ANN JORID KLUNGERVIK GREENALL. Towards a socio-cognitive account of flouting and flout-based meanings. Doctoral Thesis, University of Trondheim, English Department. Trondheim 2001. 290 pp. (mimeographed).

Reviewed by Jacob L. Mey

0. Introduction

In this work, the author argues against the traditional interpretations of Grice's Maxims: she wants to 'rescue Grice' in ways not practiced before (Leech 1983 is one example of a trend to 'contextualize' the maxims in a social setting, but letting them grow beyond control).

Others have endeavored to reduce Grice's importance, and doing this, paved the way for a total dismissal of the maxims and the CP as an essentialist effort to capture the multiplicity of human communicative behavior (thus, e.g. Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995).

The author is right when she asserts her diffidence of the 'monologic' approach, and advocates a 'socio-cognitive reinterpretation' of the maxims, so as to promote a 'new sprouting' of the old maxims. Yet, a number of problems remain, some of which will be discussed below

1. Cooperation and interpretation

In the following, I will first raise the question of what 'moves', and motivates, interpretation, seen both as an objective phenomenon ('a flow') and as a personal need for communicators. The author discards the idea of a common rationality as the underlying principle of communication, indeed the inescapable condition for the cooperation that it presupposes (p. 61). (I am even quoted as considering cooperation as a 'kind of rationality', based on a feeling that 'everything goes better with cooperation', as it does with Coke).

A problem arises when the author discusses the nature of the 'Gricean cooperation' (p. 17). On the one hand, she seems to assume that cooperation is everywhere ('observably common, if not all-pervasive'; p. 13). On the other hand, she remarks, it is only a 'sketch' (p. 15) of a principle, and as such not observable at all.

The author proposes to replace the CP with what she calls an 'interpretational drive', understood as the need to make sense of what one hears and react to it in some ways, 'the basic interpretational inclination on which *all* interpretation depends, namely in the all-pervasive *reciprocal response-readiness*' (ibid.).

But such a move generates a potential circle: how do we know that such an 'inclination' exists without any evidence being provided? In particular, what is the empirical basis of this principle? One is reminded of the malaise in defining 'relevance' as a substitute for the CP (Sperber and Wilson 1995; see also Klungervik's chapter 3). The author actually describes 'interpretation' in terms of 'a steady flow onwards' (p. 17), something which brings back memories of the Medieval philosophers' 'sleeping force' (*vis soporifera*), said to cause sleep, or of the pre-Lavoisier 'phlogisthon' whose presence was invoked to explain why certain substances burn, while others don't. In other words, what we have here is a rational proposal, rather than an empirical observation.

2. Rationality

While I of course agree that 'rational behavior is not as prevalent in real communication as Gricean theory makes it seem' (p. 61), this is still a far cry from rejecting the idea of rationality altogether. In a similar vein, one might want to concede Charles Lanman's point (made in his *Sanskrit Reader* under the explanation of the root *man* 'to think', when put into a presumed etymological connection with the word for 'man'), that the quality of thinking does not seem to be among Man's most conspicuous behaviors, yet distance oneself from a total rejection of the human faculty of thought. In other words, it behooves us to distinguish (something Klungervik does not, at least not explicitly) between rationality as a principle and as observed behavior.

Of course, the eternal trouble with principles is that they cannot be observed except through behavior. This brings me to the next point.

3. 'Worldview'

Suggesting an alternative to the rationality approach, Klungervik brings up the notion of 'worldview'. If we embrace 'a complete rejection of rationality' (p. 62) as the foundation for our cooperative activities including communication, how are we gong to explain that we sometimes (maybe often) do 'behave 'rationally'' (ibid.)? The answer is that 'rational thinking and behaviour [are] a manifestation of an inherited worldview: the cultural context we are born into contains pre-interpreted (but negotiable) notions and ideals giving rise to certain ways of thinking and behaving' (p. 63). But – apart from the fact that 'worldview' is about as precise a term as the much-maligned *Zeitgeist* that used to go the rounds a few generations earlier – I do not think that the two views are as different as the author seems to think. In fact, what this worldview does is to instill some principles in the human mind (e g. of rationality); whether these principles are inborn, or have become 'natural' by adoption (like St. Augustin's '*natura secunda*') is of lesser importance. The question remains: how do we explain this behavior that underlies all communication, whether we call it rational or ascribe it to an 'interpretational drive' (itself also in need of a motivation)?

