

Easy Does It: Unnsteinsson on Saying and Gricean Intentions

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This paper critically examines Unnsteinsson's Collapse Argument, which contends that "Easy" views of saying something or expressing a proposition collapse into the Gricean view (Unnsteinsson 2022: Ch. 4). Easy views maintain that saying/expressing is simply a matter of uttering a sentence with its meaning, without requiring Gricean communicative intentions. Unnsteinsson argues that Easy views must appeal to such intentions to explain what makes saying/expression intentional and rational and that this collapses them into the Gricean view. I show that this argument fails for several reasons. First, the intentions that the Easy views must posit to explain what makes saying/expressing rational are not equivalent to the Gricean communicative intentions. Second, the constitutive question of what makes an act into a saying/expressing and the rationalizing question of what makes it rational are distinct. Thus, even if Easy theorists would have to appeal to something like Gricean communicative intentions in answering the latter question, this wouldn't cause their answer to the former question to collapse into the Gricean answer.

Keywords: Language; meaning; saying; intentions; Grice; Unnsteinsson.

1. Introduction

What is it, in uttering a sentence, to say something or express a proposition? Elmar Unnsteinsson's recent book *Talking About: An Intentionalist Theory of Reference* involves an extended argument against views which take this to be, in his words, "easy" (Unnsteinsson 2022: Ch. 4).

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On such *Easy* views, saying/expressing is a matter of uttering a sentence that has a meaning in a language while participating in a convention, being subject to a rule, or expressing a thought. It doesn't involve Gricean communicative intentions, intentions to produce effects in a particular addressee. In contrast, Unnsteinsson aims to argue that saying/expressing something isn't easy and must involve Gricean communicative intentions. The reason is that he thinks that any *Easy* view will have to posit something like Gricean communicative intentions to explain what makes saying/expressing intentional and rational, and therefore collapses into the Gricean view.

My aim in this paper is to discuss Unnsteinsson's *Collapse Argument* and show that it fails for several reasons. I will first demonstrate that it depends on two unargued assumptions that some *Easy* theorists don't grant, namely that saying/expressing is a necessarily intentional action and one that must furthermore be intended to have effects on a particular hearer. I will then show that even if we go along with these assumptions, the *Easy* views still do not collapse into the Gricean view. First, the intention that the *Easy* theorists would have to posit in explaining what makes saying/expressing intentional and rational is one of intending for the hearer to come to believe that one has *said* that *p/expressed* the proposition that *p*. Such intentions, while structurally similar to Gricean communicative intentions, are semantically infused in a way that the latter aren't. Second, and fundamentally, Unnsteinsson's argument runs together the *constitutive* question what it is to say/express with the *rationalizing* question of what makes saying/expressing intentional and rational. But, as I will demonstrate at length, these are distinct questions. Even if the *Easy* theorists would have to posit something like a Gricean intention to explain what makes saying intentional and rational, this still wouldn't cause their view of saying/expressing to collapse into the Gricean view. Thus, the *Collapse Argument* argument leaves the *Easy* views of what is it to say/express completely untouched.

I will proceed as follows. First, I'll reframe the issue in a way that should be acceptable to all parties in the dispute (Section 1). Next, I'll discuss Unnsteinsson's *Collapse Argument* and show that the intention that the *Easy* theorists would have to posit to explain what makes saying/expressing intentional and rational is not equivalent to a Gricean communicative intention (Section 2). Finally, I'll discuss the fundamental problem with the argument, namely that it conflates constitutive and rationalizing questions about language use and demonstrate why this shouldn't be done (Section 3).

2. Reframing the issue

To start, we have to make sure that we frame the issue in a manner acceptable to all parties to the dispute. Unnsteinsson frames it in terms of the speaker's *meaning* something:

Cicero was an orator. Normally in making such an utterance part of the speaker's or writer's goal will be to *mean* something, in this instance to mean something that is true if and only if Cicero really was an orator and false otherwise. Speaking truly (falsely) about Cicero involves *meaning* something by one's utterance such that its truth (falsity) depends on the state of a worldly object, namely Cicero. (Unnsteinsson 2022: 75).

