

## ‘Pragmaticising’ Kaplan: Flexible Inferential Bases and Fluid Characters

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### *Abstract*

It can easily be observed in analysing natural language discourse that the category of an indexical expression does not correspond to clearly delimited types of expressions: in spite of the philosophers’ rigid distinctions into directly referring and contextually referring expressions (where, for example proper names belong to the first category and definite descriptions to the latter), the devices natural languages use for the purpose of conveying reference cannot be easily put into this mould. At the same time, these rigid classifications, such as those informing Kaplan’s (1989) content/character distinction, rely on a formal semanticists’ dubious assumption that expressions can be identified and classified prior to the function they have in a particular context. So, for example, for Kaplan, personal pronouns have *characters* (sometimes referred to as ‘linguistic meanings’) that are in need of contextual specification before the truth-conditional semantic analysis (in terms of a function from possible words/circumstances of evaluation to truth values) gives them *content*. However, what counts as character is arguably itself context-dependent: the *unit* that is relevant for such a contextual specification is in itself dependent on the particular situation of discourse, and even, arguably, on speaker’s intentions. It is therefore proposed that Kaplan’s character/content distinction be ‘pragmaticised’ accordingly, to apply to such a flexible, use-driven category.

### *1. Pragmatic Processing and the Lexicon: Rationale and Objectives*

On one of the versions of two-dimensional semantics, a distinction has been made between the *character*, the value of an expression that comes from the language system, and *content*, the semantic and (partly) conceptual value this expression has in an utterance at hand (Kaplan 1977/1989a). While the utility of the distinction is now well-established in the semantics of what is standardly regarded as indexical expressions (for example *I*, *you*, *here*, or *now*), the scope of its application is still an open question. Ever since Wittgenstein (1953) convincingly emphasised that even the core of word meaning depends on the particular use of the expression (viz. his concept of family resemblance), we have witnessed heated debates concerning the language-system dependent vis-à-vis discourse-dependent aspects of word meaning. Theories of sentence meaning followed suit, in the form of the debate between semantic minimalism (e.g. Borg 2004, 2007 or Cappelen and Lepore 2005) and contextualism (e.g. Recanati 1994, 2004, 2010; Jaszczolt 2005, 2010). But there are two ways in which we can look at these debates: one, which we can call a methodological route, according to which it is a matter of theoretical preference as to whether one wants to pursue an enquiry into the properties of a language *system*, as it was understood in the well-established structuralist tradition (de Saussure 1912/1983; see also Matthews 2001), or, more adventurously, an enquiry into what use words and sentences are put into in a particular discourse. In what follows, it is proposed that, on the assumption that the uses to which we put the system of signs, symbols and grammatical preconceptions (short of calling them in an old-fashioned way ‘rules’) is what really counts, Kaplan’s ground-breaking solution to the semantics of indexicals be extended, by a natural and nowadays rather uncontroversial progression, to the totality of natural language lexicon. In this sense, the proposal merely puts a stamp on what various contextualists have been progressing towards in the past two

decades, namely the recognition of what we can call ‘degrees of indexicality’. Naturally, there will be a need to address the question of the compatibility of such terms as ‘indexical’, ‘character’, or ‘context’ when a formal (and minimalist) theory is transposed onto the ground of contextualism and pragmatic processing. I deal with them as the argument develops.

Attempts to contextualise lexical meaning are nothing new. But what is relatively new is the tendency of post-Gricean contextualists to consider more and more seriously the so-called *meaning eliminativism*, the view according to which there is no core, context-free meaning of lexical expressions (see Wittgenstein 1953; Recanati 2005; 2010). In the last few years, with the revival of lexical pragmatics, evidence has been mounting that there is no part of lexical meaning that can be legitimately abstracted from the context of discourse. As Asher (2011) aptly observes, the compositional process has to allow for the adjustment of types; there are default, presumed senses, but they are fuzzy and changeable. Delimitations of this changeability aside (to be pursued by the sister disciplines of sociology and psychology), the following enquiry focuses on a natural-language semantics that, by force of this incontrovertible empirical evidence, will have to conform to, and reflect, this changeability of word meaning. Facing the facts, it seems prudent to pursue the ideas of those who focused on this changeability for that part of the lexicon that is clearly semantically changeable, and therefore on the precursor, David Kaplan. His enquiry into the context-dependence of meaning was limited pretty much to indexical expressions as standardly conceived. However, facing the developments in semantics and pragmatics, it seems justified to claim that the range of Kaplan’s insights is much wider than it has been acknowledged so far.<sup>1</sup> In what follows, I make a preliminary attempt at the delimitation of this range. Section 2 challenges the direction of the debates between the so-called ‘localists’ and ‘globalists’ about processing, proposing instead a variable unit of pragmatic processing. In a similar vein, Section 3 offers a solution to the question of the existence of default interpretations,

redefining the concept of a default as a speaker-based and discourse-based form of salience. In Section 4 the main proposal of flexible, situation-dependent bases for inferential processing is laid out and, building upon it, the concept of a character, applied in Kaplan's approach to indexical expressions, is reanalysed and subsequently employed to reflect this flexibility. As a result, the distinction between indexicals and non-indexicals is replaced with the graded property of context-dependence, where this gradation is reflected in characters. In other words, characters are created in context both with respect to (a) their lexical bases (the length of the unit they correspond to) and (b) the degree to which the context affects processing on the particular occasion. Such fluid characters are made to reflect the ordinary language philosophers' idea of meaning as use, while at the same time preserving the fairly formal conception and role of context proposed in Kaplan's version of two-dimensional semantics, thereby allowing radical contextualism and indexicalism to meet: expressions are indexical, but, arguably, indexicality is variable, not attached to word types, but instead is attached to situations of discourse. Fluid characters are a way of capturing indexicality so-conceived.

## *2. Local, Global, and Intention-Informed Processes*

In his 'Scalar implicature and local pragmatics', Geurts (2009) confronts two important aspects of post-Gricean debates about utterance processing, notably (i) localism/globalism and (ii) defaultism/noncism. He rejects the syntactic explanation of scalar inference put forward by Chierchia (2004, 2006), opting for a pragmatic solution, at the same time advocating a rather off-beat view that implicatures are produced globally, on the basis of the structural unit corresponding to the entire sentence, or even a multi-sentential string, rather than locally, incrementally, as part of the online processing of utterance meaning. This solution is in accord with Grice's original definition of implicature (Grice 1975, 1978) and

also, in some respects, with the methodological globalism of Default Semantics (Jaszczolt 2005, 2010), but it stands in opposition to radically local ‘presumptive meanings’ of Levinson’s (2000) theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature and it appears that it also goes against experimental findings (see Katsos forthcoming for a review). Geurts (2009) proposes a division of labour between implicature, which is regarded as a global phenomenon, and ‘local pragmatics’, comprising other ‘non-implicature’ cases.<sup>2</sup> His solution is founded on the assumption that the localism/globalism debate has to concern sentence *types*: if the type does not give rise to correct defaults when handled through local inferences, then it constitutes a counterexample to localism *tout court*. However, a methodological question arises pertaining to this discussion as to whether localism and globalism are the only options; after all, they are both fairly radical in the attempt to subsume discourse processes to a stable pattern. A more flexible proposal would be to assess the phenomenon on a case by case basis, where ‘case by case’ means ‘situation of discourse by situation of discourse’, paying due consideration to the particular speaker’s intentions and the requirements posed by the common ground. As a result, ‘local’ or ‘global’ would turn out to mean ‘local’ or ‘global’ *for the context*: while the enrichment of the conjunction ‘and’ may be local in one context, it may require the processing of the entire sentence, or even a larger chunk of discourse, in another.

