FictionalAssert and Implicatures

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1 Introduction

In this paper, we present interdisciplinary work of linguistics and literary studies on the emergence of implicatures in fictional texts. By conducting empirically motivated research on a small corpus of poems by Emily Dickinson, George Herbert and John Donne, we show in our resulting analyses that, due to specific characteristics of the text type, an additional effect of pragmatic interpretation occurs that we call *apparent flouting*: In poetry, the pragmatic interpretation of the text is achieved in a more complex way than in non-fictional discourse. It requires a speech act operator that is different from *Assert* (Krifka 1995), which applies to the text as a whole and does not assert its actual truth. Because the pragmatic interpretation of poetry is more complex, cases of ambiguity that put forward several possible readings, for example, are not resolved right away. Rather, all possible readings contribute to the overall meaning of the poem:

> (1)   The Owner passed – identified –
> And carried Me away
> (Emily Dickinson, "My Life had stood," J754)

In (1), for example, the predicate "carry away" can be both interpreted literally, meaning that the owner relocated the speaker, or figuratively, such that the owner overwhelms the speaker emotionally. Because of the specific communicative situation of poetry, where the speaker and the reader do not share a common ground of information, and because of the specific nature of poetry that does not necessarily want to assert something that is true in the evaluation world, both the literal and the figurative meaning are kept up as possibilities. On the level of the text as a whole, we can observe that both meanings are actually necessary for an overall interpretation of the poem. We assume that, in general, pragmatic mechanisms, such as presupposition resolution and pronoun assignment, arise and are processed as usual once the specific characteristics of the text type are taken into account by the reader. *Apparent flouting* presents a pragmatic effect that arises because of the particular pragmatic interpretation in poetry. We consider the Cooperative Principle put forward by Grice to be still valid. When the poet produces an underdetermined or ambiguous text, she is not - contrary to first impression - uncooperative. Instead, she deliberately exploits context-sensitive phenomena and other elements of the text in order to arrive at an enriched and complex meaning of the text.
Our basic claim for the present work is therefore that fictional, here specifically lyrical, texts are not a different form of language per se, but that their specific context integration contributes to the rise of *apparent flouting*.
In the following, we will consider Grice's theory of conversational maxims as a theoretical starting point. We then show the need for the speech act operator *FictionalAssert* (Bauer & Beck 2014). By assuming that fiction comes along with a speech act operator that guides its

interpretation, pragmatic mechanisms can work as usual, albeit on another level. The operator *FictionalAssert* is the missing link between the status of fictional texts and the stable workings and rules of grammar, including pragmatic mechanisms.

The framework we propose is the result of a thorough corpus analysis of a small set of poetic texts by Emily Dickinson, John Donne and George Herbert. We annotated the poems with software designed for this purpose (AnnotAID) and included annotations of (apparent) violations of the maxims of conversation. We then analysed these examples systematically and identified cases of *apparent flouting*.

With the exemplary analyses given here, we hope to show that the pragmatic effect *apparent flouting*, found in fictional discourse, is stable across maxims. It is a recurring, systematic mechanism that enriches our understanding of the relation between text-type and pragmatics. Adding to the recent literature on implicature that focuses on the fact that implicatures can arise locally below the level of the text (Chierchia et al 2012), we provide evidence that pragmatic mechanisms can also be global in their impact in the sense that they can and will apply on the level of the text as a whole. This is, we argue, a question of text-type.

The structure of our paper is as follows: We will first give an overview over our basic theoretical assumptions and then discuss three examples in detail. IIn the conclusion, we will focus on the consequences of our analyses for the theory of pragmatics in general and specifically for cases of non-literal communication.

2 Theoretical Background
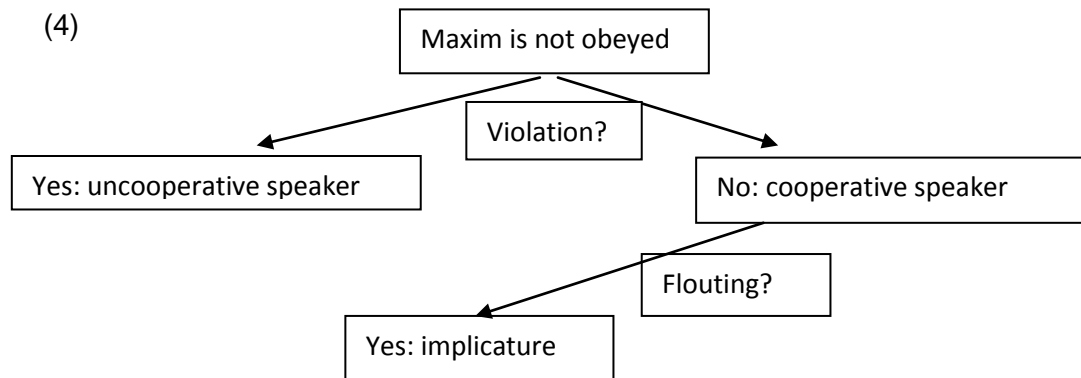
2.1 Starting Point: Grice (1975)

In this paper, we combine Grice's (1975) notion of implicatures as obeying or flouting the four conversational maxims (see below) with a formal pragmatic understanding as to how and when sentences or texts are added as information to the Common Ground (cf. Stalnaker 1987). We assume that implicatures arise at the point where the context update is performed, i.e. information of the sentence or text is added to the Common Ground. They do so when the assertion of the sentence is clear, yet the information provided does not fit the context properly, e.g. by not presenting novel information or not being relevant to the conversation. The speaker has to obey the following principles, according to Grice, to make a statement that is a suitable contribution to a conversation:

(2) The four conversational maxims:
   a. Manner: "Be perspicuous"
   b. Quantity: Do not give more or less information than is required
   c. Quality: Do not say something which you believe to be false or for which you lack adequate evidence
   d. Relation: "Be relevant"
   (Grice 1975)

In his 1975 publication, Grice proposes that there are four ways of failing to fulfil the maxims:

(3)
   a. A participant may violate a maxim and thereby be liable to mislead (i.e. not to be cooperative).
   b. A participant may opt out, e.g. by explicitly stating that they are unable to say more.
   c. A participant may be confronted with a clash, e.g. trying to be as informative as possible (quantity) and not having the necessary evidence (quality).
   d. A participant may flout a maxim to create a conversational implicature.