He then introduces the *Easy* views which he aims to argue against:

There is a long and powerful tradition of theorists who argue that meaning something by what one utters is easy. It is easy in the sense that the speaker is not required to intend the utterance to produce an effect in some addressee. Rather, by uttering something, speakers can simply voice their thoughts or, even, undergo episodes of thinking those thoughts. ... I will call this tradition 'expressionism'. ... Arguably, the rallying cry of easy meanings is routine in other quarters as well. Conventionalists would say that all the speaker needs to perform a meaningful speech act is to participate in a convention of a specific type (e.g., Lepore and Stone 2015). Normativists would say that the speaker only needs to be subject to a norm (e.g., Brandom 1994). (Unnsteinsson 2022: 75–76).¹

In contrast, Gricean intentionalists think that meaning something isn't as easy as simply voicing their thoughts, participating in a convention, or being subject to a norm, but rather requires Gricean intentions to have effects on a particular addressee.

Framing the issue in terms of the speaker's *meaning* something is problematic. It's clear that what is fundamentally of interest to Unnsteinsson is speaking truly or falsely at all (Unnsteinsson 2022: 75). He calls this 'meaning something', but this departs both from the pre-theoretical use of 'to mean' and the Gricean notion of 'speaker meaning' both of which are a matter of attempted communication. This is why those who hold *Easy* views typically deny that speaking truly or falsely is the same as the speaker's meaning something, either in a pre-theoretic sense or in the Gricean sense, where the latter is instead thought to be a matter of communication that goes beyond language use (Bach and Harnish 1979, Bach 2001). In other words, if the issue is framed in terms of 'meaning something', those in the *Easy* camp could simply insist that speaking truly or falsely is easy while granting that meaning something requires Gricean intentions. But this wouldn't satisfy Unnsteinsson, who is interested in the former.

It is therefore better to frame the issue directly in terms of speaking truly or falsely, that is, in terms of a notion like saying that p or expressing the proposition that p.² Thus, what we'll take to be at issue

¹ Note that these versions of the *Easy* view aren't necessarily in competition with each other. There are *Easy* views which are simultaneously expressionist, conventionalist, and normativist. For example, one could think that to say/express is to use a sentence with its meaning, which is to be subject to a conventionally accepted rule, as a result of which one counts as expressing a thought (Reiland 2023b, 2025a, Schroeder 2008). For recent explicit defenses of *Easy* views see Fisher 2024, Michaelson 2022, and Reiland 2023a, 2023b, 2025a, 2025b.

² The choice between these two ways of putting it depends on one's view of mood. It is natural to think that in uttering 'p' with its meaning one *says* that p (Austin

is the question what is it, in uttering ‘p’, to say that p or express the proposition that p. On *Easy* views this doesn’t involve Gricean communicative intentions, which, if at all, are taken to be relevant only to the further act of speaker meaning or attempted communication. In contrast, Unnsteinsson thinks that saying something or expressing a proposition must involve such intentions.

3. *The Collapse Argument*

Unnsteinsson’s main argument against *Easy* views is that they collapse into the Gricean view. He directly targets only what he calls “expressionism” but thinks that his argument can be extended to other versions of the view (Unnsteinsson 2022: 76). Here’s his construal of his target:

Expressionism: *S* says that *p* /expresses the proposition that *p* by uttering *U* if and only if *U* expresses *S*’s thought that *p* (Unnsteinsson 2022: 81).³

This schematic view is compatible with different ideas about what it is, in uttering an expression, to express a thought. For example, one could take expression to be a causal relation (Rosenthal 1986), an intentional relation (Davis 2003, Green 2007) or a conventional or normative relation (Alston 2000, Kaplan MS, Reiland 2023b, 2025a, Schroeder 2008). Unnsteinsson’s argument doesn’t depend on any particular theory of expression so we can abstract away from this, for the time being.

Here is his preliminary presentation of the *Collapse Argument*:

In a nutshell, the argument against expressionism is that expressing a thought—the expressionist’s basic theoretical posit—must be construed as an intentional action on all fours, requiring explanation in terms of the speaker’s beliefs, desires, and intentions. If so, I argue, the act of intentionally expressing a thought collapses into the act of uttering something with the intention to mean something to someone. Thus, the expressionist fails to carve out an intentional act different from the Gricean act of speaker meaning. (Unnsteinsson 2022: 76)

I will argue that this argument fails for several reasons. However, to see this, we need to work through it slowly.

