

Protagonist Projection, Character Focus, and Mixed Quotation

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Abstract

This chapter compares two kinds perspective-shifting language. The first is so-called “protagonist projection.” (Holton, 1997, Stokke, 2013) The second phenomenon is sometimes known as “character focus.” I argue that both protagonist projection and character focus should be analyzed as forms of mixed quotation. Drawing on the work of Potts (2007) and Maier (2014, 2015), mixed quotation is seen as interacting with two-dimensions of interpretation, one corresponding to the use-component of mixed quotation, the other corresponding to the mention-component. I propose that the mention-component of mixed quotation can be interpreted modally. As a result, protagonist projection and character focus can be seen to have the same semantics, while they differ pragmatically. In particular, while protagonist projection pragmatically conveys attributions of beliefs, character focus does not.

Keywords Protagonist projection; character focus; mixed quotation; viewpoint shifting; conventional implicature; free indirect discourse

1 Introduction

This chapter concerns two linguistic phenomena involving what can be described as perspective shifting. The first of these is usually called *protagonist projection*, the other is known as *character focus*. Both are prominent in modern fiction.¹ Examples of each are given in (1)–(2).²

Protagonist Projection (PP)

¹Protagonist projection can be found in non-fiction, as in this example: “It is not easy dating such monuments – a fact demonstrated by the recent revelation that an unusual bronze-age stone circle in Aberdeenshire was actually built 20 years ago by a farmer.” (“The Battle for the Future of Stonehenge.” *The Guardian*. 8 February 2019) In this chapter I confine myself solely to examples from fiction.

²The example in (1a) was first mentioned to me by Josh Dever.

- (1) a. Uzowulu and his relative, on the other hand, were whispering together. It looked like whispering, but they were really talking at the top of their voices. Everybody in the crowd was talking. (Achebe, 1988 [1958])
- b. He gave her a ring studded with diamonds, but they turned out to be glass. (Holton, 1997)
- c. He tossed me the magazine, which I now saw was a glossy brochure. (Tartt, 1992)

Character Focus (CF)

- (2) a. But Mr. Harford was very decent and never got into a wax. All the other masters got into dreadful waxes. (Joyce, 2000 [1914])
- b. Every morning, therefore, uncle Charles repaired to his outhouse but not before he had creased and brushed scrupulously his back hair and brushed and put on his tall hat. (Joyce, 2000 [1914])
- c. Papa made a speech and sent his petitioners away; that is what always happened. [...] He went with mamma through the rooms and halls, in which the members of the Court were gathered [...]. Whoever was addressed by him bowed low, left a space of parquet between himself and papa, and answered soberly and with signs of gratification. (Mann, 2011 [1909])

The underlined expressions in these examples are used from a perspective other than that of the narrator at the time of utterance. The use of *whispering* in (1a) does not reflect the narrator's perspective on the event, since it is clear that the narrator knows they were not whispering. *Diamonds* in (1b) is used to convey that someone thought the ring was studded with diamonds, even though the narrator knows it was not diamonds. In (1c) *magazine* is used to convey that the narrator thought the brochure was a magazine at the time. In (2a) *got into a wax* is used because that is a phrase the schoolboy protagonist would use, rather than the adult narrator. *Repair* occurs in (2b) as an indication that Uncle Charles would use such a word, even if the narrator would not.³ Finally, in (2c), which is taken from a 3rd person narrative, *papa* and *mamma* are used from the perspective of the child protagonist, Klaus Heinrich, rather than the narrator.

The aim of this chapter is to argue that both PP and CF should be analyzed as instances of mixed quotation (MQ). In particular, we will see that a version of

³Kenner (1978) dubbed the phenomenon of CF in literature "the Uncle Charles Principle," after the passage in (2b). See also Wood (2008, 19), Johnson (2000, xxii).

the two-dimensional analysis of MQ developed by Potts (2007) and Maier (2014), (2015) offers an attractive way of capturing the relevant features of both PP and CF. One main consequence of this account will be that while PP and CF have the same semantic profile, they differ pragmatically.

Section 2 examines the two phenomena in detail and compares both with free indirect discourse. Section 3 reviews the fundamentals of a two-dimensional account of MQ. In Section 4 this account is applied to PP and CF and some refinements are introduced. Section 5 discusses some problems and motivations for this approach to PP and CF and relates these to some further perspective shifting phenomena that have been discussed by others.

2 Protagonist Projection and Character Focus

2.1 Protagonist Projection and Belief Attribution

The term *protagonist projection* was introduced by Holton (1997) to describe cases like (1b).⁴ Holton's central observation on these examples was that they, in some sense, involve the beliefs of the relevant protagonist:

I suggest that these sentences work by projecting us into the point of view of the protagonist [...]. In each case the point of view into which we are projected involves a false belief. (Holton, 1997, 626).

Accordingly, an initial judgment on PP examples is that they involve an attribution of a belief that is easily seen to be false. For instance, (1b) is naturally read as conveying that she (the female protagonist) falsely believed the ring was studded with diamonds.

Consideration of more cases suggests that this description of the phenomenon needs to be broadened. Two of Holton's other examples were (3a–b).

- (3) a. She sold him a pig in a bag, but they both knew that it was really a cat. (Holton, 1997)
- b. When they parted they exchanged photos and other keepsakes that would keep their love alive forever. But they both knew that it was hopeless. (Holton, 1997)

Commenting on the cases in (3), Holton noted that

⁴Holton's main object was to reply to arguments by Tsohatzidis (1993) concerning the factivity of certain constructions, and he did not offer a developed analysis of PP. Later studies of PP include Stokke (2013), Buckwalter (2014), Abrusán (2020).

