

# Some Notes on Points of View

Eros Corazza

**Abstract** I'll argue that the notion of viewpoint plays central stage in our understanding and interpretation of many utterances. I'll claim that such a notion is best characterized on the background of indexical reference; yet it cannot be reduced to it. I'll thus show how points of view can be unarticulated (roughly, unmentioned) and yet play an important role in our linguistic practice inasmuch as the understanding of some utterances rests on the grasping of the point of view associated with them. Finally, I'll mention how the notion of viewpoint (as an unarticulated linguistic phenomenon) plays an essential role in the understanding and interpretation of utterances containing anaphoric reflexive pronouns.

---

An ancestor of this paper was presented at the SOPHA conference in Aix-en-Provence (September 1–3, 2006), Carleton University (Ottawa), the University of Neuchâtel, Bilkent University (Ankara), the Institute Jean-Nicod (Paris), and the ALFA conference (Merida): comments by the various audiences have been helpful. Comments by Ash Ashudeh, Raj Singh, Tom Baldwin, Roberto Casati, Steven Davis, Jérôme Dokic, Richard Glauser, Pierre Jacob, Kepa Korta, David Matheson, Peter Pagin, François Recanati, Gian-Franco Soldati, and Rob Stainton have also been useful. The research for this paper has been partially sponsored by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant (SSHRC, Standard Research Grant), the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (FFI2009-08574), and the University of the Basque Country (GIU 08/23) grants.

---

E. Corazza (✉)

ILCLI, UPV-EHU, Carlos Santamaria Zentroa, Elhuyar Plaza 2,  
20018 Donostia San-Sebastian, Spain  
e-mail: eros\_corazza@yahoo.com

E. Corazza

IKERBASQUE, Basque Foundation for Science, Bilbao, Spain

E. Corazza

Carleton University, Philosophy, 3A41 Paterson Hall, Colonel By Dr. 1125,  
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6, Canada

## 1 The Importance of Points of View

In our everyday life, down to some of the most basic activities in which we engage, points of view play a crucial role. To understand what someone says or does we often take on board her viewpoint. We can hardly interpret someone's action, let alone her intentions, without considering her point of view. We often face sentences like:

- (1) Hugo Chavez's and Alvaro Uribe's viewpoints on Washington's foreign policies differ.
- (2) Chomsky's point of view on the mind/body divide differs from that of Descartes.
- (3) If you take Anya's point of view, you can easily understand why she left Bob.
- (4) On this particular issue Anya and John have similar viewpoints.
- (5) G.W. Bush and Tony Blair failed to appreciate the viewpoint of the Arab world.
- (6) On this subject Anya has no particular point of view.
- (7) If you understand my viewpoint you will not criticize me.

In these sentences points of view can, roughly, be defined as the general perspective one has on something. The latter seems to involve, among other things, the set of beliefs, dispositions, etc. one has on a given issue/problem/object/event/... This, though, is not exactly what I have in mind when I talk about points of view. What I am interested in is a more modest and narrow view on points of view. In what follows I shall confine myself to the notion of point of view as it is linked to one's agency, in particular to one's perceptual or sensory apparatus. That is, the notion of a point of view I am interested in is the one that would be expressed by sentences like:

- (8) From my viewpoint I cannot see the shop near that building.
- (9) Ian and Anya heard the same noise because they shared a viewpoint.
- (10) Anya's point of view is the best; she can admire the entire scene.

In (8)–(10) the notion of point of view comes close to the notion of the location, place, position, perspective, etc. from which one apprehends and can act on one's surroundings. And one usually apprehends and acts on one's surroundings from a given place, at a given time and with one's own sensory apparatus. A way to characterize the notion of point of view I have in mind is to employ the analogy of the camera. A point of view is analogous to the point from which the camera films the action in a movie. As the camera can move around and register an event from different points of view, an agent can move around and perceive an event from different viewpoints.

Along this line a point of view can be cashed out using what came to be known (after Perry 1979) as *essential indexicals*: 'I', 'here', and 'now'. The latter are characterized in epistemological terms. Take 'I', for instance. It has a *cognitive impact* insofar as it triggers self-centered behaviors. The same thing holds for the indexicals 'now' and 'here'; they trigger self-centered behaviors as well. Essential

indexicals cannot be explained away or replaced by co-referring terms without destroying the cognitive impact their use conveys (see Castañeda 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1979). Privatus may know that Privatus is a war hero without knowing (being amnesiac, for instance) that he himself is a war hero and, thus, without behaving appropriately. As a first approximation we can summarize the notion of point of view as follows:

- *Point of View*

A point of view is the perspective from which one interacts with one's own surroundings and from which one can perform a given action. As such one can characterize one's own viewpoint using the indexicals 'I', 'here' and 'now'.<sup>1</sup>

Actually, if one were asked to express one's own viewpoint one would end up articulating it using 'I', 'now', and 'here'. As such, the notion of point of view I have in mind is intrinsically linked to the notion of perspective, insofar as a point of view encapsulates the egocentric perspective one has on some contextual salient aspects of one's surrounding, be it an event, an object, and individual or what you have. For this reason, the notion of point of view is best explained against the background of indexical reference. This doesn't mean, though, that viewpoints reduce to indexical reference. I shall argue that points of view can work as the non-conceptual or subdoxastic perspective one entertains on one's surrounding. The occurrence of an indexical, on the other hand, explicitly expresses a conceptual perspective one entertains on a give item of discourse and/or thought. And this, we shall see is the main difference between indexical expressions and viewpoints. The notion of point of view I have in mind should capture the way one cognizes one's surrounding without being constrained by conceptual representations.

From Kaplan (1977, 1989) we learned that indexical expressions have a linguistic meaning (character) which can be represented as a function taking as argument the context and giving as value the content (or referent). In short, a semantic account of indexicality must take on board the following notions: (1) the indexical linguistic meaning (character) and (2) the context on which the character operates whose parameters are: the *agent(s)*, *time*, *location*, *demonstratum (demonstrata)*, and *possible world*. As we'll now see, viewpoints don't have a linguistic meaning (character) operating on some aspect of context to deliver a content.