The first step of the *Collapse Argument* is to claim that the act of expression must itself be an intentional action and thus must be explained in terms of an intention to have some effect on the actual world:

1962: VIII). However, saying seems forceful in a minimal, representational sense: to say that p is not just to present the proposition as an object, but to present it as true (Reiland 2024). Those who take mood to encode just content and no force at all therefore typically prefer putting their view by saying that in uttering ‘p’ with its meaning one *expresses* the proposition that p which is just to present the proposition as an object. Since this difference won’t matter for us here, we will leave this open and put things in terms of say/express. For discussion see Reiland 2024.

³ I’ve replaced ‘means’ with ‘says’. It would also be more accurate to put the view by saying that it’s not *U*, an expression-type, but *S*’s utterance of *U*, an act, that expresses *S*’s thought that p.

...if the label ‘expressing a p -thought’ names anything of interest to a theory of meaning, it must name some person’s rational, intentional action, which is normally explained in terms of that person’s intention to achieve some perceived good or benefit. It follows that this person (S) intends, minimally, to have some p -thought-involving effect on the actual world. (Unnsteinsson 2022: 84)

Here Unnsteinsson makes an unargued assumption that expression is a necessarily intentional action. Some *Easy* theorists might already balk at this and argue that at least some linguistic expression could be unintentional, but expression nonetheless.⁴ But let’s grant this step for now.

The second step of the argument is to claim that the intention to have effects on the actual world must be an intention to directly have effects on minded creatures, more specifically, a particular addressee or hearer:

Let’s use the label ‘ T_p ’ for S ’s p -thought. So, to explain S ’s behavior we would normally postulate some T_p -involving intention-state which guides and controls her action. ... If a speaker S intends to have T_p -related effects on the actual world those effects must be intended as effects on minded creatures. ... S will only have intentions to cause T_p -effects in creatures which S takes to have the capacity to be influenced in the T_p -way by her intentional action. Otherwise we have no rational explanation of her action. S ’s intentional act of expressing T_p by uttering something can be labeled ‘ $E_s(T_p)$ ’. So, what we are saying is that S would not, if S is a competent speaker, form the intention to express T_p at all, unless some minded creature—for all we have said, it will be possible that $S = H$ —is supposed by S to be influenced by $E_s(T_p)$ in a cognitive way. (Unnsteinsson 2022: 84–85)

Here Unnsteinsson makes an unargued jump from the claim that the relevant intention is an intention to have effects on the actual world to the claim that it must therefore be an intention to have direct effects on a particular addressee or hearer. Many *Easy* theorists would balk at this and argue that the intention could be to have certain effects that do not directly mention a particular addressee or hearer. For example, the intention might be simply to externalize the thought or record information (Chomsky 1975: 55–77). Or the intention might be to have an effect on the public conversational record (Camp 2018, Lepore and Stone 2015). But again, let’s grant this step for now.

⁴ For example, consider people with Tourette’s syndrome, some of whom are subject to vocal tics, consisting of utterances of words and sentences. Or consider automated announcements, utterances made by chatbots, and LLMs etc. It’s not clear that all of these utterances amount to meaningful utterances and thus to acts of expression. But if they do, it’s at least an open question whether they are intentional actions. Thanks to Alex Radulescu for discussion.

It is also important to realize that even if it turns out that expression is always an intentional action, it doesn’t immediately follow that what one wants to express is what one ends up expressing. Many, if not most *Easy* views deny this, claiming that a speaker who is mistaken about the linguistic meaning of an expression might use it meaningfully, wanting to say one thing, but ending up saying something else (Burge 1979, Dummett 1986, Fisher 2024, Reiland 2023a, 2025b).

The final step of the argument is to claim that the relevant intended effect on a hearer that the expressionist must posit is equivalent to the sort of effect on a hearer involved in Gricean communicative intentions. Discerning the exact argument for this is not straightforward, so let's walk through the steps of Unnsteinsson's reasoning slowly:

So, finally, we can safely conclude that there will be some H which S expects to be capable of recognizing or inferring that the act of $E_s(T_p)$ was performed with the intention to produce T_p -related cognitive effects in H From this point on it is easy to derive several interesting consequences about the cognitive state of someone like S . First, in performing an act of expressing a thought, S will expect some H to be able to infer from the act that it was performed with an intention to have a cognitive effect on H . This intention is a propositional attitude of some kind. If S forms the belief that a particular propositional attitude, say $M(p)$, where M stands for 'meaning,' is the easiest and most likely one to be immediately inferred by H , S can only be rational in performing the act if S really expects H to infer that the act was performed by someone in the $M(p)$ -state. Second, if $M(p)$ is indeed the most immediate inference by S 's own lights and S would have no reason to engage in expressive behavior other than in order to have cognitive effects on a minded creature, it follows that the $M(p)$ -effect is the cognitive effect S primarily intends to produce, if she (S) is rational. She may intend to produce many other cognitive effects, for sure, but as we have set things up, $M(p)$ is comprised of a mental attitude toward a proposition with truth conditions, such that it is believed by the speaker to be her most easily and immediately inferable mental state. On most accounts of communication, this is simply what an act of attempted communication consists in. Trying to communicate some message is to produce a signal from which the recipient can grasp the message. An important part of human communicative messages is standardly thought of as a proposition or attitude to a proposition and, so, if a speaker takes it that a given propositional attitude is most likely to come to a hearer's mind on perceiving the signal, producing the attitude will, under normal circumstances, be the primary intended purpose of producing the signal in the first place. Communication succeeds when the hearer grasps the intended propositional attitude or, perhaps, some mental content sufficiently similar to that attitude for all intents and purposes. It follows, like Schutz had surmised, that in every rational and intentionally produced act of expressing a contentful thought, what is expressed is intended as some kind of communication, presupposing a recipient of the message. (Unnsteinsson 2022: 87–88)

Note, first, that what Unnsteinsson is interested in is the intention that makes S 's act of saying/expressing intentional and rational. We've gone along, for the time being, with the assumption that this must be an intention to have an effect on a particular hearer H . However, it is still distracting to call it " $M(p)$ " or a "meaning-intention". After all, it is just whatever intention it is that makes S 's act intentional and rational, and it is an open question whether this is equivalent to a Gricean communicative intention that explains acts of speaker meaning. Unnsteinsson thinks it is. He characterizes the Gricean communicative intention as follows, relying on Sperber and Wilson:

Basically, the speaker's intention to communicate, or the 'communicative intention, involves at least two more basic intentions. The first is the effective intention which Sperber and Wilson call the 'informative' intention. This is simply an intention to have a cognitive effect on someone; I can intend to produce a belief, but also an intention. This may explain, for example, differences between declaratives and imperatives. More importantly, for current purposes, I can very well intend to induce an attitude in someone without thereby *meaning* anything by my action. A cop could plant evidence on a crime scene to make everyone believe that the butler did it. The cop does not express that belief by the act of planting evidence, however. She could express that belief by ostentatiously displaying the evidence to someone or simply saying that she believes the evidence is there. The crucial difference in the latter case is the cop's *signaling* intention, as I will call it, namely the intention that the audience recognize that she wants the audience to believe something. This is the intention to get the hearer to recognize the speaker's effective intention, as Thom Scott-Phillips (2015) would say, to "signal signalhood". The combination of effective and signaling intentions partly determines the speaker's overall communicative intention, also called the *meaning-intention*. ... The point here is to say that the communicative intention is precisely the type of propositional attitude common to all rational acts of expressing a thought that we were looking for, even, I argue, in cases of self-directed speech. (Unnsteinsson 2022: 88–89)

At a relatively general level, this is a standard Gricean view of communicative intentions on which they consist of a pair of audience-directed intentions. Informally, the first intention is to induce a particular *response* (belief, activated belief, second-order belief, intention etc.) in the audience. This is what Unnsteinsson calls the "effective intention". The second intention is to *reveal* the first intention to the audience. This is what Unnsteinsson calls the "signaling intention" (compare Harris 2025).

Unnsteinsson thus thinks that even on the expressionist view and other *Easy* views, the intention that makes *S*'s act of saying/expressing intentional and rational is equivalent to the Gricean communicative intention, characterized as above. Here's his final train of thought to this effect:

So, finally, we can specify the invariant cognitive effect intended by an act of expressing the thought that *p* as that of making it possible for some hearer to infer, on the basis of the utterance, that the speaker intends the hearer to have a particular propositional attitude. Or, more simply, that *S M*-intends some proposition *p*. Thus we have our *M(p)*-effect as postulated before. If this is right, the distinction between performing an intentional act of expressing the thought that *p* and doing something with the *M*-intention that *p* simply collapses. There is no difference between the two.

