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► **To cite this version:**

François Recanati. Natural Meaning and the Foundations of Human Communication: A Comparison Between Marty and Grice. Giuliano Bacigalupo; Hélène Leblanc. Anton Marty and Contemporary Philosophy, Springer International Publishing, pp.13-31, 2019, 10.1007/978-3-030-05581-3_2 . hal-02932365

HAL Id: hal-02932365

<https://hal.science/hal-02932365>

Submitted on 7 Sep 2020

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Natural Meaning and the Foundations of Human Communication :

A Comparison between Marty and Grice

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In G. Bacigalupo et H. Leblanc (dir.) *Anton Marty and Contemporary Philosophy*, London : Palgrave Macmillan (coll. History of Analytic Philosophy), 2019, p. 13-31

1.

Several authors have noted the proximity of Marty's ideas to Grice's (Liedtke 1990 ; Cesalli 2013 ; Longworth 2017). Both Marty and Grice distinguish natural meaning (the meaning of natural signs) and the sort of meaning involved in human communication (the meaning of gestures and utterances) ; and they both attempt to provide a characterization of human communication that does not essentially appeal to the conventional nature of the linguistic devices it standardly uses.

Natural meaning is the same thing for Marty as it is for Grice. Both take natural meaning (as illustrated by 'dark clouds mean rain', or 'those dark clouds mean that it will rain', an example they both use) to be a matter of consequence : x means y just in case y can be (correctly) inferred from x . Natural meaning is 'factive', as Grice puts it. If those dark clouds mean that it will rain, then it *will* rain (Grice 1957/1989 : 213). If it does *not* rain, Marty points out, that means that those clouds did not *really* mean that it would rain but were *wrongly* taken to mean that (Marty 1908 : 281). This feature is shared by Dretske's notion of 'indication', itself patterned after Grice's natural meaning (Dretske 1988 : 55-56).

For Grice, natural meaning stands in contrast to 'non-natural' meaning. Non-natural meaning is first and foremost what *a person* means – 'speaker's meaning', as it is often called. The Indian guide's insistent gesturing toward the sky means that it will rain, in the non-natural sense, just in case what *the Indian guide* (the person) means by this gesture is that

it will rain. In such a case, the gesture can be reported as meaning ‘It will rain’,¹ and it does *not* follow that it will actually rain. Non-natural meaning is not factive : The guide may well be mistaken or deceitful.

In contrast to natural meaning, Gricean non-natural meaning is not a matter of what follows from what, but is a matter of intention : someone means something by a gesture or an utterance just in case the gesture or utterance is made with a certain communicative intention, where a communicative intention is an intention to achieve a certain effect in the hearer via the recognition of this intention (Grice 1957). Communicative intentions have a nested structure and (as Grice and his followers came to realize) potentially involve an infinite sequence of sub-intentions pertaining to the recognition by the hearer of a previous sub-intention (Grice 1969/1989 : 94-9). The intention whose recognition by the audience is intended by the speaker to mediate the fulfilment of the speaker’s communicative aims goes beyond the speaker’s intention i_1 to achieve a certain effect in the hearer : it includes her intention i_2 that the hearer recognize intention i_1 , as well as her intention i_3 that the hearer recognize intention i_2 , and so on ad infinitum. That series of conditions, required to make the speaker’s communicative intention fully ‘overt’, can be captured by letting the communicative intention be *reflexive* : it is the intention I to achieve a certain effect in H (the hearer) by means of H’s recognition of I (Searle 1969, Bach and Harnish 1979).²

¹ The dark clouds *cannot* be reported as meaning ‘It will rain’, Grice points out. They don’t mean anything in the non-natural sense (but only in the natural sense).