We do not in general need a protagonist who has actually been fooled. It is good enough to have someone who is simply a possible location for the salient false belief, especially if they are the target of a pretence (Holton, 1997, 627)

For instance, with respect to (3a), if both knew it was really a cat, clearly neither of them actually believed it was a pig in a bag. Similarly, in (1a) it is made explicit that Uzowulu and his relative "looked like" they were whispering, even though they were not. Yet this example is compatible with no one in fact believing that they were whispering. Instead, a natural gloss on (1a) is that, since Uzowulu and his relative looked like they were whispering, someone might have thought they were.

Given this, one suggestion is that PP serves to convey that someone had or might have had a belief which is seen to be false. However, this can also be seen to be too restrictive as a description of the phenomenon. In fact, the relevant belief does not need to be false, as shown by (4).

- (4) [Context: Neither she nor the reader knows whether the locked room is a pantry. But the reader knows that she thinks it is.]
She was curious about the locked pantry. [...] When she had the house to herself, she [...] uncovered the lock. [...] The pantry was indeed a pantry.
(Byatt, 2009)

(4) is clearly a case of PP. In particular, the last clause of (4) conveys that she believed the locked room was a pantry, rather than the trivial, uninformative claim that the pantry was a pantry. But in this case the belief was true.

These examples indicate that even though PP does not always involve an attribution of an actual, false belief, PP does involve at least the attribution of a possible belief, which may be true or false. Moreover, Holton's original observation that this is achieved by using expressions from the perspective of the relevant protagonist highlights the central feature of these examples.

2.2 Protagonist Projection and Metarepresentation

The observations made above suggest that PP involves metarepresentation, that is, representation of, or reporting on, thoughts or utterances. PP is akin to forms of metarepresentation in which expressions are used from the perspective of the subject of the report. Paradigm examples of this kind of metarepresentation are direct discourse and free indirect discourse, as in (5)–(6).

Direct Discourse (DD)

- (5) She thought, "God! Only yesterday he gave me a ring studded with diamonds. What's that all about!?" But a week later they turned out to be glass.

Free Indirect Discourse (FID)

- (6) She thought about what had happened. God! Only yesterday he had given her a ring studded with diamonds. What was that all about!? But a week later they turned out to be glass.

Both DD and FID resemble PP in using certain expressions from the perspective of the subject of the report, that is, the referent of *she*. Yet PP is demonstrably a distinct phenomenon from both DD and FID.⁵

That PP is distinct from DD is obvious at least from the person features of pronouns. Had (1b) been DD, the first person, rather than the third person, would have been used to refer to the protagonist. On the other hand, the resemblance between FID and PP might appear stronger. In particular, note that *diamonds* is required in an FID report of the false belief involved in (1b):⁶

- (7) He bought a ring with fake, glass diamonds and gave it to her. She didn't notice. The day after, she was at home, thinking about what had happened. God! Only yesterday he had given her a ring studded with diamonds/#glass. What was that all about!?

Despite this resemblance, PP is distinct from FID. This can be seen from the fact that in FID indexicals are used from the point of view of the subject, not the speaker, as witnessed by *yesterday* in (6). Yet shifting indexicals in this way is not licensed by PP, as seen from (8).

- (8) A week ago, Ann was pacing around after coming home from the jeweler, disappointed and angry with John. The day before/#yesterday he gave her a ring studded with diamonds, but they turned out to be glass. (Stokke, 2013)

Still, PP resembles both DD and FID in their, as we might say, quotative aspects. As I will suggest later, analyzing PP as MQ captures precisely this fact, and also explains the observations concerning belief attributions we made above.

2.3 Character Focus and Perspective Shifting

While PP has been studied by some within philosophy of language and linguistics (Holton, 1997, Stokke, 2013, Buckwalter, 2014, Abrusán, 2020), CF has so far not received direct attention in these fields, but has been mainly discussed in literary

⁵Cf. Stokke (2013).

⁶See Sharvit (2004) for a similar observation about the gender features of pronouns.

theory and narratology (Booth, 1961, Kenner, 1978, Genette, 1980, Wood, 2008) and in philosophical aesthetics (Currie, 2010).⁷

A general consensus in these areas is, roughly, that CF serves to imitate the speech or thought of the relevant protagonist. For example, the standard gloss on (2b) is that *repaired* is used, not because it is a word that is a natural choice for the narrator, but because that is a word that Uncle Charles could have used.⁸ The intended effect of this is to convey something about Uncle Charles. By suggesting that he could have used *repaired*, rather than, say, *went*, we are prompted to think that Uncle Charles is an affected, frumpish character.

Here is another example from Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*:

- (9) Sir William Lucas had been formerly in trade in Meryton, where he had made a tolerable fortune, and risen to the honour of knighthood by an address to the King, during his mayoralty. [...] he had removed with his family to a house about a mile from Meryton, denominated from that period Lucas Lodge, where he could think with pleasure of his own importance [...]. (Austen, 2001 [1813], 12)

Wood (2008) remarks on this example,

the pomposity of "denominated from that period" is funny because we can imagine Sir William saying to himself "and I will *denominate* the house, from this period, Lucas Lodge. Yes, that sounds *prodigious*." (Wood, 2008, 21)

As in (2a–c), the narrator is using words that the protagonist could have used in order to convey something about the latter's character.

In this respect CF resembles PP. Both involve using expressions that the protagonists could have used. Yet CF differs from PP in that CF does not convey belief attributions, even in the weak sense of a merely possible belief. Take (2b). Even though the use of *repaired* conveys something about Uncle Charles, (2b) does not convey that Charles had or might have had a belief like "I will repair to my out-house." Similarly, (2a) uses *got into a wax*, rather than, for instance, *got angry*, because the former is a phrase the schoolboy Stephen could have used. Yet (2a) does not convey that Stephen had or might have had a belief like "Mr. Harford never gets into a wax." Of course, in both cases the protagonist might very well have had the relevant belief. But even so, this is not communicated by the use of CF.