This is where we're supposed to get the collapse. The intention that makes *S*'s saying/expressing intentional or rational is supposed to be equivalent to the Gricean communicative intention. However, this is not true.

On the assumption that all acts of expression are intentional and have to involve intentions to have effects on a particular hearer, it is

true that the intention that makes *S*'s act of saying/expressing intentional and rational must be an intention for the hearer to produce a response and to reveal this to the audience. The intention is thus structurally similar to the Gricean communicative intention. But it is not equivalent to a Gricean communicative intention! This is because, on *Easy* views, such an intention is naturally taken to be for *H* to come to believe that *S* has said that *p*, expressed the proposition that *p* or expressed the thought that *p*. Such intentions are semantically infused in the sense that they mention notions like saying or expressing. In contrast, the Gricean communicative intention is for *H* to come to believe something about the world etc. Such intentions are semantically innocent in that they don't mention concepts like saying, expressing etc. The former sorts of intentions presuppose linguistic meaning etc. and couldn't therefore be used to explain acts of non-linguistic communication or linguistic meaning. In contrast, Gricean communicative intentions don't presuppose linguistic meaning etc. and could be used to explain acts of non-linguistic communication and linguistic meaning.

To sum up, there is no collapse. Even if we go along with all of Unnsteinsson's assumptions, the *Easy* theorists will still think that the intention that makes *S*'s act of saying intentional and rational is distinct from the Gricean communicative intention.

But there is an even more fundamental problem with the whole argument. The question at issue is what it is to say that *p*/express the proposition that *p*. *Easy* theorists give a particular view of this that doesn't mention Gricean communicative intentions. Unnsteinsson's aim is to argue that such views collapse into the Gricean view. However, this is not actually what he's done. What he's argued for is that *Easy* theorists have to posit a particular sort of intention to explain what makes saying/expressing intentional and rational. But this is relevant to the question what it is to say/express only if the explanation of what it is to say/express is the same or is somehow dependent on an explanation of what makes an act of saying/expressing intentional and rational. Unnsteinsson seems to be assuming that it is:

Let me restate the point briefly. Expressionists explain why an utterance means that *p* by holding that the utterance is an act of expressing a thought, where *p* is the content of the thought. What I have argued, in essence, is that expressive acts of this sort cannot be fully explained unless we assume that speakers intend, by performing such acts, to induce some attitude *A* to the proposition *p* in some addressee. Essentially, this is because of the peculiarly cognitive nature of the act-type; the presence of a competence to perform such acts is best explained by their intended effects on creatures with specific rational dispositions or receptivities. If so, the act of expressing a thought is no different from the act of intending to produce a thought in someone. (Unnsteinsson 2022: 90)

The claim that the act of expressing the thought is no different than the act of intending to produce a response assumes that what makes

it the case that one says etc. is the same that makes one's saying etc. rational. In the next section I will show that this is false. The result is that even if Unnsteinsson were right that the *Easy* theorists would have to posit something like a Gricean intention to explain what makes one's saying/expressing intentional and rational, it still wouldn't cause their view of what it is to say/express to collapse into the Gricean view.

4. *Constitutive vs. rationalizing questions about language use*

At every level of language use, we can and ought to distinguish between the following two questions:

(*Constitutive*) What is it to perform the relevant sort of act (e. g. use a sentence, say/express, speaker mean etc.)?

(*Rationalizing*) What makes one's act intentional and rational?

I will go on to show that these are separate questions that require distinct answers.

In discussing levels of language use, it is helpful to start with Austin's distinctions between phonetic, phatic, and rhetic acts which together constitute what he called the locutionary act:

The phonetic act is merely the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is the uttering of certain vocables or words, i. e. noises of certain types, belonging to and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary, conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar. The rhetic act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference. Thus 'He said "The cat is on the mat"', reports a phatic act, whereas 'He said that the cat was on the mat' reports a rhetic act. A similar contrast is illustrated by the pairs:

'He said "I shall be there"', 'He said he would be there';

'He said "Get out"', 'He told me to get out';

'He said "Is it in Oxford or Cambridge?"; 'He asked whether it was in Oxford or Cambridge' (Austin 1962: 95)