² Reflexivity already seems to be a feature of Grice’s analysis of communicative intentions in ‘Meaning’ (Grice 1957). There he says that ‘A non-naturally meant something by x ’ is roughly equivalent to ‘A uttered x with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of *this intention*’. Whether reflexivity was actually intended is not totally clear, however : Grice did not explicitly address the issue, except in a brief and puzzling remark (‘This seems to involve a reflexive paradox, but it does not really do so’, Grice 1957/1989 : 219). Grice 1969/1989 : 97 discusses the threat of an ‘infinitely or indefinitely regressive’ analysis explicitly, but in that paper, instead of advocating a ‘virtuous’ regress in the form of an overtly reflexive analysis, as some of his disciples did, he opts for something along the lines of what I call ‘default-reflexivity’ (see the last paragraph of this chapter and the reference therein).

In Marty we do not find such a sharp contrast between natural meaning and non-natural meaning. For Marty as for Grice, communicative behaviour is guided by what Strawson calls ‘audience-directed intentions’ (Strawson 1964), but Marty construes communicative behaviour as embedding natural meaning somehow, and in any case as continuous with natural meaning.

Marty notes that human behaviour itself can be a natural sign ; in particular, it can be a natural sign of ‘internal psychological processes’ in the subject who so behaves (Marty 1908 : 283). This is particularly true of involuntary behaviour, such as a scream (a natural sign of pain) or tears (a natural sign of sorrow). The relation of the behaviour to the psychological state of which it is a natural sign is traditionally called ‘expression’, and I will retain that name.³ According to Marty, human communication has an expressive core : someone who says that *p* expresses her belief (judgment) that *p*, just as someone who cries expresses her sorrow (Marty 1908 : 285). To be sure, human communication is a deliberate activity, not an involuntary one (Marty 1908 : 284). But the expression of one’s psychological states can itself be deliberate. Suppose that, upon being hurt, the subject screams. If the subject actually is in pain and the scream is caused by the pain, there is no reason to deny it the status of a natural sign, *even if the subject could have inhibited the externalization of his internal state*. The fact that the externalization was within the subject’s control (since he could have inhibited it) means that the externalization was wilful or deliberate, to some extent at least. It did not take place against the subject’s will. Still, it remains a natural sign of the pain which caused it.

The fact that it is deliberate is not sufficient to turn the expression of one’s psychological state into a communicative act, however. What is distinctive of human

³ Marty speaks of announcement (*Kundgabe*). Cesalli translates *Kundgabe* by ‘indication’ (Dretske’s term for the natural meaning relation). On the relation between *Kundgabe* and *Ausdruck* and terminological variations among Marty’s contemporaries, see Linhaeres-Dias 2006: 127.

communication, for Marty, is the fact that the communicator's *primary intention* is to manipulate the mental states of his audience, *by instilling in him or her a matching attitude towards the object of the expressed thought* (Marty 1908 : 284-92). The revelation of the communicator's own psychological state is only a means to that end. If the subject openly reveals her state by behaving in a certain way, that is the deliberate production of a natural sign but does not, or not necessarily, count as an instance of communication proper, because the subject may lack the further intention to induce a particular psychological state in the audience. Thus Wharton distinguishes behaviours that are deliberately *produced* and behaviours that are deliberately *shown* (Wharton 2009 : 31).

The deliberate production of a natural sign counts as an instance of communication in Marty's sense if it is accompanied and motivated by the primary intention to affect the audience's mental life in the relevant way. This shows that for Marty, in contrast to Grice, something can be *both* an instance of natural meaning and a bona fide instance of human communication.⁴ A putative example of that sort of case is Grice's well-known Salome example (Grice 1957/1989 : 218).⁵ When Herod presents Salome with the severed head of St John the Baptist on a charger, he produces a natural sign of St. John the Baptist's death, and thereby conveys to Salome that St. John is dead. This is the wilful exploitation of a natural sign for communicative purposes. Now Grice insists that Herod's ostensive sign is *not* an instance of non-natural meaning. Herod intends to induce in Salome the belief that John the Baptist is dead, but he does not intend to induce that belief in her by means of the recognition

⁴ Of course, Grice was aware that humans often communicate by using natural signs (as in the Salome example I am going to discuss). But what is *distinctive* of human communication, for him, is the mechanism of non-natural meaning. When I say that, for Grice, nothing can be both an instance of natural meaning and an instance of human communication, I take 'human communication' in that distinctive sense : communication involving non-natural meaning.

