



# The semantics and pragmatics of hybrid quotations

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The semantics and pragmatics of hybrid quotations

## Abstract

This paper examines a type of quotation – ‘hybrid quotations’ – that has received quite a bit of attention from philosophers, semanticists and pragmaticists over the last dozen years or so. Theoretical debates have centred on the question whether the contribution to content of such quotations is semantic in essence, or pragmatic. After presenting prototypical examples of ‘mixed quotation’ and ‘scare quoting’, the two sub-types of hybrid quotations usually distinguished by specialists, I outline the two main ways of approaching them – as semantic or pragmatic phenomena – and point up their strong and weak points. When that is done, I present several empirical facts that may help us decide which sort of theory is more likely to prevail eventually. In the process, the reader can get acquainted with some of the remarkable variety that hybrid quotation offers.

## 1. Introduction: varieties of hybrid quotations

The first scholars to take a theoretical interest in quotation were logicians (Frege, and some time later Carnap, Tarski, Quine). In those early days only one variety of quotation was taken into consideration, what may be termed ‘metalinguistic citation’ (1). In time, growing interest in ways people actually use quotations has led to the recognition of ‘direct speech’ (2), ‘mixed quotation’ (3), ‘scare quoting’ (4) as valid objects of linguistic and philosophical study.

- (1) ‘**Brussels**’ rhymes with ‘**muscles**’.
- (2) Then she said, ‘**Will you write a letter?**’ and I said, ‘**Sure**’. (Hash 1999)
- (3) Alice said that life ‘**is difficult to understand**’. (Cappelen and Lepore 1997: 429)
- (4) She took me to the “**in**” Hollywood restaurants and pointed out the important producers and agents. (Lodge 1996: 50)

Recently, quotation has become one of the battlegrounds where the dispute on the semantics-pragmatics distinction is fought (Cappelen and Lepore 2005: 52, 2007: 8f; De Brabanter 2005: 3ff).

This paper focuses on quotations that can be subsumed under the ‘hybrid’ heading (see Recanati 2000: 139, 2001: 658). For a similar range of phenomena, other scholars have used terms like ‘incorporated’ (Clark and Gerrig 1990), ‘double-duty’ (García-Carpintero 2005) ‘mixed’ (Geurts and Maier 2005), ‘impure’ (Gómez-Torrente 2005) or ‘subclausal’ (Potts 2007). In core instances, hybrid quotations are strings that appear to be simultaneously used and mentioned (for early spottings, see Mayenowa 1967; Rey-Debove 1978: 253ff; Davidson 1979: 28f; Recanati 1979: 79ff, 123; for a detailed discussion of use and mention, see Saka 1998). Many scholars split hybrid use into mixed quotation (henceforth *MQ*) and scare quoting (henceforth *ScQ*). For convenience’ sake, I initially adopt this partition and present typical cases of each category.

Ideally, theories of hybrid quotation should be considered within the broader framework of general theories of quotation, as the most influential accounts of hybridity are indeed components of wider theories. For reasons of space, this cannot be done here; however, I will give pointers when needed. I must also point out initially a difficulty with the central terms *semantic* and *pragmatic*, which are understood differently by different writers. In this paper, I use the term *semantic* to refer to aspects of content that are determined by the conventional linguistic meaning of words and grammatical constructions. I reserve the term *pragmatic* for aspects of content whose interpretation requires inferences on extra-linguistic, contextual, clues.

### 1.1 Mixed quotation

Possibly drawing inspiration from Partee (1973: 411), who talked of “mixed direct and indirect quotation” in relation to a similar example, Cappelen and Lepore (1997) introduced the term ‘mixed quotation’ to capture what goes on in (3) above. According to Cappelen and Lepore (henceforth *C&L*), mixed quotation is a combination of direct speech and indirect speech (e.g. *C&L* 1997, 431; McCullagh 2007: 928). As in direct speech, a quoted string is under the scope of a reporting verb and its previous utterance must therefore be attributed to the referent of the subject of that verb. As in indirect speech, the complement of the verb of saying is a *that*-clause, which ‘samesays’ what the reported speaker said (cf. Davidson 1968).