A *phonetic* act is simply an act of making certain noises or marks or gestures. Parrots can perform phonetic acts. In contrast, a *phatic* act is an act of making certain noises etc. and therein using (uttering etc.) expressions of a particular language. Non-linguistic creatures can't perform phatic acts. As Austin puts it: "If a monkey makes a noise indistinguishable from 'go' it is still not a phatic act" (Austin 1962: 96). A *rhetic* act is an act of performing a phatic act with *its* meaning (or with one of its meanings if it has several) in the language while fixing the reference of the expressions that need their reference fixed. If one performs a rhetic act with a full sentence then one also performs a *locutionary* act of saying, asking or telling-to which is just an abstraction from the rhetic act which disregards the particular sentence used (Austin 1962: 97–98, for discussion see Reiland 2024).

Let's reserve the term 'uses of expressions' for Austin's phatic acts.⁵ Uses of expressions are acts like utterings, inscribings and gesturings etc. What turns a phonetic act, a mere making of noise, into a use of an expression or a phatic act? Many appeal to *articulatory intentions*: intentions, in making a noise, to articulate a particular expression (Capellen 1999, Hawthorne and Lepore 2011, Neale 2016: 265).⁶ Let's assume this view for a moment, since it allows us to make the point that what makes a phonetic act into a use is quite distinct from what makes the use itself intentional and rational. What makes a phonetic act into a use is an articulatory intention. That is what explains why one made the noise or performed the phonetic act and what makes the act of making the noise intentional and rational. But it isn't what makes the use itself intentional and rational. Typically, what makes the use intentional and rational is the speaker's desire to, in using the expression, to perform a locutionary act: to say/express something. But it might also be the speaker's desire to practice pronunciation etc..

Let's reserve the term 'meaningful use of an expression' for Austin's rhetic acts. What turns a use of an expression or a phatic act into a meaningful use or a rhetic act? Many people who hold *Easy* views appeal to *semantic intentions*: intentions, in uttering a sentence, to use it with its meaning in the language (Forguson 1973: 163–165, Evans 1982: 387, Kaplan 1989: 602, Reiland 2025b, Salmon 2004: 257). Depending on the variety of *Easy* view, this might taken to amount to an intention to participate in a convention, be subject to a rule, or to express a thought. Again, let's assume this view for a moment, since it allows us to make the point that what makes a use into a meaningful use is quite distinct from what makes the meaningful use itself intentional and rational. What makes a use into a meaningful use is a semantic intention. That is what explains why one used the sentence and what makes using the sentence intentional and rational. But it isn't what makes the meaningful use or a rhetic act intentional and rational! Typically, what makes the meaningful use intentional and rational is the speaker's desire to, in meaningfully using the expression, to communicate something to an audience. But it might also be to record information for one's private use, to go on the conversational record etc.

Let's reserve the term 'linguistic act' for Austin's locutionary acts. As already hinted at above, the relationships between phonetic, phatic, and rhetic acts and the relationship between rhetic acts and locutionary acts or meaningful uses and linguistic acts are disanalogous. The former three are nested in that the more sophisticated act is constituted by the more basic act + something extra like an articulatory or semantic intention. But the latter two don't stand in this relationship: locutionary acts aren't rhetic acts + something extra. Rather, locution-

⁵ Searle calls these utterance acts (Searle 1969: 24) while Alston calls them sentential acts (Alston 2000: 26).

⁶ For criticism and alternative views see Munroe 2022, Stojnić 2022.

ary or linguistic acts are just abstractions from meaningful uses or rhetic acts where we disregard the particular sentence used. To report a meaningful use or a rhetic act we say:

- (1) Dan used ‘Bertrand is British’ to say that Bertrand is British/express the proposition that Bertrand is British.

To report a linguistic or locutionary act we say:

- (2) Dan said that Bertrand is British/expressed the proposition that Bertrand is British.

Thus, nothing turns a rhetic act into a locutionary act. Rather a locutionary act is an abstraction from a rhetic act. Still, we can distinguish rhetic or what Heck calls *semantic* descriptions of such acts like in (1) from locutionary or what Heck calls *propositional* descriptions like in (2) (Heck 2006: 30–32). And the point remains. What makes a use of a sentence into a meaningful use and thus into a linguistic act such as saying/expressing, is quite distinct from what makes the linguistic act intentional and rational. Again, what makes a use into a meaningful use and a linguistic act is a semantic intention. That is what explains why one used the sentence and what makes using the sentence intentional and rational. But it isn’t what makes the meaningful use or a linguistic act itself intentional and rational! Typically, what makes the meaningful use and the linguistic act of saying/expressing intentional and rational is the speaker’s desire to communicate something to the audience etc.