---

<sup>1</sup> The notion of action I have in mind is an intuitive one. It need not involve the notion of responsibility, for instance. The agent performing an action is the one engaging in behavioral movements, she is not the one who may influence, force, induce, etc. ... someone else to do something. I also ignore cases where one can be said to perform an action at a distance. E.g.: when one leaves a will giving instructions to perform some actions after one's death, or when one leaves some instructions on an answering machine.

## 2 Beyond Indexicals: Points of View

When two people engage in a communicative interaction they do so from different perspectives. Anya sees the world with *her* eyes and talks about it with *her* mouth, while Ian sees it with *his* eyes and talks about it with *his* mouth. A difference in points of view is particularly salient when two people perceive something from a different perspective or angle. While one sees one side of a figure someone may see the other side and thus have a different view of the same object.

To illustrate the importance of points of view in the understanding of some utterances, consider a face-to-face communication like:

(11) Anya to Ian: “The book is to the left of the pen”

In that exchange, for Ian to understand Anya’s utterance he has to grasp Anya’s viewpoint, i.e. he must understand that the book is on the left of the pen *relative* to Anya’s position. If the relevant book is placed between Anya and Ian it is on the left *vis-à-vis* Anya and on the right *vis-à-vis* Ian. If Anya and Ian’s communicative interaction were by telephone, for instance, the relevant point of view could be different. Suppose that Anya forgot her book at home and calls Ian to ask him to find the book and bring it to her. In her phone conversation Anya guides Ian to the location of the book (e.g., in her room on the desk under the window, etc.) and then utters (11). In such a situation the relevant viewpoint is Ian’s, not Anya’s. It is Ian’s viewpoint insofar as Anya jumps so to speak, into Ian’s shoes, i.e. she assumes Ian’s perspective.<sup>2</sup>

Further examples involving the notion of a point of view can be furnished by so-called *contextuals* like: ‘local’, ‘foreigner’, ‘enemy’, ‘national’, etc. (cf. Vallée 2003). Consider:

(12) Anya: “Ian is a foreigner”

Anya is likely to be claiming that Ian is a foreigner regarding *her own* nationality or, if Anya is a foreigner *vis-à-vis* the country in which she produces her utterance Anya is likely to be claiming that Ian is a foreigner regarding the *location* of the utterance. For, one is a foreigner *vis-à-vis* some people and/or some places. Were Anya to communicate that Ian is a foreigner *vis-à-vis* someone else or some other location but not a foreigner *vis-à-vis* herself or the location in which she produces her utterance, she is likely to make that explicit, either by overtly articulating it or by relying on some information surrounding the discourse situation. If, for instance, Anya and her audience are discussing Ian’s planned travels to Afghanistan, Anya can express the worry that Ian is in danger. Her friend asks why and Anya replies with (12). In that case the relevant nationality *vis-à-vis* which Ian is a foreigner is neither Anya’s nationality nor the place of the utterance,

---

<sup>2</sup> The capacity we have to assume others perspective—what Vendler (1984) characterizes as transference—underlies most of our linguistic exchanges and joint activities.

but Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> In uttering (12) Anya doesn't explicitly refer to a specific viewpoint. Furthermore, Anya need not have a conceptual representation of the relevant point view *vis-à-vis* which Ian is a foreigner.

As I have already hinted, the notion of a point of view I am interested in is the one tied to the notion of the agent's perspective. Every utterance is an event produced by someone. As such an utterance is intrinsically linked to a point of view. Hence, like the performance of an action, a speech act is fundamentally linked to *who*, *where*, and *when* it is produced. It's chiefly for this reason that if one were to express one's viewpoint one would end up using the essential indexicals 'I', 'now', and 'here'. Yet when one acts (e.g. kicks a ball), as when one produces an utterance, one doesn't usually mention, let alone think about, one's own egocentric perspective. There is no action lacking an agent, a location and a time. Furthermore, one cannot influence an event like picking up a glass which happened yesterday (time traveling is out of our power) or in some other location. If one is in New York one cannot pick up a glass in, say, Paris, let alone drink the burgundy it contains.<sup>4</sup>

Points of view may not be relevant in the production and understanding of an utterance. If one utters " $2 + 2 = 4$ " or (as Galileo once famously said) "The Earth moves",<sup>5</sup> for instance, the point of view accompanying these utterances does not play a particular role in their processing and understanding. That is, whether these utterances are produced by Claire, Ian or Anya, at a time  $t$ ,  $t'$ , or  $t''$  in location  $l$ ,  $l'$ , or  $l''$  they would express the same content (say the same thing) and convey the very same information.<sup>6</sup> To grasp the latter one need not grasp the producer's points of view, i.e. by whom, where and when it has been produced. In short, in saying that a point of view is intrinsically tied to an utterance I am not suggesting that the understanding of the latter necessarily rests on the conceptualization of the accompanying point of view. On the one hand, there are viewpoint-free utterances and, on the other hand, there are viewpoint dependent utterances that one can

---

<sup>3</sup> This characterization should be neutral on whether or not we consider contextals like 'foreigner' to work on the model of indexicality because they present an argument place (a hidden indexical) in their underlying grammatical structure—this would be the view favoured by so called *Indexicalists* (e.g. Stanley 2000). If one were to embrace Indexicalism one could claim that the relevant contextual parameters fixing the nationality *vis-à-vis* which Ian is judged to be a foreigner are furnished by a point of view contextually selected by a hidden indexical or argument place. Notice, though, that one could be a Indexicalist concerning contextals terms without endorsing Indexicalism for all the utterances that happen to be viewpoint dependent.

<sup>4</sup> I invite you to restrain your science fiction imagination. It may help philosophers to state some thesis, but it does not help us to understand what is going on in everyday life and in situations like the ones I am describing and interested in.

<sup>5</sup> What he actually said is: "Eppur si muove".

