Pragmatics, Prague- matics, Metapragmatics: Contextualizing Pragmatic Contexts

DAVID HERMAN

...the complete meaning of a sign cannot be but the historical recording of the pragmatic labour that has accompanied every contextual instance of it; . . . to interpret a sign menas to foresee- ideally-- all the possible contexts in which it can be inserted (Eco 1937 : 706).

1. Analytic and Structuralist Pragamatics

When Charles Morris(1938) isolated syntax, semantics and pragmatics as three interactive dimensions of semiosis, he thought that he was contributing to an international project envisaged by the founding members of the Vienna Circle-- the project, namely, of the unification of the sciences. Ironically, a half- century after Morris specified these three dimensions, and despite his having defined the notions of syntax, semantics and pragmatics in what no doubt seemed to him a highly general and therefore maximally non- controversial manner, consensus about what falls within the scope of each semiotic dimension remains split roughly along the lines of scholars' nationalities. Herman Parret (1983) has shown how ,in general, scholars working in the Anglo Saxon or Peircean ("analytic") semiotic tradition find themselves pitted against scholras in the ("structural") Continental tradition, which began with Saussure, extends through Hjelmslev and perpetuates itself in post- Hjelmslevians like Greimas (23-88).1 Specifically, the dispute between the analytic and structuralist factions centers on the element of dynamism that Peircean semiotics, in constrast to Saussurian/Hjelmslevian semiotics, builds into the very nature of semiosis. As Parret puts it, "[t] the dynamism of the sign relation in Peirce is in fact due to the functioning of the third term, the interpreter, which is simultaneously a sign itself and an essential ingredient of any sign relation " (29)

Thus, whereas Peirce's analytical semiotics evolves "a logic of action " (30), the dyadic concept of the sign operative in structural semiotics produces chiefly " a relational logistics " (30), providing " no perspective either on the dynamism and the creativity of the sign and the meaning process or on the *interpretation* regularities and rules of *inference*" (31) at work in that process. We are as a result left with a seemingly irresolvable dispute, 2 namely, whether semiotics should be viewed as a formal or rather as a functional grammar (36), with the analytic semioticians setting up semiosis on a functional basis, the structural semioticians by contrast urging for signs closed, immanent systematicity. Historically speaking, therefore ,Morris's dream

of a general semiotic, 3 which would provide a metalanguage into which the various subsidiary scientific languages of sign- systems could be translated, never got past the first, rather mundane or empirical stage of translating Saussure into Peircean terms and vice -versa.

Indeed, as Parret's analysis suggests, however we choose to redescribe Morris blithely minimalist definitions of syntax as " the study of the syntactical relations of signs to one another in abstraction from the relations of signs to objects or to interpreters" (13); or of semantics as the study of " the relations of signs to their designate and so to the objects which they may or do denote" (21); it is on Morris' definition of pragmatics as " the science of the relations of signs to their interpreters" (30) that the dispute between analytic and structural semiotics hinges.As Jef Verschueren has shown, on the Continent, but not in the Anglo-American tradition, scholars generally adhere to Morris' view that pragmatics should concern itself with, very broadly speaking, the relation of signs to interpreters (1985: 459). By contrast, the Anglo-American tradition includes within the scope of pragmatic inquiry only such narrowly delimited topics as deixis, implicature, presupposition, speech acts and conversation (459-60).

Here, in fact, we witness a strange chiasmus of sorts. On the one hand, the analytic tradition, which began with Peirce's emphasis on the dynamic contribution of interpreters to the process of communication, attempts how to formalize the constraints that delimit just how much interpreters can so contribute. Thus Grice posits "maxims" that constrain permissible conversational implicatures, and Montague develops a grammar that includes and formalizes deictic terms, or rather the deictic *features* of utterances-- features that Montague defines as "the set of all complexes of relevant aspects of intended possible contexts of use" (Montague 1974: 98). On the other hand, scholarship on the Continent, where semiotics originally bore a formalist impress, now resists specifying in any very exact way the constraints within which context dynamizes communication. Instead, pragmatic inquiry in its continental guise concerns itself with " the huge range of psychological and sociological phenomena involved in sign systems in general or in language in particular" (Levinson 1983: 5; cf. Parret 1983: 10).

We have then a quite complex configuration of disputants, *each* of whom, notwithstanding Parret's analytic, structuralist distinction, distributes semiosis between structure and function, code and interpretant- - but in ostensibly incommensurable ways. In order to rethink the syntax-semantics- pragmatics relation as such, it may therefore prove necessary to reinscribe the very notions of structure and function-- or rather the difference these terms capture--within a less interactable matrix of oppositions. Such a matrix can be marked off, I submit, with an alternative set of

distinction invoked, or at least set into play, by Prague School functionalism: the distinctions of provisional versus eternal or intemporal; focal versus global; *de facto* versus *de jure*. But before I attempt to substantiate the importance of the Prague School in this connection, I should like to sketch in, very briefly, the root- concepts of pragmatics operative within the ongoing debate over what constitutes the proper scope of pragmatic inquiry itself. In talking about the notions of pragmatics informing this debate, I shall not only drop Parret's distinction between the "analytic" versus "structural" traditions, but also shift, by and large (though not entirely), from generally semiotic to more particularly linguistic terms. For recent, and in fact nearly all, work in pragmatics (so-called) has been conducted under the auspices of either linguistics or philosophy of language--although I should like to put off making, at least for the time being, any *general* remarks about the relation of semiotic to philosophico-linguistic inquiry in this connection.4

2. Definitions , Taxonomies

All issues in pragmatic inquiry are, primarily, the range and specific nature of those mechanisms or, as Gazdar terms them, functions by means of which the contexts of language-use help determine the meaning of the sentences used or uttered. Pragmatics attempts not only to establish that, but also to specify how ,a context paired with a sentence produces a (meaningful) utterance. Most broadly, pragmatics attempts to derive a function f_p that can map the domain E (the set of all possible utterances) into the range M (the set of contexts for utterances) (Gazdar 1979: 4-5). This pragmatic "function," in turn, takes on a more or less properly mathematical character--that is, f_p signifies to a greater or lesser degree the relation between mutually dependent variables--in proportion with the degree of indeterminacy imputed to M itself. As we shall see, Prague School functionalism in particular assigns (*de jure*) absolute indeterminacy to M and thus allows for only provisional and highly localized maps--non-generalizable functions, as it were--with which to project the set of all possible utterances onto the set of contexts those utterances might conceivably affect or be affected by.

.   In any event, the broad and therefore quite flexible conception of pragmatics as an attempt to map utterances onto contexts itself remains subject to dispute (see Levinson 1983: 5-35). Lyons (1977), for one, tries to explain away the very notion of pragmatics as a specific mode of inquiry. Lyons resorts to the argument that since working linguists (and, we might add, semioticians) do not always or even often think of themselves as conducting research within the three bomains in question, Morris' dimensions lack even a heuristic or regulative value (119). Yet as for example Gazdar (1979: x; 2-4;89ff., esp. 161-8) and Levinson (1983: 33-35) point out, the

contexts in which language is used supplies language-users with information not derivable just from the syntactic or semantic rules of a language . Thus, whereas syntax and semantics may be necessary conditions for the design and interpretation of sentences, syntactic and semantic features do not suffice to explain how utterances of sentences--utterances specific to a particular place, time and socio- cultural milieu--link up with the meaning of which sentences, semantically speaking, are the bearers (Levinson 1983: 18-9). Sentence-meaning, that is to say, seems to be a function not just of (a) the syntactic rules that determine the design and interpretation of elements coordinated into a meaningful increment of speech; and not just a function of (b) the semantic rules that determine what sort of world- fragment (Parret 1983:9) a given increment of speech bears on; but also a function of (c) the the context in which the utterance, the empirical realization of the abstract or idealized sentence, in fact gets said. But then we still have got to specify how much autonomy or rather instrumentality we should grant to (c) vis-a-vis (a) and (b).

In fact, one way to taxonomize the manifold variants of pragmatic inquiry is to posit a distinction based precisely on the degree of instrumentality assigned to pragmatic constraints. We may distinguish, more specifically, between those who approach the relation of syntax and semantics to pragmatics through what Levinson terms "Pragmatic reductionism," versus those who account for the syntax- semantics-pragamatics relation via "pragmatic complementarism" (Levinson 1985:98) whereas reductionists, making a very strong claim for pragmatics, "seek to show that a systematic pattern of distribution or construction is actually not due to a rule of grammar but rather to a preferred code of use, itself following from a more general principle", complementarists, making a weaker claim, seek "to show that such a systematic pattern, which may or may not be specified by a rule of grammar, is consistent with a pragmatic principle specifying one " (98). I do not have space here to attempt, using Levinson's criterion of reductionism versus complementarism, an exhaustive classification of past and present work done in pragmatics. I shall, however, cite exemplars of each stance toward pragmatics in order to prepare the way for my more substantive claim: namely, that Prague School functionalism, just as it allows us to circumvent any rigid distinction between form and function insemiosis in general, allows us to rethink pragamatic constraints as such outside of the reductionist-complementarist dichotomy in which other accounts of language- as- use remain trapped.