Let’s illustrate the distinction between answers to constitutive and rationalizing questions by walking through a concrete example. Take a speaker, Dan who utters ‘Bertrand is British’ to communicate to Stephen that the point made before in the conversation, say, that descriptions are Russellian, is too obvious to discuss. Here’s the structure of nested acts together with pieces of practical reasoning that explains why a particular act was intentional and rational:

1. *Phonetic act*: making the noise /Bertrand is British/

Reasoning: I want to make this noise to utter ‘Bertrand is British’ (in order to...). Making the noise with an *articulatory intention* to utter ‘Bertrand is British’ is a way of doing it. Therefore, I will make the noise with the articulatory intention.

2. *Use/Phatic act*: uttering ‘Bertrand is British’

Reasoning: I want to use the sentence ‘Bertrand is British’ in order to say that Bertrand is British (in order to...). Using the sentence ‘Bertrand is British’ with a *semantic intention* is a way of saying that Bertrand is British. Therefore, I will use the sentence with the semantic intention.

3. *Meaningful use/Rhetic act & Linguistic/Locutionary act*: using ‘Bertrand is British’ with its meaning in English / saying that Bertrand is British.

Reasoning: I want to communicate that the point made before in the conversation, that descriptions are Russellian, is too obvious to discuss. Saying something commonly known, such as that Bertrand is British, is a way to do that due to general pragmatic principles. Therefore, I will say that Bertrand is British.

4. *Speaker meaning/communicating*: that the point made before, that descriptions are Russellian, is too obvious to discuss.

On each step, we can see that what makes the more basic act into the more sophisticated act could be a particular intention (articulatory, semantic, communicative). However, what makes the resulting more sophisticated act itself intentional and rational is a further desire-belief pair that the speaker has.⁷

This should be enough to demonstrate that we shouldn't run together constitutive questions about language use such as what it is to use a sentence, to use it meaningfully or say/express, or even what it is to speaker mean, with questions about what makes these acts intentional and rational.

Coming back to Unnsteinsson's *Collapse Argument*, its conclusion was that *Easy* theorists have to posit something like a Gricean intention to explain what makes one's saying/expressing intentional and rational. But even if this were true, this would only pertain to the rationalizing question and still wouldn't cause their view of what it is to say/express to collapse into the Gricean view.

5. Conclusion

On *Easy* views, saying/expressing something is a matter of uttering a sentence with its meaning in a language which is thought to be a matter of participating in a convention, being subject to a rule, or expressing a thought. Unnsteinsson's aim is to argue that saying/expressing isn't easy and must involve Gricean intentions. His argument is that any *Easy* view must posit something like Gricean intentions to explain what makes saying/expressing intentional and rational. He therefore thinks that the *Easy* views collapse into the Gricean view.

I've shown that this argument fails for several reasons. First, even if we grant Unnsteinsson all of his assumptions, the intentions that the *Easy* theorists would have to posit are still not equivalent to Gricean communicative intentions because they are semantically infused

⁷ Note that the same sort of difference is evident on the Gricean view of speaker meaning. On that view what makes one's bare, non-communicative action (gesture, utterance etc.) into a case of speaker meaning or attempted communication is the communicative intention. The communicative intention is thus what makes the *bare action* intentional and rational. It's what explains why one made the gesture, utterance etc. But it isn't what makes the act of *speaker meaning* or attempted communication itself intentional and rational! What makes the act of speaker meaning rational is whatever beliefs and desires the speaker has that make them want to mean or communicate something.

in the way the latter aren't. Second, and fundamentally, Unnsteinsson's argument conflates the *constitutive* question what it is to say/express with the *rationalizing* question what makes saying/expressing intentional and rational. The main lesson of this paper is that this shouldn't be done. These are distinct questions. The result is that even if Unnsteinsson were right that the *Easy* theorists would have to posit something like a Gricean intention to explain what makes one's saying/expressing intentional and rational, it still wouldn't cause their view of saying/expressing to collapse into the Gricean view. Thus, the *Collapse Argument* leaves the *Easy* views of what it is to say/express completely untouched.

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