implicature can be, although with many difficulties (and context building), be cancelled. The negativity component conveyed by a slurring expression seems to be, like conventional implicatures (or presuppositions) uncancellable. Let us consider the utterance of a sentence like:

(6.6)   John stopped smoking.

presupposes (or implies) that John used to smoke.

The negation of this sentence or in a question format:

(6.7)   John didn't stop smoking.

(6.8)   Did John stop smoking?

Also conveys the presupposition (or implicature) that John used to smoke.

The same phenomenon seems to apply with slurs. Consider:

(6.9)   Max is a Boche.

(6.10) Max is not a Boche.

(6.11) Is Max a Boche?

(6.9), (6.10), and (6.11) all seem to implicate the negative attitude of the speaker regarding German people. Imagine a context where someone hears "Max is a Boche". One's reaction could be: "Max is not a Boche, he is German". Or in being asked whether Max is a Boche one replies "NO, he is German". Or in hearing "Max is not a Boche" one replies, "Sure, he is German". In these discourse situations, the interpretation that comes to my mind is that the non-racist speaker does not endorse the slurring expression. In uttering "Max is not a Boche, he is German", like in the other previously mentioned cases the non-racist people openly condemn the use of the slur. To my ear, these are cases of so-called meta-linguistic negation. Consider a doctor telling someone: "You cannot tell Mary that she is knocked up, you ought to tell her that she is pregnant". In such a speech act the speaker conveys to the hearer the message that she should not use the expression 'knocked up' but the (semantically) equivalent 'pregnant'. Similarly, in addressing a group of racist people, one can utter,"You cannot tell Max that he is a Boche, you must

tell him that he is German". These cases can be accounted as being similar to cases of meta-linguistic negation. In such a discourse situation, it seems to me that the negative attitude conveyed by the slur can be cancelled[11]. As Grice recognized, it isn't easy to cancel a generalized conversational implicature, yet with some difficulty it can be done. For these reasons, I believe, following Vallée, the negative attitude conveyed by a slur is best captured within the Gricean framework supplemented by the pluri-propositionalist model of communication, through generalized conversational implicatures rather than conventional implicatures.

We need strong contextual inputs or clearly articulated clauses to convey the fact that the speaker does not endorse the generalized conversational implicature usually

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[11] Slurs pass Bach's IQ test (see Hom 2010). Consider a case where an agent reports what John said by uttering:

(1) People that treat Germans as Boches are racist.

A correct report would be:

(2) John said that people that treat Germans as Boches are racist.

The report could not be:

(3) John said that people that treat Germans as Germans are racist.

For (3) does not accurately report what John said. Actually, it would report John as saying something false. It follows that slurs can be treated as alleged conventional implicatures and thus would be part of what is said (they would affect the truth conditions of the utterance). Yet, if as I argued, the negative component conveyed by a report can be cancelled, slurs contribute in triggering generalized conversational implicatures. Hom (2010: 178) proposes the following example where a pejorative expression can be cancelled:

(4) John is a fucking lawyer, but I don't think that it's bad or out of the ordinary
that he's a lawyer; [he's just having (morally reprehensible) sex / he just
specializes in laws regarding (morally reprehensible) sex]

As Hom (2010: 179) points out "If the second conjunct in each of (4) successfully cancels the expression of the negative attitude on the part of the speaker, then pejorative content cannot be explained by conventional implicature".

triggered by the slur. It is an open question whether, for example, an actor dressed like an 18th century Irish man overindulging in whiskey and using the word 'mick' during a humorous sketch, conveys a negative attitude towards the Irish. Anderson and Lepore (2013) would claim that even in this situation, the slur can extend beyond the scope of the sketch and convey a negative attitude towards the Irish.

One way to consider slurs, and other biases that fall along the lines of generalized conversational implicatures, is to consider the latter as belonging to a theory of utterance(-type) meaning:

> The theory of GCI [generalized conversational implicatures] is not of course a theory of conversational idioms, clichés, and formulae, but it is a generative theory of idiomaticity—that is, a set of principles guiding the choice of the right expression to suggest a specific interpretation and, as a corollary, a theory accounting for preferred interpretations. . . . The theory thus belongs to the intermediate level of a theory of communication, the layer of utterance(-type) meaning. (Levinson 2000: 24; italics in the original)

The fundamental idea underlying a theory of communication focusing on generalized conversational implicatures must take on board "the general contribution of a level at which sentences are systematically paired with preferred interpretations" (Levinson 2000: 27). Translated into the terminology I assumed, this may amount to stating that we need a general theory of biases where a given expression on top of its semantic value systematically conveys a (pragmatic) default interpretation. The theory of use concerning biases in general, and slurs in particular, would come close to the theory of generalized

conversational implicatures. Thus, 'German' and 'Boche', like synonymous expressions such as 'vixen' and 'female fox', have the same extension. Yet, the default interpretation associated with 'Boche' conveys the negative attitude of the user regarding German people. If John and Paul both use the slur 'Boche' they convey the same negative attitude. The latter, as a default interpretation, triggers a generalized conversational implicature. If the pluri-propositionalist model of communication I endorse is the correct one, then this implicature is captured in the reflexive content associated with the utterance. In other words, generalized conversational implicatures systematically pairs expressions with preferred interpretations. To illustrate this, let us consider an utterance comporting two biases:

    (6.12) Alas, Jane is a whore.