Consider (1)

- (1) Oscar believes that Lucinda likes some of his ideas.

On the Gricean account, (1) generates a generalized conversational implicature in (2).

- (2) It is not the case that Oscar believes that Lucinda likes all of his ideas.

However, intuitively, the utterance generates a stronger implied meaning in (3).

(3) Oscar believes that Lucinda doesn't like all of his ideas.

An approach to implicature generation<sup>3</sup> that adheres to the assumption that implicatures are always sentence-based, or 'global', has a difficulty with explaining belief report contexts. Similarly, in (4), it seems that the implicature 'sometimes but not always' has to arise locally, after 'sometimes' has been processed, because otherwise we obtain a rather problematic (5) before scalar inference kicks in. The problem arises mostly with Grice's category of generalized conversational implicature but is not limited to it.

(4) Being sometimes wrong is better than being always wrong.

(5) Being at least sometimes and possibly always wrong is better than being always wrong.

However, in both of these scenarios, a plausible response along the Gricean lines is available.

In (1), it is the relative un informativeness of (2) that leads the addressee to strengthen it to (3), in accordance of the maxim of quantity. In the case of (4), it is the sheer improbability of (5) that, again, in accordance with the maxim of quantity, makes the addressee strengthen it to (6).

(6) Being sometimes (but not always) wrong is better than being always wrong.

In his presentation of the case against localism, Geurts (2009) concedes that these cases do not pose a serious threat for Grice's theory. But now consider (7).

(7) Kai had the broccoli or some of the peas last night.

(from Geurts 2009: 56, after Sauerland 2004; see also Geurts 2010). Geurts contends that (7) is potentially problematic for Grice because it should produce an implicature that the stronger (8) is not the case, which can be formulated as in (9).

(8) Kai had the broccoli or all of the peas last night.

(9) It is not the case that Kai had the broccoli or all of the peas last night.

However, (9), being of the form  $\neg(p \vee q)$ , is equivalent to  $\neg p \wedge \neg q$ , and hence to (10), and therefore incorrect as potential implicit content.

(10) Kai didn't have the broccoli and neither did he have all of the peas last night.

While Grice's account is arguably struggling with these examples, localism thrives: Levinson explains them by means of a default inference, 'presumptive' meaning which in this case is triggered by the lexical item 'some'. Chierchia (2004: 64) ascribes the enriched meaning of 'some' to the generative power of the grammar, adding that although both weak and strong meaning of 'some' are generated, there is a default rule that produces the stronger, 'some but not all' one.<sup>4</sup> Now, while Geurts (2009: 59) admits that an account based on local inferences is better supported by a view that there are default interpretations than by a theory of nonce-inference, he then goes on to point out that there is no empirical support for default enrichment and hence if we were to defend localism, one would have to do so by marrying it with nonce-inference after all.<sup>5</sup> Let us look at his argument against 'defaultist localism'. The

meaningful reading of (11) requires that ‘sometimes’ is locally enriched to ‘sometimes but not always’.

- (11) If the chair sometimes comes to the department meetings that is not enough; he should come always.

(from Geurts 2009: 60, after Levinson 2000). Geurts argues that the scalar implicature should not arise in this context because scalar effects are not present in downward entailing constructions such as antecedents of conditionals (see Chierchia 2004, 2006). So, the argument goes, Levinson supports his defaultism with an example where the enrichment should *not* take place; default interpretation should not be the ‘sometimes but not always’ reading but rather the one with no scalar implicature at all. However, this seems to be a rather serious misunderstanding of Levinson’s localism/defaultism position. It is true that presumptive meanings arise locally on this account but ‘local’ is a predicate that requires further precisification: ‘local’ for Levinson means in this case word-based, rather than ‘antecedent-of-the-conditional-based’. Nowhere in his theory of generalized conversational implicature does Levinson claim that there is a grammatical constraint to do with monotonicity that warrants the suspension of a potential default inference. Such a grammatical constraint would not be correct: we would have to exclude cases where the item is used metalinguistically such as (11). Surely, we would be able to account for a plethora of non-emphatic uses of ‘some’ in downward entailing contexts such as (12) but at the expense of a further constraint. It is precisely this constraint that Levinson’s version of localism manages to avoid.

- (12) If some people say you are arrogant, you should perhaps think about changing something in your behaviour.

However, Levinson's localism is not without problems either. When we construe inferences *very* locally, as properties of lexical items, and thereby allowing for strong, defaults coming from the language system itself (Levinson 2000), we face frequent and costly cancellation – a point often made with respect to Levinson's account. Therefore, it seems that one should adopt a more economical theoretical stance. Instead of fixing scalars to words or to other subsentential and sentential units, we follow common sense and assume that the unit on which potential inference is founded is *flexible*: inferences arise *sometimes* on the basis of a word, in other cases on the basis of a phrase or a morpheme, and yet in others on a basis of some other sub-sentential string. In other words, different occasions of use trigger different inferential bases, i.e. different units on which inference is performed. This variability is present even within occurrences of a single word or expression such as 'some'. For example, the conventional phrase 'some people say' prevents the scalar implicature from arising in (12) although, on Levinson's account, the presence of the word 'some' would seem to signal that it should be there.

Scalar inferences are for Levinson generalized conversational implicatures and therefore default interpretations. It follows from the discussion so far that when we vindicate defaultism by making the unit on which default interpretation operates flexible, we can also vindicate a form of localism. However, my position on localism will be close to that of Geurts, although for slightly different reasons. Geurts observes that sentences of the type (13) give rise to implicatures which are certainly not local.

(13) Some of the senators like the US foreign policy.

Localism allows us to infer (14), while globalism also predicts (15)-(16).

- (14) Not all of the senators like the US foreign policy.
- (15) The speaker is not in a position to say whether all of the senators like the US foreign policy.
- (16) The speaker doesn't have a view on whether all of the senators like the US foreign policy.

Further battery of arguments follows suit, including an argument from modal contexts and from implicatures which take a string of several utterances as their basis. But it seems that such a detailed exemplification of evidence against localism results in an overkill: we have just seen that inferences arise on the basis of units of various lengths, and therefore it is only natural to include scenarios on which several sentences have to be uttered as a foundation for an implicated content; the units can vary from a morpheme (the smallest meaningful unit) to entire discourses. Any careful scrutiny of fiction gives ample evidence of the latter.<sup>6</sup>

Next, consider the cases in which implicatures should arise according to the localist account but in fact are very unlikely to be generated. In (17) and (18), the relevant implicatures are suppressed. The symbol ' $\neg + >$ ' stands for 'does not implicate'.

- (17) I prefer to visit Tokyo or Kyoto.  
 $\neg + >$  I prefer not to visit both.
- (18) I hope that some of my relatives will remember my birthday.  
 $\neg + >$  I hope that not all of my relatives will remember it.