*C&L* (1997, 2005) represent the logical form of (3) as:<sup>1</sup>

(3<sub>LF</sub>)  $\exists u(\text{Said}(a, u) \ \& \ \text{SS}(u, \text{that}) \ \& \ \text{ST}(u, \text{these}))$ . Life is difficult to understand

(3<sub>LF</sub>) states that there is an utterance *u* such that Alice said *u* and *u* samesays (*SS*) ( $\approx$  expresses the same content as) *Life is difficult to understand* and *u* sametokens (*ST*) ( $\approx$  is a token of the

same type as) *is difficult to understand*. It is because *say* introduces both indirect and direct speech that it can glossed as the pair of predicates *Samesays* and *Sametokens*: arguably, samesaying (see Elugardo 1999 for a detailed discussion) is what happens in indirect speech – where *life is difficult to understand* would be used – while sametokening characterises direct speech – where *Life is difficult to understand* would be mentioned.

A central aspect of C&L’s analysis is that MQ affects the truth-conditions of the utterance in which it occurs: for (3) to be true, Alice must have used the very words *is difficult to understand*. Many take this – which I will call ‘speech attribution’ – to be a robust intuition (cf. Reimer 2005: 167f). One way of capturing this intuition – and underlining the concurrent use and mention of the quoted string – is to paraphrase examples like (3) as two sentences (cf. Potts 2007), one to do with use, the other with mention:

- (3<sub>u</sub>) Alice said that life is difficult to understand.
- (3<sub>m</sub>) Alice uttered the words “is difficult to understand”.

This split representation is only an initial approximation, and many writers find fault with it. Thus Geurts and Maier (2005: 110-15) argue against the adequacy of a bi-dimensional account, and C&L (1997: 436) deem it inadequate because the separation of use and mention conceals the fact that the quoted string does double duty. But it is nevertheless useful in allowing us to see where most disagreements about MQ originate, namely in the status of the ‘mention-line’. Indeed, hardly anyone disagrees that (3<sub>u</sub>) is part of the semantics and of the truth-conditions of (3). Discrepancies arise, however, as to whether (3<sub>m</sub>) captures the semantic contribution of the quotation and its impact on truth-conditions (C&L 1997, 2005; Benbaji 2004a/b, 2005; with qualifications: García-Carpintero 2005, Predelli 2005), or a truth-conditional outcome of pragmatic processing (Abbott 2005; Recanati 2001), or a non-truth-conditional outcome of pragmatic processing (Stainton 1999; Saka). Besides, there is disagreement about the wording of the mention-line (Recanati 2001: 663; Gómez-Torrente 2005), an issue taken up in §2.2.

The split representation also allows us to point up separate empirical problems with use and mention. First, the strong version of the mention-line requires that the reported speaker said *the very words* quoted, a requirement that usually also extends to direct speech. This appears unwarranted, for at least two reasons. First, as Saka (2005: 200-03) shows, hearers often accept both direct and mixed quotations that are not verbatim: standards of formal faithfulness prove context-dependent (see also Clark and Gerrig 1990: 795ff; Wilson 2000: 425f). In this respect, Wade and Clark’s (1993) experiments are an eye-opener: in various settings, they find that direct reports reproduce another speaker’s words no more faithfully than indirect reports, no matter what the instructions. They conclude that “[q]uotations are intended to depict only some aspects of the original speaker’s utterance, and that usually doesn’t include its exact wording” (1993: 819).

Second, one can quote in English (as a direct or mixed report) words that were originally uttered in a different language:

- (5) Frege said that predicate expressions “**are unsaturated**”. (Tsohatzidis 2005: 215)

The point here is that Frege never wrote English tokens, but German ones, and still (5) can be judged true.

Note that there are some issues with the use-line too. Take:

- (6) A doctor tells him [Gustave Flaubert] he is like a “**vieille femme hystérique**”; he agrees. (*TLS* online, 18/12/1998)
- (7) Wright won’t disclose how much the Nike deal is worth, saying only that “**they treat me well**”. (*The Face*, Sept 93 : 55)

(6<sub>u</sub>) would arguably be judged ungrammatical, on account of the occurrence of unquoted non-English words; (7<sub>u</sub>) would be grammatical but semantically incorrect because of the indexical *me*: it would say that the utterer, not Wright, is treated well.

After this brief review of MQ, we can already see that, although providing a useful rough-and-ready characterisation, the simultaneous-use-and-mention view of hybridity is too crude. Alternatively, if we want to stick with the simultaneous-use-and-mention view, the original meaning which Quine (1940: 23) assigned to the terms ‘use’ and ‘mention’ must be altered to some extent.