The trouble here is (as already intimated) that to defend any kind of principle, one must look for a way to establish its credibility. That can be done either by fiat (or by appealing to some Higher Principles, like the Laws of Nature, or Divine Precepts), or by postulating an axiom (which I think is what the author is doing when she invokes the interpretational principle of 'reciprocal response-readiness' (p. 55). In the end, we are still faced with a circular event; and whether we break out of the circle centrifugally (as in the case of Homo Ipse) or let ourselves be constrained centripetally (as for some types of Homo Socius, to use the author's labels; I will revert to these terms and what they imply, below), the main question still remains to be asked. And that main question, as Humpty Dumpty has taught us more than a century ago, is, and has always been, 'which is to be master'.

Seen under this angle, the question of rationality has very little connection with what people actually do, or think they do, or what the linguists and communication theoreticians think people do. In our society, the main question is not one of rationality as such, but of *whose* rationality we practice in our daily lives, and subscribe to in theory. We may do this consciously, as philosophers or political scientists, or unconsciously, as language users and communicators; the main point is not to be able to analyze the process of communication, but to communicate, willy-nilly. As Watzlawick and his collaborators expressed this as early as 1967 in their immortal phrase, 'one cannot not communicate' (Watzlawick et al. 1967:47). And Marx would nod his mane in assent, all the way from his tomb in Highgate, mumbling his famous 'Sie tun es aber sie wissen es nicht'.

4. *The social element in Grice*

The question of 'whose rationality' takes us immediately into the heart of the matter, when it comes to communicative and other social activities: whose is the power that allows us to communicate in the first place, and who is setting the boundaries and constraints for our communication? It is an illusion to think that this communication happens in a time- and place-less capsule of thought or thought-transfer, where the communicators make rational decisions based on their individual interpretation of the conditions of their talk. So far, I agree with the author.

But if asked for an explanation, I would prefer to look around and make sense of the *actual* communicative acts that people execute. Here, we see the doctor talking to a patient who is not able to communicate about her or his disease in the way she or he would like to, because the medical man's authority prevents her or him from doing so. Here, too, we find the police interrogator stating to a girl that she is seventeen and a half, and thereby not communicating a fact of vital statistics, but creating a backdrop for making light of her accusations of rape: given that, by her own admittance, she has had sexual relations with 'several men' at that young an age, her accusations cannot possibly be taken too seriously (example due to Fairclough 1992). And no matter how often Sydney Poitier, in the movie *Guess who is coming for diner*, tells the police officers trying to make an arrest, that his name is not 'Boy', but 'Dr. Eric Adams', he cannot prevail in the face of those wielding the real societal power, the police, who can send him to jail for the sin of performing an insubordinate act of speech: Black people just don't talk to police officers like that.

5. *On value(s)*

Related to the above discussion is Klungervik's notion of 'valuelessness' (p. 152ff). Let me first quote the author in the context in which she uses this term: the purported asymmetry in social interaction between the several interactants. I can go along with the author's view that such a asymmetry does exist, as her examples also clearly show (p. 150-151), and for which she quotes my own work (Mey 1987). But from there to say that '[t]he notion of asymmetry, as I employ it here, is in essence a *value-less notion*, where the focus is merely on the fact that some constraints apply to some participants in an activity type, and other constraints to others' (p. 152), is quite a big step.

The author knows she is on a collision course with me here, and I am glad to be able to make my points clearer. I do believe, contrary to Klungervik, that it is wrong to claim that '[c]onstraints are a fact long before they express anything in particular, .. before one goes on to consider them at the level of value'. I can only say that such constraints lack the very essence of what I see as motivating a constraint: the social division of power. There is no 'such thing as a 'comprehensive theoretical framework' that one 'must come to grip with' in formulating constraints, if such a framework does not 'comprehend' (in the double sense of the term) questions of power.

In the following, I'll have a closer look at this central notion of Klungervik's work, 'constraint'.

6. *Constraints*

6.1. Constraints and rationality

An interesting development in the author's thinking can be observed in the next few sections of the work, where she is dealing with the matter of constraints, and their possible suspension. Before saying something about the crucial difference between a constraint and a rule (see for this my *Pragmatics*, second edition, pp. 182ff), I would like to reflect a bit on Klungervik's musings around the necessary notion of 'truthfulness' in conversation. Even though she (rightly) condemns those who claim universal validity for the Gricean maxims (calling it even a possibly 'blatant ethnocentric act'; p. 154), the way she argues for at least a partial reinstatement of the notion of truthfulness as a 'central', if not 'universal' constraint is curiously redolent of the very rationality she earlier had criticized (e.g. p. 61ff).