⁷A closely related term to "character focus" is "focalization," first introduced by Genette (1980). As Currie (2010, 136–135) explains, as usually understood, "focalization" is a broader term. This chapter follows Currie's (2010) use of "character focus" for the narrower phenomenon, exemplified by (2).

⁸See e.g. Kenner (1978), Wood (2008, 19), Johnson (2000, xxii).

2.4 Character Focus and Free Indirect Discourse

Even though CF is sometimes equated with FID, the fact that CF does not serve to convey belief attributions shows that CF is neither an instance of DD nor of FID.⁹ Both DD and FID are mechanisms for reporting thoughts or utterances. Still, one might think that FID always involves CF, even if CF can occur outside FID.

As we noted earlier, in FID expressions are used from the perspective of the subject of the report, as in DD. Both DD and FID requires that *diamonds* be used rather than *glass* when reporting the false belief that the glass was diamonds. At the same time, there are instances of FID that are consistent with a reading on which the relevant expressions do not belong to the vocabulary of the protagonist. Consider the following example of FID:

- (10) He could smell the smoke swelling in the corridor. What should he do now!? Should he take the lift down to the lobby? Or should he bolt down the stairs? Argh! The smoke was coming closer!

Imagine that we, as readers or hearers, are aware that the protagonist would not use *lift* but would use *elevator*, and would use *run* rather than *bolt*. Even so, the FID report in (10) is acceptable. At least it is true to say that, in some contexts, (10) would be acceptable, depending on further details of the case such as the perceived differences between the word choices and what is known about the protagonist.¹⁰ This is evidence that FID is compatible with not imitating the particular style of speech or thought of the subject of the report as in CF.¹¹

What is the difference between cases like (10) and cases like (7)? One answer is that, given the context, the choice between *elevator* and *lift* in the former case does not make a relevant difference to the thought reported, whereas choosing *glass* instead of *diamonds* in (7) produces an FID report that conveys, incorrectly, that she thought the ring was studded with glass. This is some reason to think that, as we might put it, FID requires CF up to intensional equivalence, but not beyond. (Assuming, as is reasonable, that the extension of *elevator* and *lift* is the same in all possible worlds.)

While PP and CF resemble FID and DD in using expressions from the perspective of the protagonist, neither PP nor CF are instances of these recognizable forms of metarepresentational discourse. Moreover, PP and CF differ in that while PP

⁹Wood (2008, 19) conflates CF and FID: "The Uncle Charles principle is just an edition of free indirect style." Johnson (2002, xxi) correctly distinguishes the two.

¹⁰Thanks to Emar Maier for discussion on this.

¹¹This is compatible with the observation that FID reports occurrent thoughts, or inner speech. See Abrisán (2020), (this volume), and section 5.3. of this chapter. That is, even if (10) does not require that the protagonist would use "lift," it may still require that an equivalent token occurred in his inner speech.

uses perspective shifting to convey an attribution of a (possible) belief, CF does not communicate reports of what the protagonist did or might have thought.

3 Mixed Quotation

In this section and the next I will argue that an account of PP and CF in terms of MQ is able to capture the observations made so far.¹² This section reviews the rudiments of the account of the semantics and pragmatics of MQ I am interested in. We will see in the next section that the basic account needs to be modified in order to be applicable to PP and CF.

3.1 Use and Mention

Following Partee (1973), Davidson (1979), Cappelen and Lepore (1997), (2007), Recanati (2000), Geurts and Maier (2005), Maier (2015), and many others, we distinguish MQ, as in (11a), from pure quotation, as in (11b).

- (11) a. Romney said that Newt Gingrich is an “influence peddler.” (Maier, 2015)
b. “Beth” begins with a b.

The standard observation about pure quotation is that the quoted material is merely mentioned, rather than used. By contrast, in MQ the quoted material is both used and mentioned. (11a) conveys both that Romney said that Gingrich is an influence peddler and that, in doing so, Romney used the phrase *influence peddler*. Following Maier (2015), we call the former aspect of cases like (11a) the *use component* and the latter the *mention component* of MQ.

The mention component of MQ is usually taken to communicate that someone used the quoted expressions to refer to some object, property, or relation. The use component is taken to contribute that object, property, or relation to the truth conditions of the sentence. This motivates a semantic analysis of MQ on which the use component and the mention component are seen as separate dimensions of meaning.

Maier (2015) implements this approach by adopting a two-dimensional framework of the kind that have been developed by Potts (2005) and others to theorize about phenomena such as conventional implicatures. In the relevant systems clauses denote ordered pairs of truth-values. For instance, (11a) is analyzed as in (12).

¹²Maier (2015) presents an account of FID in terms of MQ. This account is highly congenial to the proposal I argue for here, given the strong resemblances between these phenomena. Indeed, if both proposals are right, PP and CF can be seen as localized instances of the kind of MQ that, on Maier’s account, characterizes FID.

- (12) $\llbracket(11a)\rrbracket^c = \langle \text{Romney said that Newt Gingrich is an } P; x \text{ used } \textit{influence peddler} \text{ to refer to } P \rangle$

Here elements of the ordered pair on the right-hand side represent the truth-conditions for the two different dimensions where the context of utterance c determines the values of P and x . In this case presumably their values will be as follows:

$P = \lambda x. x \text{ is an influence peddler}$

$x = \text{Romney}$

So, in this case, (11a) will denote the pair of truth-values $\langle 1,1 \rangle$ if and only if Romney said that Newt Gingrich is an influence peddler and Romney used *influence peddler* to refer to the property of being an influence peddler. Correspondingly, (11a) might denote the pair $\langle 0,1 \rangle$ if, for instance, Romney has used *influence peddler* but has not said that Gingrich is an influence peddler. And so on for the remaining two possible combinations of truth-values.