### 1.2 Scare quoting

A useful characterisation of scare quoting is that it is “a warning to the reader that there is something unusual or dubious (in the opinion of the writer) about the quoted word or phrase” (McArthur 1992: 839). There is, therefore, a major difference in terms of ‘quotational point’ (Recanati 2001: 666ff) between ScQ and MQ, a difference which suggests, at least initially, that they should be treated as distinct phenomena. Take (4) above or (8):

- (8) Done properly, computer simulation represents a kind of **“telescope for the mind,”** multiplying human powers of analysis and insight just as a telescope does our powers of vision. ([www.nytimes.com/2008/10/01/opinion/01buchanan.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/01/opinion/01buchanan.html))

In core cases, the quotation marks can be glossed as something like *as they/some people (would/could) say, if I/you/they/we may put it that way*. No reporting verb takes scope over the quotation; hence there is no speech attribution to a precise speaker, as is the case in MQ. Neither in (4) nor in (8) does the quotation appear to affect the truth-conditions of the utterance.

## 2. Semanticists-about-quotation

### 2.1 MQ: truth-conditional impact

Most scholars in the ‘semantic camp’ start from the assumption that quotation marks have a conventional meaning that affects truth-conditions. That is certainly their position with respect to metalinguistic citation and direct speech, and most of the time MQ too. As we’ll see, there is less consensus about ScQ. For those theorists, everything that affects truth-conditions is *eo ipso* semantic: any impact on truth-conditions, even when some degree of context-dependence is involved, is triggered by the meaning of some component of a sentence (cf. Stanley 2000: 392). Now, if MQ affects truth-conditions, that can only be due to the quotation marks. Compare (3) with (3<sub>u</sub>). Only (3<sub>u</sub>) would arguably be true if Alice had actually said *is tough to figure out*. Since the only apparent difference between (3) and (3<sub>u</sub>) is the quotation marks, they must be responsible for the more demanding truth-conditions of (3).

### 2.2 MQ: non-cancellability

A related argument is that the truth-conditional effect just mentioned cannot be cancelled. This must mean that it results from the conventional meaning of quotation marks. Otherwise, if the apparent impact on truth-conditions were context-dependent it should be cancellable, which it is not.

The argument from non-cancellability is not identical to the argument from truth-conditional impact. One may accept that quotation marks have a non-cancellable conventional meaning without it affecting truth-conditions (e.g. Saka 1998: 128f; Recanati 2001: 661ff; Gómez-Torrente 2005: 133). Remember, too, that cancellability judgments depend on exactly *what* is cancelled. Since scholars have different versions of the ‘mention-line’, their views about cancellability are bound to be discrepant.

Gómez-Torrente (2005) provides a thorough discussion of cancellability in hybrid cases (see also C&L 2005: 68-71; Reimer 2005: 178-83, Recanati forthcoming). He agrees with Recanati that in (3) the attribution of *is difficult to understand* to Alice is cancellable. One could say:

(3') Alice said that life 'is difficult to understand', to use Rupert's favourite phrase.

Here, the words *is difficult to understand* are not attributed to Alice but to Rupert. This should dispose of the strong version of the mention-line, hence also of C&L's theory. But C&L counter that nothing is cancelled in (3'), because the quotation in (3') is not a MQ but a ScQ. And, as MQ and ScQ are very different linguistic objects, (3') proves nothing. This sort of response is predicated on a clear-cut distinction between MQ and ScQ, a question we look into in §5.

The cancellability objection can be met without appealing to the sort of manoeuvring that C&L resort to, if one maintains that the conventional meaning of quotation marks is less specific than C&L make it out to be. Thus, Gómez-Torrente takes quote marks in MQ to conventionally indicate that the quoted string is "a contextually appropriate version of expressions uttered by some agent or agents who are contextually relevant" (2005: 131). This appears much more difficult to cancel than speech attribution (2005: 136).

In the end, the cancellability argument proves dependent on two factors: (i) what conventional meaning is ascribed to quote marks; (ii) whether marks of MQ and ScQ have a different semantics. For the answer to (ii) to be positive, MQ and ScQ must be genuinely different phenomena (see §5).