⁵ Marty focuses on linguistic communication and rarely mentions instances of nonverbal communication of the sort Grice discusses. Still, on the basis of what Marty says of linguistic communication, we can extrapolate and ask what he would have thought of e.g. the Salome example.

of that intention. The crucial reflexivity is missing: the severed head of John the Baptist is a natural sign which, by itself, is sufficient to induce the relevant belief in Salome. Marty, however, would presumably construe the Herod example as an instance of human communication exploiting the natural meaning relation. What is distinctive of human communication, for Marty, is the fact that the communicator's primary intention is to manipulate the mental states of his audience, by instilling in him or her an attitude towards the object of thought that (in standard cases at least) matches or replicates the speaker's own attitude. In the Salome case the condition seems to be satisfied : Herod intentionally shares with Salome his knowledge that St. John the Baptist is dead, by openly producing a natural sign of his death.

Distinct from but closely related to that type of case is the simulation of a natural sign : by screaming, as if he were in pain, the subject implies that he is. In this case the scream no longer is a natural sign. It is a faked natural sign, where 'fake' is what Brentano and his students, including Marty, called a 'modifier'.⁶ A faked natural sign is no more a natural sign than a faked gun is a real gun. The factivity constraint no longer holds : from the fact that the subject screams, it no longer follows that he is in pain. (The pretend scream may still be a natural sign, but of something else than the pain : it is a natural sign of the subject's deceptive intention. More on this below.)

For Marty, presumably, both the wilful exploitation of natural signs and the production of fake signs simulating natural meaning are instances of communication, *provided* the communicator's primary intention is to manipulate the mental states of his audience, by instilling in him or her an attitude towards the object of thought corresponding to the attitude the speaker expresses or pretends to express. The paradigm case of human communication is, of course, linguistic communication. According to Marty, if the speaker

⁶ See Brentano 1874/1971, II, 62n.

says that *p*, she expresses her belief that *p*. If the speaker is sincere, the utterance is a natural sign of the belief (just as a scream is a sign of pain). If the utterance is not sincere, it is a faked natural sign. Either way, the speaker deliberately produces the sign to reveal, or pretend to reveal, to the audience her psychological state (the fact, or alleged fact, that she believes that *p*), but *that is not the speaker's primary intention*. The speaker's primary intention is to induce the belief that *p* in the hearer. That intention is (intended to be) fulfilled mediately, through the (alleged) revelation to the hearer of the speaker's own state.

If the hearer takes the speaker to be sincere and well-informed, he will take the *speaker's belief that p itself* to be indicative of the fact that *p*. In other words, we have a chain of (alleged) natural signs. In the basic cases, the speaker's utterance is a natural sign of the psychological state which it expresses, and that state in turn is a natural sign of the state of affairs which is the content of the belief. The basic cases are the cases in which the speaker is sincere and well-informed, and the hearer is trustful (Marty 1908 : 286-87). The non-basic cases (e.g. the cases in which the speaker attempts to deceive the hearer or does not know what he is talking about) presuppose the basic cases. Even the liar pretends to be telling the truth.

Now we see what the difference is, for Marty, between the involuntary expression of a psychological state (the scream, or the tears) and human communication. Natural meaning involves only one semiotic relation (Marty 1908 : 280-81) : a natural sign indicates (to use Dretske's term) what can be correctly inferred from it. In human communication there are three distinct semiotic relations at work, not just one. An utterance (or gesture – the difference does not matter) expresses the speaker's psychological state. Through her utterance the speaker reveals (or pretends to reveal) her psychological state to the hearer, but that is not the aim of communication. The aim is to induce a corresponding state in the hearer, via the hearer's recognition of the speaker's alleged psychological state. The hearer will be led to

infer that p from the fact that the speaker believes that p and intends her to share that belief. In the basic cases, the chain of natural signs makes the utterance itself a sign of the fact that p (Marty 1908 : 293-94), and that is the third semiotic relation which Marty considers at work in a linguistic utterance. In his framework an utterance has three kinds of meaning (Marty 1908 : §60-61) :⁷

(1) *Expressive meaning (Kundgabe)* : the utterance expresses, and reveals to the hearer, the speaker's psychological state (the belief that p , in the judicative case) ;

(2) *Communicative meaning* : the utterance expresses the speaker's communicative intention to induce in the hearer a psychological state corresponding to that expressed by the speaker.