Here is one example among many: 'It is difficult to imagine how communication would be possible without the possibility of assuming that people generally speak, if not the truth, then at least some harmless functional surrogate to [sic] the truth (for instance white lies' (p. 155). Leaving aside the question of the legality of such a substitution of a 'white' lie for the truth, when one precisely is arguing about truthfulness, it seems to me that Klungervik, in this passage, echoes, and almost paraphrases, authors she earlier had criticized for operating with a 'rational' criterion for success- and truth-ful communication. Compare her quote, on p. 75, from the 1993 edition of my *Pragmatics* (p. 55), which in the revised version comes off as 'People talk with the intention to communicate something to somebody; this is the foundation of all linguistic behavior' (2001:68); is this so much different from the way the author expresses what she considers to be the condition and criterion for communicating?

6.2. Constraints and predictability

In another instance, Klungervik is talking about 'predictability' as a necessary condition for humans to make sense of their world. Again, her entire argumentation is couched in the language of rationality: what if all these constraints and other mechanisms of conversational behavior were to disappear ('a social version of the atomic bomb', as she quite strikingly characterizes such a terrible event; p. 129), how would we go about making sense of our world?

I'm not saying I disagree, on principle, with the author here; still, it seems strange to see accusations of 'rationality' leveled at persons like Allwood (and of course myself) for saying (or at least meaning) more or less the same as she does herself. Klungervik maintains that 'we need some boundaries against chaos, some rules to manage the social 'traffic', in order to make the social world more easily understandable'. This, in my opinion, sounds like a paraphrase, in more user-friendly words, of what Allwood is quoted for as saying in a more technical way on the next page, viz.:

> They [the members of a group] need some kind of set co-ordination equilibria which, by introducing predictability, will make social interaction more manageable (1976:53).

Klungervik is then forced to disavow the similarity between the two accounts (which she recognizes on p. 130) by imputing to Allwood the idea, 'inevitable in a rationalist framework, that *self-interest* should be the main driving force behind the need for predictability and hence the establishment of norms' (ibid.). I, for one, find no evidence that will support such an imputation of motives to Allwood, something which indirectly transpires in the author's own formulation, further down on the page:

> When Allwood claims that it is beneficial for the members of a group to establish coordination patterns in their interaction he *surely means something else* than when the present account states the same. (ibid.)

My naive question here is: How can any author know anything about what another author 'surely means'? And how can anyone construct an argument by imputation, like the present one, and hope to get away with it?

6.3. What *is* a constraint?

6.3.1. Constraints and rules

Next, let me say a few words about the use of the term 'constraint' in Klungervik's thesis. It seems to me that for the author, 'constraint' means something akin to 'restriction' – which is not altogether wrong, but neither does it capture what I feel is the specific difference of this term, as compared to e.g. 'rule', or 'restriction' in the usual sense. (Let me note in passing that the word belongs by birth-right to the Anglo-American technical vocabulary, and that translating the term into other languages poses almost insurmountable difficulties for the translator; my Brazilian students have opted for *restrição,* with the understanding that we will use this term in a specific way in our classes, to avoid the undesirable connotations that a word such as *constrangimento* would carry with it).

'Constraint', as defined against 'rule', implies that the necessary conditions for successful (linguistic and other) behavior can be formulated in terms of *what is there* (viz., in the 'socio-cognitive context', to borrow Klungervik's felicitous neologism), rather than in terms of *what is done* (by some individual, social-cognitive agent). A rule is formulated as a condition on occurrences of individual items, such as a 'sentence', which (by a syntactic rule) can be rewritten as 'noun phrase plus verb phrase'. And already in the very early use of 'constraint' (by George Lakoff in the late sixties), this term came to be used as the shibboleth distinguishing the generative semanticists from the traditional transformationalists. Lakoff simply wanted to state a condition in more general terms than a single rewrite rule would allow him to do, hence he started to use the term to capture the fact that for any particular, happy generalization of a linguistic phenomenon (such as noun phrase raising) to be possible, one needed more than a (set of) particular rule(s): a 'global' characterization of a linguistic environment was necessary, and this type of descriptive device was given the name of 'constraint'.