### 2.3 ScQ: no truth-conditional impact?

As said above, not all semanticists-about-quotation treat ScQ as a semantic phenomenon. Thus, C&L (from 1997 up to 2007), making out no truth-conditional impact for ScQ, judge it to be a pragmatic affair. But are all instances of ScQ like (4) and (8)? At least some writers believe they are not, and interestingly some of these are on the semantic side. One interesting theory is defended by Yitzhak Benbaji in a series of papers (Benbaji 2004a/b, 2005).

Benbaji adopts C&L's semantics for MQ. To him, however, ScQ too – which he dubs 'using others' words' – is a semantic phenomenon, which can be captured if one enriches one's representation of the semantic context, as defined by Kaplan (1989) – which includes the speaker of the utterance, the time, the place, and the world in which it was uttered – with a variable for the echoed speaker (Benbaji 2005: 38). Benbaji proposes a range of rules to capture the various grammatical manifestations of using others' words. I give the rule for singular terms; similar definitions are provided for quoted predicates and clauses:

(R) The referent of "N" in the formula "N is P" = the thing to which the echoed speaker refers in uttering a token of 'N' = the thing to which the echoed speaker refers in producing a token that same-tokens this. N. (2005: 38f)

In so doing, Benbaji essentially treats quotation marks as indexical signs, i.e. linguistic items whose meaning consists in an instruction to recover a value in the context of utterance. This enables Benbaji to explain occurrences of ScQ with apparent impact on truth-conditions:

Imagine that Alice consistently calls McPherson – a physicist whom she very much appreciates – 'Einstein'. Bob does not like the comparison, so he says,  
(10) Stop it, Alice, 'Einstein' is not that smart. (2004b: 536)

The Einstein type of examples have been widely used by Recanati (2000, 2001) to show that ScQ can also affect truth-conditions. In the context as described, the utterance of (10) would

be evaluated as true because Alice would recognize Bob's intention to refer to McPherson, hence judge the asserted content to be about McPherson, not Einstein. The same utterance without the quotation would be about Einstein, and therefore false.

There are other, non-indexical, semantic accounts of ScQ. Thus, Predelli (2003, 2005), García-Carpintero (2005), Geurts and Maier (2005), Gómez-Torrente (2005) all offer accounts based on the conventional meaning of quote marks. Predelli, Gómez-Torrente and García-Carpintero defend theories on which the contribution of quote marks in ScQ is likened to Gricean conventional implicatures, though Gómez-Torrente is much less ready than the others to grant these a truth-conditional impact. As for Geurts and Maier, they favour a presuppositional account according to which ScQ triggers the presupposition that some agent expressed a certain property by means of the quoted string. Geurts and Maier view their theory as pragmatic, as it allows for context-dependence. However, as the presuppositions are generated by the quote marks – i.e. mandated by linguistic items – I classify the theory with the semantic accounts.

### 3. Pragmaticists-about-quotation

There are two main types of pragmatic accounts of hybrid quotation: those that reject (e.g. Stainton 1999) and those that accept (e.g. Recanati 2000, 2001) truth-conditional intuitions.

#### 3.1 Rejecting truth-conditional impact

Stainton (1999) admits that if Alice had said something like *is tough to figure out*, one might have the impression that (3) is false. But this impression, he suggests, results from confusing truth with felicity. Stainton's claim is that the choice of the words in quotation marks is no different from voice quality, accent, volume. If I stutter and whisper while quoting the words that Alice pronounced fluently and loud, I will definitely mislead, but one would not judge my utterance to be false. "Ditto", says Stainton, "for the quotation marks in mixed quotation" (1999: 274). Marga Reimer (2005: 171ff) offers a series of arguments that undermine Stainton's position.

#### 3.2 Accepting truth-conditional impact

Other 'pragmaticists-about-quotation' accept the truth-conditional intuitions invoked by defenders of semantic theories. Thus Recanati explains the truth-conditional impact of the MQ in (3) in terms of the pragmatic process of *free enrichment of the truth-conditions*. Such enrichment results from a top-down process that is not controlled by any linguistic component of the utterance. As a result, it is not "compositionally articulated" (2001: 663) and is cancellable.