The fourth possibility, namely the participant's flouting of a maxim, is the alternative that will concern us in the following. According to Grice, when a participant flouts a maxim, this "characteristically gives rise to a *conversational implicature*" (30). In accordance with (3), the following diagram shows a simplified version of Grice's theory of pragmatic reasoning:

(4)

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Maxim is not obeyed │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                       ↙   Violation?   ↘
   ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
   │ Yes: uncooperative speaker│   │  No: cooperative speaker  │
   └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                              ↙   Flouting?
                 ┌──────────────────────┐
                 │   Yes: implicature    │
                 └──────────────────────┘
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When a maxim is not obeyed, two strategies could be at play: either, the speaker violates the maxim and is thus uncooperative or the speaker does not violate the maxim and is cooperative. In the latter case, if the maxim is flouted, an implicature arises.

To give evidence for his theory, Grice provides several examples. We will briefly consider examples of flouting of those maxims that will be relevant for the two literary examples discussed later.

Grice lists various submaxims under the supermaxim of manner:

    a. Avoid obscurity of expression.
    b. Avoid ambiguity.
    c. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
    d. Be orderly.
       (Grice 1975)

An example given by Grice to illustrate flouting of the third submaxim helps us understand how manner implicatures arise. Compare the remarks:

(5) Miss X sang "Home Sweet Home."
(6) Miss X produced a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of "Home Sweet Home."
(Grice 1975, 313)

Here, (6) does not obey the third submaxim of manner, because the utterance is unnecessarily excessive. However, the speaker of (6) is not uncooperative. Rather, s/he is flouting the maxim in order to convey something different: she wants to implicate thatMiss X's performance was very bad, but she does not want to be impolite. This implicature comes about by changing only the representation of the informational content. Through this change, the literal meaning of the sentence in (5) triggers the implicated meaning.

Another example Grice provides to illustrate what he means by flouting the maxim of relevance is given below:

(7) At a genteel party, A says "Mrs. X is an old bag." There is a moment of appalled silence, and then B says "The weather has been quite delightful this summer, hasn't it?" (Grice 1975, 312)

Here, B's answer is, on the surface, not related to the utterance of A at all. Thus, the maxim of relevance is not obeyed. However, B still seems to be cooperative. For reasons of politeness (maybe Mrs. X is just standing right behind A and B), she quickly changes the

topic altogether. Accordingly, the statement by B itself is not relevant, but only the implicature that B does not want to discuss the topic out of politeness. Here, the implicature arises in a different way than in the example above: Whereas before, the literal meaning of the utterance gave rise to the implicature, here, the literal meaning of the utterance is not important at all. The only relevant information that gives rise to the implicature here is that B changes the topic.

However, Grice also includes examples taken from literary texts. Grice neither comments on the fact that these examples are taken from literary texts nor on their fictional nature, but treats the examples in the same way as everyday utterances. He uses phenomena like irony, metaphors, tautologies, and other stylistic devices found not only in everyday conversation but also in literary texts as examples of flouting the conversational maxims.

For instance, Grice discusses ambiguity by referring to William Blake's poem "Never pain to tell thy love," quoting it in the variant reading as "Never seek to tell thy love / love that never told can be" (Grice 1975:313). He claims that "thy love" is ambiguous between the object of the emotion and the state of emotion, and that "love that never told can be" is ambiguous between "love that cannot be told" and "love that if told cannot continue to exist." He calls this the first type of ambiguity,[1] which is used to flout the manner maxim. It is characterised by the fact that "neither interpretation is notably more sophisticated, less standard, more recondite or more far-fetched than the other" (Grice 1975: 313). However, Grice also states that the poet is not explicitly saying one or the other, but rather "conveying" or "suggesting" both(Grice 1975: 313). The implicature resulting from this type of ambiguity is, according to Grice, precisely the fact that the poet wants to convey both meanings at once.

We believe that Grice's intuition about this example is correct. Yet, it seems to be the case that a few steps are missing that could accurately explain why the effect Grice identifies comes about. Specifically, Grice ignores the fact that the utterance is made in a fictional framework and takes it as an everyday utterance instead. According to him, the pragmatic process triggered by the utterance is to be treated as in any other utterance: the listener assumes that the speaker deliberately flouts the maxim of manner and makes an implicature. In our opinion, the process involved is more complex since in fictional texts we cannot assume the pragmatic step *Assert* (according to Krifka 1995) to take place but rather the pragmatic step *FictionalAssert*, which yields a different result.

2.2   The Speech Act Operator *FictionalAssert*

We assume that the pragmatic interpretation of poetry works differently from the pragmatic interpretation in everyday conversation. Pragmatic Meaning is formed at the level of text in poetry and mediated through the speech act operator *FictionalAssert*. This operator can be seen as a counterpart to other speech act operators that update the context with the assertions made, e.g. *Assert* (cf. Krifka 1995):

(8) [[Assert]] = λP.P(@) (simplified version)

In a non-fictional utterance, it is usually the speaker's aim to convince the hearer that the text/utterance is true in the actual world. This requires a pragmatic step that wants to update the context with the assertion achieved through, for example, the operator *Assert*. It is

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[1] Since we only resort to these examples for the sake of illustration, we will not analyse what Grice calls the second type of ambiguity here. According to Grice, this type is one where "one interpretation is notably less straightforward than another" (36). As in the first case, however, an implicature arises and Grice believes that the author flouts the maxim of manner, again.

asserted that the actual world is part of the set of possible worlds in which the text is true (see (9)):

(9) $@ \in [[\text{Text}]]$

Fictional texts, by contrast, are not usually claims about the actual world. In fact, the implicature arises that the actual world is not part of the meaning of the fictional text, see (10):

(10) $@ \notin [[\text{Text}]]$

However, readers do not perceive fictional texts as lacking meaning or relevance for the actual world altogether. Thus, there has to be a connection between the actual world and the possible worlds described by the text. We assume that the pragmatics of fictional texts derive from a conditional: worlds in which everything the text says is the case are worlds that stand in relation R to the actual world, and R is to be determined on the basis of the specific text. The nature of the relation to the real world is what makes the text relevant. It represents an inference: if everything the text says is the case, then this relates to me, the reader, in the way specified by R.