(adapted from Geurts 2009: 64). The question arises why we are led to conclude that implicatures *should* arise in these cases. The problem seems to be that Geurts follows here the

radical version of localism modelled on Levinson according to which ‘local’ means based on the properties of the lexical item ‘or’ or ‘some’. In addition, the lexical items are assessed as units cut off an abstract construct, a sentence. Instead, in the spirit of what I have proposed concerning the flexible unit as a basis for inferences, we should think of ‘local’ along the lines of ‘incremental’, consisting of the stretch from the beginning of the relevant utterance up to the moment at which the inference can be safely drawn without the risk of costly and methodologically unwelcome cancellation. Put simply, the strings in (17a) and (18a) are available to the addressee before the offending lexical items (‘or’ and ‘some’ respectively) are uttered and processed.

(17a) I prefer to visit Tokyo...

(18a) I hope that...

These strings constitute the bases for (local) inference and ensure that the enrichment of ‘or’ to ‘not both’ and of ‘some’ to ‘not all’ does not take place. I should add tentatively that these examples suggest the existence of patterns of inference, and hence defaults, perhaps to do with the properties of the concept of preference and the concept of hope but I have no further explanation to offer at present. The main interim conclusion is that localism has to be conceived of in a more flexible manner, as inference (default or not default, this issue has to be resolved separately) that is founded on the incrementally processed unit whose length is appropriate for the case at hand. Needless to say, the same explanation also applies to stubborn cases with metalinguistic use of a term such as (4). Note that Geurts does not offer an explanation for these cases and opts to group them as a category of ‘quasi-implicature’ (2009: 73), stipulating ‘context-dependent meaning shifts’ (2009: 75). So, while Geurts and I are, in essentials, on the same track as compared with syntactic solutions such as Chierchia’s

(2006), my flexible-base, incremental-localism account incorporates these stubborn cases as mainstream cases.

Now, Geurts advocates globalism, while so far I have been arguing for flexible localism. At the same time, I have also indicated that in this paper I would side with Geurts on the issue of global inferences. My version of localism discussed above is founded on the *processing unit* and thereby on the unit which is sufficiently flexible to reflect the incremental nature of utterance interpretation. To repeat, I have opted for this move in order to avoid the unwelcome corollary that implicatures have to be frequently cancelled (or, of course, that they have to be nonce-inferences) and, more importantly, to make the theory reflect the very process of utterance interpretation.<sup>7</sup> But now, faced with a flexible base for inferences, we have to make technical adjustments to facilitate a formal truth-conditional account of utterance meaning – in the spirit of contextualism which appropriates the tool of truth conditions to the unit reflecting what is said/explicit in discourse.<sup>8</sup> In order to impose some order on such flexible processing units, we can make a methodological decision to subsume them under the theoretical construct of *global*, post-propositional inferences. In other words, from the point of view of semantic theory, implicatures are as good as global. From the point of view of psycholinguistics, a theory of utterance processing, they are flexible: based on a unit which is selected for the situation at hand. As a result, on the surface, our theory advocates globalism in that globalism gives us the object which is necessary for the purpose of employing truth conditions and at the same time allows for the assumption of incremental interpretation and incremental building up, so to speak, of the ‘real’ unit on which generation of implicatures is based. Needless to say, Geurts’ point that local inference accounts better for his stubborn examples fits in perfectly with my ‘methodological globalism’.

Having proposed that the length of the unit on which pragmatic inference is based is flexible and varies from situation to situation, we are almost compelled to take one more

small step and say that these local inferences are in fact drawn not on the basis of a fragment of a sentence, a whole sentence, or a multisentential discourse but instead on the basis of a unit of a more ‘pragmatically’ provenance. We concluded that the unit on which pragmatic inference operates is to be assessed anew for each purpose at hand. In other words, while in one context the lexical item ‘some’ may trigger inference to ‘not all’, in others the entire nominal phrase will trigger this inference, and yet in others it may be obvious from the phrase that such inference does not take place, as in example (19).

(19) Some people say you are presumptuous.

¬+> Not all people say you are presumptuous.

Instead, (19) is a basis for inferring something to the effect of (20), which goes in the opposite direction from the putative enrichment ‘not all’, or (21).

(20) The general opinion has it that you are presumptuous.

(21) You should change something in your behaviour.

If the unit that gives rise to the implicature is to be assessed ad hoc, then we can stipulate that perhaps also the presence or absence of the implicature tout court should be assessed on the basis of this ad hoc unit. But, at the same time, the very fact that a unit such as ‘some people’ in (19) may suppress a scalar inference to ‘not all’ when uttered with appropriate intonation, while failing to suppress it when uttered flat, suggests that the question of the *content* of the inferential base has to be revisited. To clarify: when (19) is uttered with flat intonation, the addressee may have to continue the incremental interpretation until ‘say’ is issued, or possibly until the end of the utterance before making sense of the meaning of ‘some’ which is

appropriate for this situation. So, the very same sentence in the very same context may produce different inferential bases depending on the intonation. Next, the very same phrase ‘some people’ may give rise to a scalar inference when it is a constituent of a different sentence, as in (22).

(22) Some people are bald.

+> Not all people are bald.

Further, one and the same sentence may produce or not produce an implicature, and when it produces it, the implicature may arise on the basis of units of different lengths. Other combinations and factors can easily be brought in to testify to the fact that implicatures are not exactly based on sentences, their fragments, or their strings. Instead, they are based on these units as immersed in particular contexts. Put crudely, for the purpose of assessing local inferences, ‘some’ of (22) is not the ‘some’ of (19), and neither is ‘some people’ of (19) the same as ‘some people’ of (22). Further, ‘some people’ of a particular utterance of (19) is different from ‘some people’ of another utterance of (19). This is how contextualism can be pushed to its limits to aid and direct the identification of the inferential bases. Extant approaches to pragmatic inference are unnecessarily constrained by the identity of the syntactic string while in fact different portions of this string (be it constituents or not constituents) interact with various aspects of the situation to produce a contextualist inferential basis.

In short, we conclude that ‘localism’ and ‘globalism’ are better construed as meaning *local/global for the context* rather than *local/global for the type of the sentence*. Adhering to the latter is a mistake which I call a syntactic constraint.

### 3. *Defaults for the Context and Defaults for the Speaker*

Analogously, the debate concerning default vs. nonce inference, when viewed in this light, turns out to make sense only when defaults are understood not as enriched meanings that are predictable from a word or a sentence as a unit conceived of in abstraction, but rather as interpretations that are arrived at automatically, effort-free, so to speak, and hence ‘default’ in the sense of *defaults for the speaker and for the context*. Naturally, such a construal is immediately open to potential objections. The classic examples of defaults are, after all, Gricean generalized conversational implicatures which are inferences arising on the basis of a sentence-based proposition.<sup>9</sup> The next type of example in line to the status of a classic is Levinson’s presumptive meaning: inference arising on the basis of a sub-sentential or sentential unit, in virtue of some assumptions, which are neither semantic nor pragmatic, but which are shared by members of a linguistic community.<sup>10</sup> Salient interpretations so-conceived are also very different indeed from the language-system-based defaults proposed by Levinson (2000). However, as ample evidence discussed above suggests, neither Gricean, global sentential nor Levinsonian, very local sentential models seem to work: a flexible-base model suggested above for a theory of processing, accompanied by methodological globalism for a semantic theory, do the job much better.