(3) *Denotational meaning*⁸ : the utterance means that p .

II

Let us now summarize what Marty's theory of communication and Grice's have in common, as well as the differences between them. They have in common two things. First, in contrast to most semantic theories, the relation between a linguistic utterance and its worldly content (the fact that p) is mediated by the relation between the utterance and various psychological states, one of which is a communicative intention. Second, the speaker's communicative

⁷ Insofar as I can tell, the distinction between these three kinds of meaning appears in Marty's third paper on subjectless sentences (Marty 1884 : 300 sq). It can also be found in Twardowski, who applies it to the semantics of names (Twardowski 1894/1977, pp. 9-10). Van der Schaar suggests that the distinction was common among the students of Brentano (van der Schaar 2013 : 65). On Marty's originality in relation to Brentano, see Cesalli 2013 : 155-60, esp. p. 158.

⁸ What I call denotational meaning Marty calls 'meaning in a restricted sense' (*Bedeutung im engeren Sinne*), in contrast to communicative meaning which is 'meaning in a wider sense' (*Bedeutung im breiteren Sinne*). Rollinger speaks of 'meaning in the ontological sense' in contrast to 'meaning in the communicative sense' (Rollinger 2010 : 84).

intention is (intended to be) fulfilled mediately, via the hearer's recognition of the speaker's psychological state (and of his intention to reveal it openly to the speaker).

There are two main differences between Marty and Grice. First, Grice's communicative intentions have a nested/reflexive structure. That arguably is Grice's major contribution to the analysis of non-natural meaning, and there is no anticipation of that idea in Marty's work (Longworth 2017). Second, Marty views linguistic communication as continuous with natural meaning, which it embeds within a chain which itself can be construed as a chain of natural signs (even though Marty is not explicit on this issue). Grice, on the other hand, insists on the irreducible difference between natural meaning and non-natural meaning.

The second difference is more apparent than real, however. In 'Meaning Revisited', published 25 years after his seminal 'Meaning', Grice himself argues that natural meaning is the ancestor of non-natural meaning :

Here I am interested not so much in the existence of [the distinction between natural and non-natural meaning], which has now, I think, become pretty boringly common ground (or mutual knowledge), but rather in the relationship between the two notions, the connections rather than the dissimilarities between them. (...) What I want to do now is look to see if one would represent the cases of nonnatural meaning as being descendants from, in a sense of 'descendant' which would suggest that they were derivative from and analogous to, cases of natural meaning. I shall also look a little at what kind of principles or assumptions one would have to make if one were trying to set up this position that natural meaning is in some specifiable way the ancestor of nonnatural meaning. (Grice 1982/1989 : 284-92)

This is very close to the ideas I ascribed to Marty. Nor is this a change of mind on Grice's part. The stance taken in 'Meaning Revisited' is anticipated in 'Meaning', where Grice discusses cases of intentional exploitation of natural signs which seem to cast doubt on the sharp contrast he draws between natural meaning and non-natural meaning.