(11) $[[\text{FictionalAssert}]] = \lambda T. \forall w [T(w)$ & w is maximally similar to @ otherwise $\rightarrow R (@)(w)]$

At the point in interpretation when the pragmatic step, represented by speech act operators like Assert, happens, implicatures may arise. In fictional texts, therefore, we expect that implicatures can arise when we apply *FictionalAssert*. Crucially, in fiction, the pragmatic step that updates the context with assertive content happens after the whole text (especially in poetry), or rather large units of text (such as paragraphs in the case of novels, or passages and scenes in dramatic texts), has been read. That is due to the fact that *FictionalAssert* does not directly contribute to the truth of the text but rather, through the relation R, invites the reader to find out in what way the text is relevant for her. However, the reader can only find values for R after having gathered all of the information given in the text that might inform her decision about the nature of R.
Consider the example below:

(12) The Crow and the Pitcher

A Crow perishing with thirst saw a pitcher, and hoping to find water, flew to it with delight. When he reached it, he discovered to his grief that it contained so little water that he could not possibly get at it. He tried everything he could think of to reach the water, but all his efforts were in vain. At last he collected as many stones as he could carry and dropped them one by one with his beak into the pitcher, until he brought the water within his reach and thus saved his life.—Necessity is the mother of invention. (as cited in Bauer and Beck 2014)

Applying *FictionalAssert* to the fable as a whole results in the text meaning below (see (13)). The relation R is formalised in (14):

(13) $\forall w[[[T]] (w)$ & w is maximally similar to @ otherwise $\rightarrow$ counterpart $(crow_w)$ $(reader_@)$ & $\forall w'[$ what is desirable in @ is the case in w' $\rightarrow reader_@$ behaves in w' like $crow_w$ behaves in w]]] (Bauer and Beck 2014: 265)

(14) "$wR@$ iff *w* is exactly like @ except the counterpart of the crow *c* in *w* is the human reader *h* in @ and what is desirable for *h* in @ in terms of ingenuity and persistence is the case for *c* in *w*" (Bauer and Beck 2014: 263)

The relation R is parallel to the accessibility relation assumed for counterfactual conditionals (cf. Kratzer 1991, Hacquard 2012), such that the text-worlds and the actual world are maximally similar except for certain relevant facts that differentiate them. Those facts are stated in the text. These 'exceptions' at the same time present values that are arguments for an function *f* that takes values of the text-worlds and maps them to parallel items in the actual world. The function *f* is automatically triggered through the relation R. It is a mapping construed by the reader. For example:

(15)   f(the crow) = the reader
(16)   f(die of thirst) = face a seemingly insurmountable problem

2.3   Apparent Flouting

Apparently flouting a maxim means that it only seems as if a maxim is being flouted on the surface, while on a deeper level – when applying *FictionalAssert* – we observe that the maxims are being followed. But a meta-reflection is triggered concerning the interpretation of the text (yielded by the poet's specific use of language). Most often, what seems to be a flouting of a maxim on a local level of sentence meaning is resolved by considering the global level of the poetic text as a whole. Consider the example below:
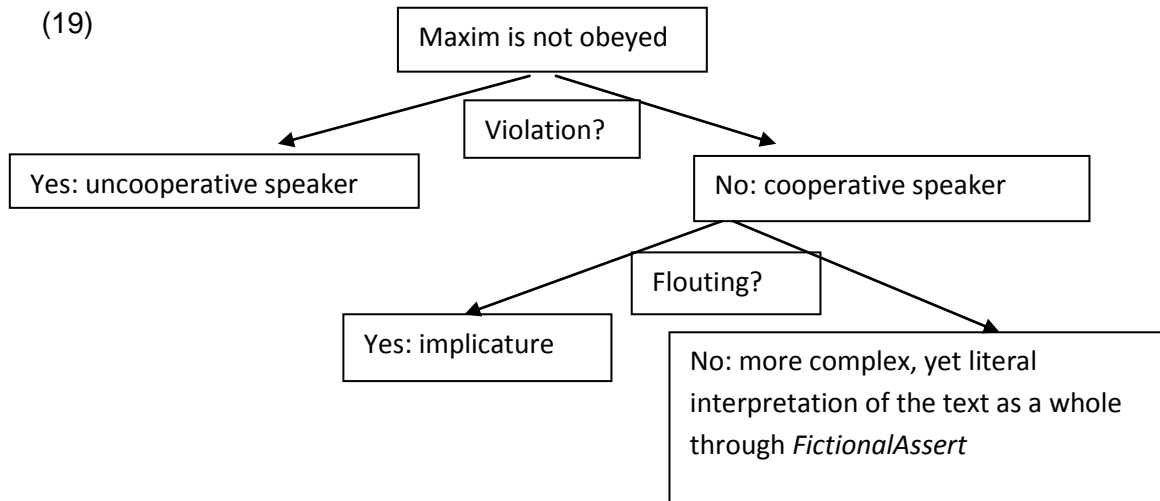
(17)   Do you see the man with the binoculars?

This classic example of syntactic ambiguity can have two readings: One, where the man himself has binoculars and the other, where the addressee of the question is asked to look for the man with the help of binoculars. In a conversation, usually enough information is provided by the Common Ground such that hearers of this sentence can disambiguate quite easily, e.g. because it is clear where the binoculars are or because the addressee can ask the speaker.