The reason for implementing the kind of context-sensitivity represented by P and x in the analysis is that MQ allows for variation along both of these dimensions. Consider, for example, (13).

- (13) Nicola said that Alice is a "philtosopher." (Cappelen and Lepore, 2007)

(13) can be used to convey that Nicola attributed the property of being a philosopher to Alice by using *philtosopher*. For instance, if both the speaker and hearer are aware that Nicola typically uses *philtosopher* to mean philosopher, (13) is naturally interpreted in this way. Hence, in this case, (13) will be analyzed as in (14).

- (14) $\llbracket(13)\rrbracket^c = \langle \text{Nicola said that Alice is a } P; x \text{ used } \textit{philtosopher} \text{ to refer to } P \rangle$

$P = \lambda x. x \text{ is a philosopher}$

$x = \text{Nicola}$

(13) illustrates the context-sensitivity of the use component of MQ. The mention component behaves in a similar way. To see this, consider (15).

- (15) Kushner agrees that Trump is a "genius."

(15) can be read as conveying that Kushner used *genius*, or that Trump used *genius*, or that they both did, or that someone else entirely used *genius*. In other words, the context should assign a value for the mention component as well as for the use component.

The mention component of MQ can apply to both speech and thought. That is, the mention component may signal that the relevant expression was used in speech or in thought (or both). This corresponds to the fact that DD can likewise be a report of either speech or thought. (16a–b) are parallel in the relevant respects.

- (16) a. Petra thought, "He's an amateur."
b. Petra thought that he was an "amateur."

Just like DD, MQ can be used to report both speech and thought.

3.2 The Primary and Secondary Dimensions

This analysis of MQ classifies MQ along with other two-dimensional phenomena, such as conventional implicatures.¹³ According to this approach, the use component and the mention component of MQ, respectively, determine two kinds of assertions associated with (assertoric utterances of) sentences like (11a). In this case these are roughly as follows (we will see that this needs to be refined later):

Primary assertion (use component)

Romney said that Gingrich is an influence peddler.

Secondary assertion (mention component)

Romney used *influence peddler* to refer to the property of being an influence peddler.

A central motivation for this two-dimensional analysis of MQ is that, as Maier (2015) observes, the mention component of MQ typically projects. That is, it is insensitive to embedding in ordinary entailment canceling environments. Take Maier's example of (17).

- (17) Most Republicans disagree that Gingrich is an "influence peddler." (Maier, 2015)

Maier notes that (17) does not imply that most Republicans disagree that the phrase *influence peddler* was used. Rather, the mention component of the MQ projects out, in the sense that (17) implies that *influence peddler* was used.

As more evidence, note that all of (18a–c) convey that someone (most likely, Trump) used *genius*.

- (18) a. Trump isn't a "genius."
b. Is Trump a "genius?"
c. Kushner thinks Trump is a "genius."

¹³Earlier theories of quotation in terms of conventional implicature have been proposed by Predelli (2003), Potts (2007), García-Carpintero (2011).

None of these sentences convey that Trump is a genius, while all of them convey that someone used *genius*. In other words, the secondary assertion projects out of environments that cancel the primary assertion. Indeed, since there is no reading of (18c) on which it conveys merely that Kushner thinks someone used *genius*, (18c) is evidence that the projection behavior of MQ is like that of conventional implicatures, and unlike that of standard presuppositions.¹⁴

4 Applications

Having outlined the main elements of the way of understanding the semantics and pragmatics of MQ I favor in the previous section, in this section I show how it can provide an account of PP and CF.

4.1 Protagonist Projection and Two-Dimensionality

To apply the two-dimensional account of MQ to our examples of PP and CF, we claim that the relevant expressions in these cases are mixed-quoted at the level of logical form. Given this, to a first approximation, the first conjunct of (1b) will have a denotation roughly as in (19).

- (19) $\llbracket(1b)\rrbracket^c = \langle \text{He gave her a ring studded with } P; x \text{ used } \textit{diamonds} \text{ to refer to } P \rangle$

The context will set P to the property of being glass. Further, in most contexts x will be the referent of the female pronouns. But note that this analysis is compatible with readings on which x is someone else, perhaps the male protagonist, or perhaps even the speaker. Indeed, as we noted, the example of (1c) shows that the relevant protagonist can be the narrator herself at the time the story is about, rather than the time it is told.

- (1c) He tossed me the magazine, which I now saw was a glossy brochure. (Tartt, 1992)

Here we continue to assume that, for (1b), x is the female protagonist. Accordingly, we will predict the following two assertions for the first conjunct of (1b):

Primary assertion (use component)

He gave her a ring studded with glass.

Secondary assertion (mention component)

She used *diamonds* to refer to the property of being glass.

¹⁴See Potts (2005) for discussion of the difference in projection behavior between conventional implicatures and presuppositions.

As before, the mention component can be interpreted as meaning that she used *diamonds* either in speech or thought.

The central observation we made earlier was that typical PP examples convey belief attributions. A natural reading of (1b) takes it to imply that she thought the ring was studded with diamonds. I suggest that the belief attributions associated with PP are pragmatically inferred by a process that takes as its input the secondary assertions generated by the MQ structure of PP uses.

Crudely, the suggestion is that, when (1b) is interpreted as MQ, hearers are prompted to an inference along the following lines:

(a) The speaker asserted that *x* used *diamonds* to refer to the property of being glass.

(b) The speaker wants to convey that *x* thought the glass was diamonds.

I take it to be undeniable that we typically make similar inferences. Imagine you and your friend Mike are looking at a sports car. You recognize it as a BMW. Mike points to the car and says,

(20) I really love that Mercedes.

Later you report this incident to your other friend Carol by telling her (21) and using air quotes around *Mercedes*.