In 'Meaning', Grice writes:

If I frown spontaneously, in the ordinary course of events, someone looking at me may well treat the frown as a natural sign of displeasure. But if I frown deliberately (to convey my displeasure), an onlooker may be expected, provided he recognizes my intention, *still* to conclude that I am displeased. Ought we not then say, since it could not be expected to make any difference to the onlooker's reaction whether he regards my frown as spontaneous or intended to be informative, that my frown (deliberate) does not mean_{NN} anything? I think this difficulty can be met; for though in general a deliberate frown may have the same effect (with respect to inducing belief in my displeasure) as a spontaneous frown, it can be expected to have the same effect only provided the audience takes it as intended to convey displeasure. That is, if we take away the recognition of intention, leaving the other circumstances (including the recognition of the frown as deliberate), the belief-producing tendency of the frown must be regarded as being impaired or destroyed. (Grice 1957/1989 : 219)

The important point is that, according to Grice, a natural sign *ceases to be a natural sign as soon as the hearer recognizes that it is produced deliberately*. From the deliberate scream, one can no longer infer that the screamer is in pain, since an alternative explanation for his (deliberate) scream is that he intends to persuade the hearer that he is in pain. But if the

deliberate character of the production of the sign impairs or destroys the belief-inducing tendency of the sign qua natural sign, that tendency can be restored :

The import of the recognition by Y that the production is voluntary undermines... any tendency on the part of Y to come to the conclusion that creature X is in pain. So, one might ask, what could be required to restore the situation : what could be added which would be an antidote, so to speak, to the dissolution on the part of Y of the idea that X is in pain ? (Grice 1982/1989 : 293)

What must be added, Grice says, is Y's recognition of X's intention to let Y know that he was simulating pain-behaviour in order to induce in Y the belief that X is in pain. Someone who intends to deceive by faking a natural sign must hide his or her intention to do so (Recanati 1979 : 175-77). Think of the game of poker, where a large bid induces in the other players the belief that one has a good hand only if the player's intention to induce that belief is not recognized ; or think of the act of leaving the lights on to deceive the potential burglars into thinking that there is someone in the house : the burglars will only be deceived if they don't recognize the intention to deceive. When the deliberate character of the production of a sign is revealed, the sign no longer works as a natural sign, and deception fails. So, by openly revealing your intention to induce a belief in the audience, you show that your intention is not a deceptive one ; for if it were, it could not be revealed openly without defeating itself.

So here is, in simplified form, the Gricean recipe for restoring the belief-inducing tendency of the faked natural sign : if e.g. the scream is seen as emanating from the subject's intention to convey that he is in pain, and if that intention itself is openly revealed (rather than hidden, as in cases of deception), then, if certain additional conditions are met, the communicative intention itself will be a reliable sign that the person is really in pain. In such

cases of ‘non-deceptive simulation’, the connection between the pain and the scream which was severed by the recognition of the deliberate nature of the production is restored. The scream is no longer directly a natural sign of the pain, but indirectly it is. There now is a chain of signs : from the utterance the communicative intention can be inferred, and from the communicative intention the content (the existence of the pain) can be inferred. Grice’s theory here converges with Marty’s.

I talked about the additional conditions which are to be met for the communicative intention to serve as a natural sign of its content. These conditions, which obtain in what I called the ‘basic cases’, are mentioned by both Marty and Grice.

Grice :

Whether or not in these circumstances Y will not merely recognize that X intends, in a rather queer way, to get Y to believe that X is in pain, whether Y not only recognizes this but actually goes on to believe that X is in pain, would presumably depend on a further set of conditions which can be summed up under the general heading that Y should regard X as trustworthy in one or another of perhaps a variety of ways. For example, suppose Y thinks that, either in general or at least in this type of case, X would not want to get Y to believe that X is in pain unless X really were in pain.

Suppose also (...) that Y also believes that X is trustworthy, not just in the sense of not being malignant, but also in the sense of being, as it were, in general responsible, for example, being the sort of creature who takes adequate trouble to make sure that what he is trying to get the other creature to believe is in fact that case, and who is not careless, negligent, or rash. Then... one would regard it as rational not only for Y to recognize these intentions on the part of X, that Y should have certain beliefs about X’s being in pain, but also for Y actually to pass to adopting these beliefs. (Grice

1982/1989 : 294-95)

Marty :