2 .1. Pragmatic Reductionism

Take for instance the pragmatic reductionism evident in Austin (1963[1940]). Disputing the ability of logicism or "ideal-language" philosophy (e.g., Carnap's

logico-syntactical method of analysis) to a dispel a number of problematic features of actual language use, Austin argues that

> The supposed 'ideal' language ... is in many ways a most inadequate model of any *actual* language: its careful separation of syntactics from semantics, its lists of explicitly formulated rules and conventions, and its careful dilimitation of their spheres of operation are all misleading. An *actual* language has few, if any, explicit conventions, no sharp limits to the spheres of operation of rules, no rigid separation of what is syntactical and what semantical. (13)

Although Austin does not use the term "pragmatics" in this context, to the extent that what counts as a syntactic and what as a semantic feature of a given utterance is determined by the use or "situation" of the speech- act ,syntax and semantics may be reduced to pragmatics-- at least at a certain (most fundamental) level of inquiry. As Austin puts it a few pages earlier: the reason why I cannot say 'The cat is on the mat and I do not believe it' is not that it offends against syntactics in the sense of being in some way 'self- contradictory. What prevents my saying it, is rather some semantic convention (implicit, of course), about the way we use words in *situations*" (10). Austin here grounds the principle of non-contradiction itself not (or at least not most basically) in an idealized, logically-purified language to which actual or ordinary" language can at best hope to approximate, but rather in the conventions or implicit rules by which language use is from the start constituted.

Austin's subsumption of syntactic features under implicit semantic conventions, and of semantic conventions under "the way we use words in *situations*," 5 points ahead to the question with which Toulmin, in his aptly- titled *The Uses of Argument* (1958), begins. Toulmin starts by asking "how far logic *can* hope to be a formal science, and yet retain the possibility of being applied in the critical assessment of actual arguments" (3). Extending Austin's analysis of both syntax and semantics into situations, Toulmin applies Austinian reductionism to the realm of formal logic in general, placing in question even the view "that the validity of syllogistic arguments is a consequence of the fact that the conclusions of those arguments are simply formal transformations of their premisses" (118). Instead, Toulmin reinscribes the operation of formal logic within the (largely) jurisprudential concepts of "data, " "Warrant," and "backing." As Toulmin puts it, "Once we bring into the open the backing on which (in the last resort) the soundness of our argument depends, the suggestion that validity is to be explained in terms of formal properties, in any geometrical sense, loses its plausibility(120). But when logical validity itself becomes a matter of the suitabilityof arguments (and steps of arguments) for practical purposes or actual situations, pragmatic constraints acquire, in effect, absolute force. The syntactic and semantic determinants by means of which utterances earn well-

115

formedness and pertinence or fit--such determinants become merely secondary or epiphenomenal. By implication, what makes sense; what counts as meaningful or non- (logically-) absurd sentence or propositional component of a sentence; what figures as semantically appropriate--all this follows from the more fundamental practical or rather pragmatic constraints under which these features of utterances can in the first place be isolated and defined. The limit-case of such a reductionist stance may be stated thus: what you term a syntactic feature of an utterance I may term a semantic one or vice versa; and there are no pre-existent criteria to which we can appeal independently of the practical uses we make of these terms in the process of inquiry or research.

2 . 2. Pragmatic Complementarism

Yet this reduction of syntactic and semantic to pragmatic consideration is flanked by a line of inquiry we may label complementarist, again to use Levinson's nomenclature. The complementarist and reductionist standpoints on pragmatics are-- like formalist versus functionalist approaches to semiosis in general-- at root incommensurable. Parret, for one, points up the incommensurability of the reductionist and complementarist lines in his account of the possible "perversions" of pragmatic inquiry. Indeed, Parret suggests how a complementarist method can pervert not just pragmatics, but syntax and semantics as well. Parret uses "The suffix *icism* in a pejorative way. 'Icisms' postulate sets or relation which do not consist of *interdependent* entities but *isomorphic* ones" (1983: 9). Thus, "syntacticism, " for instance, "is the perversion whereby the sign -function gets a holisitc interpretation--- which destroys any possibilityof realizing the relations between world and sign, and sign and sign-function (11). Syntacticism simply posits complementary relations between signs ,sign- users and the world- fragments signified, instead of specifying how these relations are mutually constraining or interdependent. Likewise, "pragmaticism" "considers [signs] simply to reflect [subjectivity]..."(10). Whereas pragmaticism, semanticism and syntacticism produce merely "juxtaposed" subdisciplines --modes of inquiry that have "only *paratactic* but not functional relationships" to one another-- pragmatics, semantics and syntactics produce, by contrast, "interpenetrating or intermediating "modes or inquiry (11). Parret's study as whole, in fact, attempts to avoid, on the one hand, the one extreme of complementarism-- whereby it becomes impossible (and indeed misguided) to try to establish the degree of instrumentality of pragmatics vis- a- vis syntax and semantics. On the other hand, Parret also studiously avoids the reductionist extreme-- the non- dialectical approach of subsuming any one "subdiscipline" under any of the others.

Eco (1987), as a matter of fact, points out that Morris' initial formulation of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics as "sciences" smacks of complementarism from the start:

> Since every science has a proper object, [Morris'] definition[of e.g. pragmatics as a "science"] risks [transforming] semiotics into a mere confederation of three independent sciences, each of them dealing with three independent objects. In this sense, semiotics becomes a generic label such as' natural sciences.' . . .. (696)

In contrast, Eco himself wants to argue that

> Pragmatics cannot be a discipline with its proper object as distinguished from the ones of semantics and syntactics. . . The object of pragmatics is that same process of semiosis [which] also syntactics and semantics focus under different profiles. But a social and perhaps biological process such as semiosis can never be reduced to one,and only one , among its possible profiles.(697)

Eco's remarks suggest, however, the extreme difficulty of maintaining, in one and the same argument, two basically antithetical commitments : on the one hand, an anti- reductionist commitment to pragmatics as only one "profiles" of signification and/or communication (704), consistent with or complementary to its syntactic and semantic profiles; on the other hand, an anti- complementarist commitment to pragmatics as (more or lesss) instrumental vis- a- vis the syntactic and semantic features of signification and/or communication. This second, anti- complementarist commitment entails that the syntactic or semantic profile of a given utterance *can* (at least at a certain level or stage of analysis) be reduced to the contextual or pragmatic constraints that (at least in part) determine what counts-- what can be isolated-- as a syntactic or semantic feature of that utterance. To say that any adequate or theoretically productive account of the scope and nature of pragmatic inquiry must dialectically balance the anti -reductionist with the anti- complementarist commitments, furthermore, is not to provide any real or at least non-trivial strategy for achieving this crucial balance.

2. 3. Metapragmatics

Indeed, I offer these excerpts from the closely- and often hotly- argued debate over the proper scope and natureof pragmatics not becaue I want to endorse ,from

the outset, either the reductionist or complementarist positions. Rather, I wish to suggest that Prague school functionalism points beyond the ostensibly irresolvable debate I have excepted by displacing the terms of the dispute unto a level, or rather into a conext, where the terms in fact become commensurable. Within this (larger) context, we are newly equipped to reconceptualize two correlative distinctions in terms of which the debate over pragmatics has (at least in effect) been waged: (a) the reductionism- complementarism distincion and (b) the functionalism- formalism distinction. More specifically, through the concepts set into play by Prague School functionalism, we can map(a) into the context of the *de jure- de facto* distinction; and we can map (b) into the context of the provisional- intemporal distinction. To this extent, and by a necessity occasioned (as I discuss below) by the peculiarly reflexive relation of pragmatic rules vis- a -vis contexts as such, I wish to dwell for the moment at a level that might be termed to meta -pragmatic.

I do not mean here, however, to multiply (meta-) levels and generate neologisms gratuitously. Instead, I wish to contextualize, using in particular the Prague School concept of functional context, what it means to say in the first place that context determines meaning, that sentences are but incomplete idealizations of context- bound utterances. The recognition of the importance of context, I want to argue has its own context. In fact, I shall register in this connection the basic impetus for my argument: namely, the pragmatics as such marks of a generalized institution, at work in all language- use, that the indenfinite multiplication (or rather multipliability) of contexts is a condition of possibility for using language to begin with (I here build on the important formulation found in Derrida, 1982[1971] and 1988. On this view, meaning is pragmatically determined because the resolution of meaning to contexts- - more specifically, the resolution of sentence- meanings into utterances uttered in contexts-- is a forever incomplete operation, since a context is by definition always only more or less, never absolutely, specifiable.