As hinted above, Recanati believes that not only MQ but also ScQ can affect truth-conditions. A ScQ as in the Benbaji citation above is explained in terms of a shift in one of the parameters of the context of utterance (Recanati 2001: 674ff). Let me offer a real-life example. A close relative of mine often has trouble hitting on the right word. At the end of a meal, he once requested a 'poplar' instead of a toothpick. Mischief sometimes induces me, during a family reunion, to say things like:

(9) OK, I'll fetch you a '**poplar**',

with a wink or some other clue that I am being playful. Recanati would deal with (9) in terms of a language-shift: the word *poplar* is used with the meaning it has in my relative's idiolect, not in standard English. That is how (9) can be judged true. According to Recanati, shifts in the context are pre-semantic phenomena. Hence their identification takes place as part of the same phase as the determination of the language of the utterance or disambiguation. Such shifts are particularly visible when they make a truth-conditional difference. Example (9), like



the example in the Benbaji citation, is termed a ‘non-cumulative hybrid’: it does not logically entail its corresponding ‘use-line’ (the same utterance without quotation).

### 3.3 Taking stock

We have seen that neither semantic nor pragmatic accounts of hybrid quotation are monolithic. However, they exhibit tendencies that shape their strengths and weaknesses. Semantic theories of MQ are strong on the widespread assumption that speech attribution to the referent of the reporting verb is both truth-conditionally relevant and non-cancellable. Unsurprisingly, they are less adept at dealing with precisely those cases where that assumption seems to be cancelled and therefore fails to affect truth-conditions. As for ScQ, the various ‘echoic’ accounts seem to be on the right track.

Purely pragmatic theories are rarer. The initial difficulty for them is to address the strong intuitions about truth-conditions and non-cancellability (especially, but not only, as regards MQ). Here, those that take up the challenge (Recanati and the few scholars following in his footsteps) seem more prudent than those that dismiss it (essentially Stainton), notably because ScQ too occasionally appears to affect truth-conditions. One advantage, maybe, of pragmatic accounts is the very flexibility that stems from the defeasibility of any pragmatic effect of quotation, including putative truth-conditional effects. The apparently variable impact of hybrid quotation is predicted by the pragmaticist.

Still, it is difficult so far to choose one camp over the other. In what follows, I consider a number of issues that may provide further reasons to prefer either type of theory.

#### 4. To what extent are marks necessary?

We have seen that semantic theories of quotation depend on quotation marks. They are essentially *theories of quotation marks*. However, as has repeatedly been observed (notably by Rey-Debove 1978), there are many quotations that are not signalled by marks. Here we must distinguish between non-hybrid and hybrid quotations:

(10) This guy is called **Stefan Raab** [...]. ([black20.com/finds/mib-eukelale](http://black20.com/finds/mib-eukelale))

Cases like (10), which are perfectly everyday, lend themselves to an easy answer from the semanticists’ camp: though not realised syntactically, the quotation marks are present in logical form.

Still... it is a historical fact that language users *spoke* quotations long before they wrote them, let alone signalled them with punctuation or typographical means. Consider the many languages of the world that remain unwritten or have only been written for a short time, or even our western languages, where quotation marks did not appear until the 16<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Compagnon 1979: 246f). Is it not strange, in light of this, that whole theories of quotation should stand or fall on marks (or their putative logical-form counterparts) that have only been around for 500 years? Such theories presuppose that all languages that permit ‘talking about themselves’ (presumably *all* languages, cf. Harris 1968: 17; Lyons 1977: 5; Rey-Debove 1978: 1) had implicit quote marks ages before these were ever realised. Naturally, nothing prevents one from assuming that quotation marks are like the traces and other empty categories of syntactic theory: those too are unwritten/unpronounced. However, quote marks would constitute an unusual empty category, one that is sometimes realised, and realised by punctuation signs.

Several writers on quotation – mainly, but not exclusively, pragmaticists – question or sometimes even deny the significance of quotation marks (e.g. Washington 1992: 588; Saka 1998: 118f; Wertheimer 1999: 515; De Brabanter 2005: 6f). These are writers that are less prone to the ‘written-language bias’ of studies on quotation pointed out by Clark and Gerrig (1990: 800). Whether marks of quotation are ubiquitous should be, at least in part, an

empirical question, but it is one that has received little attention. A group of German researchers working on reported speech have shown that direct speech is often marked prosodically and/or paralinguistically, but “it would be an overstatement to claim that prosodic marking is used systematically as a sign of reported speech in talk the way quotation marks are in texts” (Klewitz and Couper-Kuhlen 1999: 473; see also Sams 2007; Kasimir 2008).