6.3.2. Constraints and context

There is more to this than a mere historical validation of the proper use of a term. Since constraints are shortcuts to describing a context, it is clearly advantageous to use them in a study which so emphatically is oriented towards contextualizing the linguistic message as is the present author's. But there is also some tendency to name everything a constraint, which (technically and/or conceptually) perhaps better would be called a 'rule' or even a 'maxim'.

Take Klungervik's example of the 'constraint Tip the waiter', on p. 157. To me, this is typically part of a *frame* 'visiting a restaurant', in which certain behaviors can be expected, even without our having to formulate rules for them. (Actually, the very essence of the notion of frame lies herein). In the context of the restaurant, we have certain general 'rules of behavior', such as that meals ordered should be paid for, whether eaten (either wholly or in part) or not.

A 'behavioral rule' like this one is a particular case of the old adage *do ut des*, which the Romans used in their dealings with the gods: If I give you this (e.g. an offering), then you give me that (e.g. good fortune). The way such rules are specified in a particular context, however, depends entirely on the individual circumstances, and this is where the constraint comes in. Having been served by a waiter, it is not enough just to pay the bill to the cashier or to the person in charge of our table; other considerations narrow down, or as the case may be, expand, this actual tit-for-tat.

For instance, the context may be such that the waitperson's tips are subject to taxation according to a certain percentage of the restaurant's total earnings; and thus, whenever the waiter/waitress is not given a tip, s/he loses doubly: first on the income not earned, and second on the tax on that very income, which has to be paid regardless. This constraint on the tipping situation translates then concretely into a certain percentage of the bill, also thought to compensate for those unfortunate cases when guests leave the restaurant without remembering to tip the waiter. (My own daughters, in their waitressing times, used to go up to the exit door and look those unfortunate guests straight in the eye, while inquiring if 'anything had been the matter with the service'!)

6.3.3. Constraint and frames

Another way of formulating this would be to say that while rules are 'centrifugal' (starting out from the individual user to the rest of the communicating world), constraints are 'centripetal', that is to say, they capture general conditions which are then narrowed down to apply to the individual case. It follows that such general constraints usually will apply to larger domains than do rules; in this way, part of the vexing question: Are rules universal? can be said to make no sense: it is the constraints who do the universal job, while rules always consider a particular case.

In the second edition of *Pragmatics* (if I may be allowed to quote myself once more), I express this as follows:

> The goals and expectations that are incorporated in such constraints [viz., of scripts and frames] are essential to a pragmatic understanding of human activity, much more so than are correctness of sentence construction and observance of the rules of grammar (2001:183)

– and, I might add, of the Gricean maxims taken as (universally or centrally) valid rules for human linguistic behavior.

Invoking a Bakhtinian perspective, one could note that the very idea of constraint is being 'centripetal', rather than 'centrifugal' (the terms are originally due to Bakhtin, who has been characterized as 'the apostle of constraints'; Morson and Emerson 1990:43). The problem for Bakhtin is not first of all to characterize and explain deviance (e.g. a flout), but 'integrity'. Our quest for explanation of broken frames should not close our eyes to the fact that frames are mostly there not to be broken but to be applied, entered into, and obeyed. The centrifugality of the individual utterance can only make sense in the centripetality of the constraint; hence I find it problematic that Klungervik seems to believe that 'the very existence of constraints rests on the idea of their observance' (p. 223).

I will not comment on the strange juxtaposition of 'idea' and 'existence' here, which would put any vulgar Hegelian to shame; instead, let me ask the question how anyone could *not* see that constraints indeed are not respected at certain points of the interaction. The very idea of flouting, or frame-breaking, seems to rest on this possibility.

I think part of the problem lies in the author's fuzzy concept of 'constraint'. In the passage quoted above, she continues by saying: 'If you make a rule, you do so because you want the world to unfold in accordance with that rule ... Because of this basic trait of constraints, we may get two or more scenarios: ... ' and so on. Here, the two concepts, rule and constraint, are completely merged and used indiscriminately; no attention is paid to the fact that constraints, like frames, are *not* made up by the individual speaker, but rest on a solid societal basis. To quote an undisputed, older authority on constraints: 'If there were no law, there would be no transgression' (St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans); for a frame to be broken, there first has to be a frame.