<sup>6</sup> For the sake of simplicity I'm ignoring the difference between what is literally (semantically) expressed and what is communicated. One could indeed defend the view that what is conveyed or communicated transcends what is literally expressed or said. This would be for instance the view presented by minimalists inspired by Cappelen and Lepore (2005). These distinctions, as interesting as they may be, shouldn't affect the main argument of this chapter.

successfully process without conceptualizing the relevant viewpoint. If I am right, points of view are usually neither something one explicitly refers to nor something one conceptualize. Points of view aren't something ending up in the proposition expressed. When one produces an indexical utterance like "Today I meet the Dean", the day referred to by the occurrence of 'today' ends up in the proposition expressed. When one utters a viewpoint dependent utterance like "The salt is on the left of the pepper" the relevant point of view fixing the perspective *vis-à-vis* which the salt can be judged to be on the left doesn't enter the proposition expressed. The speaker didn't say "The salt is to the left of the pepper from my viewpoint". And in uttering this sentence the speaker need not represent her own perspective when thinking that the salt is to the left of the pepper. This is, I reckon, one of the main difference between indexical reference and viewpoints. In other words, when one entertains a thought one would express by uttering "Now I must go to meet Jane" one comes to entertain a representation of the relevant time. One thinks of it as *now*. The same with thoughts expressed or grasped by utterances like "Here is cold" or "Today I must go to my office" one entertains indexical thoughts representing the relevant day as *today*, the relevant location as *here* and oneself as *I* and *me*. In claiming that points of view need not be conceptualized I mean that a speaker and her audience need not represent the relevant point of view. The structure of the situation in which their linguistic interchange occurs may raise to salience the relevant viewpoint without the speaker and her audience having to represent it. This does not mean, though, that points of view never get conceptualized. It simply means that in many cases a point of view need not be the constituent of a thought. In short, when one produces an utterance one need not represent, the point of view from which the utterance is made. To borrow Perry's (1986) terminology we could say that a point of view can be an *unarticulated constituent* of both of the utterance and the accompanying thought. To highlight this phenomenon let us consider utterances of sentences like:

(13) It's raining

and

(14) It's 3:00 p.m.

These sentences are context-sensitive—if uttered in London (13) may be true, while if uttered in New York it may be false. Yet there is no indexical expression appearing in them designating the relevant location and time zone. No specific element in the utterance operates on context to designate a particular item.<sup>7</sup> As Perry argues, the relevant location and the relevant time zone in (13) and (14) are *unarticulated constituents* of the propositions expressed (see Perry 1986, 2001). In an utterance of "It is raining" the relevant location, *qua* unarticulated

<sup>7</sup> Unless one defends the view that there's a hidden indexical (or argument) in the logical form of the sentence singling out a determinate location and/or time zone. This would be the position advocated by so-called Indexicalists (e.g. Stanley 2000). If this were the case "It's raining" and "It's raining here" would differ only at the superficial, grammatical, level.

constituent, is picked out, following Perry's suggestion, by the utterance as a whole.<sup>8</sup> What does it exactly mean, though, to claim that an utterance *as a whole* can single out a given location? The notion of a point of view helps us here. It is because our relevant utterances are made from, or concern a specific point of view that their full truth conditions also depend on a specific location/time/etc. In other words, it is the implicit point of view accompanying an utterance which contributes in making an utterance like (13) to concern a specific location and an utterance of (14) to concern a specific time zone. (13) and (14) can thus be considered as typical examples of viewpoint-dependent utterances.

The question many philosophers and linguists raised is whether the speaker (and the audience) of utterances like (13) and (14) ought to represent the relevant place and time zone of the utterance. While many would not contest that the truth value of these utterances also depends on the relevant time zone and location, opinions diverge on whether or not the utterances and the corresponding thoughts ought to represent the time zone and the location.

Friends of so-called "Indexicalism" would argue that the relevant location and time zone are represented both in the utterance and in the corresponding thought. And they are so represented because at the level of the logical form there is a hidden indexical (or implicit argument) selecting the relevant time zone and location. Given that the notion of logical form corresponds to the level of syntactic representation which represents the properties relevant for semantic interpretation, the relevant location and time zone are somewhat represented in the thoughts associate with (13) and (14).

One of the chief arguments put forward by indexicalists (see for instance Stanley) is the so-called binding argument. It runs as follows: a sentence like (13), for instance, can be encapsulated into a quantificational sentence like:

(15) Every time I lit a cigarette it is raining

meaning, roughly, that it is raining where I happen to be when litting a cigarette. While in (13) the relevant place is provided by the location where the utterance occurs, in (15) it depends upon (and varies with) the domain of the quantifier. We are told that the natural way to understand utterances such as (13) and (15) is to posit a hidden argument place for a location, so that the implicit argument place for the verb 'to rain' in (13) works like a free variable, while in (15) it works as a variable bound by the quantifier. As far as I know, the first person to suggest that we have to postulate an argument place for the alleged unarticulated constituent when binding is possible is Partee (1989). For more on the argument from binding and the way it suggests the presence of tacit arguments at the level of LF see Stanley (2000).

---

<sup>8</sup> However, the relevant location and time zone need not, *pace* Perry, enter the proposition expressed. One could argue that the utterance concerns them insofar as the (minimal) proposition expressed is situated. The time zone and location belong to the situation or circumstance of evaluation. This debate, as interesting as it may be, transcends the scope of the present chapter.

The same argument can be run for viewpoint-dependent utterances. Consider:

(16) Every client thought that the salt was to the left of the pepper

which could mean that the salt is to the left of the pepper regarding different orientations depending on the different values of the quantifier. If one embrace the binding argument one is likely to consider points of view as a kind of indexical reference.

Recanati (2002) and Cappelen and Lepore (2004) propose what I consider a convincing argument against the binding argument. Recanati's main argument is that it forces unwelcome consequences. In particular, it forces us to postulate the presence of argument places where, intuitively, there is none. Recanati invites us to consider an intransitive verbs like 'to eat' which denotes the property of eating. In that case, he argues, the contextually provided constituent results from free enrichment and not from the semantics of the verb, for in its intransitive reading 'eat' is not a two-places predicate. But in a sentence like "Jon ate" binding can occur:

(17) Jon is anorexic, but whenever his father cooks mushrooms, he eats.