It is with this assumption concerning inferential bases that we approach the question of default vis-à-vis nonce inference. Here, acknowledging ample evidence of the existence of regularities in utterance interpretation, we opt for defaults for the context, meaning *defaults for the inferential base* construed flexibly as above, with its constituent variables such as the length of the unit, the contextual assumptions, intonation, identity of the interlocutors, and so forth. ‘Default meaning’ is a notoriously ambiguous term and is used to foster various claims across the semantics/pragmatics playing field. It has been used to mean automatic, unreflective processes, statistically more frequent meanings, meanings which are more salient

and not necessarily noninferential, and a variety of other concepts.<sup>11</sup> Sadly, ‘defaultism’ referred to by experimental pragmaticists (see e.g. Noveck and Sperber 2004) is confined to the least plausible, radically abstract inferential base proposed by Levinson in his *Presumptive Meanings*. It is an unfortunate turn in the history of research on this topic that the common-sense term ‘default’ has been relegated to a highly contentious and easily targeted Levinsonian object. Freeing it from this theoretical burden opens up many possibilities of using it to depict real, observable tendencies and regularities in utterance interpretation.<sup>12</sup>

Let us consider (23) and focus for the sake of this discussion on the recovery of the referent for the proper name ‘Leonardo’.

(23) Kate and Leonardo acted superbly in *Revolutionary Road*.

There are various theoretically feasible options. Firstly, following Grice, we can say that the utterance gives rise to the reference resolution to the actor Leonardo diCaprio on the basis of the information it conveys (acting, juxtaposition with ‘Kate’, resolved analogously as Kate Winslett), together with background knowledge that acting means acting in a film, *Revolutionary Road* is the title of a famous Oscar-nominated movie, and possibly also knowing beforehand who enacted the main characters in the film. Secondly, we may ask whether, perhaps, hearing the nominal phrase ‘Kate and Leonardo’ might not be sufficient to form an assumption as to the referents. Or, perhaps, the nominal followed by ‘acted’ suffice. Be that as it may, common-sense based account would require that we diversify this inferential base to make it match the background knowledge of the processing agent. Moreover, we have to ask whether it is an ‘inferential’ base *sensu stricto*; in other words, whether an inferential, reflective process was employed in the recovery of the referent

Leonardo diCaprio. It is more likely that, in the case of this particular utterance, and in the case of a standard scenario in which we might expect to find it, the addressee will recover the referent automatically, subdoxastically, and fast: in other words, it may be an associative process that produces a default reading. ‘Inferential base’ will be used to cover both concepts: units on which conscious inference is founded and units which engender default interpretations.<sup>13</sup>

On the (widely shared) assumption that such automatic, preferred, salient, presumed etc. interpretations are part and parcel of the interpretation process, we can go further and ask about the identity of the unit on which they operate. From the above discussion of example (23) we can infer that there is nothing counterintuitive about assuming that such defaults can arise locally. They can also, of course, arise globally, post-propositionally, as in (24), but this post-propositional quality will have to be treated as an accidental feature, engendered by the particular position of the item in question.

(24) In her press interview, Kate commented on the ups and downs of working with Leonardo.

It appears that the best option is to assume flexibility as far as the basis for defaults is concerned; they arise when the particular situation of discourse triggers them for the particular interpreting agent. In other words, their flexibility is twofold: on the dimension of the length of the triggering unit, as well as on the binary choice of their presence or absence for the particular interpreting agent in a particular situation of discourse.<sup>14</sup> To put it in the form of a slogan, we have Flexible Bases for Inference and Flexible Bases for Defaultism.<sup>15</sup>

It is now well acknowledged that a compositional semantics of intensional contexts such as belief reports is somewhat of a Holy Grail; it has been one of the greatest challenges facing formal semantics for many decades. But, in view of the advances in the contextualist

truth-conditional semantics, we are compelled to ask whether it is necessary to seek compositionality on the level of the syntactic structure. Instead, perhaps compositionality can be envisaged as a property of representations of utterances. Alternatively, it can be construed as pertaining to the properties of metaphysical reality upon which linguistic representations supervene, à la Schiffer (1991, 1994, 2003). All these developments facilitate the pragmatic construal of compositionality which we need for our account of flexible inferential bases.

It seems that there are various ways in which pragmatics-rich compositional representations can be formalized. One way involves revisiting Chierchia (2004, 2006): the syntactic generation of scalars has the potential to being extended to the syntactic generation of contextualist inferences once the syntax is ‘kicked up’, so to speak, to the level of a compositional structure that incorporates information from the context of discourse and generates meanings on the basis of such conceptual, higher-level strings. Another option might be what I proposed elsewhere: freeing the primary meanings from the syntactic constraint and allowing for a free interaction of information from various sources, at the same time imposing the methodological requirement of compositionality on the merger of information that comes from these sources.<sup>16</sup> Yet another option is to focus on conceptual shifts within current mainstream contextualism, or perhaps go even further and subscribe to meaning eliminativism, ‘eliminating’ the stage of abstraction of meaning and focusing on the context-dependent (compositional) representation.<sup>17</sup> The question of a theoretical framework which best accommodates the flexible bases and pragmatic compositionality is an extensive one and cannot be pursued within the remits of this discussion. However, flagging the fact that possibilities to accommodate flexible bases already exist is pertinent.

Now, having presented the case for flexible inferential bases, I move to the appropriation of a concept from a very different approach, namely Kaplan’s ‘character’, presenting the case for the expansion and reanalysis of its use, and rebutting in the process

some potential objections concerning the compatibility of the notions of ‘context’, ‘character’, or ‘indexical’ as they are used on each side: post-Gricean pragmatics and Kaplan’s two-dimensional semantics.

#### *4. Towards Pragmaticising Kaplan: Indexicals, (Putative) Non-Indexicals, and the Composition of Context*

Having prepared the stage, through the assumptions made above, for such a discourse-based rather than language-system-based understanding of localism-globalism and defaultism-noncism controversies, we are ready to address the question as to what meanings, if any, can be considered to be essentially constant, context-free. In order to address the question properly one needs substantial data-based study. But in addition, or as a preparation, we can pursue an interesting methodological option by starting, so to speak, from ‘the other end’ and ask what would discourse meaning be like if no aspects of it were kept stable. In other words, how can one approach lexical semantics and lexical pragmatics having adopted ordinary language philosopher’s thesis of substantial context-dependence of meaning; ‘substantial’ to the extent that, in the meaning-eliminativists’ catchphrase, all there is to meaning is language use.

Here one can resort to the solutions that have been proposed precisely for that part of the lexicon whose meaning is preponderately context-driven, namely the theories of indexicals. If indexical expressions, such as ‘I’, ‘now’, or ‘today’ cannot have semantic content without being first pragmatically fixed, then, arguably, the same method of analysis can be applied to the remainder of the natural language lexicon, should the enquiry result in the conclusion that there is a need to do so. Following through these assumptions, namely the (i) discourse-bound understanding of localism/globalism and defaultism/noncism; (ii) the central role of the question concerning the existence of context-free conceptual cores, and

(iii) the potential applicability of indexical theories to a wider range of expressions (lexical and all) constitutes the method that leads to the proposal of the so-called ‘fluid characters’ in what follows. Two-dimensional semantics will allow us to handle this contextual trigger of defaults very well.

