FINDING AN AUDIENCE

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1. Introduction

While philosophers have tended to think that (in large part) the meaning of an utterance is determined by the intentions of the utterer, a group of anthropological linguists has recently suggested that meaning is (in large part) determined by the utterer's audience.¹ This paper discusses difficulties for the anthropological position in cases where one and the same utterance is interpreted in different ways by different groups.

2. Two questions about meaning.

'Meaning' covers a great many things. In this paper I want to consider only two of them. In order to decide what an utterer meant, one may have to decide:

[1] what was uttered, and

Here are some examples of [1]. In conversation, Michael Frede (a distinguished scholar of ancient philosophy who speaks with a German accent) sometimes utters what sounds like 'ein', the German word for one. Usually this sound is semantically insignificant, but sometimes, Frede

¹Two of these, to whom I am indebted for a great deal of conversation in connection with this paper (but to whom its views should not be attributed) are Donald Brenneis and Alessandro Duranti. A good introduction to the anthropological approach to meaning is *Text* vol. 6-3, 1986.

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really is uttering the numeral. To know what he meant, you sometimes need to know which. The shorthand in Pepys' diary usually codes English, but sometimes (especially during descriptions of Pepys' sexual exploits) it codes other languages. Thus there are times when one needs to know whether Pepys' making of a given mark was an utterance of a word in English, French, or Spanish. 1 When Cannonball Adderly first heard Ornette Coleman, he thought certain intervals were off pitch, and therefore that Coleman was technically incompetent. 2 Defenders of Ornette claim Adderly didn't understand what sorts of intervals he was playing and that in fact they were played correctly. 3 We often have to figure out whether the motion someone made was this or that gesture. And so on.

As an example of [2], suppose someone utters the sentence 'Donald is coming'. In so doing he could have been promising that a famous trumpet player would show up, warning of the approach of a famous philosopher, or beginning a joke or a story about a Disney cartoon character, or about no one in particular. 4 Typically, we wouldn't think we knew what the utterance meant until such issues had been settled.

As these examples suggest, I treat not only speech acts, but also some non-verbal actions (e.g., gestures, dance steps, productions of musical sounds, etc.) as utterances. And I want to consider the dancers, musicians, etc. as utterers. The approach to meaning I want to discuss emphasizes the role of the audience in connection with the utterances of all of these kinds.

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2By the late '50s Cannonball Adderly was among the most admired, commercially successful and well established of younger, mainstream alto sax players. In an interview for KPFK in 1959 he expressed his opinion of Coleman by telling me that Ornette played 'indiscriminate quarter tones'. By then Ornette had released 'The Shape of Jazz to Come', a record which rejects most of the conventions of the style Adderly had mastered. In the end he won the argument by influencing a new generation of musicians who generally ignore Adderly.
3Bobby Bradford and Stanley Crouch, In conversation.
4 In a joke which begins 'Donald comes into this bar carrying 3 frogs and a penguin, and the bartender says "what'll you have?"... there need be no answer to the question 'who was Donald?'
3. An illustration of the anthropological view: the *fono*

An example of Duranti's illustrates the leading ideas of the anthropological view, and the kind of evidence which makes it sound plausible.¹ Duranti studied a Samoan *fono* (a gathering in which village problems were dealt with by the village chiefs and orators) in which an orator named iuli argued that another orator, Loa, should be fined, and perhaps expelled from his village because of his part in the creation of a situation in which the village lost face. According to iuli, Loa had told the chiefs that

...the newly re-elected district MP...was going to present some goods to the village assembly.²

¹Philosophers will be familiar with different sorts of plausibility arguments. One of them is popular among aestheticians. Suppose a dancer stumbles. No matter what step that dancer intended to execute when he lost his balance, all he actually did was to stumble. In this case, it is said, we needn't consider his intentions to see what his utterance was, or what it accomplished. And if he had executed the step successfully, we could still see what he uttered and what the utterance accomplished without considering his intentions. By analogy, a bad poet's good intentions don't change what he wrote. And so on, for all utterances. The *locus classicus* for this sort of view is Wimsatt, WK, and Beardsley, M, 'The Intentional Fallacy', in Adams, H, *Critical Theory Since Plato*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York, 1971, p. 1014-1022.