The intuitive way to understand it is that Jon eats *them*, i.e., *the mushrooms his father has cooked*. Examples like this seem to prove that intuitive binding, *per se*, does not entail the presence in the logical form of an argument place and, therefore, that the argument from binding is not compelling. Cappelen and Lepore (2004) propose the following reduction of the argument from binding:

(18) Everywhere I go,  $2 + 2 = 4$

Here is the Binding Argument applied to (18). Intuitively, (18) says that, for every place I go,  $2 + 2 = 4$  at that place. So we should present the logical form of (17) along the following lines:

(19) For all places  $x$ , if I go to  $x$ , then  $2 + 2 = 4$  at  $x$ .

The quantifier phrase 'Everywhere I go' is binding a place variable in the logical form of " $2 + 2 = 4$ "—otherwise, there would be nothing for the quantifier phrase to bind. This establishes that the logical form of the sentence ' $2 + 2 = 4$ ' has a freely occurring place variable.

Like Recanati and Cappelen & Lepore I don't think that the binding argument forces us to posit hidden indexicals or argument places in logic position when dealing with underdetermined utterances like (13) and (14). The same story can be told about viewpoint-dependent utterances.

Concerning the general phenomena involving points of view, I am sympathetic to Perry's view that although the full truth conditions of the utterances and the accompanying thoughts involve the relevant time zone and location, the agent need not represent them. It is a matter of an external, contextual, relation that makes the thought concerning a relevant location and time zone. As an analogy, think of the mental representation one, John, has when perceiving a given individual, say Anya. The fact that John's perceptual representation is about Anya and



not her identical twin need not be represented by John. It is because Anya and not her twin is in John's perceptual field that John's representation is about Anya and not her twin. If Anya's twin, instead of Anya, were in John's perceptual field John's representation would be about Anya's twin and not Anya. If John expresses his thought by uttering "That woman looks anxious" his thought would be about Anya if Anya happens to be in John's perceptual field and it would be true iff Anya looks anxious at the time John perceives her. Were Anya's twin in John's perceptual field the very same representation would be true iff Anya's twin looks anxious. If one were to build into the relevant representation the time and perceptual relation, one would commit oneself with the view that in both scenarios John would entertain different thoughts insofar as the relevant representations concern different individuals.<sup>9</sup> In short, the picture I have in mind goes as follows. The very same mental representation can be about different objects/events/... It is the situation in which the representation occurs that links that representation to an object/events/... and this contextual link need not be represented by the agent entertaining that representation. As far as I understand, this comes close to Perry's idea that the relevant location in (13) and time zone in (14) is picked up by the utterance as a whole and that they are unarticulated constituents entering the full truth conditions. Furthermore, the relevant location and time zone need not be represented, i.e. we can have, to borrow Perry's terminology, thoughts without representation for the time zone and location.<sup>10</sup>

To further highlight this point think of a child who is unaware of time zones. Our child can utter "It's 3:00 p.m." and, in so doing, succeed in passing along some relevant information and engage in a successful linguistic interchange. Our child's speech act can be successful even if the speaker (and the hearer) do not represent the relevant time zone, e.g. without them having to think that it is, say, 3:00 p.m. *Pacific Time*. Little-John and little-Jane can decide to meet at the playground at 3:00 p.m. without them having to represent the relevant time zone. They lack the cognitive resources to represent time zones. In cases like this, all the relevant parameters granting the success of the linguistic interaction are *fully* provided by the structure of the situation in which the exchange occurs.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> This would be the view advocated among others by some neo-Fregeans (e.g. Evans 1982 and McDowell 1984) who defend the existence of *de re* senses, i.e. modes of presentations involving the object itself. A sense, as a thought constituent, would thus vary with a change of the object involved.

<sup>10</sup> Corazza (2007) and Corazza and Dokic (2007, 2010) claim that alleged unarticulated constituents need not end up, *pace* Perry, in the proposition expressed but can remain in the situation *vis-à-vis* which the proposition is assessed to be true or false.

<sup>11</sup> Following Barwise and Perry (1983) seminal work a situation can be characterized as a partial possible world: "Reality consists of situations—individuals having properties and standing in relation at various spatiotemporal locations. We are always in situations; we see them, cause them to come about, and have attitudes toward them" (Barwise and Perry 1983: 7). A real situation comports infinitely many aspects. Yet we can cognize only parts of it; what we cognize depends on many factors such as our interests, activities, practices, etc. The very same individuals and properties may appear in different situations. As such they are uniformities. Locations and time

This seems to obey a general cognitive principle of economy, i.e. that people (like many organisms) tend to minimize internal representational resources. Since the situation fixes all that needs to be fixed, the speaker and her audience need not represent what their discourse concerns.<sup>12</sup> In a nutshell, what is fixed by a situation need not be fixed by the agent's representational system. As I just pointed out, this reflects a principle of cognitive economy.<sup>13</sup> If, for instance, a group of people living on a small island never travel and never have contact with the outside world (e.g. they do not observe reports coming from abroad and their telephone line does not extend outside their small island), they need not have representations for time zones. The situation in which they utter, say, "It's 3:00 p.m." provides all that is needed for them to get the time right and their actions are automatically attuned to it. Yet their time-utterances (and thoughts) concern a given time zone. These islanders, though, don't need any mental effort to distinguish various time-zones. They are simply unaware of the existence of time zones. Since we are often aware of time zones and since we sometimes communicate with people in other parts of the world and thus in different time zones we need some cognitive capacity to keep track of various time zones. If Ian from San Francisco calls Anya in New York and tells her "I'll call you back tomorrow at 3:00 p.m." Anya ought *to know* whether Ian will call at 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time or 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time. There are different ways, though, in which Anya can know about the relevant time that Ian will call. It may be the case that when calling Anya, Ian always refers to Anya's time zone, i.e. the Eastern Time zone. In that case, based on past practice, Anya need not think about the relevant time zone. She takes it for granted that Ian will call at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time. This kind of knowledge can be stored in Anya's (and Ian's) long-term memory. As such, it need not be articulated in Anya's and Ian's cognitive system. That is to say, it may be stored in their memory without them having to activate it. It can thus be considered as background knowledge and belief stored in the situation in which their time-utterances and thoughts occur. It's for this very reason that it need not enter Anya's and Ian's thoughts during their telephone exchange. Just as some relevant information can be stored in the external world (e.g.: we store telephone numbers, birthdays, meeting schedules, etc. in our notebooks), some information can be stored in one's memory. Stored memory information isn't part of one's working memory. Because of that it can be

---

(Footnote 11 continued)

are uniformities as well insofar as different things can happen in the same location at different times and various things can be going on at the same time in different locations.