(21) So Mike and I saw this flashy car yesterday. And he told me how much he loved that "Mercedes," while all along I knew it was a BMW.

Clearly, Carol will conclude that you wanted her to know that Mike thought the car was a Mercedes. On the analysis I am advocating, (1b) is parallel to (21) in the relevant respects.

Further, note that there is nothing surprising in the suggestion that pragmatic inferences may arise from secondary assertions. On the standard view, (22) conventionally implies that François is French.

(22) François, who is French, is cooking dinner tonight.

That François is French is a secondary assertion of (22), and will project accordingly. Still, (22) can be used to conversationally implicate, for instance, that the dinner will be good, or that François is a good cook, and so on.¹⁵

¹⁵Inspired by Recanati (2004, 5), (2010, 144).

4.2 Modalizing the Use Component

We have seen that some PP cases have readings on which the protagonist did not in fact have the relevant belief. As Holton noted, "It is good enough to have someone who is simply a possible location for the salient false belief [...]" (Holton, 1997, 627) We saw that, as long as we allow that the relevant belief may be true, this suggestion is arguably on the right track. To make this concrete, I propose that the mention component of MQ can be interpreted modally.

Specifically, we amend the semantics for MQ as follows (where the quotation marks indicate mixed quotation):

$$(23) \quad \llbracket \dots "e" \dots \rrbracket^{c,w} = \langle \dots P \dots; \exists w' \in f(w, x), x \text{ uses } e \text{ to refer to } P \text{ in } w' \rangle$$

We will find reasons to further modify this slightly later on. For now, note that f is a function from a world w and an individual x to a set of worlds, intuitively, the worlds in which x does use e to pick out P .

How is this set of worlds delineated? Although I will not attempt to give a precise characterization in this chapter, we can think of f as representing (at least) two features of the protagonist x . These are, first, x 's dispositions (perhaps restricted to those that are relevant to how she would talk about P), and second, x 's beliefs. Concentrating on these two ideas, we give a rough characterization of f as follows:

$$(24) \quad f(w, x) = \{w' : x \text{ has the dispositions that } x \text{ has in } w\} \cap \{w' : x \text{ believes what } x \text{ believes in } w\}$$

In other words, $f(w, x)$ is the set of worlds in which x has the dispositions and beliefs that x has in w .

So, intuitively, the modalized mention component captures the idea that, given the protagonist's actual dispositions and beliefs, she could have used e to refer to P . For simplicity, in what follows, I will typically use the gloss "could have," but it is important to remember that the modality here is constrained and so it does not represent what the protagonist could have done in the general sense, but what she could have done given her actual dispositions and beliefs.

I want to briefly mention two possible refinements that can be made to the semantics, but which I will not pursue further here. First, the semantics might be refined by imposing a closeness relation on the relevant worlds to better capture the intuitive sense that the mention component tracks what the protagonist "could very easily have said," given her actual dispositions and beliefs. Second, f might be relativized to the context, so that c will be seen as determining which features of the protagonist(s) that are relevant. For example, one might think that, in some cases, it is relevant to hold fixed the protagonist's actual idiolect or vocabulary.

Further, note that f is reflexive (or realistic) in that for all w and x , $w \in f(w, x)$. This corresponds to the fact that in ordinary cases, like (11a), (15), or (21), we interpret the mention component as applying to the actual world. For instance, (21) is clearly interpreted as conveying that Mike actually used *Mercedes* to refer to the BMW.

Consider how this modified proposal applies to (1b). As before, we assume that P is the property of being glass and x is the female protagonist. Hence, (23) predicts that the primary assertion of the first conjunct of (1b) is the same as before. In turn, whether the secondary assertion pertains to the actual world or a non-actual world belonging to $f(w, x)$ will vary from case to case. This means that we predict that (1b) is compatible both with a reading on which she actually used *diamonds* in language or thought and a reading on which she could have done so, given her actual dispositions and beliefs. The main motivation for building this into the analysis is that, as we noted, PP sometimes conveys that someone actually believed something or other and at other times conveys that someone could have believed something or other, given her actual beliefs and dispositions.

Along the lines sketched earlier, I suggest that both such attributions of actual beliefs and of merely possible beliefs are pragmatically inferred from the secondary assertion. As before, if the speaker asserts that she (actually) used *diamonds* to refer to the glass, it is reasonable to conclude that the speaker wants to convey that she (actually) believed the glass was diamonds. But moreover, if the speaker asserts that, given what she actually believes and is disposed to do, she could have used *diamonds* to refer to the glass, one can conclude that the speaker wants to convey *either* that she actually believed the glass was diamonds *or* that she could have believed that. Which conclusion is most reasonable will depend on further facts about the case.

In other words, on the modalized proposal, (1b) is compatible with a reading on which, although she did believe the ring was studded with diamonds, she did not actually explicitly “token” *diamonds* in speech or thought, as is arguably required by DD reports. This is arguably the right result, since (1b) can be used without an implication that she has had an explicit thought like, “Those are diamonds,” let alone has made an utterance using the word *diamonds*. (I return to this in 5.3.) But note that, on the analysis just outlined, PP does convey at least that the protagonist could have used the relevant words in speech or thought, even if no actual event of speech or thought involving those words has taken place.

4.3 Unidentified Metarepresentation

As we have noted, PP is often compatible with different readings concerning whose perspective we are being placed into. This is the reason we take the context to determine the value of x in our semantics. Moreover, there are cases in which it may

not be possible to assign anyone in particular as the value of x . An example of this is (1a). Here is how the present proposal analyzes (1a):

- (25) $\llbracket(1a)\rrbracket^{c,w} = \langle \text{Uzowulu and his relative, on the other hand, were } P; \exists w' \in f(w, x), x \text{ used } \textit{whispering} \text{ to refer to } P \text{ in } w' \rangle$ together. It looked like whispering, but they were really talking at the top of their voices. Everybody in the crowd was talking.