Put otherwise, we can always only give, on pain of never completing our list of contextul factors, merely a local specification of context. We can always say only in part what the spatiotemporal, let alone the socio- cultural, context of an utterance is And it is precisely in the Prague School's notion of functional contexts, in which the various functions of an utterance are always only more or less operative-- and more or less operative always only within particular social collectivities-- that we discover a commitment to the indefinite multipliabilityof ontexts. This multipliability of contexts, as Jakobson and Mukarovsky in particular demonstrate, can be delimited only temporarily and provisionally,6 and again always within a further socio-institutional context, by assigning relative dominance to one function of an utterance vis- a- vis its other functions. Thus we might say that the Prague School, admittedly *avant la lettre*, built into its pragmatics, from the start, a meta- pragmatics; or at

least an awareness that, in principle if not at a given moment of analysis, any given portion of the context of an utterance always bears on another portion of that context, any context C_n on context C_{n+1}.

3. Archeology of Speech Acts

In contextualizing the notion of pragmatic context, I shall structure my account, at least to some extent, by means of Mary Louise Pratt's *Towards a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (1977). Pratt's book is important in this connection because, in the first place, it brings into focus a particular variant of pragmatic inquiry (speech- act theory) that still provides the terms in which recent debates over discursive practice, in the broadest sense, have recently been waged debates such as ,for instance, Lyotard's (1988[1983]) and Habermas's (1981) [7]. In the second place, in setting out the possibilities and limits of its own approach to pragmatics, Pratt's text offers an at once suggestive and misleading descriptionof the purported failure of the Prague School to develop a genuinely pragmatic analysis of literary discourse: suggestive, because Pratt's account, by virtue of what it omits, helps us see how Prague School structuralism anticipated the sorts of criticism leveled against speech- act theory (at least in its initial formulation) by Derrida and Lyotard, among others; misleading, because Pratt's account of Prague School structuralism has been influential in scholarly discussion at large, assisting in the trend to assimilate the Prague School either to Russian Formalism or alternatively to French structuralism.[8] Hence my purposes here are at one archeological, for I wish to recover the partially lost legacy of the Prague School vis- a- vis current debates over pragmatics, and more narrowly forensic or argumentative, for I wish to suggest that Prague School functionlism can help us rethink the stakes of speech- act theories in particular and pragmatic inquiry in general.

First, then, let me briefly recount Pratt's argument. Pratt states her basic case thus : "[Taking as my departure-point] the claim that literary discourse must be viewd as a *use* rather than a *kind* of language, I have advanced the hypothesis that a descriptive apparatus which can adequately account for the use of language outside literature will be able to give a satisfactory account of literary discourse as well" (xii). Pratt thus argues that "a socially based use oriented linguistics is a prerequisite toward sealing the breach between formal and sociological approaches to literature "(xix). Indeed, Pratt attributes this breach between the formal and sociological approaches to what she calls" the Poetic Language Fallacy" (6ff), a fallacy that Pratt in turn assigns ,indiscriminately, to both the Russian Formalists and Prague School structuralism . Through the Poetic Language Fallacy, Pratt argues, "the concepts of 'poetic' and 'nonpoetic' (or 'ordinary' or 'everyday,' or 'practical') language were

incorporated by the Russian formalists and the Prague School into the framework of structural linguistics ,as formal linguistic categories "(xii). Furthermore,Pratt notes how such quasi- linguistic categories, applied in particular to poetics, represent not empirically falsifiable divisions of the material under study, but rather a more or less ingenous way of articulating a foregone conclusion. As Pratt, puts it, "the weakness of the 'poetic language' argument immediately surfaces as soon as 'oridnary language' is treated not as a vacuous dummy category but as a real body of data" (25).

Admittedly, this Poetic Language Fallacy, which Pratt further specifies as the postulation of "a separate grammar of poetry which is related analogically to the grammar of language" (11) at large, and the concomitant view that "intrinsic textual properties constitute literariness "(26), does in fact operate, at least at some levels,[9] in Eichenbaum's "Theory of the 'Formal Method'" (1971[1926]). Witness for instance Eichenbaum's claim that" [t] he basis of our position was and is that the object of literary science, as such, must be the study of those specifics which distinguish it from any other material"(831), as well as his mention of " the contrast between poetic and practical language that served as the basic principle of the Formalists' work on key problems of poetics". (832) But-- and this is the point I wan t to stress here" -- even *if* we grant Pratt's assertion that " the Formalists were only interested in the structural properties of literary uttrances" (6);10 and even *if* we grant that the Fromalists in this respect took their cue from Saussurian structural linguistics, which on Pratt's view "does not claim to describe real utterances of any kind but rather the abstract set of rules which underlies real utterances "(7); we need not grant Pratt's elision of the Prague School with the Formalists, nor, therefore, her contention that "Prague School structural linguistics, though it made a point of calling itself 'functional, 'was, like Saussure, almost uniquely concerned with the function of elements within the linguistic system rather than with the functions the language serves within the speech community" (7).

To say that, for instance, Mukarovsky's functionalism is situated (primarliy) upon "the linguistic system" rather than "the speech community" is not just to gloss over important historical differences between the formalist and structuralist movements (Cf note 8.). By misreading Mukarovsky in this fashion— that is by not reading how Mukarovsky's notion of social collectivities contextualizes Pratt's own rather empty or at least unnuanced idea of speech communities— Pratt thereby deflects criticism away from the *de*contextualizing effects of her own (pragmatic) metalanguage. Yet Pratt's is a metalanguage whose very claim to descriptive richness vis-a- vis the object- language, literary discourse, rests in the first place on a painstaking attentiveness to contexts. To anticipate : my point is that although Pratt claims to be developing, in contrast to Mukarovsky and the other members of the Prague

School, a pragmatic metalanguage adequate to the relation between literary discourse and discourse at large, her analysis is vitiated by an infinite regress of meta- pragmatic contexts that Mukarovsky's functional analysis, unlike Pratt's approach, builds into the metalanguage from the start and thereby dispels.

In what follows, therefore, I wish to address not primarily the historical but rather the conceptual or theoretical stakes of identifying the Formalist notion of literariness with in Prague School's commitment to the idea of functionality. Thus, I shall not make it my main business here to knock down what we might very plausibly argue to be the merely straw-man Russian Formalism (and for that matter Prague Structuralism) that Pratt incorporates into her argument- perhaps chiefly for heuristic or rhetorical purposes. Rather, I want, first, to dispute, through a detailed examination of (certain of) Mukarovsky's and Jakobson's remarks in this connection, Pratt's chacterization of functional contexts as merely the notion of literariness in disguise. Second, I wish to show how Pratt's own pragmatics (and other even more broadly speech- act- based approaches to literary and other discrusive practices), with a marked emphasis on use and context, can in turn be construed, meta- prgamatically, as a specific case of that indefinite multipliability of contexts with which Prague structuralism invests language- use in general. As I shall attempt to demonstrate, Prague structuralism generates indefinitely multiple contexts for any and all utterances-- including the utterances constituting pragmatic inquiry itself-- through what may be termed two meta- pragmatic rules: (i) the dialectical interplay of linguistic functions one within another, and thus the dialectical interplay of the sets of pragmatic rules constituting each function; and (ii) the relativization, via the social collectivies in which particular function s arise; not of linguistic functions themselves, but rather of the pragmatic rules by which a given utterance can in the first place be assigned a given function or, in other words, use. 11 These meta- pragmatic rules, I submit, furnish a kind of second- order metalanguage against which certain kinds of pragmatic analysis can be read as an obeject- language-- an object- language that, as formulated, remains unable to resolve certain paradoxes of reflexivity it nonetheless occasions by its very commitment to contexts.