A competent speaker of English will compute, without further information (linguistic and/or contextual), that the speaker has both (i) a negative attitude toward female sex-workers, triggered by the slur-word 'whore' instead of the neutral 'sex-worker' and (ii) a negative attitude regarding Jane being a sex-worker, triggered by the interjection 'alas'. That is, an utterance of (6.12) encompasses two biases, one triggered by the slur 'whore' regarding sex-workers and the other triggered by the interjection 'alas', regarding Jane being one of them. If instead of (6.12) the speaker or writer had produced:

    (6.13) Jane is a sex-worker.

He or she would have said (in Grice's sense) the same thing, that is, he or she would have expressed the same proposition (or Kaplanian content), that Jane is a sex-worker. Yet, in expressing its content, the speaker or writer conveys different attitudes. While (6.13) is

neutral, (6.12) conveys the speaker or writer's biases; the latter triggers two generalized conversational implicatures. These implicatures could be understood, in adopting the pluri-propositionalist framework, as follows:

(6.12/6.13 a.) That *the person the convention exploited by* **(6.12)** *permits one to designate with 'Jane'* **is a sex-worker**.

While its official content would correspond to the proposition:

(6.12/6.13 b.) That **Jane** is a sex-worker.

Since (6.12), unlike (6.13), also conveys the biases that the utterer (or writer) has a negative attitude regarding sex-workers and regarding the fact that Jane is a sex-worker, the reflexive content of (6.12) also encapsulates the agent of (6.12)'s biases,

(6.12 c.) That *the agent of* **(6.12) has a negative attitude toward** *the individual s/he refers to using 'Jane'* **being a sex-worker**.

(6.12 d.) That *the agent of* **(6.12) has a negative attitude toward sex-workers**.

(6.12 c.) should capture the generalized conversational implicature that the agent of (6.12) has a negative attitude (conveyed by the use of the interjection 'alas') concerning Jane being a sex worker, while in (6.12 d.), the generalized conversational implicature that the agent of (6.12) has a negative attitude[12], triggered by the slur 'whore', towards

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[12] There is currently a rich debate, especially among neo-Griceans and contextualists concerning scalar implicatures. On the neo-Gricean side (see, for example, Levinson 2000), the debate concerns

sex workers in general. If I am right (following Perry) in arguing that reflexive content helps us to classify agents' attitudes (and, as such, to deal with problems pertaining to cognitive significance), then the reflexive contents triggered by the interjection 'alas' and the slur 'whore' captures the attitude of the agent of (6.12).

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whether they are best captured in exploiting Grice's notion of a conventional implicature or by a generalized conversational implicature (see, for example, Levinson 2000). Contextualists (see, for example, Relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson inspired)) try to deal with scalar implicatures through the notion of pragmatic free enrichment or expansion.

(1) Some people are racists.

implicates

(2) Not all people are racists.

The example found in (2), according to Grice, is cancellable by the utterance of a sentence like "Some people are racist; indeed, all are". Such an implicature, being cancellable, is best understood as a generalized conversational implicature. (See Novak and Sperber (eds.) 2004 for a recent debate on the experimental work on scalar implicatures). Similar experimental work may be fruitful in dealing with the use of slurs and slurring expressions, and the way they are pragmatically calculated. To my knowledge empirical investigations on how slurring expressions are calculated has not yet been conducted.

7. Conclusion

In adopting the pluri-propositionalist model of communication, and in treating slurring expression along Grice's notion of generalized conversational implicatures, we can deal with the following:

1.

Against Anderson and Lepore's account of slurs, we can handle cases where a speaker can use a slur without conveying a negative attitude (see, for instance, cases of appropriation like the variations of the N-word used by the African-American community, cases where testimony is provided, such as in a courtroom setting, for example, one may attribute to someone the use of a slur without having to endorse the slur.

2.

In handling a slurring expression at the reflexive level, we can maintain the Gricean distinction between semantics and pragmatics.

3.

Within the pluri-propositionalist treatment of slurring expressions we can account for the speaker's motivation and intentions in his or her utterance of a slurring expression. The reflexive content triggered by a generalized conversational implicature allows us to classify, in the case of slurring expression the speaker or writer, negative attitudes towards the group he or she aims to undermine and discriminate.

4.

In treating slurs in the way Grice treats generalized conversational implicatures, we can classify slurs as belonging to the same phenomena as many other pragmatics phenomena, like, for example, the vocatives 'hurray' and 'alas' that, although are semantically inert, convey the speaker's attitude.

5.

Grice's notion of generalized conversational implicature also allows us to capture some default interpretations associated with the slurring words, and the idiomaticity of a given language. In that way, we can also understand how slurring expressions are culturally and temporally bound. As an example, we can consider 'homosexual'. Its meaning and connotation did not change across time. Its counterpart 'queer' changed its connotation in a relatively short period of time from being a slur to being a well-accepted expression (for example, we now have the academic field labeled 'Queer Studies').

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