Wenn die Äußerung meines eigenen Urteilens oder der Schein einer solchen, Mittel sein soll um einem anderen ein gleiches Urteilen zu suggerieren, so muß dieser einseitig Vertrauen in meine Wahrhaftigkeit haben und auf Grund dessen überzeugt sein, daß ich eine gewisse Aussage nicht lügenhaft und auch nicht gedankenlos (und gleichsam mich selbst nicht verstoßend) mache. Außerdem ist aber bei einem Wesen, das den Unterschied zwischen richtigem und unrichtigem Urteilen kennt, die Zuversicht vorausgesetzt, daß mein urteilendes Verhalten richtig sei. Ich muß ihm also als Autorität und Garantie für die Wahrheit des Geurteilten gelten. (Marty 1908 : 286-87)

III.

What about Salome ? I said that there was a difference between Marty and Grice with respect to that type of example, and it is time to revisit the issue.

For Grice, the Salome example is an instance of exploitation of natural meaning that does not add up to non-natural meaning, because Herod's intention is not intended to be fulfilled via the recognition of that intention. I said that for Marty, that should count as a bona fide instance of communication, since the three dimensions of semiosis are exemplified : Herod's ostensive gesture springs from his knowledge that St. John the Baptist is dead and his desire to share that knowledge with Salome, so (through the indirect route) the gesture means that St. John the Baptist is dead. That makes it a bona fide instance of communication in Marty's sense. At the same time, it involves a natural sign (the severed head) which signifies

St. John's death through a more direct route, independently of Salome's recognition of Herod's intentions. That is what prevents it from being an instance of non-natural meaning in Grice's sense. But shouldn't that feature prevent it also from being an instance of communication in Marty's sense ? After all, Marty repeatedly says that the communicator's primary intention (the intention to instil in the audience a certain psychological state) is fulfilled mediately, via a secondary intention which is fulfilled immediately : the speaker's intention to disclose his or her psychological state, expressed by the utterance. But in the Salome example, as Grice points out, the communicative intention is fulfilled more directly : the sight of St. John the Baptist's head is sufficient to induce in Salome the belief that he is dead, without the recognition of Herod's own psychological states playing any significant role. Even though Martyan communicative intentions are not reflexive, contrary to Gricean communicative intentions, still they share the feature that they are intended to be fulfilled mediately, via the audience's recognition of the communicator's psychological states. That feature is missing in the Salome case, so Grice and Marty should *both* rule out that example.

What I have just said points to a tension within Marty's account as I have presented it so far. Marty, I suggested, holds that cases of intentional production of natural signs can be instances of bona fide communication exemplifying the three dimensions of semiosis, while simultaneously claiming that the communicator's primary intention is to be fulfilled mediately rather than immediately. Now when the sign intentionally produced is a natural sign, it indicates its object (or rather, the existence of its object) in such a way that the audience is led to judge that the object exists, independently of their recognition of the subject's own judgment to that effect. The inference from the subject's expressed state to the existence of its object is available to the audience, but a more direct route to the same conclusion is available too : from the natural sign to the existence of its object. So a charitable reading of Marty imposes that we qualify his claim that the communicator's primary intention

must be fulfilled mediately. We should construe him as holding the following, weaker view : in communication the audience must be able to ground her judgement that the object exists (or that the object is such and such) in the recognition of the communicator's own judgment, expressed by her words in the linguistic case ; but that does not mean that the audience's judgment cannot also be grounded more directly through the natural connection between the sign and its object. It would be inconsistent for Marty to insist that in *all* cases of human communication, the communicator's primary intention is to be fulfilled mediately. Mediate fulfilment must always be *possible*, in the sense that the expressed psychological state itself is a natural sign of its object, but the utterance may well involve the production of a more direct sign, as in the Salome example.⁹