<sup>12</sup> See Perry (1986)'s Z-land story where the inhabitants of a little island, Z-land, never travel and don't have telephone communications and broadcasting information coming from the external world. When a Z-lander utters "It's raining" her talk concerns Z-land (it rains in Z-land). Yet she doesn't (and need not) represent the location where it is raining.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Clark 007 principle: "[E]volved creatures will neither store nor process information in costly ways when they can use the structure of the environment and their operations upon it as a convenient stand-in for the information-processing operations concerned" (Clark 1989: 64).

classified as tacit and/or dispositional knowledge, a sort of knowing-how or procedural knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

As a way of an analogy we can mention the implicit knowledge one has of the grammatical rules one follows when computing sentences. The knowledge at work in these cases can be characterized as non-representational, procedural, knowledge insofar as one is not aware of these rules. This kind of knowledge can only be deployed in one's understanding of the language. The conceptual apparatus that the linguists use in describing and characterizing syntactic rules does not belong to the conceptual stock of an ordinary competent speaker.<sup>15</sup>

### 3 Points of View and Understanding

From a third person perspective, i.e. from the audience's viewpoint, in order to understand utterances like (13) [It's raining] or (14) [it's 3:00 p.m.] one needs to grasp the intrinsic point of point of view the utterances concerns. It is only when one "knows" the relevant location (13) concerns, for instance, that one understands it.<sup>16</sup>

I claimed that if one were to articulate one's own viewpoint one would likely use an essential indexical ('I', 'here', 'now'). In some cases the point of view is explicitly articulated in the utterance itself. This happens when one utters one of these indexicals (or other indexical expressions).

---

<sup>14</sup> No doubt, more should be said about the way information can be stored in memory and how it works in our thinking and linguistic interchanges without being actualized and/or articulated. For a detailed review article on this issue and on how shared memories work, see Sutton (2009). Following Clark and Chalmers (1998) there is no principled difference between information and beliefs stored in memory and information and beliefs stored in one's notebook. Someone may reliably believe that the meeting start at 1:00 p.m. because they wrote it down in their notebook (see Clark and Chalmers' case of Otto who, suffering from Alzheimer's, cannot store in his biological memory relevant information and, as a consequence, reliably stores it and successfully retrieves it from his notebook).

<sup>15</sup> This comes close to Cussins (1990) when he argues that an account of experiential content is best understood in terms of an organism's abilities to act upon the perceived environment, rather than in terms of truth and truth conditions. Along this line we can argue that what an individual perceives when uttering viewpoint dependent sentences is a structured environment or situation in terms of the possibilities it affords for action. Cussins' conception of an ability-based notion of content provides a clear distinction between a level of what Dummett's (1986) characterizes as proto-thoughts that can successful trigger some actions and a level of truth apt full-fledged thoughts.

<sup>16</sup> As I previously mentioned, though, the knowledge at issue here need not be *explicit* knowledge. One may be said to tacitly know or grasp a viewpoint inasmuch as one's action is consonant with the relevant viewpoint. If Anya, looking out of the window, says "It's raining" John's grasping of the relevant viewpoint (location) needn't rest on John coming to entertain a thought he would express by "It's raining *here*" or "It's raining *in London*". For John to grasp the relevant viewpoint, it suffices that his action is attuned to it: e.g. he picks up an umbrella before going out, he renounces going out watering the garden, etc.

It's also interesting to note that sometimes grammar forces us to explicitly articulate someone else's viewpoint. Consider, for instance, Roger Federer's utterance:

(20) I hope to win Wimbledon

One can faithfully report what Federer said with:

(21) Roger Federer hopes to win Wimbledon

(21) captures Federer's viewpoint, i.e. the viewpoint he expressed using 'I'. (21) can but have a *de se* reading (see Chierchia 1989). As such, its underlying form can be represented as:

(22) Roger Federer<sub>1</sub> hopes [*PRO*<sub>1</sub> to win Wimbledon]

where the unpronounced subject of the report (*PRO*<sup>17</sup>) attributes to the agent of the attitude, Roger Federer, an 'I'-thought and, as such, captures Federer's viewpoint, i.e. the viewpoint he explicitly expressed using the first person pronoun in (20). Here we have syntactic evidence favoring the view that in some of our linguistic activities we explicitly convey someone's viewpoint. Another way to capture Federer's viewpoint as he manifests it in (20) would be in using what Castañeda (1966, 1967, 1968) characterizes as a quasi-indicator. The paradigmatic examples of quasi-indicators are the anaphoric 's/he (her/himself)', i.e. an anaphoric pronoun attributing to the referent of its antecedent an 'I'-thought. We could thus have:

(23) *Roger Federer<sub>1</sub> said that he (himself)<sub>1</sub> hopes to win Wimbledon*

In (18) the narrator also expresses Federer's viewpoint. That is, on top of referring to Federer the narrator also attributes to Federer a specific viewpoint. The anaphoric pronoun 'he (himself)' in (23) must be understood as a pronoun which allows the reporter to capture someone else's, in our example Roger Federer's, viewpoint.

In favor of this interpretation, viz. that we often represent someone else's viewpoint, we can also mention some cross-linguistic data. In some natural languages (so-called logophoric languages) logophoric pronouns are used to attribute a point of view explicitly. This is, for example, the case of 'sɛ́' in Tabury (see Hagège 1974):

(24) a. á Dík lí māy mà:gā à kó n sú: m̀nò  
(He<sub>1</sub> thinks of the young girl that he<sub>1</sub> saw yesterday)

b. á Dík lí māy mà:gā sɛ́ kó n sú: m̀nò  
(He<sub>1</sub> thinks of the young girl that he (himself)<sub>1</sub> saw yesterday)

---

<sup>17</sup> *PRO* represents the null pronominal element acting as the syntactic subject of infinitives and gerunds. In other words, *PRO* is the null analogue of lexical pronouns.