However, ambiguity can also be used to flout a Gricean maxim, for example the maxim of quantity. Although Grice himself only talked about literary examples of ambiguity, as we have seen before, the following dialogue demonstrates a clear case of flouting:

(18)   A manager tells a friend about her business meeting with a client. Both know that her client has to wear thick glasses.
         Friend: How did it go? Did he sign the contract?
         Manager: Well, his short-sightedness made it pretty hard.

In (18), the manager is disobeying the maxim of manner as she is ambiguous about what she means by "short-sightedness". However, she is still cooperative. She implicates that her client not only had trouble signing the contract because of his eye sight, but also because, in a figurative sense, he was reluctant to see the advantages of the contract. Here, the ambiguity gives rise to the implicature that both the literal and the figurative meaning are relevant for the conversation. In that way, the manager proves to be witty. Here, both readings of "short-sightedness" make the utterance true and the implicated, figurative meaning can also be added to the Common Ground through *Assert*. Thus, according to the diagram in **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**, the maxim is flouted in order to give rise to an implicature, namely that both, the literal and the figurative meaning can be added as true statements. In fictional texts, we do not operate with *Assert* but with *FictionalAssert,* and therefore expect that ambiguity in fictional discourse is not a case of flouting but rather a case of a more complex interpretation where both readings are intended to be part of the overall text meaning.

(19)

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Maxim is not obeyed │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                       ╱   Violation?   ╲
                      ╱                   ╲
        ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
        │ Yes: uncooperative speaker│   │  No: cooperative speaker │
        └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                                         ╱   Flouting?    ╲
                                        ╱                  ╲
                         ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                         │ Yes: implicature │   │ No: more complex, yet literal │
                         └──────────────────┘   │ interpretation of the text as a whole │
                                                │ through FictionalAssert       │
                                                └──────────────────────────────┘
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In the following, we observe examples in lyrical texts where maxims seem to not be obeyed, e.g. underspecified or ambiguous text passages. We exclude the possibility that these are cases of uncooperative speakers, i.e. simply violations of the maxims. It would be odd for the poet to deliberately not want to communicate with the reader. But if the poet is cooperative, then she might flout the maxims - similar to the reviewer of Ms X's performance or the manager. This is more plausible because the poet must intend interpretive effects to arise from the properties of the text. We will, however, go one step further: we will suggest that the flouting is only apparent. At a local (sentence) level, a maxim may appear to not be obeyed. But at the level of the interpretation of the text, it is in fact obeyed. For example, both readings of an ambiguous passage are in fact intended to be present (like Grice anticipated above). Thus the relevant maxim only appears to be flouted. To the diagram in (19) we add the second option that a speaker may be cooperative and is in fact not flouting the maxim. Because *FictionalAssert* operates on the global level of text and is more complex in that it wants to establish a relation to the evaluation world, all readings of elliptical or syntactically ambiguous sentences are important to establish R. Thus, unlike in non-fictional discourse, where an utterance wants to contribute something truthful and thus disambiguating is necessary, here, a more complex text interpretation is necessary.

An important point about the following examples is that, for reasons of simplicity, we only focus on individual lines or parts of poems. Generally though, we assume that the pragmatic step is only applied to the poem as a whole: in addition to the detailed analyses of the examples to come, much more material would originally be part of what we take to be the text meaning. Every sentence of the poem along with its different readings would then constitute the overall text meaning.

3 Examples

3.1 *Apparently Flouting* the Maxim of Manner

In the following, we will look at an underspecified (and therefore ambiguous) passage in Emily Dickinson's poem "This was a Poet" (J448) as an example to clarify what we mean by "*apparently flouting*" the maxim of manner:

(20)

Of Portion – so unconscious –
The Robbing – could not harm –

The ambiguity that is predominant in the text is between the two options of either the reader or the poet being the active agent throughout the poem. On the surface, we observe an ambiguity (flouting of the maxim of manner) in the line "The Robbing could not harm" that adds to this overall ambiguity. It is not clear who the agent and patient of robbing or harming are, respectively. The two possible meanings of (20) (simplified versions) are given in (21)a and (22)a as they would be asserted at this point. The respective paraphrases are in (21)b and (22)b:

(21)

    a. $\lambda w.\exists e[robbing(e)(the\_readers_w)(poet_w)(w)]\&\neg\exists e'[BECOME(harmed(e')(the\_readers_w)(w))\& CAUSE(e')(e)(w)]$

    b. The robbing of the readers by the poet does not harm us (the readers).

(22)

    a. $\lambda w.\exists e[robbing(e)(poet_w)(the\_readers_w)(w)]\&\neg\exists e'[BECOME(harmed(e')(the\_poet_w))(w)\& CAUSE(e')(e)(w)]$

    b. The robbing of the poet by the readers does not harm him (the poet).

However, we are not dealing with an ambiguity that is meant to be resolved at this point so that the reader would arrive at one interpretation that is to be asserted. Since the above example is taken from a fictional text, nothing is intended to be asserted at this point. Accordingly, no implicature that results from flouting the maxim of manner through this ambiguity arises at the level of assertion either. Instead, both meanings are to remain active options and are passed on as possible parts of the text meaning. They end up playing a crucial role at the level of text when the operator *FictionalAssert* comes into play.

    The first possibility (option A) of textual meaning for (20) is the following: For the ambiguity in (20) that results in the possible readings in **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**(21) and (22), we assume that both are part of the text meaning. This is derived by intersecting the two possible meanings in (21) and (22). However, the point is not only to say that both are true (as in the first type of ambiguity Grice discusses). Rather, a process of reflection on the relation between these two interpretations and their respective status is triggered that mirrors the complexity of the relationship reader–poet. This reflection process is part of applying *FictionalAssert* to the text meaning (we are ignoring for a moment that other propositions are part of the meaning of the text, and take the intersection of (21) and (22) to be the text meaning).