3.1. Functional Contexts

In order to show how the Prague School stimulates such meta- pragmatic considerations, however, let me first discuss how the Prague structuralist notion of functional context in fact prevents, minimally, any overhasty conflation of (a) the Prague School's functionalist analysis of art and literature with (b) what Pratt attributes (indiscriminately) to (all) the Russian Formalists as the Poetic Language Fallacy: the quixotic search for "literariness" or that intrinsic quality or property of

poetic language that differeniates it from so- called ordinary language. Granted-- and to this extent, Pratt's critique of the Prague School is in fact borne out by the texts at issue-- Mukarovsky does in some instances seem to vacillate between, on the one hand, positing merely a difference in degree between poetic and other utterances, and, on the other hand, making poetic utterances a class or sort of language- use different in kind from other sorts or utterance. Thus, in the first section of Mukarovsky's essay "On poetic Language," "Poetic Language as a Functional language and as a Material, "Mukarovsky at one point asserts

> that no single property characterizes poetic language permanently and generally . Poetic language is permanently chracterized only by its function; however, function is only a *mode of utilizing* the properties of a given phenomenon. Poetic language belongs among the numerous other functional languages. . . . . (1977 [1940] : 3-4)

Immediately after this passage, however, Mukarovsky makes the follwoing claim :

> The aesthetic "orientation toward the expression itself," which is, of course, valid not only for linguistic expression and not only for verbal art but for all arts and for any realm of the aesthetic, is a phenomenon *essentially* different from a logical orientation toward expression whose task is to make expression more precise, as has been especially emphasized by the so- called Logical Positivist movement ("Viennese Circle") and in particular by Rudolf Carnap. (4)

Arguably, any approach to language- use that calls itself functionalist cannot legitimately label as "essential" the difference between one "mode of utilizing" language and another mode. Nor is it permissible for a functionalist approach to brand "the Logical Positivist notion of language [as] *completely* different from the notion of language as a means of communication in everyday life" (1977 [1940] : 5, my emphasis). Here Mukarovsky's self- contradictory propositions-- the proposition that we must ground meaning in modes of language- use, versus the proposition that philosophical and communicative uses of language are absolutely distinct, not resolvable into even the same universe of discourse-- bear out Pratt's criticism that "[Mukarovsky] end [s] up maintaining a difference in kind and denying it at the same time" (26). For once we grant a difference in kind between the use to which language is put in logico- syntactical analysis and the use to which it is put in communicative situations at large, it is but a short step to the dreaded Poetic Language Fallacy.

Yet I should like to insist ,in turn that there is a difference in kind between, on the one hand, locating inconsistencies in Mukarovsky's functionalist argument,

and, on the other hand, resolving the functionalist position itself back into the view to which Prague school (poly) functionalism is manifestly opposed: the view, namely, that utterances are bestowed with intrinsic properties, of a given sort, even apart from the contexts-- and in particular the speech communities or, in Mukarovsky's parlance, "Collectivites"-- in which the utterances are designed and interpreted. To be sure ,both Holenstein(1979: 10-11) and Steiner (1982: 198-99) have identified the monofunctionalism evident, for example, in the Russian Formalist Leo Jakubinsky's 1916 essay "On the Sounds of Poetic Language"-- a restricted or very limited functionalism that, as Holenstien notes, merely redescribes in slightly different terms "den Unterschied zwischen gewohnlicher und poetischer Sprache in finaler Perspektive" (11). For Jakubinsky, "practical " versus "poetic" language may be distinguished on the basis of whether the means of expression in each case are wholly subordinated to the communicative function ,or whether conversely the means of expression are accorded independent value, negatively defined against the commmunicative function (See, however, note 10.). We seem infact to witness here, in the clear- cut opposition between communicative and non- or extra- communicative (poetic) function, that covert redescription of literariness with which Pratt identifies functionalism generally.

Even in the Prague School 's 1929 "Theses" 12 we find evidence to support Pratt's criticism that what should be a commitment to functional gradualism-- a mere difference in degree between different uses of language-- all too often mainfests itself as a commitment to generic differences of kind-- either- or distinctions-amongst sorts of utterance. Thus, in the thesis "On the Functions of Language, the members of the Prague school assert that "[i] n its social role one must distinguish speech according to its relation to extralinguistic reality. It has either a communicative function, that is, it is directed toward the object of expression, or a poetic function that is, it is directed towards the expression itself" (in Steiner 1982: 12). Accordingly, continues the thesis," [i] t is advisable to study those forms of speech in which one function totally predominates and those in which manifold functions interpenetrate" (12, my emphasis). In the first clause of this latter sentence, the Prague School seems to be hedging its bets against precisely that manifold interpenetration of functions which the second clause of the sentence makes room for--- an interpenetration that in turn points beyond what, I am quite ready to grant Pratt, can only be a spurious distinction between poetic and ordinary language.[13]

But other, more developed accounts of functional contexsts by the Prague School do not prove so susceptible to Pratt's attack on literariness or rather the poetic language Fallacy. I have in mind both Mukarovsky's extended analysis, in a number of different texts, of the role of the aesthetic function vis- a- vis the other functions, and also the well -known six- function schema set out, long after the official demise of the Prague School, in Jakobson's "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics"

(1960). It is not just that these polyfunctionalist accounts make it impossible to distinguish between literary and non- literary discourse in any absolute or generic sense. By the same token, through what I have identified as two meta -pragmatic rules-- (i) the dialectical interplay of functions and (ii) the relativization of the pragmatic rules by which functions are assigned to particular utterances within particular soical collectivities-- through these two rules, Jakobson and Mukarovsky also, in effect ,multiply indefinitely the contexts within which a given utterance is in principle operative at a given time t_a, as well as the contexts within which an utterance will potentially be operative, or has possibly been operative ,at time t_{n+1} or t_{n-1}. By focusing on the more developed Prague School functionalism that Pratt fails to give its due, I shall now move toward a further specification of just these meta- pragmatic rules: rules that not only give Prague School functionalism a descriptive power beyond that of the speech- act model as such, but also suggest how, specifically because of its bearing on the pragmatic dimensions of language-use, Prague School structuralism can neither be too quickly aligned with other structuralsims, nor too readily set over against a *post*structuralism whose concerns the Prague School had in many respects already articulated.

3.2 Metapragmatic Rules: Jakobson

In (1960), Jakobson states at the outset that

> Language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions. Before discussing the poetic function we must define its place among the other functions of language. An outline of these functions demands a concise survey of the constitutive factors in any speech event ,in any act of verbal communications (353).

Jakobson, at roughly the same time as J. L . Austin's post- Wittgensteinian researches, here builds on the rudimentary theory of speech acts already in place in Karl Buhler's *Sprachtheorie* (1934)- - on the attempt, which Holenstein associates with the Prague School in general as well as Buhler, " to coordinate the functions of the constitutive components of speech- events and to anchor those functions in such speech-occurrences. "13 But Jakobson is also careful to stress the poly or multi- functionality of any given utterance: its constitutive dependence on a field of interpenetrating functions; its status as a speech- act whose effects, far from being delimitable by the rule -system proper to, say, the referential function alone, distribute themselves, in fundamentally indefinite quantities or magnitudes, *among* the other linguistic functions in which the speech -act is (simultaneously) either in fact or in pricniple engaged. As Jakobson puts it,

Although we distinguish six basic aspects of language, we could, however, hardly find verbal messages that would fulfil onlyone function. The diversity lies not in a monopoly of some on of these several functions but in a different hierarchical order of functions. The verbal structure of a message depends primarily on the predominant function. But even though a set *(Einstellung)* toward the referent, an orientation toward the *context-* - briefly the so-called *referential,* "denotative," "cognitive" function- - is the leading task of numerous messages, the accessory participation of the other functions in such messages must be taken into account (353).

Insofar as Jakobson emphasizes "the [potential] accessory participation of the other functions" in each particular manifestation of linguistic function, his model avoids driving a wedge of generic or absolute difference between literary and non -literary discourse and thereby falling victim to the Poetic Language Fallacy.

Indeed, Pratt's critique of Jakobson in this connection reveals the antinomy --the delimitation of contexts by context- based analysis --on which speech- act models for pragmatic inquiry must inevitably founder. Pratt, in commenting on the polyfunctionalist view Jakobson here articulates, in effect reverses direction and faults Jakobson, it seems, formaking *too* gradual the distinction between the various uses to which language can be put. Pratt suggests that the descriptive power of Jakobson's model suffers in part because, for Jakobson," there seems to be no one set of linguistic properties in terms of which the six functions are distinguished and related," and in part because "there are some important types of verbal structure for which the model does not attempt to account" (31). But in the one case, Pratt, assuming a set of linguistic properties prior to or more fundamental than the functions or uses to which language is put, seems to contradict her own professed desire to redefine so-called kinds of language by appeal to the context or use of utterances typically associated with that " one set of linguistic properties" Pratt here seems to retract her own concerted opinion that "with any utterance, the way people produce and understand [it] depends" not on lingusitc properties against which the various possible functions of the utterance may be defined, but rather "on unspoken, culturally-shared knowledge of the rules, conventions, and expectations that are in play when [the utterance] is used in [a particular] context" (86). In the other case, Pratt, criticizing Jakobson's model to the extent that it does not account for certain kinds of verbal structure, seems to conflate with the *de jure* generative power of a theoretical model the particular applications that have, in fact, been generated from that model. In this respect, too, we witness, on the part of one who wishes to dissolve meaning into use, a certain baffling tendency toward reifying the achieved reuslts of a theory, instead of addreṣsing the possible applications or uses of it .