In the case of Grice there is no such pressure to weaken his position for the sake of consistency. Grice insists that a natural sign that is deliberately produced (and recognized as such) *ceases to be a natural sign and no longer indicates its object*. Its meaning can only be restored via the indirect route, by construing the intention of which the deliberate production of the sign is a sign as itself a sign of its object. For Grice, the direct route and the indirect route necessarily compete. So the sharp contrast between natural meaning and non-natural meaning can be maintained, notwithstanding the prior conclusion that non-natural meaning is itself grounded in natural meaning. In the Gricean framework, either the sign is a natural sign of its object directly, that is, *independently of the psychological states which its production expresses*, or it only becomes a sign of its object indirectly, *because* of the psychological states its production expresses. There is non-natural meaning only in the latter case : when the only way for the communicator to fulfil her primary intention is by letting the audience

⁹ That this interpretation may correspond to what Marty actually had in mind is supported by a couple of passages in which he says that the communicative intention is fulfilled mediately 'in most cases' (Marty 1908 : 284) or 'normally' (Marty 1908 : 286).

recognize her expressed psychological state (viz. her communicative intention). On this view the Salome example is not an instance of non-natural meaning.

Now which view is preferable ? I think Marty's reconstructed position is preferable. A first, prima facie reason for accepting the Salome example as a bona fide instance of communication is that Grice's own tests for non-natural meaning yield a positive verdict. By his gesture, Herod (the person) means that St. John the Baptist is dead ; and his gesture can be reported as meaning 'St. John the Baptist is dead'. That is the case even though the severed head 'means that St. John the Baptist is dead' also in the natural, factive sense. It seems that in this example there is *both* natural meaning (independent of the recognition of the subject's psychological state) and non-natural meaning in the sense of the informal tests. Still, Herod cannot be said to intend Salome to come to believe that St. John the Baptist is dead via the recognition of Herod's intention to that effect. Grice's reflexive analysis seems to be too demanding and to fit only a sub-class of cases of non-natural meaning.

A second reason to prefer Marty's reconstructed position over Grice's is that many theorists in the Gricean tradition have come to the conclusion that it was a mistake on Grice's part to rule out cases like the Salome example.¹⁰ I explicitly said so in my article 'On Defining Communicative Intentions' (1986) and in my book *Meaning and Force* (1987) which incorporates the same material. There I gave an example of linguistic communication involving indexicals which has the same structure and properties as the Salome example, that is, which qualifies as a mixture of natural and non-natural meaning :

My friend and I are walking in a crowded place, and she loses track of me, although I am not at all far away. I tell her : 'I am here'. I thereby communicate to her that I am

¹⁰ See Schiffer 1972 : 57-58 ; Recanati 1986, 1987 : 189-90 ; Sperber and Wilson 1986 : 46-54 ; Neale 1992, section 15 ; Davis 2003 : 71 ; Green 2007 : 59 ; Wharton 2009 : 31-33 ; Sperber and Wilson 2015.

here, but to her, my utterance is also a natural sign of the fact that I am here. Even if I had said something different to someone else — with no recognizable intention to communicate to her where I was — the sheer sound of my voice in the vicinity would have indicated my location to her, exactly in the same way as John the Baptist's head indicates to Salome that he is dead. Moreover, the 'natural' meaning of my utterance is not just a matter of fact : I *intend* my utterance to provide the hearer with some evidence independent of the evidence provided by my recognized intention. This case, it seems to me, is exactly parallel to the Salome case. So if I have performed an act of Gricean communication in the linguistic case, there is no reason to deny that Herod may very well have done so by showing Salome the severed head. (Recanati 1987 : 190)

In a footnote, I added :

The similarity goes further than I have indicated. To recognize S's communicative intention, it is necessary, in the case of Herod, to first recognize the natural meaning of the sign (Salome recognizes what Herod means by first recognizing what the severed head of John the Baptist 'naturally' means). Similarly, in the linguistic case, the hearer does not know what is said, and so what the speaker intends to (linguistically) communicate, if she does not grasp the 'natural meaning' of the utterance : She does not know *who* is said to be *where* if she does not infer, from the familiar voice she is hearing and from its proximity, that *I* am speaking to her and that I am *here*. (*ibid*, fn.)