    (23)   [[FictionalAssert]] ((21)∩(22)) = ∀w [(21)∩(22) (w) & w is maximally similar to @ otherwise → R (@)(w)]

    In order to specify R, we assume that the mapping function f is triggered that maps the poet and the readers within the poem to readers of poetry in general and poets in general:

    (24)   ∀w [(21)∩(22) (w) & w is maximally similar to @ otherwise → counterpart (the_poet_w) $(poet_@)$ & counterpart $(the\_readers_w)$ $(readers_@)$ & counterpart (relationship (the_poet_w) $(the\_readers_w)$) (relationship $(poet_@)$ $(readers_@)$)]

    (25)   'If everything the poem says is the case, then poetry and this poem in particular create a creative and reciprocal relation between readers and poet.'

    The reflection process is triggered by the fact that the reader has to establish what the relation R to the actual world has to look like in order for both readings – the reader by robbing the poet cannot harm him, and the poet by robbing the readers cannot harm them – to be true. One possibility is to arrive at a meaning where in the actual world there is some kind of reciprocal relationship between poet and reader. Both of them "lose" something by writing or reading a poem but both are also left unharmed (so no actual loss is involved). The details of what R has to look like are established by the individual reader. Most importantly,

the ambiguity observed locally vanishes on a global level because both possibilities coexist. Thus, there is no ambiguity on the level of the whole text, and, in accordance with Grice's theory, no implicature arises. The relevance of both meanings for the actual world is mediated through the *FictionalAssert* operator. The fact that both are true is important for the way R is defined. If we were to assert in the usual way, the ambiguity above would count as actual flouting of the maxim of manner as found in the example in (18). Since we apply *FictionalAssert* instead (at the level of text), the two ambiguities are passed along as parts of the meaning of the text and play a role in finding the relation R, and no maxim is flouted. We can thus see that the poet strictly obeys the maxims on the level of text.

3.2   *Apparently Flouting* the Maxim of Quality

As illustrated in example **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**, combining the predicate "stand in corners" with the subject "my life" is undefined because "my life" violates the selectional restrictions that the argument for "stand in corners" must be a physical object:

> (26)   My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –
>   In Corners – till a Day
>   (Emily Dickinson, "My Life had Stood a Loaded Gun," J754)
> (27)
>   a.   [[stand]] = [λe.λx.λy: y is a physical object that has a vertical dimension. y is in location x in e and y is vertically oriented in e]
>   b.   [[stand]]([[my life]]) is undefined.

Thus, the speaker disobeys the maxim of quality, as she utters something that is not interpretable. However, we deem the speaker to still be cooperative. As a result, we can attempt to reinterpret the mismatch in (27)b. However, the text makes available two ways of reinterpretation that are equally plausible:

First, to simplify matters, we will assume that the NP *My Life* is reinterpreted to metonymically refer to the speaker:

> (28)   I (the speaker) stand in corners

Second, (28) can have two possible meanings, since the apposition of the sentence "a loaded Gun" can either literally mean that the speaker is a loaded gun, or that she just compares herself to a loaded gun but is human. We will assume a naïve view of the meaning of the first sentence such that reinterpretation leads to two readings that are incompatible (given our world knowledge in the actual world), and we will further pretend for now that the text consists only of the first sentence of the poem:

> (29)   I am human and I stand in corners
> (30)   I am a gun and I stand in corners

It is obvious that the speaker cannot be a gun and a human being at the same time. We thus see that avoiding a violation of the maxim of quantity opens up yet another seeming violation of the maxim of manner: By first uttering something uninterpretable that requires reinterpretation, the speaker is ambiguous in which way this reinterpretation can be resolved. The reader thus has to deal with a contradiction that comes about through ambiguity. As we have seen in the diagram in (19), the reader has three options: first, she could deem the speaker to be uncooperative and quit reading the poem; second, she could decide for one of the two readings and go on reading the rest of the poem with this one reading in mind; or third, she acknowledges that the speaker is still cooperative and wants to convey additional

information through the interaction of both readings. While for our poetic examples, we have excluded the first option in general for our analysis, the second option of disambiguation will run into problems as soon as the reader goes on reading: The following lines and stanzas make it impossible to decide for one of the two readings, as they refer to specific characteristics of either human beings or guns.[2] That leaves us with option 3: the speaker is cooperative and wants to communicate something that arises through the interaction of the readings. There are two generally accessible ways as to how to combine (29) and (30): Conjunction or disjunction. We already have seen in the discussion of the example in (20) how conjunction works: Conjunction takes two propositions and states that both have to be true in the same world. This option is not available in the present case, as the conjunction of both readings results in a contradiction. Here, the speaker is stated to be human and a gun within the same world. According to our world knowledge, this is impossible.[3] The only other option to combine both readings is to combine them via disjunction:

(31)   λw: the speaker is human in w & the speaker stands in corners in w ∨ λw': the speaker is a gun in w' & the speaker stands in corners in w'

Through the disjunction of the two readings, we arrive at an overall meaning that states that the speaker is either human or a gun. No contradiction arises. The reader can apply the pragmatic step via *FictionalAssert* without a failure of the compositional interpretation. Instead, the disjunction makes an even stronger claim than a conjunction of the readings would. This is possible because *FictionalAssert* is modelled in parallel to a conditional. Consider the following example of a disjunction under an ordinary conditional first:

(32)
   a. If Peter and Mary come, Jane is happy.
   b. ∀w[the same facts are true in w and @ & Peter and Mary come in w → Jane is happy in w]
(33)
   a. If Peter or Mary comes, Jane is happy.
   b. ∀w[the same facts are true in w and @ & Peter comes in w or Mary comes in w → Jane is happy in w]

In this scenario, there are more possible worlds that make the statement true in (33) than there are possible worlds that make (32) true, as illustrated in the Venn diagrams below: If we assume that propositions are sets of possible worlds for which the statement is true, then, in the case of a conjunction, Jane is only happy in those worlds that make true both the statement that Peter comes and the statement that Mary comes (see (34)). In the case of a disjunction, Jane is happy in all the worlds where either Peter or Mary comes, which is a much larger set (see (35)).