Perhaps, however, *hybrid* quotations cannot occur without marks and the general considerations above do not apply to them. Whereas non-hybrid quotations are ‘recruited’ (cf. Recanati 2001: 649) to fill a syntactic slot in the sentence so that their internal structure is neutralised (it is ‘inert’, cf. Davidson 1979: 37; García-Carpintero 1994: 261; Recanati 2001: 651), perhaps hybrid quotations – being (somehow) used and mentioned at the same time – do not stand out enough, *qua* quotations, unless they are flanked by inverted commas or italicised or realised with special intonation.

Two types of examples may help us here. First, there are cases where the speaker/writer draws attention to some non-quote-marked string by means of a metalinguistic comment:

- (11) It means nothing to you, I suppose, he said, it was just a, what do they call it, a **one-night-stand**. (Lodge 1989: 297)

These examples co-exist with similar ones where the displayed string is enclosed in quotation marks. It is therefore tempting to treat them as instantiating the same phenomenon.

There is, however, a simpler analysis available for examples like (11): the impression that we are dealing with a hybrid case may be caused by a deictic element in the parenthetical (here, *what*) which refers metalinguistically to a string that is part of the context of this parenthetical. The string *a one-night-stand* is indeed used and mentioned, but mentioned non-quotationally by a pronominal expression. This analysis predicts that, when the metalinguistic parenthetical is removed, the utterance is exclusively ‘about the world’. Its one potential defect, however, is that it may fetishise quotation marks.

Now for the second type of case, allusions to well-known proverbs or sayings:

- (12) Winston Churchill actually read “Mein Kampf,” understood what the plan was about, wanted to confront it early on, and it was his vision that won the day and ultimately defeated Hitler, with the help of America and a lot of **blood, toil, sweat, and tears**. ([www.unitedfamilies.org/hannity\\_article.asp](http://www.unitedfamilies.org/hannity_article.asp))

Churchill declared “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat” in his maiden speech to the Commons on May 13, 1940. The context suggests that the writer is mentioning the (slightly modified) phrase as well as using it, even though there is no overt marking. As far as I can see no overt marking would be noted in speech either.

These examples probably do not succeed in *demonstrating* that there are unmarked hybrid quotations; still, they show that the indispensability of quote marks cannot be taken for granted, as it is by semantic accounts.

## 5. Can MQ and ScQ be neatly separated?

If we take C&L’s conception of MQ and ScQ literally, there are many hybrid quotations that remain unaccounted for. Take

- (13) Her idea that “**Feminist studies should, by definition, entail respect for the views and intentions of authors**” (238) ought, in fact, to have been extended to her discussion of other plays. ([mclc.osu.edu/rc/pubs/reviews/liruru.htm](http://mclc.osu.edu/rc/pubs/reviews/liruru.htm))

Use of the words *Feminist studies [...] authors* is undoubtedly ascribed to the referent of *her*, indicating at least that we are not dealing with ScQ. Yet the quotation is not under the scope of a reporting verb, and it therefore seems that speech attribution results from a pragmatic process. I see two possible replies for C&L and followers (Benbaji, García-Carpintero, McCullagh). First, they might counter that the quotation in (13) does not modify truth-conditions. But (i) intuitions about truth and falsity are not neat here, and (ii) in any case, even if the quotation is not truth-conditionally relevant, (13) still remains unclassifiable, as it cannot be an instance of ScQ. This option would probably force them to recognise a third sub-type of hybrid quotation, somewhere between MQ and ScQ.

Another possible response would consist in claiming that *idea* is a metalinguistic noun capable of introducing indirect speech and that, combined with quotation marks, it triggers the occurrence of both the *Samesays* and *Sametokens* predicates in logical form. This is not the place to work out the particulars of such an option, but it seems it would be a tricky affair, if only because we are not clear about whether (and in what respects) the quotation affects truth-conditions.