But the singlemost revealing criticism Pratt ventures in this connection is that, vis- a-vis the poetic function, Jakobson "does not provide any criteria for determining when [the] presence [of the poetic function] has reached the point of dominance" (33). Such criteria, however, presuppose not a mobile interpenetration of the functional contexts in which any given utterance participates-- not a continuously shifting configuration of functions comprising, at all times, accessory functions-- but rather a static structure of functional relations to which one and the same set of criteria can be applied, over and over agian, in order to determine the dominance of this or that particular function. The demand for such criteria, as I see it, constitutes a demand for (fixed) language -kinds versus (unfixed) language- uses. Thus, meta- pragmatically speaking, Pratt's particular mode of pragmatic inquiry--even in setting out its object and specifying its limits-- counter mands its own avowed intention to meet "the need for a contextually based approach to texts. " Pratt instead embarks on the dubious mission of developing context-free criteria with which to describe, classify and to some extent predict context- bound instances of utterances. Pratt's analysis does not answer the imperative, of peculiar force in pragmatics, to maintain a homology of context -boundedness between the metalanguage and the object language; whereas Jakobson's metalanguage-- in that very inability to "deduce" "a text's function" from "a text's intrinsic properties" which Pratt criticizes (31)-- by contrast meets the double imperative of specifying both pragmatic and meta-pragmatic contexts.

3.3 Metapragmatic Rules. : Mukarovsky

At this point, however, in order further to clarify the meta-pragmatic yield of Jakobson's stress on the accessory participation of functions one within another, it may prove helpful to move backward chronologically and examine Mukarovsky's analyses of the aesthetic function and function in general. This is because Mukarovsky analyses quite transparently couple the first meta-pragmatic principle-- namely, the intersection or rather interpaly of various functions-- with the second such principle-- namely, the binding of functional configuration to particular, historically- specific social collectivities. Indeed, as Mukarovsky's functionalism suggests, the two meta-pragmatic rules at issue might alternatively be chracterized as, in the first place, a rule for the indefinite multiplication of the *modal* contexts of a given utterance distributed *among* an indefinite number of rules for use at any given time; and, in the second place, a rule for the indefinite multiplication of *temporal* contexts for a given utterance distributed *across* an undefined number of functional configurations-- these configurations being indexed, in turn ,to an undefined number of past, present and (possible) future soical collectivities. Together, in fact, the two meta- pragmatic rules I am eliciting from Prague School functionalism capture both that difference

and that deferral which, in another context, Derrida assigns to the structure of signification in general :"*[di]fference* as temporization, *difference* as spacing"(1976[1968]:9).

But I am perhaps getting ahead of myself. For the moment I shall restrict myself to assembling a number of Mukarovsky's polyfunctionalist statements. First, we have those statements or propositions which issue the imperative of interpenetrating functions. In his essay on "The Place of the Aesthetic Function among the Other Functions, " for instance, Mukarovsky, proposing to "revise" the (monofunctionalist [37]) emphasis hitherto at work in "functional architecture and functional linguistics" (34-5), confirms that

> We are not concerned with the aesthetic as a static property of things, but with the aesthetic as an energetic component of human activity. For this reason we are not interested in the relation of the aesthetic to other metaphysical principles, such as the true and the good, but in its relation to other motives and goals of human activity and creation. (1978[1942]: 32-33)

In consequence, as Mukarovsky observes in the same essay, " there is not an insurmountable difference between practically and aesthetically oriented activities" (34); in consequence, too,

> not even the most ordinary colloquial speech is, in principle, devoid of the aesthetic function. And so it is with all other human activities.... In brief, we shall find no sphere in which the aesthetic function is essentially absent; potentially it is always present; it can arise at any time . It has no limitation, therefore, and we cannot say that some domains of human activity are in principle devoid of it, while it belongs to other in principle. (35)

Indeed, claims Mukarovsky, "there are cultural forms [like "folklore culture"]... in which functions-- among them, of course, the aesthetic-- are almost indistinguishable from one another, in which they appear with every act as a compact bundle... (36). And if "[a]ny function, not just the one which the acting subject ascribes to his [or her] act or creation, can always be evoked " (36-7), then Mukarovsky is quite justified in drawing a broader "conclusion pertaining to functions in general" : the conclusion, namely, that "can be formulated as the basic polyfunctionality of human activity and the basic omnipresence of functions" (37).

Propositions of this class-- propositions about the polyfunctionality not just of linguistic utterances but of all human activity, and about the impossibility, therefore, of indexing a single function to a given activity or utterance-- may be found throughout

127

Mukarovsky's corpus. Thus, in the essay "On the Problem of Functions in Architecture," Mukarovsky asserts that [e] very act in which an object is used can simulataneously pursue more than one purpose " (1978[1937-8]: 237), and that " there are potentially present in every act and its result functions other than those which the act obviously fulfils" (239). More poetically, if I can risk that term here, Mukarovsky in describing the aesthetic function in particular as "always potentially present, waiting for the least opportunity for revival" (244), goes on to suggest that the aesthetic function clings closely to and follows the other functions just as space fills up with air everywhere that an object has withdrawn, or just as darkness penetrates a fold of space from which light has retreated " (244). Similarly, in his analysis of "Poetic Reference," Mukarovsky reiterates that "the boundary separating the aesthetic function from practical functions is not always apparent, and, in particular, it does not coincide with the dividing line between art and other human activities. Even in a fully autonomous artisitc expression, practical functins are not entirely suppressed" (1976[1936]:158).

Finally, in his book -length study of *Aesthetic Function ,Norm and Value as Social Facts* (1970[1936]), Mukarovsky opens with an analysis of the aessthetic function that provides us with a transition from ,on the one hand, the set of propositions in which Mukarovsky points out the indefinability, in the modal sense, of the aesthetic function vis- a -vis the other possible or actual functions of acts or uttrances; to, on the other hand, the set of propositions in which Mukarovsky distributes functions indefinitely across different temporal contexts. Restating that there is no definite border line between the aesthetic and the extra aesthetic (1); and that [t]he aesthetic sphere develops as a whole and is ,in addition, constantly related to those aspects of reality which ,at a given point in time, do not exhibit the aesthetic function at all" (19); Mukarovsky clarifies thus: "There are no object or actions which, by virtue of their essence or organization would, regardless of time, place or the person evaluating them,possess an aesthetic function and others which, again by their very nature, would be necessarily immune to the aesthetic function" (1-2).

We have, accordingly, those propositions of Mukarovsky's which enjoin us to relativize the fit between functions and things (artifacts, utterances, etc.). This relativization proceeds vis -a- vis the temporal or, more broadly speaking-- to use a term with modal as well as temporal dimensions-- the socio- cultural contexts in which the fit between functions and things is to be determined. As Mukarovsky puts it in (1970[1936]),

> the aesthetic function manifests itself only under certain conditions, i.e.
> in a certain soical context. A phenomenon which, in one time, period,
> country, etc ,was the privileged bearer of the aesthetic function may

128

be incapable of bearing this function in a different time, country, etc....
As soon as we change our perspective in time, space, or even from
one social grouping to another (e.g from one [social] stratum to another,
one generation to another, etc) we find a change in the distribution of
the aesthetic function and of its boundaries. (3,5)

Hence, if "the aesthetic function is ,in itself, neither a real property of an object
nor explicitly connected to some of its properties"; and if the "aesthetic function of
an object is likewise not totally under the control of an individual ...";then we must
conclude that" stabilizing the aesthetic function is a matter for the collective and is
a component in the relationship between the human collective and the world, and
that" any given distribution of the aesthetic function in the material world is tied to
a particular social entity" (18). Further, in his analysis of "The Problem of Functions
in Architecute", Mukarovsky explicitly links the dialectical interplay of functions
with the specificity of the temporal contexts in which the configuration or structural
bond of functions is located. As Mukarovsky puts it, because of the dominance of
the structural bond among functis over individual functions it is sometimes possible
to identify one and the same function in two different historical or social contexts
·only with great difficulty" (1978[1937-38]:238). Inescapably, we have a given" set
of functions [both] lodged in the awareness of the collective and bound by internal
interrelations into a structure " (237). Hence ,if within a certain structure of functions
"an object can change its conventional function in the course of time, "this temporal
variability of functions in turn derives, on the one hand, [from] the collective that
associates certain functions with a particular object and ,on the other hand, [from]
the individual who uses the object for his personal aims and largely determines this
usage" (237). Indeed, the dialectical antinomy, as it were, between individual and
collectivity, with the individual introducing "a constantly renewed structure of
accidentality into the functional process and thus [setting][a given] structure of
functions into motion"(237), insures that the manner in·which a soicial collectivity
embodies a functional configuration can be determined on only a momentary basis.
What you call art, for instance, we do not; yet in a moment, under the right kind
of (peer) pressure, we may have to grant your point, and thereby extent (once again)
the protean domain of the aesthetic function.