7. Flouting

When a frame does get willfully broken, we are in the presence of a *flout*, the principal theme of the book (to which the author devotes her entire chapter 6, about one-fifth of the book's total pages (in addition, there is a discussion of flouts and 'floutability' in the long chapter 4, on the 'constraints-web').

I will not take issue with the way the author defines and operationalizes flouts; this is all done in the best of Gricean traditions. What is new however, is her take on flouting (and floutability). Klungervik sees flouts as a disruptive device (in line with Bakhtinian 'transgressions'); hence, flouts are for a purpose, and the purpose is (as in the case of the indirect speech acts) to obtain an effect, called the 'product' of the flout (p. 209).

7.1. Flouting and acting

As to the functions of a flout, the author distinguishes two basic ones: to capture the interest of the audience (just as Thomas stipulates 'interestingness' as one of the functions of indirect speech acts; 1995:143-144), and to involve the audience in the process of 'meaning creation' (p. 210), seen as a heightening of the earlier mentioned interpretational activity.

While I have no beef with any of the things the author says in this connection, there lingers one small doubt in my mind, when I consider the implications of Klungervik's treatment of flouting within a larger framework of pragmatic acting. The author remarks (correctly, in my opinion) that flouting is an act (and I would add: a *pragmatic* one, as I have defined it in my 2001 book, chapter 8): it is situationally set up, it relies on the cooperation between the interactants of the situation, and it is not describable by reference to one or several specific speech acts or maxims.

Furthermore, I find the idea of coopting the listener into the process of 'meaning construction' very attractive; it is basically the same line of thinking that brought me to considering the consumer of the literary text, the reader, to be just as active a partner in the construction of the text's meaning as is the author (this is why I give the reader a 'voice' in another recent book; Mey 2000:ch. 9). But is this 'uptake' really that simple a process?

7.2. Flouting: production and uptake

Consider now the following quote from Klungervik's work on p. 209: 'flouting is an act; implicature – traditionally speaking – is the (linguistically transcribable) product of this act'.

To me, it seems clear that implicatures are not 'produced' in the ordinary sense; the first question to ask, of course would be: Who is the producer? Given the fact that implicatures can be likened to 'moves' or 'bids' (following Caffi's characterization; 1998:754), such moves may be rejected; an implicature is never forced on one, but always the result of a choice, as in the case of a flout (the choice may be either conscious or unconscious, the latter in the case of what Klungervik calls 'sedimented' implicatures).

The author herself gives an excellent example of this in her discussion of the (in)famous Benetton ads on pp. 218-219, here she characterizes the two ways people have been constructing implicatures in this case: they either perceived the flout (the 'broken constraint') as too outrageous ('the constraint [being] too strong to be breached'; p. 219), and consequently 'refus[ed] to accept any message', or they 'did not perceive the constraint as that strong, and presumed the breach to be a signal of an underlying message'. In the latter case, the implicature is taken up, and the flout is successful; in the former case, it is not, and the flout 'misfires', inviting 'punishment' instead (ibid.)

In either case, it would be wrong to say that the flouting actually 'produced' these effects; the implicatures, or their rejection, are the result of a process which depends not only on the flouting person and his or her act, but on the co-constructing participants, the conversationalists realizing the pragmatic act of flouting in cooperation. One should never forget that, if we agree that the context (or the situation) is a 'world of signs', in Klungervik's felicitous formulation (p. 171), those signs never act by themselves, but are always in need of an interpreter.

7.3. Flouting and the maxims

Following Klungervik's lead, and assuming the act of flouting as a pivotal point in the theory of implicatures, it first of all becomes clearer why many post-Griceans (such as Sperber and Wilson, or Levinson, sans comparaison, of course), in their efforts to 'out-grice' or 're-grice' Grice, still cannot escape the boundaries that are inherent in the orthodox interpretation given to Grice by many. These boundaries include a view of the semantics-pragmatics interface which is basically syntax- and semantics-bound, in a 'complementary approach', as Leech (1983) has called it (e.g. by adding a 'speech act guest wing to the house of Chomsky', as the author somewhat maliciously calls it on p. 108, quoting Pratt (1981:6)).