This final instalment of the current proposal consists of immersing the idea of flexible bases, understood, to repeat, as bases for inference as well as bases for default interpretations, in a theoretical semantic framework. For this purpose I turn to the role of context as envisaged in Kaplan’s (1977/1989a) distinction into content and character.<sup>18</sup> The simplest way to introduce Kaplan’s version of two-dimensionality is through the example of a pronoun. In the case of (25), it would not make much sense to talk about truth conditions, propositions, intensions, functions from possible worlds to truth values, and so forth, unless the pronoun ‘he’ were assigned a referent.

(25) He is the greatest philosopher who ever lived.

‘He’ has its linguistic meaning, called on Kaplan’s account *character* and conceived of as the stable meaning of third-person singular pronoun, masculine gender. Characters are ‘functions from possible contexts to contents’ (Kaplan 1989a: 505) and can be thought of as constituting the ‘first leg’, so to speak, in the two-dimensional semantic analysis. Indexicals such as ‘I’, ‘he’, ‘here’, ‘tomorrow’ have a character (linguistic meaning) that is not fixed, it is not a constant function. Non-indexicals, such as, to adapt Kaplan’s example, ‘all persons alive in 2011’, have a ‘fixed’ character. Now, in order to understand the concept ‘fixed’, we have to move to the ‘other leg’ of the theory, namely to the role of the so-called *circumstances of evaluation* in establishing *content*. Kaplan says that non-indexicals invoke the same content in all context. What it means is that the differences in the referent associated with the

expression ‘all persons alive in 2011’ as used in a particular sentence will have to do with different possibilities the world might have been but not with the context as such. (*Nota bene*, proper names are on Kaplan’s account genuinely ambiguous: they have their referent established pre-semantically and have a fixed character and a fixed content, see his 1989a: 562). Content is a function from such possible scenarios, called by him ‘circumstances of evaluation’, and for the time being identifiable with a better known concept of possible worlds, to extensions. One can also think of content as intension. In short, the resolutions we make in the ‘first leg’ (context) enable the pursuit of content, while the ‘other leg’ (circumstances of evaluation) gives us content envisaged as a bunch of extensions pertaining to each of the relevant circumstances of evaluation. In most general terms, the first-dimensional notion (character) is *actual*, it ‘is put forward at least in part as a way of better capturing the cognitive or rational significance of an expression’ (Chalmers 2006: 63) and corresponds to ‘what may be the case’ (p. 100). It is associated with *a priori* knowledge. The second dimension is counterfactual, it reflects ‘what might have been the case’ (p. 100) and is best thought of on analogy with the well understood idea of intensions as functions from possible worlds to truth values, replacing ‘possible worlds’ with, as we will observe shortly, more malleable ‘circumstances of evaluation’ and intensions’ with ‘content’. This crude introduction to two-dimensional semantics is all that we will need in what follows.

It is evident from the above that Kaplan’s account constitutes a big leap in the direction of contextualism. He built upon Carnapian theory of intensions, adding the ‘first leg’, the character, which had been a largely underresearched and poorly understood murky area, unharnessed by rules or regularities that would make it attractive for the purpose of formal semantic accounts. Characters provide this harness: they can be context-sensitive, or they can be fixed. *Pace* Chalmers (2006), they can be applied to a wide variety of linguistic expressions when we also adopt the Kripke-Kaplan story of pre-semantic, societal fix of

reference as in the case of proper names. They can also be syntactically simple, monolexemic, or they can be complex, assuming that compositional rules are operative on this level. These two types of properties, (i) fixed vs. context-sensitive and (ii) syntactically simple vs. syntactically complex, make characters good candidates for an umbrella unit under which our flexible inferential bases and flexible default-generating bases can be subsumed. For the sake of simplicity, from now on we will use the term ‘inferential base’ to cover bases for (conscious) pragmatic inferences as well as bases for (automatic) default reading assignment.

Flexible inferential bases are produced by the particular context. Let us return to examples (19) and (22) repeated below.

(19) Some people say you are presumptuous.

$\neg +>$  Not all people say you are presumptuous.

(22) Some people are bald.

$+>$  Not all people are bald.

It was argued in Section 2 that it is the context that makes the addressee generate an implicature in some cases and suppress it in others. It is also the context that determines the length of the unit which constitutes the inferential base: be it ‘some’, ‘some people’, ‘some people say’, the entire sentence, or a multisentential stretch. It does not take much imagination to propose that this context be viewed in terms of the ‘first leg’ of Kaplan’s two-dimensionalism, and thereby that the inferential base behaves just like a kaplanesque indexical, having its kaplanesque character, only producing content of a certain kind (here: implicatures of a certain kind) when fixed by the context.

For Kaplan, context is at the same time formal and flexible. Context, also called an *index*, consists of a number of parameters, each of which serving a specific purpose in semantics. For indexical expressions, these parameters are an agent, time, location, and world. The flexibility comes from the fact that additional parameters can be added when interpretation requires it. In other words, context is open-ended as far as its parameters are concerned.<sup>19</sup> As Kaplan (1989b: 591) puts it, “context provides whatever parameters are needed”.<sup>20</sup> He rightly observes that context is used here *before* truth and reference are established (p. 575). It is also used *before* the semantic component of evaluation in counterfactual situations takes place. So, it is clear that context belongs to semantics. If so, there is nothing to stop us from posing the question concerning the range of expressions for which context can perform such an intra-semantic role.

Now, although Kaplan leaves a lot of scope for construing context in a way that would reflect speakers’ intuitive grasp of the situation of discourse by allowing for the index to have “whatever parameters are needed” (*ibid.*), there are aspects in which reconciliation between the post-Gricean and the kaplanesque concepts of context has to be sought. Gricean context are pragmatic through and through. This means that they are not easily formalizable<sup>21</sup>, they may, according to post-Gricean contextualists, affect the meaning and the truth-conditional content of utterances ‘top-down’, in a manner that arguably cannot be captured by any well-delineated ‘parameters’. Gricean contexts are also expansive: just as in dynamic semantics, they are ‘dynamic’, increasing incrementally with every unit of information that is added to the pool of shared information and presuppositions. These are, however, not irreconcilable characteristics. The crucial point is that, for contextualists, pragmatic context affects the *semantic* context: it affects the truth-conditional representation of the primary meaning conveyed by the utterance. In other words, truth conditions are utilised as a tool for representing the composition of the main meaning that is intended by the

speaker of the sentence and the representation of this intended meaning is conceived of in a quite liberal way: there are a variety of ways in which the logical form of the sentence may undergo alterations before it represents this intended meaning. On the other hand, Kaplan's 'parameters' were put to a rather limited use in his resolution of the reference of characters. But this does not mean that there is a methodological constraint of any sort that would prevent them from assuming the function of such 'contexts *qua* pragmatic penumbra', so to speak. In fact, Kaplan's index is precisely what contextualism needs: it needs systematization and categorization of aspects of contextual information that would allow us to test contextualist predictions – say, concerning particular cases of quantifier domain restriction as exemplified in (26) via constructing suitable algorithms.

- (26) Everybody (+> everybody in the lecture theatre) laughed at the professor's joke about the centipede playing football.

'Free', 'top-down' enrichment proposed in contextualism pertains to inferences that are free from constraints imposed by the logical form of the sentence (meaning 'top-down' as opposed to 'bottom- (LF-) up') but it does not necessarily assume an unordered and vague notion of context itself. How expansive, or, conversely, how minimal such a context would have to be becomes then a matter for theoretical decisions as to what parameters the algorithm would have to make use of.