(34)

w: Peter comes in w

w': Mary comes in w'

w": Jane is happy in w"

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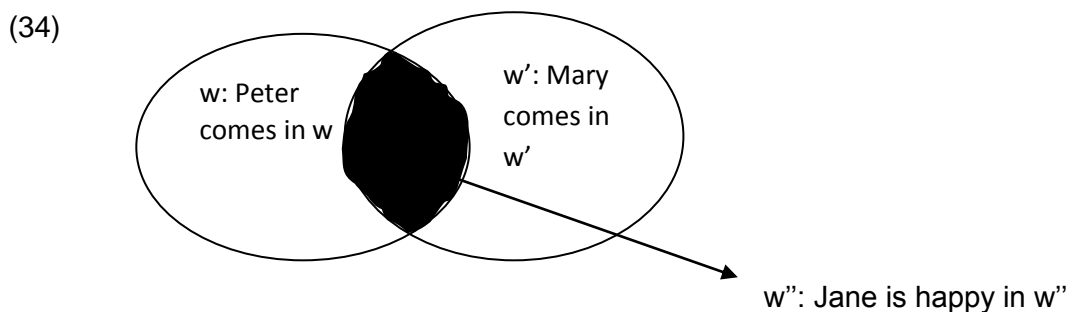
[2] See Bauer et al (2015) for a detailed analysis and Bauer and Brockmann (accepted) for a parallel example of disjunction under *FictionalAssert*.
[3] However, because the poem talks about worlds that are not necessarily the actual world, this could be possible in worlds where individuals can change from being human to being a gun. However, the rest of the poem doesn't support such a reading as possible.

(35)
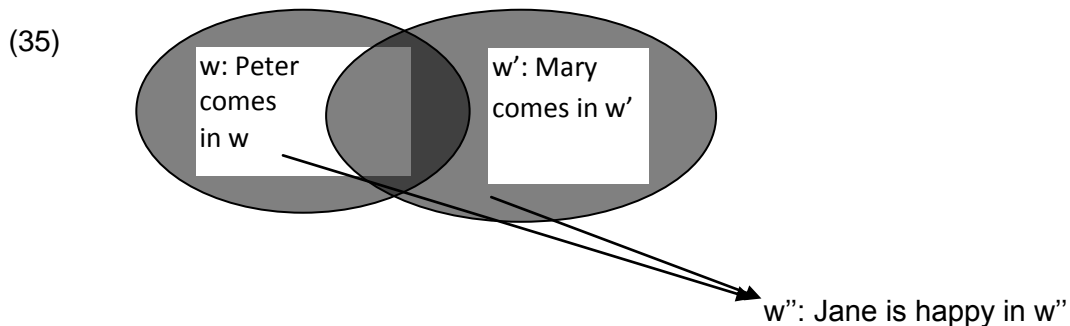
Coming back to the example in (28), if we treat the two readings in (29) and (30) as disjuncts in parallel to (35), this results in a stronger statement once we apply *FictionalAssert*: All worlds in which the speaker is either human or a gun stand in relation R to the actual world. Interestingly, the disjunction also promotes a more complex interpretation that takes into account the similarities between gun and human being, as both readings must be equally relevant for finding a value for R. In other words, both the speaker being human and the speaker being a gun constitute together why and how this text is relevant for the reader:

(36) $\forall w[[[(31)]] (w)$ & w is maximally to @ otherwise $\rightarrow$ counterpart (gun_w or $human_w$) ($reader_@$)]

The similarities between the two readings could lie in the characteristics that human beings and guns share: being dangerous, or depending on somebody else, or being used by somebody for instance. It follows that even if the two text meanings are contradictory, *FictionalAssert* can still be applied and no implicatures arise on the global level of text. This comes about through the context update that is specific to fictional texts and that takes into account the text as a whole information unit. Thus, on the level of the global text, what seemed to be a violation of the manner maxim   contributes necessarily to the overall meaning of the text, because only the disjunction of the two readings makes explicit the characteristics shared by human beings and guns. Thus, on the global level of text, the manner maxim is not flouted and no implicature arises.

3.3   *Apparently Flouting* the Maxim of Relevance

The third example is a case of *apparently flouting* the maxim of relevance. In the poem below, the speaker describes an intense experience that is not specified in detail:

(37)   He fumbles at your Soul
  As Players at the Keys
  Before they drop full Music on –
  He stuns you by degrees –
  Prepares your brittle Nature
  For the Ethereal Blow
  By fainter Hammers – further heard –
  Then nearer – Then so slow
  Your Breath has time to straighten –
  Your Brain – to bubble Cool –
  Deals – One – imperial – Thunderbolt –
  That scalps your naked Soul –

> When Winds take Forests in their Paws –
> The Universe – is still –
> (Emily Dickinson, "He fumbles at your Soul," J315)

Structurally, the poem consists of 14 lines of which the last two are set off by white space. Although there is no consistent rhyme scheme (which Dickinson's poetry rarely employs), the form recalls the sonnet tradition. While lines 1-12 are about a certain action and the impact of that action of an unnamed "he" towards an addressee "you"—whose soul is sometimes the subject of the action—lines 13-14 involve neither "he" nor "you." Instead, the last lines are a general statement about winds and forests, both of which are generic mass nouns. Furthermore, they describe something that can maybe best be explained by the natural phenomenon of a storm. This sudden change from referential statements to general statements and from emotional experience to natural phenomeon might seem to violate the maxim of relevance: the last two lines not only introduce a new topic that does not seem to have anything to do with the preceding lines, but also neglect characterising the two main referents "he" and "you" further. Relevance seems not to be observed and thus this is a candidate for flouting of the relevance maxim. In a situation such as (7), hearers would have to find extra-linguistic reasons for this change in topic that can be derived through the immediate context in which the sentence is uttered, for example the unexpected presence of the individual that has just been spoken about badly. In our poetic case here, however, we as readers do not have such contextual knowledge at our disposal and thus cannot explain the meaning of the last lines in such a way. But as the following discussion will reveal, we do not *need* to have access to such a context. By applying *FictionalAssert* on the global level of the text, we will show that it is possible to establish a connection between the first and the last part of the poem, and see the contribution of the last lines as relevant and even necessary for the interpretation of the text as a whole.