Current research in the semantics-pragmatics interface (as e.g. manifested in Turner and Jaszczolt's CRISPI project; 1996ff) is strictly conditioned and bounded by the premises of linguistic theory, as it is usually understood. One of the basic tenets of such a theory is the notion of 'predictability', as many authors have remarked, criticizing pragmatics; the weakness of the pragmatic approach is seen precisely in its lacking ability to provide testable hypotheses, as it is the rule in linguistics. (In parentheses: I see absolutely no reason to characterize this approach a 'mainstream pragmatics', as Klungervik does on p. 104: there are many approaches to pragmatics, and while it is doubtful whether any of them qualifies as 'main-stream', it's doubtlessly wrong to characterize precisely this approach as being the 'main stream' of thinking pragmatically; even Levinson, back in 1983, was more generous when he allowed a 'Continental' pragmatics a place in the sun, along with other, more favored approaches; 1983:2).

Be that as it may, it remains the case that, as the author remarks, that

> [t]he maxims, to be acceptable within the semanticists' scheme, had to be able to accurately predict implicatures, in the same way that any other good linguistic rule had to prove its right to life by accurately predicting *other* linguistic phenomena. (p. 108, emphasis original)

The necessary consequence was that in order to make the maxims acceptable, they had to be turned into rules, as most clearly seen in the efforts by Sperber and Wilson to reduce all of pragmatics to one rule-based scheme, the principle of relevance. The latter authors (quoted by Klungervik, p. 108-109) say this in fact quite explicitly, when they talk about 'code-like rules which take semantic representations of sentences and descriptions of context as input, and yield pragmatic representations of utterances as output' (1995:36).

7.4. Flouting and pragmatics

In contrast to this tendency to reduce everything in linguistics and pragmatics to rules, the author advocates the inclusion of all the pragmatic phenomena of language under the notion of 'the class of floutable intersubjective constraints' (p. 134), comprising the Gricean maxims, the Searlean conditions on speech acts, the various kinds of implicatures and so on. Essential for all of these constraints is that they can be flouted, in this way proving their societal bondedness, rather than their rule-oriented predictability.

Seen in this light, the whole enterprise of turning the maxims and other constraints into rules is basically a ploy to avoid, or at least reduce, their floutability. Inasmuch as flouting introduces an element of instability into preferred cognitive mechanisms of rule-based hypothesizing, it is indeed the cornerstone of a socio-cognitively oriented approach, such as Klungervik's. By its very nature, flouting introduces the *user* into the game, thus turning the interaction into a common communicative enterprise, in which both hearer an speakers contribute to the outcome of the interaction (cf. Bakhtin's notion of 'answerability', coupled with that other key notion of his, 'addressivity', the latter not thematized by Klungervik, though). On p. 210, Klungervik signals as one of the main functions of flouting, 'an *increased interpretational activity* in the hearer' (original italics): I want to strengthen this by saying that flouting, inasmuch as it contradicts the assumptions of 'mainstream pragmatics', is a revolutionary activity, aimed at bringing the user back into that mainstream from which he or she had been unrightfully removed by the usurping 'mainstream' pragmaticists.

The above also gives us a clue as to why a pragmaticist such as Levinson in his most recent book, subtitled *Generalized conversational implicatures* (2000) prefers to deal with generalized implicatures, rather than particularized ones (Levinson 2000:16). And if and when particularized conversational implicatures are dealt with, it is in the relatively uninteresting case of 'scalarity'. Scalar implicatures, even when particularized, that is, dependent on a particular context, will then be treatable in some kind of truth

conditional approach, and therefore be 'generalizable'. (See Levinson's discussion of Hirschberg's (1991 [1985]) 'partially ordered sets'; 2000:104-108).

One of the main advantages that has accrued for the present writer from the reading of Klungervik's work, is the way the author perspectivizes the debates from one particular point of view: that of the flout. This is one of the great strengths of the book: that it allows us to view the current pragmatic literature from a fresh angle, especially where it deals with implicatures. For me, perusing Levinson's latest work (2000), aided by the optic of Klungervik's perspective, has been a rewarding experience. Even though I by no means want to imply, that Klungervik should have taken this work into account, it could be interesting to see how she in future work would deal with Levinson's CGI from the viewpoint of her own notion of floutability.

8. Some negative observations

Before I come to my conclusion, here are some additional (mostly negative) remarks, having to do with details of presentation and/or style of writing and quoting.

Among the minor quibbles I have formulated while reading the thesis, I first of all want to comment on the author's use of sources, and in particular on her interpretation of them. I will single out two cases: that of Jens Allwood and my own.