This suggested meeting point of the kaplanesque and the contextualist views on context is further supported by the rather unexpected convergence of the views on the role of intention. In 'Demonstratives', Kaplan (1989a) conceives of context as a metaphysical construct: formalized into parameters, quite minimal, and with a clearly specified role for securing reference and providing circumstances of evaluation. But this conception of context changes substantially in his 'Afterthoughts' where Kaplan (1989b) introduces the so-called

‘directing intention’. This intention is a means of associating the character of an indexical with content, where the latter can vary from occasion to occasion. By introducing the intentional element into the delimitation of content Kaplan makes two important steps: he makes context an epistemic notion, and secures semantic content for the speaker, defending it from the possibility of it being addressee-bound.<sup>22</sup>

We now return to the question of the types of expressions for the semantics of which context so-conceived may be instrumental. The observed flexibility of meaning arrived in the pragmatic process of discourse interpretation seems to suggest that just as indexicals require contextual resolution, so, to some extent, do all other natural language expressions – in agreement with the contextualist assumption (Recanati 2004, 2010). And this is where the orientation of free pragmatic enrichment proposed by contextualist and the indexical resolution in two-dimensional semantics seem to meet. For, just as we can have no conclusive evidence that enrichment is indeed free, top-down, unconstrained by the lexicon or grammatical constructions, so can we have no conclusive evidence that indexicals constitute a closely-knit class with constant characters and variable contents, opposed to an allegedly less problematic class of expressions with variable character and constant content. Rather, evidence from pragmatic processing, both experimental and arrived through everyday experience, seems to point out to a gradation: context has an intra-semantic role to perform in the case of the interpretation of natural language lexicon at large.

Just as personal pronouns require contextual resolution before truth-conditional analysis can kick in, so, very often, common nouns, noun phrases, and other constituents of a proposition, and even units that are not constituents from the syntactic point of view, are in need of contextual specification if we are to adhere to the contextualist requirement of the intuitive truth conditions.<sup>23</sup> The metaphorical use of natural kind terms as for example in (27), or the widely discussed referentially shifted use of the subject in (28), are just a couple of

examples from a battery of cases where a substantial contextual resolution is performed in discourse.

(27) That child is pure gold.

(28) The red fleece in the third row wants to ask a question.

At this point, the question arises as to *which linguistic items have a character*. Here, in agreement with the argument for flexible inferential bases laid out in the previous section, the answer is that it is a context-dependent fact which units correspond to a character. Hence, in this ‘pragmaticisation’ of Kaplan’s character, we propose a new notion of a ‘fluid character’: ‘fluid’ in the sense of reflecting the dynamic process of meaning recovery as discourse unfolds. In other words, while ‘the red fleece’ in (28) constitutes a character that is in need of referential resolution (resolution to the person in the visual field of the interlocutors who is wearing a red-coloured fleece jacket<sup>24</sup>), in (29) it is the lexical item ‘red’ itself that produces the character (‘the reds’). It is construed here as intended to give rise to a non-colour-bound, metaphorical interpretation.

(29) The novel is a historical account of the victory of the reds over the whites in early 20th-century Russia.

In (30), it is the compound ‘red cow’ that is instrumental in the character constituted by the definite description ‘the red cow’ in that it leads to the selection of the appropriate candidates for content.

(30) The red cow belongs to the next-door neighbour.

In sum, while ‘pragmaticising’ Kaplan’s character we depart from the well-entrenched view that a natural-language system like English contains a class of items that have fixed characters and a class of items that have variable characters. We also depart from the (not well-supported anyway) claim that there is a clear-cut semantic distinction between simple (lexical) and compositional, complex units. Instead, one and the same lexical item can correspond to a character or a part of a character as in (28)-(30). Likewise, all characters are in a sense, to a degree, like Kaplan’s indexicals: they need the context to establish the potential extensions. In some cases the role of the context is minimal and the standard link with the extension clicks in, and in others the context accounts for an elaborate inferential process and, on the level of semantic description, for the relative uniqueness of the interpretation.

Further, it is essential to point out that fluid characters so-construed are not an additional level of meaning; instead, the proposal is that they replace Kaplan’s characters by subsuming them and by extending the use of the concept to such units of variable length and to various semantic categories. In this way we can add very much needed clarity to the contextualists’ picture of the processing of meaning and open up the possibility of an algorithmic account of dynamic meaning-construction, without the reliance on the dubious distinction into units that are stable and units that are ‘essential contextu-als’. In a sense, they constitute the next step following the proposal of the so-called ‘Intention-Sensitive Semantics’ (Stokke 2010, this journal): Stokke incorporates *intentions*, as opposed to merely *intended referents*, as parameters of context, thereby taking seriously, in what he calls a combinatorial approach to reference, the information from what the speaker intends. Once intentions are introduced, the route to the fluid character has been paved: the speaker intends to refer by *x* to *X* and thereby *x* acquires a character it does – quite freely, and, as Stokke claims, avoiding vicious circularity that relying on the mere product of intending invokes (see

Stokke 2010: 400).

A possible objection to be addressed here is: Why do we need characters in addition to contexts if both inferential bases and characters are variable in length?<sup>25</sup> After all, radical contextualists might just about consent to an orderly, systematized context à la Kaplan's parameters, but they are very unlikely to accept the view that one needs to view all units of semantic content as indexicals, and thereby that virtually all lexical items as well as units that carry semantic content or trigger pragmatic processing are potential indexicals with variable characters.<sup>26</sup> But it seems that the onus of proof lies with those who would oppose such 'pragmaticisation' of Kaplan and, conversely, 'kaplanisation' of radical contextualism. The benefit is of course in semantic compositionality: if compositionality is to be preserved in conjunction with intuitive truth values, then, I submit, kaplanesque characters pragmaticised to 'fluid characters' as proposed above are the obvious way forward and are supported by the, often unnoticed or denied, compatibility of the two orientations.

The proposal is not put here in conceptual void. Borg's (2010) recent defence of the lexicon as organisational, combinatorial possibilities; Asher's (2011) defence of the central role of context in semantic types; Pulvermüller's (2011) neurosemantics that is largely based on combinatorial knowledge; Predelli's (2005a,b) explication of how Kaplan's two-dimensional account can handle non-indexical cases all point in the direction of a gradation of context-dependence rather than a binary distinction.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, the 'pragmaticised' characters are variable ('fluid') not only because their length varies with situation of discourse; they are also variable ('fluid') in that a lexical item itself can owe more, or less, of its meaning to pragmatic processing in context.

In short, what we have here is two-dimensionalism applied to a rather unusual domain, namely that of pragmatic inference and pragmatic default assignment, viz. implicatures. At the same time, this extended range of application does not necessitate any

disallowed departure from the theory as far as the apparatus of the two dimensions is concerned. Just as an indexical gets fixed for the context, so the inferential base is conceived of as a ‘fluid indexical’, so to speak, to be resolved in the context to the length, say, ‘some’, ‘some people’, or ‘some people say’ in various contextual uses of the scalar item ‘some’. Sentences become indexed to context in this way even before the local/global, nonce/default properties are addressed. In other words, it is context that triggers a particular sentence fragment, called a fluid indexical.