In (24b) ‘sɛ’ explicitly attributes an ‘I’-thought, thus a viewpoint, to the referent of the antecedent it is coindexed with. The same with ‘yè’ (singular) ‘yèwo’ (plural) in Ewe (cf. Clements 1975):

- (25) a. Kofi be yé-dzo  
       [Kofi say LOG-leave]  
       (Kofi said that he (himself) left)
- b. Kofi be me-dzo  
       [Kofi say I-leave]  
       (Kofi said that I leave)
- c. Kofi be e-dzo  
       [Kofi say s/he-leave]  
       (Kofi<sub>1</sub> said that she/he<sub>2</sub> leave)

In Ewe and Tabury we thus have pronouns whose specificity is to capture someone else’s viewpoint. In using these pronouns the narrator explicitly attributes a point of view, in our examples, an ‘I’-thought. Castañeda (1966, 1967, 1968) created an artificial pronoun, ‘she\*/he\*/it\*’, to represent in an attitude ascription the use (maybe only implicitly) of the first-person pronoun. “Sue says that she\* is rich” represents Sue as saying “I am rich”. These artificial pronouns are called ‘quasi-indicators’ and, Castañeda claims, are the only mechanism enabling the attribution of indexical reference from the third-person perspective. They are, therefore, the only tools which allow us to capture the cognitive impact conveyed by the essential indexicals—‘she\*’ captures the cognitive impact conveyed by ‘I’, ‘then\*’ the cognitive impact conveyed by ‘now’ and ‘there\*’ the one conveyed by ‘here’. It is an accident of English that a single pronoun ‘she/he/it’ can be used to perform very different speech acts.<sup>18</sup>

Quasi-indicators, *qua* logophoric pronouns, help one to capture someone else’s viewpoints. Yet in specifying someone’s viewpoint we need not ascribe the attribute a specific mental representation of her viewpoint. What we are ascribing may be best understood as a capacity to act in the appropriate way in the circumstance our attribute happens to be. For this reason we can ascribe viewpoint to non-linguistic infants and (some) other non-linguistic animals.

Further linguistic evidence highlighting the importance of points of view in our interpretation of utterances is furnished by so-called picture noun phrases (see Pollard and Sag 1992). In such cases the notion of point of view takes center stage when we attempt to explain how people process and understand utterances containing picture-noun phrases. Consider:

---

<sup>18</sup> “It is a mere accident of grammar that the same physical objects are used in different logical roles. The underlying rationale is this: Indicators are a primary means of referring to particulars, but the references made with them are personal and ephemeral; quasi-indicators are the derivative means of making an indexical reference both interpersonal and enduring, yet preserving it intact” (Castañeda 1967: 207).

- (26) *John<sub>I</sub>* was going to get even with Anya. That picture of *himself<sub>I</sub>* in the paper would really annoy her, as would the other stunts he had planned.

In (21) the reflexive ‘himself’ appears in another clause. As such it cannot be linked to its antecedent via some syntactic principles or rule. In particular, it is not c-commanded by its antecedent.<sup>19</sup> In cases like these, that Pollard and Sag call exempt-anaphors because they are not constrained by the grammatical rules controlling ordinary reflexives, the reflexives’ resolution cannot be determined by syntax alone. Since intersentential anaphora does not obey principle A of Government and Binding Theory whichever way one spells it out, other considerations governing their use and interpretation must be considered.<sup>20</sup> The notion of a point of view comes to our rescue here. The reflexive pronoun is coindexed with an antecedent whose point of view is being reported. In (26) the narrator is expressing John’s viewpoint and the reflexive ‘himself’ is coindexed (and thus coreferential) with ‘John’. To highlight the importance of the notion of points of view in our interpretation of anaphoric relation further, let us consider the ungrammaticality of:

- (27) a. \*Anya was quite taken aback by the publicity *John<sub>I</sub>* was receiving. That picture of *himself<sub>I</sub>* in the paper had really annoyed her, and there was not much she could do about it.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> A pronoun is *bound* iff it is c-commanded by a coindexed element, while a pronoun is *free* iff it is not c-commanded by a coindexed element. The notion of c-command is defined as:

•*C-command*

Node A c-commands node B iff:

1. A does not dominate B and B does not dominate A; and
2. the first branching node dominating A also dominates B.

The notion of dominance characterizes the vertical relation in a tree and can be defined as:

•*Dominance*

Node A dominates node B iff A is higher in the tree than B and if you can trace a line from A to B going only downwards.

<sup>20</sup> A way to state Principle A is as follows (see Pollard and Sag 1992: 263):

Every anaphor must be coindexed with a NP in an appropriately defined command relation, within an appropriately defined minimal syntactic domain.

The main questions (and disagreements) focus on how the command relation and the minimal syntactic domain should be specified. This debate, however, transcends the scope of my paper. It is also worth stressing that the (traditional) notion of anaphor I am relying on here is not the same as the syntactic GB notion, for Principle A never covers intersentential coreference.

<sup>21</sup> Tom Baldwin suggested to me that a picture noun phrase like ‘picture of him/her-self’ should be read as ‘self portrait’. Thus, if we replace ‘that picture of himself’ with ‘that self-portrait’, (22a) is grammatical. I do not know whether this constitutes the default reading of a picture noun phrase. The important point here is to compare sentences like (22a) and (22b) and to understand why one is grammatical while the other is not. Furthermore, if in a sentence like (22a) a ‘picture of himself’ means ‘self-portrait’, the sentence would be ambiguous on whether the relevant picture represents Anya or John, i.e. whether it is a self-portrait of Anya or of John. Besides, and more importantly, ‘that picture of himself’ cannot be automatically replaced by ‘self-portrait’. For it is not contradictory to say “I’m having a picture of myself taken by John”, while it would be contradictory to say “I’m having a self-portrait taken by John”.