Referring back to our earlier discussion, I want to quote from the book's p. 65, where Klungervik refers to a 'general view' of 'the communication participant as first private, then social'. And she continues, after having quoted a passage from Allwood (1976) as instantiating this 'general view':

> Here, an individual is first and foremost seen as an individual actor. This is the basic starting-point. *Inter*action only comes along and introduces 'factors', as a second layer, superposing these factors on the individual. (p. 65, original emphasis)

Apart from the subtle tautology in Klungervik's quote (an individual is necessarily also an individual when he or she acts), it remains a bit unclear how she extracts this '*prius ac posterius*' from

Allwood's text. What Allwood in fact says is that his principles [of normal rational agenthood] 'characterize an isolated Robinson Crusoe-type of individual *just as much as* an individual who is an interacting and cooperating member of a social group' (Allwood 1976:52; emphasis added). Note the 'just as much' of this attribution: Allwood does not say which comes first and which is 'added on'.

Furthermore, doing justice to Allwood also implies taking note of the date when this was written: 1976, long before any decent linguist would be caught dead doing pragmatics. Allwood's point is to counteract the then reigning attribution of 'rational acting' to the individual; in this sense, he may have paved the way for a recognition of later date (such as evidenced in Klungervik's work): that what we are dealing with here goes far beyond just 'rationally acting'.

The other quote concerns the first edition (1993) of my own book *Pragmatics.* (I won't hold it against the author that she has had no time to consult the second, much revised edition, where the quote figures in a somewhat different shape, maybe more palatable to her views). In the passage under discussion (quoted on pp. 75ff of her work), she contrasts her own 'response-readiness' view of cooperation in communication with several other people's, including myself, who are said to focus one-sidedly 'on the productive aspect of the communicative drive and, relatedly, on the individual (see Blakar above) and on individual intention (see Mey above) .... ' (p. 76).

Now, if we look more closely at the quoted passage from my book, quoted on p. 75: 'When people talk, they do this with the intention to communicate something to somebody' (Mey 1993:55), I cannot but find Klungervik's interpretation of this quote a bit far-fetched. Naturally, the desire to communicate implies a desire to be communicated to; in fact, the verb 'to communicate' is a minimally three-place predicate, with its arguments including the communicator, what is communicated, and the 'communiqué(e)' (leaving aside possible other factors for the moment). Therefore, it is not quite correct to interpret this as a 'view of the communication participant as one who rather than participating in the world, extends himself [sic] into it from his [sic] solitary spot, here in the sense of *first and foremost desiring to be speaker*' (p. 76). And onward: 'the communication participant as one whose motivations ... are shaped in supreme isolation as if by a conscious plan...' (ibid.; italics mine).

I think that much of what the author says here simply is an exaggerated and somehow distorted rendering of my views: at least, I do not recognize either my text nor its underlying intentions and desires in Klungervik's paraphrase and (re-)interpretation. After all, even the author herself, when speaking of a '*productive* drive' (earlier in the same passage, on p. 75, with original italics), she hastens to add: 'the drive to make something known *to each other*' – which is precisely what communication is all about, and it does not imply a one-sided desire or intention.

As to the principle of reciprocity itself, one could perhaps question the rationale that motivated the author to replace the 'monologic' mind by a 'dually-oriented' one (p. 78). It is true that, in accordance with Bakhtin and others, we have come to realize that all talk is basically dialogic; but why stop there? Why describe the human mind as 'dually constituted' (ibid.), rather than, say 'plurally'? The emergence of interest in the distributed nature of such a constitution (known under the buzz-term of 'distributed cognition'), and of the possibility of inquiring into 'polylogicity' rather than just 'dialogicity' would seem to point in the same direction (cf. Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2002, in press)

The author impresses me by being extremely well-read. I have come across a fair number of references and quotations that made very good sense in her context and which I would have loved to here had at my disposal when doing my own work. This is in particular true of the work of Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann (1973 /1989), who are quoted *in extenso* and paraphrased in a lengthy subsection (pp. 187-193), besides being quoted throughout the work. The notion of 'motivated relevance', which the author later on exploits when she defines 'flouts', is expounded here in detail; unfortunately, the account of Schutz and Luckmann's work is extremely dense and the reader gets lost in the author's numerical subdivisions and the overlayering discourse that she supplies in order to explain Schutz and Luckmann's thoughts. This section should be rewritten to retain only the main points of Schutz and Luckmann's theory; more specific points (such as the difference between 'motivated' and 'motivational' relevance) should be left aside for special treatment.