Next, it is this sentence fragment that produces an abstract category which, like Kaplan’s character, acquires contextual resolution, incorporating other profits gained from the ‘first leg’ such as intonation, co-text, and so forth. This category we called a *fluid* character. In other words, to put it in the form of a slogan, *fluid indexicals come with fluid characters*. On the level of (Kaplanian) content, the sentence with the fluid character contextually resolved is subjected to the function from circumstances of evaluation to extensions, like on Kaplan’s standard account. This concludes the second dimension of our application of Kaplan’s two-dimensional account.

There is one respect, however, in which our kaplanesque fluid characters differ significantly from Kaplan’s original characters. They are, in a sense, more powerful. Recall our example of a ‘default for the context’ associated with the use of the proper name ‘Leonardo’ in (31) repeated below.

(31) Kate and Leonardo acted superbly in Revolutionary Road.

For Kaplan (1989a: 562), commonly used proper names such as ‘John’ or ‘Leonardo’ are ambiguous and their referent has to be fixed pre-semantically, along Kripke’s initial ‘baptism’ and a chain of communication. Once disambiguated, they have a fixed character,

like indexicals, but they also have a fixed content: they pick out the same referent in all circumstances of evaluation. Now, ‘Leonardo’ belongs to the inferential base. It may exhaust it, when say, ‘Leonardo’ in (32) suffices to secure the referent Leonardo da Vinci – of course, in some context and thereby for some addressee, in accordance with our construal of defaults presented in Section 3.

(32) Leonardo’s painting was stolen from the Uffizi last night.

Or, it may just properly belong to it, when, say, the inferring agent requires the entire nominal phrase ‘Leonardo’s painting’ in (32) or a non-constituent fragment ‘Kate and Leonardo acted’ in (31) for reference assignment. As a component of the inferential base, it warrants the referential resolution within the ‘first leg’ of a two-dimensional account (context), rather than, as Kaplan claimed, pre-semantically. However, the topic of proper names can only be flagged here as a potential candidate for a more elaborate treatment, kaplaneque in spirit but not exactly Kaplanian.

In short, the proposal is this: a relevant fragment of the sentence constitutes an inferential base which is understood as an indexical with a character with respect to which the content is assessed. The indexicals are dubbed ‘fluid’ in that their length varies from situation to situation. It is the context that dictates what counts as the inferential base: ‘some’, or ‘some people’, ‘some people say’, the sentence, or multisentential stretch. To repeat, compositional rules are assumed to be operative on this level. Analogously, the characters are dubbed ‘fluid’ in that they are produced by fluid indexicals. Implicatures, be it scalar or other, are derived with respect to an indexical which has to be first resolved in the context, understood in the ‘pragmaticised’ kaplanesque way proposed earlier in this section. This is the ‘first leg’ of the two-dimensionality, after which the ‘second leg’ follows as specified in ‘Demonstratives’.

The use I made here of Kaplan's two-dimensional semantics/pragmatics mix does not alter Kaplan's original construal of content (as a function from circumstances of evaluation to extensions). It alters the properties that the *unit* on which the character/content distinction operates is allowed to have. It is the dynamic conception of the unit that makes the indexical and the corresponding character 'fluid'.

Fluid characters provide an elegant solution to Travis' (1997) and Predelli's (2005a,b) well-discussed 'painted leaves' scenarios.<sup>28</sup> When the colour of leaves of a russet maple tree is assessed with respect to different requirements, that of the botanist (leaves being naturally russet) and that of the photographer (leaves being painted green for the purpose of a photographic session), the nominal constituent 'the leaves' creates a *fluid indexical* (to repeat, 'fluid' in that its length and sources of enrichment are there only for the purpose at hand) and thereby gives rise to a *fluid character*. It has to be stressed again that an expression that on Kaplan's construal would be expected to be regarded as non-indexical is now construed as an indexical.

But there are no free lunches: there is always a price to pay sooner or later, although fluid indexicals seem to provide a discounted price. They are neither syntactic slots like those associated with standard indexicalists, nor free, top-down unconstrained floods of interlocutors' imagination proposed by a radical contextualist; they are moderately context-driven and psychologically feasible. 'Moderately' in a sense that context provides more, or less, information, depending on the circumstances of discourse. While sometimes we can go along with default senses, such as that leaves are normally green and normally belong to a deciduous tree, at other times such default meanings are not available or not appropriate. Discourse is dynamic, so are the units we create ad hoc for the purpose of its processing, and so are the meanings that result from processing such ad hoc units.

Fluid characters are indeed inherently dynamic. They reflect the dynamics of

discourse interpretation and at the same time allow for various degrees of salience of assumed interpretations. Assessed in this light, it seems that the current debates on localism/globalism and defaultism/noncism start from wrong premises and assumptions. We should not ask whether implicatures are local or global, neither should we ask whether a particular type of enrichment is automatic or inferential (default/nonce). Such questions appear to be wrongly posed. Characters are fluid and it is the situation of discourse that pins them down to a particular structural unit. Analogously, it is the situation of discourse that assigns the status of inferential or default interpretation to their (situated) meaning assignment. As a result, Grice's orthodox orientation on these two distinctions seems to be revindicated by means of employing two-dimensional semantics.

##### *5. Conclusions: Fluid Characters of Lexical Pragmatics?*

The main proposals made in this paper are the following:

- The units utilised as a base for inferential and default meaning assignments are variable in length. This variability owes its provenance to the incremental nature of discourse processing.
- These 'inferential bases', as we called them, make obsolete the localism-globalism debate about pragmatic inference in that the unit on which the pragmatic operation is based depends on the requirements of the situation of discourse at hand.
- A unit, called a 'fluid indexical', that corresponds to such a flexible inferential base is constituted by a portion of the sentence, an expression fragment, immersed in the context.
- Flexible bases for inference (and thereby fluid indexicals) produce 'fluid characters' – modified kaplanesque constructs which are subject to contextual resolution in the 'first leg' of the two-dimensional semantic account.

- Characters are variable (fluid) in that their length varies with situation of discourse. They are also variable (fluid) in that a lexical item itself can owe more, or less, of its meaning to pragmatic processing in context.
- Flexible indexicals can give rise to conscious inference. They can also give rise to automatic interpretations which are dubbed *defaults for the context*, and thereby *defaults for the speaker*, and avoid the pitfalls of Levinson-style radical localism/radical defaultism merge.
- Kaplan's construct of context as an index with flexible parameters, reanalysed by him as an epistemic, intention-based notion (1989b), yields to such an implementation and 'pragmaticisation' without distorting the original idea of the content-character distinction.
- Fluid characters of this pragmaticised kaplanesque view are applicable to various scenarios of contextual modulation discussed by contextualists, as well as to Travis-Predelli cases of truth-value variation which is not attributable to circumstances of evaluation. The solution (i) subjects these contexts to a version of indexicalism, at the same time (ii) extending the range of cases to cover cases understood as standard examples of top-down, free enrichment, and therefore counts as an indexicalist-contextualist hybrid, pointing to the compatibility between these two approaches.

The proposal is still programmatic at this stage. Experimental implementation will have to delimit exact principles of formation of inferential bases. It is hoped that the methodological advantages of 'pragmaticising Kaplan' delineated here make a strong case for the need for such testing.

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<sup>1</sup> For one attempt along these lines see Predelli 2005a, b.