(27a) is ungrammatical because the narrator expresses Anya's viewpoint. For this reason the reflexive 'himself' cannot be coindexed with 'John'. The ungrammaticality is generated by a conflict of viewpoint. That is, while the narrator (with the first clause) expresses Anya's viewpoint, the reflexive 'himself' expresses John's viewpoint. If, on the other hand, the reflexive were coindexed with 'Anya' we would have the grammatical:

- (27) b. *Anya<sub>I</sub>* was quite taken aback by the publicity John was receiving. That picture of *herself<sub>I</sub>* in the paper had really annoyed her, and there was not much she could do about it.

Since the narrator expresses Anya's viewpoint the reflexive can be linked to 'Anya'. In that case we do not have a conflict in viewpoint. In other words, in an example like this the reflexive can only be linked to the antecedent standing for the agent whose point of view is being represented. Hence, sentences like:

- (28) Ian was quite taken aback by the publicity John was receiving. That picture of himself in the paper had really annoyed him, and there was not much he could do about it.

must be represented as:

- (28) a. *Ian<sub>I</sub>* was quite taken aback by the publicity John was receiving. That picture of *himself<sub>I</sub>* in the paper had really annoyed him, and there was not much he could do about it.

If 'himself' is coindexed with 'John' we generate ungrammaticality:

- (28) b. \* Ian was quite taken aback by the publicity *John<sub>I</sub>* was receiving. That picture of *himself<sub>I</sub>* in the paper had really annoyed him, and there was not much he could do about it.

Once again the ungrammaticality is triggered by the conflicting viewpoint expressed, i.e. a sentence like this cannot express both Ian's and John's point of view.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, psychological verbs such as 'bother' make evident how the notion of viewpoint is crucial in determining the antecedent of an anaphora. With 'bother' it is natural to assume that the agent whose viewpoint is being reported is the direct object of the verb:

- (29) a. The picture of *himself<sub>I</sub>* in the paper bothered *Ian<sub>I</sub>*  
 b. \*The picture of *himself<sub>I</sub>* in the paper bothered *Ian<sub>I</sub>'s* mother

---

<sup>22</sup> The notion of point of view also helps us to understand the ungrammaticality of a sentence like: \* Speaking of Roger Federer, I expect himself to win Wimbledon. The ungrammaticality can easily be explained by the fact that the narrator uses 'I' and, because of this very fact, she represents her own viewpoint and, thus, she cannot represent Roger Federer's viewpoint as the reflexive 'himself' suggests she should do. The ungrammaticality is thus explained by a conflict in viewpoints.

The ungrammaticality of (29b) is explained by the fact that the viewpoint represented is that of Ian's mother, rather than Ian's; thus 'himself' cannot be coindexed with 'Ian'. We thus have a conflict of viewpoints. While the NP 'the picture of himself' brings to the fore Ian's viewpoint, the VP 'bothered Ian's mother' suggests that the viewpoint represented is Ian's mother's. The ungrammaticality is thus generated by the conflict between Ian's and his mother's viewpoints. Consider now:

- (30) a. The picture of *himself*<sub>I</sub> in the paper dominated *Ian*<sub>I</sub>'s thoughts  
 b. The picture of *himself*<sub>I</sub> in the paper made *Ian*<sub>I</sub>'s day

Although (30a–b) are structurally equivalent to the ungrammatical (29b), they are grammatical insofar as they bring to the fore only Ian's viewpoint. As such, unlike in (29b), there is no conflict of viewpoint.

The importance of points of view in our understanding and interpretation of sentences is further highlighted by sentences like:

- (31) a. *Ian*<sub>I</sub> and *his*<sub>I</sub> father saw the game  
 b. \* *Ian*<sub>I</sub>'s father and *he*<sub>I</sub> saw the game<sup>23</sup>

(31a) is grammatical insofar as the only point of view represented is Ian's. (31b) is ungrammatical because two conflicting points of view are represented, i.e. Ian's and Ian's father's. The same with sentences like:

- (32) a. I met *Anya*<sub>I</sub> and *her*<sub>I</sub> spouse  
 b. ?? *Anya*<sub>I</sub> and *her*<sub>I</sub> spouse met me.

Since 'to meet' is mutual, i.e. *a* met/is meeting/will meet *b* iff *b* met/is meeting/will meet *a*, (31a) and (32b) are logically equivalent. Yet (32b), if not ungrammatical, is awkward because the presence of 'Anya' in subject position brings to relevance Anya's viewpoint, which ends up conflicting with the narrator viewpoint represented by 'me'. As we saw, essential indexicals explicitly articulate the narrator's viewpoint. The presence of the essential indexical 'I/me' in (31a)/(32b) explicitly represents the narrator's viewpoint. Since 'Anya' in (32a) is not in subject position Anya's viewpoint is not raised to salience. We thus do not have conflict in viewpoints, so (32a) is grammatical.

We have further cross-linguistic evidence about the importance of points of view in the understanding of sentences containing reflexives. In Icelandic (cf. Sells 1987), in multiple embedded sentences any of the subjects can be the antecedent of the reflexive. In:

- (33) Jón segir að María viti að Haraldur vilji að Billi heimsæki sig  
 John says that Anya knows that Harold wants that Billy visit self

<sup>23</sup> For more examples along these lines and further discussion about them, see Kuno 2004.



The antecedent of the reflexive ‘sig’ can be either ‘Jón’, ‘María’, or ‘Haraldur’. Hence, (33) is multiple ambiguous. To dissolve the ambiguity the interpreter must decide whose point of view is being reflected. If the narrator brings to salience Jón’s viewpoint, ‘sig’ is coindexed with ‘Jón’, while if the narrator reflects Anya’s or Billi’s viewpoint ‘sig’ is coreferential with ‘Anya’ or ‘Billi’, etc. Furthermore, in Icelandic (see Sells 1987) the antecedent of the reflexive can operate across clauses. In that case the point of view which helps determine the reflexive’s antecedent is transmitted through the discourse:

- (34) *Formaðurinn<sub>1</sub> varð dskaplega reiður. Tillgan væri avívirðileg.*  
 The-chairman<sub>1</sub> became furiously angry. The-proposal was outrageous.  
*Væri henni beint gegn sér<sub>1</sub> persónulega.*  
 Was it aimed at self<sub>1</sub> personally.