A further, relatively minor matter of text exegesis is the use of the term 'word' as a translation of the Russian *slovo* in works by authors such as Voloshinov and Bakhtin (*pass.*). Specifically, on

p. 170, Klungervik quotes extensively from the former's *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (p. 86), where the original author concludes that 'A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and interlocutor'. (Similar sentiments and expressions occur profusely under the pen of Bakhtin as well). Our author then adds the following: 'The process described here does not, of course, apply only to words: *all* signs are seen to be territory shared in this sense' (p. 170; the expression 'shared territory' is from Voloshinov 1973:86). On my view, such an exegesis misses the point that the Russian word *slovo* not just stands for 'word', but also (and in fact most of the time, when it comes to Voloshinov and Bakhtin; see Mey 2000 for details) for a concept we best translate with the (albeit somewhat modish) term 'discourse'. So, while Klungervik is right in pointing out the true meaning of Voloshinov's dictum, her addition would strictly have been unnecessary, had she relied on good old-fashioned philological wisdom and knowledge.

Continuing in the same vein, I was struck by the author's use of the term 'phatic communication' (pp. 89ff), a term which (although commonly used by a number of authors, such Laver, Schneider and Zegarac, all quoted by Klungervik (ibid.)), nevertheless is an inaccurate rendering of what Malinowski as early as 1923 defined and described as 'phatic communion'. Curiously enough, the author herself, a few pages down, implicitly rectifies her usage by laconically introducing the correct term in a parenthesis: '... (hence the term *phatic communion*)' (p. 95, original italics), said to refer to '[t]he more traditional, Malinowskian account' (ibid.); however, she never bothers to explain the difference (or, as the case may be the lack of distinction, if she is inclined to believe that there is none).

The work exhibits a relaxed, but never loose, writing style, using colloquialisms where needed to alleviate the theoretical expositions, and often coining felicitous images and striking neologisms. As an example, take p. 211, where a 'successful flout' is said to 'constantly crack open new areas of experience', and 'explode the intersubjective field between speakers and hearers, waking them up to what is going on, providing further communicative and linguistic energy'. At other times, however, the author gets a bit too far afield in her imagery, as when she describes Grice as standing with one leg in both camps, trying to have [his] cake and eat it'. Picturing in one's mind the historical Paul Grice in such a precarious position is a serious challenge to the imagination, besides triggering a rather distracting attempt at visualizing this scene.

As far as the role of the reader in dealing with the text in general is concerned, I fear that the author has some rather primitive notions of what it means to be a 'competent reader', as I have called it (Mey 2000). The latter's (possible) judgments on discovering a 'broken frame' or flout in the text, ascribed to her reader on p. 206 (such as *The author is trying to be clever. Hey what an interesting twist*, and so on) simply do not relate to any degree of sophistication among a normal, competent readership. Readers do not argue about texts; they read them in cooperation with the author. The voice that is reflected in the above quotes is neither the reader's nor the author's, but some extraneous meta-commentator's, posing as, and talking down to, a real reader.

9. Conclusion

The cavils voiced earlier in this review do not detract from the merit of Klungervik's work and of the theoretical significance of her attempt to 'rescue Grice'. Leaving aside the question whether a man who even many years after his death continues to command the attention of pragmaticists and linguists world-wide, needs to be 'rescued' or revived, I am willing to agree that Klungervik's rethinking of the basic concepts of Grice's theory, and in particular her extension of the Gricean thought to comprise the 'socio-cognitive' has a number of advantages.

Despite minor quibbles and criticisms, the overall impression of Klungervik's work is one of sound scholarship, broad orientation in current and past literature, and a wide *envergure* in relation to potentially interesting, future developments. Her style of writing is direct (even to the point of introducing some less palatable colloquialisms) and (mostly) very clear. The ambitious framework that she has constructed for her theorizing is, in its main structures, sound and convincing. When revised and updated, this treatise could well become another classic in the pragmatic literature. On this, I want to congratulate the author, and at the same time, thank her for the many hours of rewarding (and even entertaining) reading, and fruitful discussion on the occasion of her defense, that beautiful 15th of May in Trondheim, 2002.

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