We assume that c determines that P is the property of shouting, or whatever property is denoted by *talking at the top of their voices*. On the other hand, it is less obvious what c will determine as the value of x in this case.

It is clear that a constraint on the interpretation is that x should at least be someone to whom it looked like whispering. Yet we can still imagine different values of x . On one interpretation x is the narrator. Since the narrator clearly does not believe they were really whispering, if x is the narrator, the secondary dimension of (1a) will be read as conveying that the narrator could have used *whispering* to refer to the shouting, from which it can be inferred that he could have believed that they were whispering.

Another, perhaps more plausible, interpretation is suggested by noting some features of the text preceding (1a):

- (26) Large crowds began to gather on the village *ilo* [...]. Most communal ceremonies took place at that time of the day, so that even when it was said that a ceremony would begin 'after the midday meal' everyone understood that it would begin a long time later, when the sun's heat had softened. It was clear from the way the crowd stood or sat that the ceremony was for men. (Achebe, 1988 [1958], 78)

In this passage, occurring just above (1a), we may take it that *everyone* ranges over the same people to whom it was clear that the ceremony was for men. This group is most naturally understood as being the villagers the story is about. This suggests a reading of (1a) on which it conveys that "everyone," that is the villagers, could have used *whispering* to refer to the shouting between Uzowulu and his relative. However, this is arguably too strong, since it is not clear that the example rules out that some of the villagers would not do so. Instead, we will understand the example to mean that someone from the relevant group could have described the shouting as whispering, and hence as ruling out that none of the villagers could have done so.

To accommodate this within our analysis, we take the mention-component to refer a set of individuals, sometimes with only one member. This leads to the following new clauses:

(27) $\llbracket \text{"... e ..."} \rrbracket^{c,w} = \langle \dots P \dots; \exists w' \in f(w, X), \exists x \in X, x \text{ uses } e \text{ to refer to } P \text{ in } w' \rangle$

(28) $f(w, X) = \{w' : \forall x \in X, x \text{ has the dispositions that } x \text{ has in } w\} \cap \{w' : \forall x \in X, x \text{ believes what } x \text{ believes in } w\}$

So, roughly, for (1a) the context will determine the following values:

$P = \lambda x. x \text{ is shouting}$

$X = \{x : x \text{ is a villager}\}$

In other words, if one looks at worlds in which the villagers have the dispositions and beliefs that they actually have, there will be some worlds where someone in that group used *whispering* to refer to the shouting. This seems like the right result.

The particular aspect of (1a) we have just looked at makes (1a) an example of what might be called *unidentified metarepresentation*. The same phenomenon occurs for other forms of metarepresentation. Here is a straightforward example involving DD:

(29) People always tell me, "You should eat more kale."

While (29) is a DD speech report, it does not identify the person who made the utterance. FID can be used in parallel ways, as in (30).

(30) A tooth – Senator Buddenbrook had died of a toothache, that was the word around town. But, confound it all, people didn't die of that! He had been in pain, Herr Brecht had broken off the crown, and afterward he had simply collapsed on the street. Had anyone ever heard the like? (Mann, 1994 [1904], 666)

(30) uses FID. Most strikingly, the occurrences of the exclamation *But, confound it all, people didn't die of that!* and the interrogative *Had anyone ever heard the like?* are clear evidence of FID. Accordingly, we are given a report of someone's speech. But whose? We are presented with "the word around town." But this is not a report of a particular person's speech. Instead, it is natural to think that we are being presented with what someone from the relevant group, the townsfolk, could have said. As before, since f is reflexive, for both the PP and the FID cases, this is compatible with situations in which someone from the relevant group actually did say or think the relevant content.

4.4 Character Focus and Two-Dimensionality

The account of PP in terms of MQ I have proposed extends straightforwardly to CF. Take the first clause of (2a). We assume that *got into a wax* is mixed-quoted. Hence, we analyze this clause as follows:

- (31) <But Mr. Harford was very decent and never P ; $\exists w' \in f(w, X)$, $\exists x \in X$, x uses *got into a wax* to refer to P in w' >.

$P = \lambda x. x$ is angry

$X = \{\text{Stephen}\}$

CF typically induces a merely modal reading of the secondary dimension. That is, CF usually conveys that the protagonist could have used the relevant form of words, rather than that they actually did so. Assuming such a reading, we predict the following assertions:

Primary assertion (use component)

Mr. Harford was very decent and never got angry.

Secondary assertion (mention component)

Stephen could have used *got into a wax* to refer to the property of getting angry.

This I take to correspond to how we intuitively understand CF uses.

Further, we noted that a key difference between PP and CF is that while the former convey attributions of (possible) beliefs, the latter does not. Yet one might wonder, if PP and CF are both instances of MQ, as I am proposing, then why is there this difference? The belief attributions associated with PP arise as pragmatic inferences that take the secondary assertions of PP uses as input. For instance, as suggested earlier, the inference triggered by (1b) is roughly as follows, here modified to take into account the modalization:

- (a) The speaker asserted that she used, or at least could have used, *diamonds* to refer to the property of being glass.
- (b) The speaker wants to convey that she thought, or at least could have thought, that the glass was diamonds.

But consider the analogous inference for (2a):

- (a') The speaker asserted that Stephen could have used *got into a wax* to refer to the property of getting angry.

(b') The speaker wants to convey that Stephen thought that that Mr. Harford never got angry.

The latter is a bad inference. While the inference from (a) to (b) is a natural one, it is unsurprising that hearer do not infer (b') from (a').

Here we assumed, as is reasonable, that (2a) does not have an "actualized" reading. But, even if some CF cases do, the corresponding inference is still deviant. Suppose, for example, that the secondary dimension of (2c) is read as actualized. If so, the relevant inference for the first clause of (2c) would be:

(a'') The speaker asserted that Klaus Heinrich used *papa* to refer to his father.