## 4 Conclusion

If the story I have told comes close to being accurate, points of view must be considered among the main features when we come to the task of explaining how context-sensitivity can affect our linguistic interchanges. If I am right, context sensitivity expands behind indexicality. Yet unlike the latter, the context sensitivity conveyed by the notion of points of view need not be linguistically and mentally represented. It is an open question whether the context sensitivity conveyed by a viewpoint-dependent utterance affects the (literal) content of what one ends up expressing. Yet this kind of context sensitivity cannot be ignored when we come to explain how people manage to understand viewpoint dependent utterances. As we saw, our capacity for grasping someone else’s viewpoint is crucial in our understanding of utterances of: “It is raining”, “Anya is an enemy”, “John is a foreigner”, etc. I suggested that when a viewpoint is not explicitly mentioned it can be understood as an unarticulated constituent. As such it need not be represented either by an utterance or by the agent of the utterance. As I attempted to show, an agent’s viewpoint is linked to an appropriate disposition to act. Although a disposition to act is causally grounded, the agent need not represent this grounding. It’s a matter of nature, it’s a given by nature, that agents act and behave from a given viewpoint. To borrow a famous terminology, we can say that it is because of a pre-established harmony that when we produce viewpoint-dependent utterances we need not represent the relevant viewpoint. Yet since we’re able to assume others’ perspective, i.e. to assume someone else’s viewpoint, in our interpretation and understanding of utterances we sometimes come to represent the relevant viewpoint. This is particularly important when we process (anaphoric) reflexive expressions. Since in an utterance one can represent someone else’s viewpoint, the anaphoric links of reflexive pronouns are often determined regarding the viewpoint represented.

## References

- Barwise, J., & Perry, J. (1983). *Situations and attitudes*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Cappelen, H., & Lepore, E. (2004). Unarticulated constituents and hidden indexicals: An abuse of context in semantics'. In M. O'Rourke & C. Washington (Eds.), *Situating semantics: Essays on the philosophy of John Perry*. Cambridge Mass: MIT Publications.
- Cappelen, H., & Lepore, E. (2005). *Insensitive semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Castañeda, H.-N. (1966). 'He': A study in the logic of self-consciousness. *Ratio*, 8, 130–157.
- Castañeda H.-N. (1967). Indicators and Quasi-indicators. *American philosophical quarterly* 4:85–100. Reprinted In H.-N. Castañeda (1989). *Thinking, language, and experience* (pp. 206–231). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Castañeda, H.-N. (1968). On the Logic of attributions of self-knowledge to others. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 65, 439–456.
- Chierchia, G. (1989). Anaphora and attitudes *de se*. In R. Bartsch, J. van Bentham, & P. van Emde (Eds.), *Language in context* (pp. 1–31). Dordrecht: Doris.
- Clark, A. (1989). *Microcognition: Philosophy, cognitive science and parallel distributed processing*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Clark, A., & Chalmers, D. (1998). The extended mind. *Analysis*, 58, 10–23.
- Clements, G. (1975). The logophoric pronoun in Ewe its role on discourse. *Journal of West African Languages*, 10: 141–177.
- Corazza, E. (2007). Contextualism, minimalism, and situationalism. *Pragmatics & Cognition*, 15 (1): 115–137.
- Corazza, E., & Dokic, J. (2007). Sense and insensitivity: Or where minimalism meets contextualism. In G. Preyer & G. Peter (Eds.), *Context-sensitivity and semantic minimalism: Essays in semantics and pragmatics* (pp. 169–193). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corazza, E., & Dokic, J. (2010). Situated minimalism versus free enrichment. *Synthese*, 184(2), 179–198.
- Cussins, A. (1990). The connectionist construction of concepts. In M. Boden (Ed.), *The philosophy of artificial intelligence* (pp. 368–440). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dummett, M. (1986). *Origins of analytical philosophy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Evans, G. (1982). *Varieties of reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hagège, G. N. (1974). Les Pronoms Logophoriques. *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, 69, 287–310.
- Kaplan, D. (1977). Demonstratives. In J. Almog, J. Perry, & H. Wettstein (Eds.), *Themes from Kaplan* (pp. 481–563). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (1989).
- Kaplan, D. (1989). Afterthoughts. In J. Almog, J. Perry, & H. Wettstein (Eds.), *Themes from Kaplan* (pp. 565–614). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kuno, S. (2004). Empathy and direct discourse perspective. In L. Horn & G. Ward (Eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics* (pp. 315–343). Oxford: Blackwell.
- McDowell, J. (1984). *De re* senses. In C. Wright (Ed.), *Tradition and influence* (pp. 98–109). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Partee, B. (1989). Binding implicit variables in quantified contexts. In *Papers from the 25th regional meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society* (pp. 342–365). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Perry, J. (1979). The problem of the essential indexical. *Noûs* (13), 3–21. Reprinted In J. Perry (2000). *The problem of the essential indexical and other essays* (pp. 27–44). Palo Alto: CSLI Publication.
- Perry, J. (1986). Thoughts without representation. *Proceeding of the Aristotelian Society* 60, 137–52. Reprinted In J. Perry (2000). *The problem of the essential indexical and other essays* (pp. 171–188). Palo Alto: CSLI Publications.
- Perry, J. (2001). *Reference and reflexivity*. Palo Alto: CSLI Publications.
- Pollard, C., & Sag, I. (1992). Anaphors in english and the scope of binding theory. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 23, 261–303.

- Recanati, F. (2002). Unarticulated constituents. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 25, 299–345.
- Sells, P. (1987). Aspect of logophoricity. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 18, 445–479.
- Stanley, J. (2000). Context and logical form. *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 23, 391–434.
- Sutton, J. (2009). Remembering. In P. Robbins & M. Aydede (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of situated cognition* (pp. 217–235). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vallée, R. (2003). Context-sensitivity beyond indexicality. *Dialogue*, 42, 79–106.
- Vendler, Z. (1984). *The matter of mind*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.