<sup>2</sup> See also his 1999 on presupposition which is there clearly distinguished from implicature as a local, as opposed to global, phenomenon.

<sup>3</sup> A terminological disclaimer is in order here. Horn (2004: 6) famously says that ‘Speakers implicate, hearers infer’. For Grice, indeed, implicature belongs with speaker’s intended meaning and inference with its recovery by the addressee. While I agree with Horn’s warning against a terminological muddle, my assumptions in this paper are as follows: (i) post-Gricean theory should model the meaning intended by the speaker; (ii) implicatures belong with intentions; (iii) inferences belong with addressees or other agents engaging in the process of implicature recovery. However, (iv) a pragmatic theory has to do with the cases of principled, rational communication, based on the model speaker and model addressee, and therefore speaking about ‘generation of implicatures’ is warranted as a shortcut: we look at model cases where inference matches intentions. ‘Inference’ and ‘generation of implicature’ are therefore used interchangeably. Also, ‘inference’ is used for the moment as a broad theoretical term, without any implications to do with the conscious or unconscious nature of the process.

<sup>4</sup> The relevant passages are worth quoting in full:

‘Grammar provides us with two related interpretive procedures that assigns (sic) two types of values to each expression: the plain value and the strengthened alternates. Plain values are defined in the usual way. The strengthened ones are defined in terms of the plain ones and the set of (local) relevant alternative values. ... Contrary to the dominant view (but consistently with our observations), implicatures, like core meaning, are computed compositionally bottom-up, off LF structures.’

and

‘One would expect that speakers will use the values grammar provides them with cooperatively. This means that they will tend to use the strongest interpretation (*consistent with the context*) for which they have evidence. So the default interpretation in a concrete communicative situation will be the one provided by strengthened values.’ Chierchia (2004: 64).

It is also worth noting that the assumption of localism is dropped in Chierchia (2006), where he claims that scalars can activate stronger alternatives via the grammar, and in particular via an operator similar to *only*. The fact that polarity-sensitive items (i.e., negative polarity items and free choice items) do not select stronger alternatives is a corollary of this view. See also end of Section 3 below on the possible reconciliation of the grammatical generation of implicatures with the contextualist ‘top-down’ view.

<sup>5</sup> But see Geurts 2010 on his critique of the utility of the concept of a default.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Papanicolaou 2009 on reference and anaphora in Agatha Christie’s novels.

<sup>7</sup> See Jaszczolt 2008 on whether Frege’s ban on psychologism should apply to semantics and pragmatics. Predictably, my answer to this question is negative, but we are now in a position to add a proviso: the psychologically real inference base is not transparent to the semantic theory. On the surface, inferences are as good as global and all is well.

<sup>8</sup> Or, to reflect the primary meaning intended by a model speaker and recovered by model addressee where this strongly communicated meaning is construed as orthogonal to the traditional explicit/implicit distinction. See merger representations of Default Semantics (Jaszczolt, e.g. 2005, 2009, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Rather than an expanded, enriched, modulated, etc. proposition of a contextualist account.

<sup>10</sup> Called ‘utterance-type meaning’, classified as ‘the middle level’ between semantics and pragmatics. See Levinson 2000.

<sup>11</sup> See Jaszczolt 2006 for an overview of types of defaults in semantics and pragmatics.

<sup>12</sup> The theory of Default Semantics offers a comprehensive model of sources of information, as well as a model of processes that interact in producing the primary meaning intended by a model speaker and recovered by a model addressee. These sources include defaults based on the socio-cultural and other world knowledge as well as defaults based on the properties of human inferential system, such as the strong, referential reading of definite descriptions, or the *de re* reading of belief attributions. The contextualist, flexible inferential base can therefore be read as a development of one aspect of the theory, namely of how certain processes and sources interact. But

equally it can be taken at face value, independently of any assumptions of Default Semantics. It is the latter aim that I pursue in this paper.

<sup>13</sup> See also footnote 2.

<sup>14</sup> The assumption of methodological globalism proposed in my Default Semantics (Jaszczolt 2005, 2010) applies here: in brief, for as long as we lack sufficient evidence concerning the length of inferential basis, it makes no difference to semantic theory if we continue assuming after Grice, for methodological uniformity, that inferences are global, sentence-based.

<sup>15</sup> Such a perspective of a flexible-base, pragmatics-rich semantics opens up the question as to whether a contextualist, truth-conditional semantics so construed can possibly be compositional. Let us start with the assumption that compositionality has to be posited as a necessary methodological requirement for every satisfactory account of meaning. It can be justifiably assumed that semantics which is not compositional fails to fulfil the task of being a theory of meaning at all. Since our object of investigation is a contextualist object, the methodological requirement of compositionality will have to apply to this contextualist object *tout court*.

<sup>16</sup> See the theory of Default Semantics, Jaszczolt 2005, 2009, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> See Recanati 2005 for an overview.

<sup>18</sup> See also Chalmers (2006) for a succinct presentation of various versions of two-dimensionalism, including Stalnaker's diagonal proposition vs. proposition expressed and his own primary intension and secondary intension. In what follows I make references only to Kaplan's character vs. content distinction.

<sup>19</sup> For example a point of evaluation or perspective from which a sentence is to be assessed as true or false. See the example discussed in Travis 1997 and Predelli 2005a, b where russet leaves of a maple tree that are painted green, are truthfully judged to be green to a photographer but are at the same time truthfully judged to be russet to a botanist.

<sup>20</sup> See also Kaplan 1989b and Stalnaker 1999 on the content of an index.

<sup>21</sup> But see for example an attempt in Optimality Theory Pragmatics, Blutner and Zeevat 2003 on an attempt to formalize Levinson's heuristics.

<sup>22</sup> This is what Korta and Perry (2007) and Perry (2009) call *locutionary content* (speaker-based, intended meaning) which they oppose to *what is said* (addressee-based, recovered meaning).

<sup>23</sup> Which we do, for the purpose of this argument.

<sup>24</sup> Note that in some contexts 'the red fleece' produces the character while in others one has to wait until 'the red fleece in the third row' or even until a non-constituent unit 'the red fleece in the third row wants', to eliminate reference to the item of clothing (cf. 'The red fleece in the third row is exactly what I want for my birthday'). This well known fact of incremental processing of information is precisely what should be incorporated in the otherwise very productive content-character account.

<sup>25</sup> I owe this objection to an anonymous reviewer of my related work on this topic.

<sup>26</sup> To repeat, due to the incremental nature of processing, these pertain to syntactic constituents and non-constituents alike.

<sup>27</sup> For this purpose, Predelli uses *applications*: functions that map points of evaluation with worldly conditions – because worldly conditions themselves do not contain the crucial ingredient of how the situation is to be judged for the purpose at hand:

'...given a representation of  $z$  by means of the clause-index pair  $\langle s, i \rangle$  and the application  $a$ ,  $z$  is true with respect to worldly conditions  $w$  iff  $j(a(w)) = \text{truth}$ , where  $j$  is the intension associated by [an interpretive system]  $S$  with  $\langle s, i \rangle$ .' Predelli (2005a: 366).

To compare, while Predelli 'tweaks' the context to get the intuitively correct truth values, we 'tweak' the characters of expressions by proposing that indexicality is a virtually omnipresent phenomenon of discourse.

<sup>28</sup> See footnotes 19 & 27.