4. Prague-matics

I should like to turn now, finally, to a more considered analysis of what I hope
I have not too disingenuously termed the meta- pragmatic rules 14 under which may
be subsumed the two sets of propositions I have isolated from Mukarovsky's corpus.
We can look at the matter as follwos. On the one hand, from those propositions
with mainly a synchronic or modal bearing on pragmatic (i.e, functional) contexts

we may derive meta- pragmatic rule (i): namely, that it is impossible to rule out in principle the accessory participation of one (or more) linguistic or indeed generally behavioral function in another such function. On the other hand, from those propositions with chiefly a diachronic or temporal bearing on pragmatic (i.e. functional) contexts we may derive meta -pragmatic rule (ii): namely, that the function assigned to a given fragment of linguistic or other behavior occuring at time t_n cannot in principle be determined by the application of any one set of functional criteria embedded in a social collectivity at time t_{n+1} (the future) or time t_{n-1}(the past)-- or, indeed, factoring in the additional constraint of rule (i), at time tn (the present) itself.

In my formulation of both rules (i) and (ii), one may notice, I have emphasized the phrase "in principle." Without some such restriction of their scope-- a restriction as I hope I have made clear, Mukarovsky does in fact recommend-- the rules would cease to be meta- pragmatic and instead become pragmatic as such. They would become, more precisely, anti -pragmatic, because they would in effect rule out the very possibility of establishing any ruled or law- governed determination whatsoever of utterances by functions, texts by contexts. Utterances or speech- acts in particular, although perhaps still chracterizable as designed and interpreted in accordance with rules for syntactic well -formedness and semantic pertinence or fit, could not be linked in more than an arbitrary, unspecifiable way to the contexts in which the speech- acts arose. The instrumentality of contextual or pragmatic vis- a- vis syntactic and semantic rules would be, undecidable, either incalculably great or infinitesmally nil, since we should have no verificatin procedure by which establish regularities between certain contexts and certain discursive effects. We should not be able (quickly and efficiently) to distingusih, for instance, between the utterance " I shall kill you" uttered as a joke, and the same utterance spoken in earnest. The limits of the concept of killing out of self -defense would therefore have to be extended to ludicrous proportions, in order to cover the violent reaction of those persons to whom such undecidably ambiguous threats and/or jokes were addressed.

But the point is that Prague School functioinalism does resstrict the scope of what I have designated as their (two) meta- pragmatic rules. In practice, accordingly, it remains possible, in functionalist terms, to establish pragmatic rules for linking utterances with their functions in a given context. Pragmatic rules result in fact from the(always provisional, always temporary) application of the operator "dominance" to a given structure of configuration of functional interrelations . More precisely, dominance marks the place where an illimitable or (truly) global set of functional contexs produce in fact, and because of inescapable pragmatic constraints, local structures of meaning. Dominance, conceived as this sort of operator, thus maps the form- function dichotomy onto the more provisional distinction between determinate or local structure and indeterminate or global functional contexts. The role of

130

dominance in this connection, indeed may best be illuminated by Nietzsche's emphasis on necessarily perspectival judgments ,on falsification and reduction as the very means of comprehension. Nietzsche's perspectivism in effect rests on the claim that, under the pressure and exigency of circumstances, the provisionality of given local structure or local determination of meaning cannot be processed as provisional-- except after the fact. In the same way, Prague School functionalism's meta- pragmatic rules presuppose the *de facto* necessity of dominant functions-- functions that necessarily, due to pragmatic constraints, terminate the *de jure* interminability of the modal and temporal contexts in which any judgment or evaluation or, most broadly, linguistic behavior takes shape (cf. Plotnitsky 1987).

De facto a succinctly- phrased telegram announcing a friends's deathly illness derives , from the context in which it is received ,a rule- based predominance of, to use Jakobson's scheme, the referential over the poetic function. After my firend's recovery, or in light of the possibility of a practical joke, the pragmatic or functional rules by which context (in part) determines the meaning, or rather the dominant function, of the telegram-- these pragmatic rules may then possibly be subject to revision. But --and this is precisely the restriction of scope which Prague School meta- pragmatics imposes or allows-- the potential revisability of a pragmatic rule does not mitigate the imperative in its *de facto* application.

In contrast ,speech -act models of pragmatics suggest that pragmatic rules are applicable at once *de jure* and *de facto*. More specifically, the speech- act models, precisely by forestalling the question whether pragmatic rules might possibly be revisable under certain (pragmatic) constraints or conditions, surreptiously confer *de jure* status on manifestly *de facto* rules and applications of rules. Speech- act approaches, to put it still otherwise, insufficiently modalize and relativize the rules for illocutionary and perlocutionary force-- and in Prattt's case the Gricean principle and maxims of conversational implicature-- bymeans of which speech- act theory stipulates a set of generally- applicable pragmatic rules for the design and interpretation of utterances within literary discourse. Pratt, for instance, makes those pragmatic rules and maxims, together with certain well -delimited violations or rather simple negations of them (152ff), applicable in principle to all possible contexts in which liteary discourse is produced and received. In other words, the (small) degree of context- boundedness Pratt assigns to her own metalanguage is at odds with the (large) degree of context -Boundedness she uses that metalanguage to assign to the object- language at issue; i.e., literary discourse. Paradoxically, Pratt's model implies that by permuting a limited number of relatively context- free pragmatic rules in order to describe a limited number of ruled forms of linguistic behavior, all possible kinds or degrees of context- boundedness can be specified, no matter what the

131

complexity of the context or the nature or era of the social collectivity comprising that context.

Yet-- and this is the threshold at which the descriptive power of Prague School functionalism effectively exceeds that of the speech- act model-- it is in principle possible for a (sufficiently complicated or polyfunctional) utterance to confound, at any given moment, a given typology of, say, perlocutionary force (Derrida 1988). The ancient Greek's apotropaic uttrances, for instance, sought to avert evil precisely by invoking it. Likewise, from the temporal standpoint, is it *de jure* possible for one and the same utterance, whatever its topic, to have more or less illocutionary force before and after the discovery of ,say ,a new planet in a solar system thousands of light years away-- or simply before and after the addressor or addressee gives way suddenly to a mood of boredom or impatience or depression. These sorts of examples can be extended indefinitely and across all moses of utterance; in particular, the *de jure* illimitable role of context in the productrion and reception of specifically literary utterance can be, on Pratt's own terms, no less instrumental than it is in connection with discourse at large. But what the examples point up in general is that Pratt's speech- act metalanguage is insuffficiently context- bound or , to put it another way, too idealized; it abstracts away from certain kinds of contexts, with the result that the metalanguage fails to exemplify that degree of context- boundedness on the strength of which the speech -act model claims to surpass, to explain more than, other, over-idealized metalanguages-- such as, for instance, the Formalists' and (sic) Prague structuralists' "literariness" metalanguage.

In any case, pragmatics is, given its peculiar relation to context- boundedness, under special obligaton not to extend-- although speech- act theory does extend-- the scope of its rules so far that only certain kinds of contexts, and not all possible contexts, are in principle allowable as pragmatic constraints. Speech- act analysis overextends the scope of its pragmatic rules not only by restricting the kinds of contextual factors subject to analysis, but also by failing to build into its metalanguage supplemactary or meta -pragmatic rules that capture the *de jure* revisability of any given working pragmatic maxim or norm. Prague School functionalism, however, restricts the scope of pragmatic rules (applicable *de facto*) by means of meta-pragmatic rules, which are in turn restiricted by a merely *de jure* applicability. Functionalist pragmatic rules, as a result, provide pragmatic inquiry neither with too much nor with too little data subject to analysis. By the same token, Prague School functionalism avoids the Scylla of reductionism and the Charybdis of complementarism,.