Worse even, the above move would not suffice. Take:

- (14) Already Mr Scargill is threatening ‘**industrial action**’ — which of course means *inaction*, in anybody else’s books — if he and his comrades aren’t showered with yet another round of pay rises and perks. (Coe 1995 : 73)

In (14), there seems to be both distancing by the speaker and speech attribution to Mr Scargill, i.e. both ScQ and (something like) MQ. This may already be a problem, though C&L claim that their account can accommodate the combination of MQ and ScQ (2005: 73, note 7). The real problem is this: unlike *idea* in (13), *threaten* does not introduce a clause that could be regarded as an indirect speech report. Therefore, nothing would justify the presence of the *Samesays* predicate in logical form. A similar conclusion applies to the next example:

- (15) What makes them different, and what has pumped up the Weimar-like rage at McCain-Palin rallies, is the violent escalation in rhetoric, especially (though not exclusively) by Palin. Obama “**launched his political career in the living room of a domestic terrorist.**” He is “**palling around with terrorists**” (note the plural noun). Obama is “**not a man who sees America the way you and I see America.**” ([www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/opinion/12rich.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/opinion/12rich.html))

What is interesting about (15) is that none of the quotations falls under the scope of a reporting verb or some other metalinguistic predicate. Yet, no one has any doubt that the quoted words are attributed to the same source, i.e. Sarah Palin. Here again, one is led to conclude that speech attribution is a pragmatic operation.

It seems that all that can be preserved from the original account of MQ is the requirement that the quoted string should sametoken some token uttered by an agent in the context. Such a loosening of the constraints on MQ brings us very close indeed to the semantic accounts of ScQ mentioned in §2.3, two of which prove especially relevant – Benbaji’s and Geurts and Maier’s. The former, which puts the echoed speaker in the truth-conditions could be chosen by those who consider that the quotations in (13)-(15) are truth-conditionally relevant. The latter, which offers a presuppositional account of hybrid quotation might be preferred by those who do not want to commit to a truth-conditional impact. On such an account, if the presupposition that some relevant agent in the context uttered the quoted words can neither be bound to an antecedent nor accommodated – the two ways presuppositions can be processed on the Geurts and Maier theory – the utterance is not truth-evaluable.

Interestingly, though the quote marks are treated differently by Benbaji and by Geurts and Maier (indexicals vs. presuppositions), their conventional meaning is very similar on both

theories: their effect is to transform the meaning of an expression  $\alpha$  into ‘what the echoed speaker calls  $\alpha$ ’. We shall see in the next section that this very form is a potential source of trouble for their theories.

Before closing this section, let us look at one more example that does not fit nicely into either MQ or ScQ in their strict definitions.

- (16) Then, after a run through of “**ideas I strongly reject**,” Bush finally got around to announcing that he was going to “talk about what we’re for. [...]” ([www.nytimes.com/2008/03/15/opinion/15collins.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/15/opinion/15collins.html))

Once again there is clear speech attribution to an echoed speaker without recourse to a reporting verb. What is remarkable here is the occurrence of an indexical in the quotation. These sorts of cases have been studied in detail by Cumming (2005). C&L themselves have used one such example – though with a reporting verb – in an argument against pragmatic accounts of hybrid quotation (2005: 63f). Yet, (16) further undermines C&L’s theory. Try removing the quote marks and you get a “mistaken rendering”, as C&L (2005: 62) put it. But a mistaken rendering means “semantic significance” (ibid.). Therefore, on C&L’s theory, (16) must involve MQ not ScQ. Yet, it seems impossible to analyse (16) like (3), because nothing in (16) licenses the *Samesays* predicate, since no reporting verb takes scope over the quotation. It appears that neither Benbaji’s and Geurts and Maier’s semantic accounts nor Recanati’s pragmatic approach would have difficulty in dealing with (16).

### 5.1 Taking stock again

The data examined in this section show that the partition of hybrid quotations into MQ and ScQ is barely tenable. Theories that explicitly rely on such a division are in trouble (Benbaji, C&L, Gómez-Torrente). One solution for the semanticist is to extend his/her theory of ScQ to all hybrids. That option is unavailable to C&L, who have no semantic account of ScQ, but it is open to Benbaji and perhaps to Gómez-Torrente (Geurts and Maier already take their theory to apply to hybrids generally). One problem, however, for Benbaji, is that his account of using others’ words is incapable of predicting what he identifies as the truth-conditional effects of MQ in (3) and (5)-(7). This is less of a problem for Gómez-Torrente and for Geurts and Maier, who are less committed to those effects. Again, because of the secondary role and the minimal conventional meaning they ascribe to quotation marks, pragmatic approaches do not appear to be threatened by the wayward purposes and effects of hybrid quotations.