As mentioned above, the poem alludes to the structure of a sonnet. In the English sonnet tradition, the final two lines appear in the form of a rhyming couplet and are set off from the preceding three quatrains; their function is to comment, summarise, or conclude the poem. In "He fumbles at your soul," we find this structure recalled. Superficially, the last two lines do not relate to the rest of the poem at all: the switch from the description of what happens between "he" and "you" (and "your Soul" respectively) to what appears to be a general, abstract statement not tied to either referent previously mentioned seems puzzling unless we keep the sonnet form in mind. Here, the concluding lines of the poem coincide with the poem's *volta*: "the 'turn' that introduces into the poem a possibility for transformation" (Levin xxxix). They summarise the preceding action using the image of a storm.

To demonstrate how we arrive at this relation between what the last two lines say and the description of a storm, we turn to a semantic analysis of lines 13 and 14. Here, on a literal level of text, we would not be able to get at a meaningful interpretation due to the selectional restrictions of the individual elements of the sentence:

(38)   When winds take forests in their Paws – the Universe – is still –
(39) $[[winds]] = \lambda x. x$ are winds.[4]
(40) $[[paws]] = \lambda x: x$ is a proper subpart of animal anatomy. x are paws.

The semantics of paws (as given in(40)) and the semantics of winds (as given in (39)) cannot be combined with winds being the subjects that take something in their paws – as a compositional interpretation will result in the violation of the selectional restrictions of paws. However, we as readers do not reject this sentence as uninterpretable. As before, we assume that the speaker is cooperative and intends to communicate something by this mismatched subject-predicate pair. By reinterpretation, we can resolve the selectional mismatch. One way would be to assign a meaning to winds where they are personalized as an animal-type being. But that does not fit well with the object of the taking in the paws-event, namely the forests. Accordingly, we would have to reinterpret forests as well. This

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[4] This is a simplified version of how to capture mass nouns and plural morphology.

version thus does not seem plausible and we will reject it. We will reinterpret the predicate "take in the Paws" instead into a meaning that preserves the roughness of the event:

(41)　　[[take in the paws]] = λx. λy. x shakes y in a rough manner.
(42)　　[[take in the paws]] (forests) (winds) = winds shake forests in a rough manner.

Applying the property of shaking something in a rough manner to the subject and object of the sentence results in the meaning given in (42). This shaking-event can be seen as a description of a storm, in which strong winds violently shake the trees in a forest.

　　　　Going back to the first twelve lines of the poem, we begin to realize that the action of some "he" towards the "you" is described using terms taken from the same semantic field as the storm in the last two lines: "fumbling" in the beginning describes the same way of rough handling that the predicate "take in the paws" does. Similarly, the "ethereal blow" and the "imperial thunderbolt" are also ways to describe a thunderstorm. Thus, the action acted out by the "he" towards the "you" is to be seen in analogy to the action acted out by "winds" towards "forests." Both the first part and the last part of the poem describe some actions that refer to one and the same action in the reader's evaluation world, using different imagery. The storm that is described in the last lines as a sensuous experience seems to be a metaphorical or inner storm within the soul of the addressee in the first part of the poem. This inner storm cannot be observed from the outside, but takes place within the addressee; similarly, a universe may be still while storms are raging on, as it is not affected by them. This correspondence between the macrocosm on the level of the universe and the microcosm on the level of the addressee and her soul points us to the purpose of the closing two lines. They conclude it by giving a concise parallel image of natural phenomena that can best capture the complex nature of the relationship between the "he" and the "you" in the first part of the poem. *Volta*-like, they transform one image into another. Thus, different from Grice's treatment of relevance violations where the statement itself is not relevant for the context, here, the seeming violation of relevance points us towards how the two lines are relevant for the overall text meaning. Thus, the literal level of the two lines bridges the imagery of a storm to the previous lines. Once again, the speaker is maximally informative on the global level of text.

　　　　When applying the pragmatic step *FictionalAssert*, readers will have to find values for "he" and "you" in their own evaluation world, given that those two are individuals whose relationship is described as the rough shaking of forests by winds. Possible referents would thus be a hierarchically superior individual for "he" that has a strong impact on the addressee – who could be identified as the reader herself. Referents for the superior "he" could be God, or a partner in an unequal relationship. For demonstration purposes, a very simple-minded and inexhaustive example of a value for R could look like this:

(43)　　$\forall w$[[[(37)]] (w) & w is maximally to @ otherwise → counterpart (he_w) ($God_@$) & counterpart (add_w) ($reader_@$) & (impact (he_w)(add_w)) ≈ storm & counterpart (impact (he_w)(add_w)) (impact ($God_@$)($reader_@$))]

(44)　　Worlds in which the relationship between a certain (male) individual and the addressee is described as having the same strong impact as a storm, where the winds shake forests roughly, stand in relation R to the evaluation world, such that God/a superior partner has an equally strong impact on the reader

Though this paraphrase remains very schematic and leaves out a more exhaustive and detailed analysis, we can see that the maxim of relevance, which appeared to be flouted before, is being observed on a global level of text, and that establishing the relevance of the last two lines is necessary for the overall interpretation of the poem. The poem's form contributes to finding a connection between the first part of the poem and the last two lines and our knowledge of genre and different types of poetry helps inform this relation. Once again we see that it is necessary to take into account the text type By considering every statement given in the poem as a contribution to the overall meaning of the text, we see how the last two lines are relevant to the overall text interpretation instead of communicating

something completely different from the literal meaning, as was the case with Grice's example for flouting of the relevance maxim. Thus, once again we see that the speaker is cooperative in the last two lines of the poem and no maxim is flouted.