(b'') The speaker wants to convey that Klaus Heinrich thought that his father made a speech and sent the petitioners away.

Again, it is unsurprising that audiences do not infer (b'') from (a'').

So even though PP and CF are both instances of MQ, the phenomena differ in that PP is used to convey belief attributions, while CF is not. More particularly, on the account I have proposed, PP and CF have the same semantic profile. Instead, the difference lies in the kind of pragmatic inferences they license.

5 Motivations and Problems

I have outlined an account of PP and CF on which both phenomena are instances of MQ. In this section I elaborate on this proposal by discussing some of its motivations and some potential problems.

5.1 Truth Conditions and Projection

The analysis of PP and CF in terms of MQ has two main consequences, both of which provide motivations for the account. First, for both PP and CF we will typically predict primary assertions that are true.

For example, recall that (1b) generates the primary assertion that he gave her a ring studded with glass. To see that this is the right result, suppose, by contrast, it was claimed that the first clause of (1b) asserted that he gave her a ring studded with diamonds. If so, then the second clause of (1b) asserts that the diamonds turned out to be glass. But both are false. The ring was not studded with diamonds, and no diamonds are glass. Hence, this cannot be the right analysis. If the first clause of (1b) asserts that he gave her a ring studded with diamonds, (1b) entails that some diamonds are glass, and does not entail that the ring was studded with glass. Instead, the first clause asserts the true claim that he gave her a ring with glass. As

Holton (1997, 626) says, (1b) provides "no evidence that some diamonds are made of glass [...]."¹⁶

Similarly, if the first clause of (1a) is analyzed as asserting the false claim that they were whispering, the second clause must be seen as asserting that the whispering looked like whispering. But this cannot be the right analysis. In particular, if the first clause asserts that they were whispering, (1a) does not entail that their shouting looked like whispering. That is contrary to the information provided by the rest of (1a).

The same applies to CF. The primary assertion of (2a) is that Mr. Harford was very decent and never got angry, which is true (in the fiction). Similarly, take (2c). The primary assertion, for the first clause of this case, is that Klaus Heinrich's father gave a speech and sent his petitioners away. Again, this is true (in the fiction).

Second, as we have seen, the two-dimensional understanding of MQ is supported by the observation that the mention component projects. Although the behavior of PP under embeddings is complex, we can note that there is good evidence that the mention component of PP is projective.

For instance, (32) does not convey that he gave her a ring studded with glass. Yet the question still conveys that someone did (or could have) used *diamonds*.

(32) Didn't he give her a ring studded with diamonds, which then turned out to be glass?

Imagine, for instance, that a rumor has been going around that Bill has given Norma a ring, which she at first thought was a real diamond ring but later discovered to be fake. In such a setting one might utter (32) in order to find out whether others think the story is true. In this setting (32) will be understood as asking, roughly, "Didn't he give her a ring studded with glass?" while conveying that she thought the glass was diamonds.

This mirrors the behavior of conventional implicatures in questions, as in (33).¹⁷

(33) Was Ames, as the press reported, a successful spy?

(33) asks whether Ames was successful spy, while conveying that the press reported that he was. Indeed, for both (32) and (33) it is plausible to think that the projective meaning gives rise to a secondary assertion.

The mention component of CF exhibits similar projection behavior. Indeed, (2a) is already a case in which CF is embedded in an entailment canceling environment, namely under *never*. Here is another example:

¹⁶See also Stokke (2013) for more discussion.

¹⁷Adapted from Potts (2005, 13).

(34) Father Arnall's face looked very black but he was not in a wax: he was laughing. (Joyce, 2000 [1914])

(34) does not convey that Stephen could not have used *was in a wax*. Instead, (34) clearly conveys, on the one hand, that Father Arnall was not angry, and on the other hand, that Stephen could have used that form of words.

Both of these results are further motivations for the account. The primary assertions of PP and CF cases are typically true. And there is at least evidence to suggest that the secondary assertions of both kinds of environments project in the manner of what is generally the case for MQ.

5.2 Denotations and the Mention Component

According to the way I have glossed the proposal so far, the mention component of MQ cases conveys that the protagonist used, or could have used, the relevant expression to refer to an object, property, or relation. For instance, we analyzed (11a) as follows:

(12) $\llbracket (11a) \rrbracket^{c,w} = \langle \text{Romney said that Newt Gingrich is an } P; \exists w' \in f(w, X), \exists x \in X, x \text{ uses } \textit{influence peddler} \text{ to refer to } P \text{ in } w' \rangle$

$P = \lambda x. x \text{ is an influence peddler}$

$X = \{\text{Romney}\}$

It might be thought that this leads to the wrong result, since surely the point is not that Romney was speaking about a property, but that he was speaking about Gingrich. Similarly, one might object to the suggestion that (1b) conveys that she used *diamonds* to refer to the property of being glass on the grounds that she was talking, or thinking, about the glass on the ring, rather than the property of being glass.¹⁸

The crucial thing to note here is that P , as used in our account, is a denotation. That is, the denotation that the MQ contributes to the truth conditions of the primary assertion. To see why this matters, consider how we will analyze a MQ case involving proper names:

(35) [Context: Everyone knows that John is under the misconception that Bill is called "Arnold"]
John said that "Arnold" was at the shop.

This example will be analyzed as in (36).

¹⁸Thanks to Jessica Keiser for suggesting this worry.

(36) $\llbracket(35)\rrbracket^{c,w} = \langle \text{John said that } a \text{ was at the shop; } \exists w' \in f(w, X), \exists x \in X, x \text{ uses } \textit{Arnold} \text{ to refer to } a \text{ in } w' \rangle$

$a = \text{Bill}$

$X = \{\text{John}\}$

So we derive the primary assertion that John said that Bill was at the shop and the secondary assertion that John used *Arnold* to refer to Bill. This is precisely what we want.