Note that, according to Karl Bühler, this mixture of natural and non-natural meaning is a characteristic property of indexical communication.¹¹

Are we not losing the advantages of Grice's theory if, to accommodate cases like the Salome example, we give up his central claim pertaining to the reflexivity of communicative intentions ? I said earlier that Grice's reflexive analysis was his major contribution, his great insight, something that is missing from Marty's account ; am I not now saying that we should give up that feature and opt for Marty's reconstructed account instead of Grice's own account ? No, that's not, or not exactly, what I am saying. Grice's insight about the nested/reflexive structure of the intentions underlying human communication is of considerable value, and it should evidently be preserved. But it can be cashed out in many ways. Some of the ways lead to problems and paradoxes, emphasized in the huge literature which Grice's article 'Meaning' gave rise to. In particular, it is no good to ascribe to communicators an infinite sequence of intentions, and it is no good to rule out cases of communication involving the exploitation of natural meaning (as in the Salome example or the 'I am here' example). But there are versions of the Gricean story which make it possible to bypass such unwelcome consequences.

As many have argued, what we need is a notion of 'overtness' through which we can characterize human communication (Strawson 1964). The communicator has audience-directed intentions which she expresses 'overtly' by her utterance. Overtness is where the action is, and to spell out what it requires we need something like Grice's analysis of reflexive

¹¹ See e.g. Bühler 1932/1990 : 129 for an example similar to my 'I am here'. Note that so-called indexicals owe their name to the fact that, while being Peircean symbols, they are also Peircian *indices* since they carry natural meaning and bear an 'existential relation' to their referent (they are 'indexical symbols' ; see Recanati 1987 : 6-7. On Peirce's classification of signs, see also Burks 1949).

intentions, or some equivalent analysis in terms of mutual knowledge.¹² But the reflexive intentions (or the mutual knowledge) may be construed as an ‘ideal’ rather than something that actually obtains (Grice 1982, section 3). One way of doing so is by appealing to the notion I introduced in the works referred to above : that of ‘default-reflexivity’.

S’s intention is default-reflexive if and only if S has no intention inconsistent with any of the (infinite number of) intentions that his intention would entail if it were genuinely reflexive. (Recanati 1987 : 201)¹³

The speaker’s communicative intentions are overt, that’s what distinguishes them from the sort of intentions involved in deceptive behaviour ; but that only means that these intentions are default-reflexive. We use the notion of a reflexive intention to specify the property of default-reflexivity which communicative intentions actually possess, but the requirement that communicative intentions be overt in the sense of default-reflexive is much less demanding than the requirement that they be reflexive in the full-blooded sense. The important point, as far as this paper is concerned, is that Herod’s communicative intention is ‘overt’ ; so the case qualifies as a bona fide instance of Gricean communication, despite the involvement of natural meaning.¹⁴

¹² The notion of mutual knowledge (a.k.a. common knowledge) was simultaneously introduced into the philosophical literature by David Lewis in his analysis of conventions and by Schiffer in his discussion of Grice (Lewis 1969, Schiffer 1972).

¹³ As I pointed out in footnote 2, something like this idea is already present in Grice (1969).

¹⁴ The aim of the conference for which I prepared this paper was to assess the contemporary relevance of Marty’s philosophy of language. The organizers asked me to participate not as a Marty expert, but as a philosopher of language, with a genuine interest in some of the ideas which Marty put forward. I am grateful to Giuliano Bacigalupo, co-organizer of the conference, and Kevin Mulligan and Laurent Cesalli, directors of the [SNF project “Meaning and Intentionality in Anton Marty”](#) which the conference concluded, for letting me see (the relevant parts of) the French translation of Marty’s main work, *Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Grammatik und Sprachphilosophie* (a translation that was in preparation as part of the project) ; to H el ene Leblanc, the other co-organizer of the

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conference, who responded to my talk and, together with Giuliano and two reviewers, provided comments on the manuscript ; and to the French Agence Nationale de la Recherche for indirect funding under grant agreement ANR-10-LABX-0087 IEC and grant agreement ANR-10-IDEX-0001-02 PSL.

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