In general, the speech- act metalanguage, instantiated in particular in Pratt's analysis, conflates *de facto* with *de jure* applications of pragmatic rules; it confuses

what, on the one hand, can provisionally be termed the most pertinent contextual features constraining a given utterance, with what, on the other hand, might possibly be termed the most pertinent contextual features constraining an utterance. This conflation in turn generates meta- pragmatic paradoxes, since speech- act theory does not build into its metalanguage supplementary rules by which the inalienable reflexivity of all pragmatic claims can be projected onto an overarching sphere of revisability, a meta- context that remains, by its very nature, open- ended. By contrast, Prague School functionalism does develop, at least implicitly, such supplementary rules for the indefinite multipliability of contexts-- and does so some thirty to forty years before Derrida's analysis of intentionality into iterability,or Lyotard's analysis of Habermasian universal pragmatics into an illimitable heterogeneity of context-specific "differends." Thus, although Pratt for one attempts to supersede Prague School functionalism through pragmatics, Prague School functionalism supresedes any overly narrow pragmatics with an implied meta- pragmatics-- or, more simply, a Prague- matics. 15.

Notes and References

1. In her "Introduction" to Gerard Deledalle's *Charles S., Peirce*, Susan Petrilli makes the same sort of distinction but uses slightly different nomenclature. What Parret calls structural semiotics Petrilli links with Saussurean " Semiotics of the code and message" ;what Parret labels analytic semiotics Petrilli associates with Peirce's "semiotics of interpretation" (1990: xi-xii). But Petrilli's formulation of this distinction, unlike Parret's, underscores the interesting overlap between Peircean semiotics and Bakhtin's dialogic theories of discourse. As Petrilli puts it, whereas "[c] ode semiotics does not provide adequate instruments for the description of heteroglossia, plurivocality, ambiguity, and semantic wealth of signs" (xii), Peircean semiotics foregrounds precisely these (Bakhtinian) features of sign, making "of semiosis an open process dependent upon the potential creativity of the interpretant. In this case, semiosis is not guaranteed by appeal to a code given that the code... [does] not subsist outside the interpretive process" (xiii).

2. Parret's study strives as a whole to "homologate" the analytic and structuralist approaches to semiotics by interposing a sufficiently broad (or perhaps electric) notion of semiosis itself between the "form function- dichotomy" (1983:40). In Parret's view,

> semiosis is a [*tertium quid between*] *significance* and *communicability* rather than either the domain of the formal or of the functional separately (with their respective residues). It all comes down to a categorical refusal to found semiotics by psychology, in which formal meaning is

> the central category, or by sociology, where communication is the primary *explanadum*. Resistance to foundationalism or to the reduction of semiotics as a logic saves us from an unbridgeable dichotomization between formal meaning and communicative meaning, which are two possible but partial domains of semiosis. (40; cf 89-128)

In my own analysis, however, I wish to focus not on the form- function dichotomy as such, but on a separate, more localized issue, which, however, at a certain point links back up with the form-function issue in its larger sense. In particular, I wish to isolate here certain formulations of pragmatic rules-- rules by means of which various utterances have been conceptualized as so many uses or functions rather than kinds or forms of language. In some formulations, I submit, these rules fail to build into a given pragmatic metalanguage the same context- sensitivity imputed by the metalanguage to the object- language. Hence, whereas Parret mediates between formalist and functionalist accounts of language (or meaning), my own analysis isolates, instead, the paradox of pragmatic (e.g., speech- act) metalanguages that propose a functionalist explanation of utterances, but do so by means of highly formalized, maximally context - free "rewrite" rules. Such rules on the one hand dissolve the form- function dichotomy into an overarching functionalism. Yet on the other hand the rules preserve the form- function dichotomy, by reinscribing within a second- order formalism the specific steps of operations by means of which utterances can be accounted for in functionalist terms. My argument is, as we shall see, that Prague School functionalism, with its careful assortment of *de jure* (effectively "meta pragmatic") versus *de facto* (pragmatic) rules, allows us to circumvent the form- function dichotomy altogether.

3. Peirce, of course, exhibits the same high hopes for a general semiotics in (1955[1897-1903]). See too Greenlee (1973:13-22) for an account of how "sign theory for Peirce takes the form of a general theory of meaning" (7).

4. The *locus classicus* of attempts to sort through the claims of linguistic and semiotics (or "semiology") is perhaps Derrida (1976[1967]:51-2).

5. In this respect, Austin's model prepares the way, too for the "functional grammar" Dik develops in (1978). Compare the schema Dik provides, in which the "functional paradigm" is set over against the "formal paradigm" (4-5). Whereas according to the formal paradigm, "syntax is autonomous with respect to semantics; syntax and semantics are autonomous with respect to pragmatics; [and] the priorities run from syntax via semantics to pragmatics;" according to the functional paradigm, "pragmatics is the all- encompassing framework within which semantics and syntax must be studied; semantics is subservient to pragmatics and syntax to semantics; [and] the priorities run from pragmatics via semantics to syntax." Rorty's (1970) account of ideal- language versus ordinary- language

articulates, in specifically philosophical terms, the same formal -functional dichotomy broached by Austin and elaborated in Dik.

6. In fact, with its emphasis on the expedience and provisionality of contexts-- its stress on the impossibility of making global or intemporal determinations of context-boundedness-- Prague School functionalism bears, in general, a striking resemblance to the (classical) pragmatism out of which Morris's Pragmatics stems (see Morris 1938: 29-30). Compare, for instance, James's analysis of "truth" as a mode or aspect of the ongoing process of inquiry :" [t]he truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process: the process namely of verifying itself, its veri -*fication*. Its validity of the process of its valid-*ation*" (1948[1907]:161).

7. For an analysis that places the Lyotard- Habermas dispute in a slightly different context, see my "Modernism versus Postmodernism: Towards an analytic Distinction" (forthcoming in *Poetics Today* 12:1).

8. Even Peter Caws' highly sympathetic Structuralism (1988), to the extent that it attempts to recover the minimal features (as it were) of structuralism, abstract away from the national or intellectual contexts in which particular variants of structuralist inquiry have been embedded. Construing structuralism as "a method for the understanding and analysis of the objects of the human sciences"(258-9, my emphasis), in other words, Caws tends to obscure the important *differentiae specificae* of the various structuralisms-- viz., Czech and French.. Steiner, for one, has stressed the historical implausibility of viewing the relation between Russian Formalism and Prague Structuralism as "a mere transfer of ideas" (1982: 175), and discussed in detail how an indigenous Czech tradition of aesthetic inquiry made the Prague School particularly receptive to only certain of the Formalists' concerns.

9. At other levels, however, Eichenbaum's text does not bear out Pratt's construal of the Poetic Language Fallacy, as for instance when Eichenbaum, in a formulation that sounds strikingly similar to Pratt's call for a "socially- based, use- oriented" approach to literary discourse, makes this claim.: "The facts of art demonstrate that art's uniqueness consists not in the parts which enter into it but in their original *use*" (834).

10. By no means should we concede this point to Pratt without hesitation, especially if we take Pratt to mean that interest in the "structural properties of literary utterances" excludes interests in the functional context of such utterances. As · Steiner (1982) points out, already in his earliest (1921) text (on Xlebnikov), Jakobson stresses the polyfunctionality of all utterances-- whereby the "functional classification [of a given utterance] is not simply a matter of the presence or absence of a particular function, but of the hierarchy in the functions co- present"

(199). While still a formalist, therefore, Jakobson places the quality or property literariness within a polyfunctional matrix that tends, from the start, to make properties parasitic on functions, the "structure" of utterances on their use. Further more, whereas both Holenstein and Steiner construe Jakubinsky as a sort of exemplary monofunctionalist, even he demonstrates, in the passage Eichenbaum (1971[1926]:832) and then Holenstein and Steiner isolate, what might be interpreted as polyfunctionalist tendencies. Thus, in describing poetic versus practical language, Jakubinsky refused to make the distinction a difference in kind: for it is "linguistic systems... in which the practical purpose is in the background (although perhaps not entirely hidden) "that constitute poetic language (my emphasis; Steiner's translation: "linguistic systems... in which the practical aim retreats to the background... "[1982:198]; Holenstein's: sprachliche *systeme*... in denen das praktische Ziel Zweitrangig wird (obschon es nicht ganz verschwindet)" [1979:11)

11. As I shall discuss later, I wish to stress that(i) highlights the synchronic or modal dimensions of pragmatic rules, whereas (ii) highlights the diachronic or temporal dimensions of such rules. Of course, (ii) does not only bear on diachrony or the change of functions over time: after all, different social collectivities in different parts of the world at one and the same time may, and probably most often do, ascribe different functions to a given utterance. But I do ascribe different functions to a given utterance. But I do mean to suggest that, taken together, (i) and (ii) exhaust both the synchronic or modal and the diachronic or temporal-- i.e., the contextual-- constraints under which any particular working pragmatic rule is always, in principle, formulated.