3.4   Overview over further examples

In the following poems, *apparent flouting* emerges as discussed above. Detailed analyses are provided in the corresponding references:
> (45)
>> a.   "To pile like thunder" (Emily Dickinson, J1247): *Apparent Flouting* of Quality (see a detailed analysis of the poem in Bauer et al 2010)
>> b.   "I'm Nobody" (Emily Dickinson, J288): *Apparent Flouting* of Quality (see a detailed analysis of the poem in Bauer et al (submitted))
>> c.   "The Canonization" (John Donne): *Apparent Flouting* of Manner (see an analysis in Bauer et al (2013))

Using the three examples analyzed in depth and the examples that were not discussed because of lack of space, we have demonstrated that *apparent flouting* is a mechanism that is used systematically as a tool to arrive at a complex text interpretation. This mechanism can be found across maxims (see our examples and the examples listed in (45)), even though *apparent flouting* of manner and quality may be more frequent. *Apparent flouting* also enriches our understanding of the relation between text-type and pragmatics in that it provides evidence for a global impact of pragmatic mechanisms on the level of text. This has to be seen as an addition to the recent literature on implicature, which focuses on the fact that implicatures can arise locally, below the level of the text (Chierchia et al 2012). The relevant factor for the availability for local versus global interpretation processes is text-type.

3.5   Discussion

By applying the speech act operator *FictionalAssert* on a global level of text, pragmatic mechanisms apply as usual in fictional discourse. However, the specific nature of fictional discourse that requires a more complex speech act operator gives rise to the additional, until now unobserved effect of *apparent flouting*. .
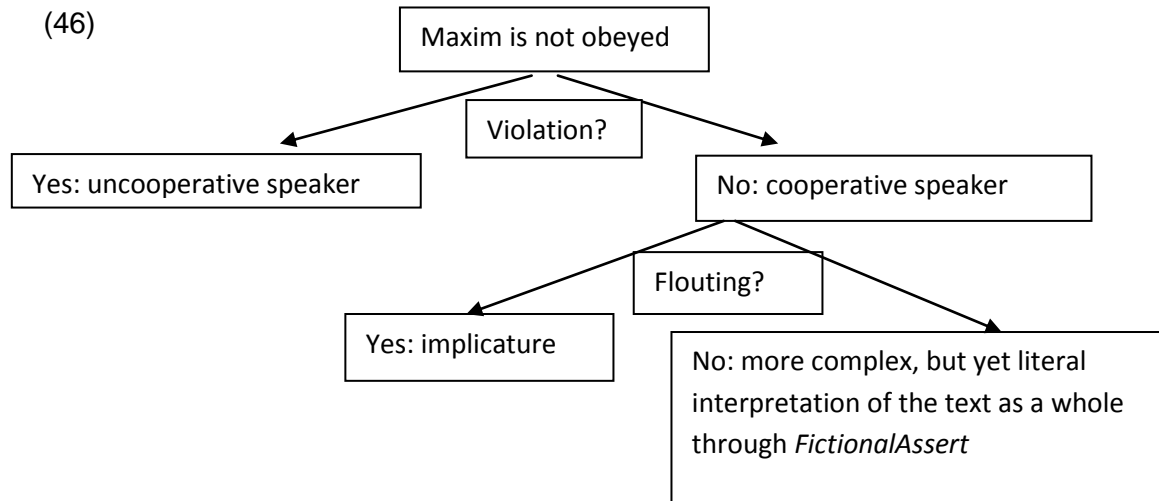
Our analysis indicates that it is not fictionality per se that triggers *apparent flouting* but rather the effect of a specific speech act operator that captures non-assertion.

Additionally, we have seen that the relation R plays a specific role within *FictionalAssert* and thus also for *apparent flouting*: First, the relation R establishes the relevance of the text for the actual world; second, it determines how the different readings of the text interact with each other. It is through R that what seems to be a violation or implicature on the sentential level can be considered cooperative on a global level of text. Furthermore, R reveals that all available readings of a text are equally important for an overall interpretation of the text. Further research on a more specific analysis of R will follow.

4   Conclusion

To summarise, even though Grice's assumptions about implicatures are correct, in poetry, they have to be refined in order to account for the specific context-update and the complexity

of the text meaning itself. We have found a necessary addition to Grice's theory that is able to explain cases of *apparent flouting*. As seen in the diagram below, the present paper brought to light a yet unobserved possibility to deal with what, on the surface, looks like flouting: instead of automatically triggering implicatures, we see that, in poetry, what seems to be flouting is in fact a literal interpretation of the poem on a global level of text.

(46)

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                        ┌──────────────────────┐
                        │  Maxim is not obeyed  │
                        └──────────────────────┘
                    ╱         Violation?         ╲
   ┌────────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────┐
   │ Yes: uncooperative speaker │      │   No: cooperative speaker  │
   └────────────────────────┘          └──────────────────────────┘
                               ╱        Flouting?        ╲
                  ┌──────────────────┐     ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                  │ Yes: implicature │     │ No: more complex, but yet literal │
                  └──────────────────┘     │ interpretation of the text as a whole │
                                           │ through *FictionalAssert*        │
                                           └──────────────────────────────┘
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In general, implicatures potentially~~can only~~ arise at that point of interpretation where the reader has to apply the pragmatic step – which is updating the context with the information received. In poetry, this happens at a later point than is usually assumed. As soon as the reader is aware that the text they are presented with is fiction, they use a different pragmatic operator than ordinary assertion to make the pragmatic step: They apply *FictionalAssert*. Because of the more complex nature of *FictionalAssert* that requires the reader to find values for R within the text, ambiguities and ellipses are not resolved directly – rather, all possible readings have to be taken as part of the overall text meaning. As we have seen in the examples above, the readings can either be combined via conjunction or disjunction. The relation R inherent in *FictionalAssert* furthermore triggers a reflection process about the relation between the different readings and demonstrates that a global interpretation of text not only tolerates the existence of several readings, but demands it in that the interaction between the readings constitutes the overall text meaning. We therefore see that the same pragmatic mechanisms are at play in fictional discourse. On the pragmatic level in particular, we find that fictional texts serve as a valuable data source for natural language use that demonstrates the whole spectrum of possible uses, rather than being an exception that has to be interpreted separately from other uses of language. Also, this paper highlights that speech act operators like *FictionalAssert* make up elementary parts of pragmatic interpretations of texts. It remains to be further investigated which other speech act operators are generally at play, which restrictions guide their use and what kind of information units they update the context with.

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