Correspondingly, P in (12) is what *influence peddler* contributes to the primary dimension, in this case, the property of being an influence peddler. We therefore derive that Romney said that Gingrich is an influence peddler. At the same time, on the secondary dimension the MQ expresses that Romney used *influence peddler* to refer to this denotation. (If one prefers not to talk in terms of predicates "referring" to their denotations, one can change the wording of the proposal accordingly.)

Now consider (1b), which is analyzed as in (37).

(37) $\llbracket(1b)\rrbracket^{c,w} = \langle \text{He gave her a ring studded with } P; \exists w' \in f(w, X), \exists x \in X, x \text{ uses } \textit{diamonds} \text{ to refer to } P \text{ in } w' \rangle.$

$P = \lambda x. x \text{ is glass}$

$X = \{\text{referent of } \textit{her}\}$

Since P is the denotation that is contributed to the primary dimension, we derive the primary assertion that he gave her a ring studded with glass. On the secondary dimension (1b) asserts that she used *diamonds* to refer to this denotation. This is the sense in which she used *diamonds* to refer to what the ring was made of, namely glass. This is analogous to the analysis of (35) on which it expresses that John used *Arnold* to refer to who he said was at the stop, namely Bill.

5.3 Perspective Shifting without Metarepresentation?

Another potential problem for the account I have offered here concerns the suggestion that both PP and CF cases convey that the protagonist at least could have used the relevant form of words (in speech or thought). As I have been emphasizing, this account does not require that PP and CF do not require that the relevant form of words was actually used. Similarly, Abrusán (2020) argues that "In PP, in contrast to FID, there is no presumption of a silent (or loud), internal (or external) speech act." (Abrusán, 2020) For instance, she remarks on (1b) that

both he and she might conceptualise the object in front of them as a ring studded with diamonds without actually telling this to each other or even themselves, similarly to when we see a cat we typically recognise it is a cat and form a mental representation of a cat in front of us without telling ourselves “this is a cat”. (Abrusán, 2020)

My account agrees that PP is compatible with the relevant form of words not being actually used either in speech or thought. Yet the account does predict that, even in such cases, the protagonists at least could have done so, given their actual dispositions and beliefs. I take this to be the correct result.

For instance, few would deny that one can believe that the ring is studded with diamonds without having said to oneself, “That ring is studded with diamonds,” or something similar. However, in such cases it is true that, given one’s dispositions and beliefs, one could have used *diamonds* to denote the glass. Indeed, this is arguably a way of capturing the key characteristic of such cases. It is natural to say that, even though she may not have made this thought explicit to herself, given her dispositions and beliefs, she could have had an explicit thought like, “That ring is studded with diamonds.”

Although we cannot examine this in any detail here, it is worth mentioning a hypothesis that deserves to be examined, namely that the modalized mention-component of MQ that I have appealed to can be seen as reporting, or representing, dispositions to inner speech. If on the right track, the modalized MQ account of PP and CF can be seen as congenial, roughly, to the broad category of views on which occurrent (conscious) thought corresponds to inner speech and non-occurrent (unconscious) thought corresponds to dispositions to inner speech.¹⁹

Further, Abrusán (2020) discusses some categories that have earlier been treated in the literature under other labels and which may appear to provide evidence that perspective shifting need not involve metarepresentation of any kind. One of these is Hinterwimmer’s (2017) category of *viewpoint shifting*, as in (38).²⁰

(38) When Mary stepped out of the boat, the ground was shaking beneath her feet for a couple of seconds. (Hinterwimmer, 2017)

Hinterwimmer’s verdict on this case is that it is “not (or at least not necessarily) understood as reporting a conscious thought of Mary, but rather as describing a sensation of her in a way that is compatible with her doxastic state at the time at which she has that sensation.” (Hinterwimmer, 2017, 291) Abrusán concurs: “there is no suggestion that Mary had a thought with a linguistic form “The ground is shaking beneath my feet”.” (2020)

¹⁹For relevant discussion, see Jackendoff (1996), Bermúdez (2008), Vicente and Jorba (2017). Thanks to Manuel García-Carpintero for discussion on this.

²⁰See also Cumming (this volume) for relevant discussion.

As we have seen, my account agrees with both observations. That is, if this is to be analyzed as an instance of PP, it will not be a consequence of my view that Mary actually thought something like, "The ground is shaking beneath my feet." What my account does predict is that, given what Mary actually believed and was disposed to do, she could have used *the ground was/is shaking beneath my feet*. As in the other cases, I take this to be a highly natural suggestion about the example.

6 Conclusion

PP and CF are instances of the same metarepresentational phenomenon, namely MQ. As such, PP and CF have the same semantic profile. Both convey primary assertions and projective secondary assertions, corresponding to the use and mention components of MQ, respectively. PP serves to convey attributions of (possible) beliefs, while CF does not. This difference is a difference in which pragmatic inferences are licensed by their secondary assertions.

A modalized account of MQ provides explanations of PP and CF examples. Moreover, there are good reasons to think that some cases that have been discussed under different names equally involve modalized metarepresentation. Given this, one question worth investigating in future work is whether there are any phenomena in the vicinity that involve shifting of perspective or point of view but do not, at least partly, achieve these effects by means of modalized metarepresentation.

Acknowledgements

Earlier versions of this material were presented at the University of Bergen in February 2019 and Uppsala University in June 2019. I am grateful to the audiences on both occasions for valuable input. I am particularly indebted to Emar Maier, Jessica Keiser, Manuel García-Carpintero, Márta Abrusán, Pål Antonsen, and an anonymous referee for Oxford University Press for very helpful discussion and comments. For financial support, I thank the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study and Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

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