## 6. Hybrid quoting of non-constituents.

There is one last empirical fact about hybrid quotation that deserves attention: quoted strings need not be syntactic constituents (cf. Clark and Gerrig 1990: 790; Abbott 2005: 20; Cumming 2005: 81; Tsohatzidis 2005: 228; Maier 2007). This feature is significant because it spells more trouble for the remaining semantic accounts. We saw above that both Benbaji’s and Geurts and Maier’s characterisations of the meaning of a hybrid quotation is something like ‘what the echoed speaker calls  $\alpha$ ’. Therefore,  $\alpha$  must stand for a syntactic constituent, such as a singular term, a predicate, a clause. But the following examples show that hybrid quotations are less well-behaved than that.

- (17) Writing that book, Doyle felt himself “a slave to reality. I was just dying to write a big book, and to have a bit of fun.” (Independent Arts, 17/09/2004)

The quoted string contains a nominal phrase (an N-bar) followed by a complete sentence; it does not form a constituent. One way out of this predicament is to say that there are actually two quoted strings: the nominal and the sentence. Aware that this might jeopardise the

account developed with Geurts, Maier (2007) has designed a ‘mention logic’ capable of handling these cases by breaking the quoted strings into manageable constituents. Maier explicitly shows how this logic can also account for examples like (18), where a non-constituent made up of two constituents is quoted:

- (18) David said that he had donated “largish sums, to several benign institutions”. (Abbott 2005: 20).

However, the non-constituent quoted strings come in all sorts of guises and it remains to be seen whether Maier’s technical solution applies across the board. Moreover, the question can be asked whether it is more than a useful notational device, i.e. whether it is capable of capturing *what really goes on in these cases*. Take a similar case with direct speech, from Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1026):

- (19) She replied, ‘I live alone. My son lives alone too. We both prefer it that way.’

Thought that is not required by most standard accounts of direct speech, it would seem consistent, within Maier’s framework, to analyse (19) like hybrids, hence to break that quotation into three constituents: *I live alone / My son lives alone too / We both prefer it that way*. But are we not thus failing to do justice to the fact that these three elements together form a ‘text’, i.e. a coherent sequence. Doesn’t Maier’s analysis also fit the case in which *she* gave three separate replies? If that turned out to be the case, Maier’s approach would fail to capture one essential ingredient of such quotations: the connectedness of their components.

I close this review of empirical facts that matter with a last pair of examples. Unlike in (17)-(19), the problem with the quotations in (20)-(21) is not that they are too long (i.e. made up of unrelated constituents) but, in a sense, ‘too short’: they end abruptly at some arbitrary syntactic point.

- (20) Tim Marlow of London’s White Cube gallery suggested that such self-censorship was now common, though **“very few people have explicitly admitted”** it. ([www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/oct/01/religion.islam](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/oct/01/religion.islam))
- (21) [The doctors’] actions defied the instructions of members of Congress, who issued subpoenas to attempt to block **‘the barbaric’** removal of her feeding tube on Friday [...]. (*The Guardian* online, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005)

No doubt Maier could break them into smaller quotations and make them fit his mention logic. But one is entitled to wonder if the writer of (21) really quoted two things, *the* and *barbaric*.

## 5. Conclusion

Two main approaches to hybrid quotations have been examined – which treat those quotations or subtypes of them as semantic vs. pragmatic phenomena – both of which appear capable of dealing with the core instances of ‘mixed quotation’ and ‘scare quoting’. When one begins to take into account more varied data, however, data where neither ‘use’ nor ‘mention’ can be understood in the strict sense in which Quine (1940: 23) defined those terms, it seems that the pragmatic accounts are at an advantage, chiefly because they place fewer constraints or no constraints at all on the need for quotation marks, on their meaning, on the non-cancellability of that meaning, and on a neat separation between mixed and scare quoting. Other researchers (notably Clark & Gerrig and Recanati) believe that quotations are part of a wider set of iconic communicative stimuli, including certain aspects of gestural communication.



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<sup>1</sup> Cappelen and Lepore have recently (2007) discarded their own previous theory. But the theory favoured by their 'previous time-slices' was advocated so forcefully that it has shaped much of the debate on hybrid quotation. Besides, the separation between mixed quotation and scare quoting remains central to their current theory.