12. Because they were formulated n 1929, the "Theses" thus predate the functional schema articulated by Karl Buhler in his Sprachtheorie (1934). It was, as Holenstein points out (1979P:14), Buhler's trichotomy of functions that Mukarovsky, around 1938, synthesized with a fourth ,poetic (versus practical) function to produce the polyfunctional schema Jakobson later extended to six functions . In any event, we see how Pratt, by isolating the early "Theses" in this connection ,selects what is, in the context of her own argument, one of the least interesting texts. Because the "Theses "do not represent the polyfunctional stance that Mukarovsky for instance eventually developed they do not provide the really crucial counterexamples to Pratt's argument that Prague School functionalism merely replicates, in different terms, that Formalist preoccupation with literariness.

13. See Holenstein (1979:13):" treffen sich die Prager und der Buhlerische Ansatz im Versuch, die Funktionen den konstitutiven Komponenten des Sprechereignisses zuzuordnen und in ihnen zu verankern". Holenstein also links Jakobson's functional schema with the contemporary interest in communication theory, which

made possible the redefinition of Saussure's, *parole- langue* distinction as that of *message* versus *code* (15).

14. These rules, of course, cannot be considered recursive, as are the specifically grammatical rules that Chomsky describes in (1964a). That is to say, what I have termed" meta- pragmatic rules" do not specify operations, of a merely finite number of steps, which, however, generate(for instance) the infinite set of grammatical sentences of a given language L, and also assign to each generated sentence what Chomsky calls that sentence's "structural description" within L(120). Nor are meta- pragmatic rules recursive in the sense Chomsky details in (1964b) meta- pragmatic rules do not" assign [to sentence of L not generated by the grammar of that language] structural descriptions that indicate the manner of their deviation from perfect well formedness" (9).

And yet neither should I like to call meta- pragmatic rules merely regulative, to use Searle's (and before him, Kant's) constitutive- regulative distinction (Searle 1969: 33-42) Rather, meta- pragmatic rules mark the limits of the very concept of recursivity as applied to pragmatic rules *per se* . At the same time, such rules provide the condition of possibility for constitute the local structure of meaning accounted for in part by pragmatic rules property so- called. What I mean is that for rules that specify the context- sensitivity of all language- use, decreasing the context -sensitivity of the rules themselves-- making them recursively finite or in other words applicable to a potentially infinite number of speech- acts --produces the paradox of recursively describing situation that are at least *de jure* irrepeatable. Yet if meta -pragmatic rules on the one hand stipulate the impossibility or recursively accounting for pragmatically -constrained situations or speech- acts; on the other hand ,and by the very gesture, meta -pragmatic rules issue the imperative of making *de facto* linkages between, say, contexts and sentences.

15. An earlier version of this essay, translated into Czech, is forthcoming in *Czech Literature*. My thanks to the editors of the journal for their permission to publish in English this expanded version of the essay. I should also like to acknowledge my gratitude for the helpful comments and criticisms of Bruno Bosteels, James English, Gerald Prince, and Peter Steiner, all of whom generously accorded their attention to the earlier draft of this paper.

Bibliography

Austin , J.L 1963[1940]."'The Meaning of a Word." *Philosophy and Ordinary Language,* ed. by Charles Caton , 1-22. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press.

Caws, Peter. 1988 *Structuralism: The Art of the Intelligible.* Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc.

Chomsky, Noam 1964a. " On the Notion Rule of Grammar" *The Structure of Language :Reading in the Philosophy of Language, ed* by J.A. Fodor and J.J.Katz, 119-36 Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.

—1964b *Current issues in Linguistic Theory.* The Hague: Mouton.

Derrida, *J.* 1976[1967] *Of Grammatology.* Trans. Gayatri Spivak, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

—1982 [1968] "Differance ."*Margins of Philosophy,* 1-27 Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago : Univ. of Chicago Press.

—1982 [1987] "Signature Event Context." *Margins of Philosophy,* 307-330

—1988. *Limited Inc.* Ed. and trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman. Evanston: Northwestern univ. Press.

Dik, Simon C. 1978. Functional Grammar Amsterdam: North- Holland Publishing Co.

Eco, U .1987 "Semantics, Pragmatics, and Text Semiotics." *The Pragmatic Perspective: Selectred Papers from the 1985 International Prragmatics Conference,* ed. by Jef Verschueren and Marcella Bertuccelli -Papi, 695-713 Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publ.Co.

Eichenbaum, Boris .1971[1926]. "Theory of the Formal Method " *Critical Theory Since Plato,* ed. by Hazard Adams, 828-46 San Diego: Har-, court Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

Gazdar, Gerald 1979. *Pragmatics: Implicature, Presupposition and Logical Form,* New York: Academic Press.

Greenlee, Douglas 1973. *Peirce's Concept of Sign.* The Hague:: Mouton.

Habermas, Jurgen. 1981. *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Holenstein, Elmar. 1979 " Einfuhrung: von der Poesie undder Plurifunktionalist der Sprache" *Roman Jakobson Poetik: Ausgewahlte Aufsatze* ,1921-71, ed. by Elmar Holenstein, 7-60 Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Jakobson, Roman. 1960 "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics", *Style in Language,* ed by Thomas Sebeok, 350-77 Cambridge: The M.I.T.Press.

James, William 1948 (1907) "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth" *Essays in Pragmatism*, ed. by Alburey Castell, 159-76. New York:, Hafner Publishing Co.

Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

—1987. "Minimization and Conversational Inference", *The Pragmatic Perspecitve: Selected Papers from the 1985 International Pragmatics Conference*, ed by Jef Verschuren and Marcella Bertuccelli- Papi, 61-130 Amsterdam :John Benjamins Publ.Co

Lyons, John 1977. *Semantics* vols. I and II Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Lyotard, Jean- Francois 1988[1983]. *The Differend.* Trans. George Van Den Abbeele. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.

Montague, Richard, 1974. *Formal Philosophy: Selected Papers of Richard Montague Ed.* Richmond H. Thomason, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Morris, Charles, 1938. *Foundations of the Theory of Signs.* Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Mukarovsky, Jan. 1978[1934] "Art as a Semiotic Fact ", *Structure, Sign and Function*, trans. and eds. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, 82-88 New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

—1970 [1936] *Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts.* Trans. Mark E. Suino. Ann Arbor: Dept. of Slavic Languages and Lit, Univ. of Michigan.

—1976[1936]. "Poetic Reference ", *Semiotics of Art : Prague School Contributions*, trans. and eds. Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik, 155-63. Cambridge: The M.I.T Press.

—1978 [1937], "The Aesthetic Norm" *Structure, Sign, and Function*, trans. and eds. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, 49-56. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

—1978[1937-8]. "On the Problem of Functions in Architecture. *Structure, Sign, and Function*, trans. and eds. John Burbank and Peter Steiner ,236--250. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

1977 [1940] "On Poetic Language "*The Word and Verbal Art*, trans and eds. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, 1-64.. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press,1977.

—1978 [1942]. "The Place of the Aesthetic Functin among the Other Functions." *Structure, Sign,, and Function* trans. and eds. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, 31-48, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.

Parret ,Herman 1983. *Semiotics and Pragmatics: An Evaluative Comparision of Conceptual Frameworks*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publ Co.

Peirce, C.S. 1955[1897-1903]. "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs." *Philosophical Writings of Peirce,* ed, by Justus Buckler, 98-119. New York: Dover Publ. Inc.

Petrilli, Susan. 1990. "On the Semiotics of Interpretation: Introduction." Chrles S. Peirce: An *Intellectual Biography* by Gerard Deledalle , xi-xxvii. Trans. Susan Petrilli. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Co.

Plotnitsky, Arkady, 1987. "Interpretation, Interminability, Evaluation: From Nietzsche toward a General. Economy." *Life after Postmodernism :Essays on Value and Culture* by John Fekete, 120-41, New York: St. Martin's Press.

Pratt, MaryLouise 1977. *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse.* Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press.

Rorty ,Richard 1970. "Introduction: Metaphilosophical Difficulties of Linguistic Philosophy." *The Lingusitc Turn*, ed. By Richard Rorty, 1-39 Chicago: Univ. of Chigao Press.

Searle, John, 1969. *Speech Acts : An Essay in the Philosophy of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Steiner, Peter Ed. 1982 *The Prague School : Selected Writings*, 1929-46. Trans. John Burbank et all. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press.

Toulmin, Stephen 1958. *The Uses of Argument.* Cambridge:. Cambridge Univ. Press

Verschueren, Jef. 1985. Review of Geoffrey N. Leech, *Pricniples of Pragmatics* (London: Longman, 1983) and Levinson (1983) *Journal of Linguistics* 21:2 459-470.