Another familiar argument comes from the behaviorists who assumed that to the extent that intentions are inner, mental states, we have no access to any but our own. If all that can be observed is the utterer's behavior, then--the argument goes--no matter what intention may have to do with an utterance, behavior is all we have to go on in determining its meaning. For those like myself, who find these arguments unconvincing, it's important to notice that the evidence from the anthropologists is quite independent of them.

²Duranti, A, 'Intentions, Self, and Local Theories of Meaning: Words and Social Action in a Samoan Context', CHIP (*Center for Human Information Processing*) Report 122, May, 1984, La Jolla, University of California at San
The village assembled, but the MP did not arrive. Luli argues that 'things like that are a humiliation for a village', and complains that the village waited until it was tired of waiting while Loa just sat there instead of bringing food for them. Fa'amonu'u, another orator who had not been present for Loa's original utterance, asks Luli if he is saying that Loa lied to the village. After hearing Luli's answer he says Loa's behavior was unusual, strange and wrong. It would be natural for us to ask exactly what words Loa had uttered, and whether in uttering them he meant or intended to be promising or assuming responsibility for the appearance of the MP. But no one challenges Luli's accusation by introducing the issue of Loa's motivations [or] of his possible intentions. The consequences of the orator's words are instead discussed, more specifically the fact that his words are seen as having caused the inconvenience of important people and contributed to their public loss of face.

Indeed Duranti claims that in Samoan one cannot say 'I didn't mean it' at all. This sort of evidence leads Duranti to question the idea... that meaning is already fully defined in the speaker's mind BEFORE the act of speaking [and that] the addressee is little more than a passive recipient who can either guess it right or wrong.

He says Samoans do not take words to be representations of privately owned meanings. They practice interpretation as a way of publicly controlling social relationships rather than as a way of figuring out what a given person "meant to say."

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Diego, SS p.3-4. A revised version of this paper will appear in the *Journal of Pragmatics.* My references are to the *CHI* version.

1Duranti, *op cit* pp. 4-6.
2Duranti, *op cit*, p. 6
3Duranti, *op cit*, p. 3
4Duranti *op cit* p.1
5 *ibid*
Instead of thinking the correctness of an interpretation is determined by the degree to which it accords with what the utterer intended, Duranti suggests we look at interpretation as part of a social interaction shaped by rules, practices, local customs and understandings. The idea is that these determine what counts as an acceptable interpretation. And if the meaning of an utterance is what an acceptable interpretation says it is, the local conventions, etc., which shape the relevant social interactions determine what factors establish the meaning of the utterance.

This allows for cases in which interpretations are required to accord with the utterer's intention. But Duranti thinks such cases are relatively rare.

The fact that a society can carry on a great deal of complex social interaction without much apparent concern with people's subjective [mental] states, and with a much more obvious concern for the public, displayed, performative aspect of language is in my opinion, an important fact which any theoretical framework concerned with the process of interpretation should take into account.¹

As I understand it, the point here is not so much that other accounts of meaning ignore the 'performative aspect of language'. The philosophers the anthropologists oppose certainly have paid plenty of attention to that.² The anthropologists point is that in many cases, the utterer's intention plays little if any role in determining what the utterance accomplished. Thus Goodwin says (in connection with utterances he observed as part of his study of storytelling)

The meaning of an utterance will be found to have...emerged not from the actions of the speaker alone, but rather as the product of a

¹Duranti, op cit, p.17. See also Duranti, 'The Audience as Co-Author', Text, 1986, p.240 ff.
²An example is Grice who, for reasons I don't understand, is usually treated by the anthropologists as the villain of the piece. (Compare Duranti, 'Intentions, Self, and Local Theories of Meaning', p.1, to Grice, HP, 'Logic and Conversation' in Davidson, D, and Harmon, G, The Logic of Grammar, Dickenson, Encino, 1975, pp. 64-74.)
collaborative process of interaction in which the audience plays a very active role.\(^1\)

It's worth emphasizing that Duranti's position does allow for cases in which the audience has relatively little role in determining meaning. Consider Frede's utterance of what sounds like 'ein'. Here there is a fact of the matter which is quite independent of the audience and its interaction with Frede. No matter what the others do or think either Frede stammered, or else he uttered a numeral. It seems to me that what he did depends upon what he intended. The anthropologist can accommodate this by saying that the bearing of any factor (the speaker's intention just as much as any other factor) upon the meaning of an utterance depends upon the nature of the activity to which utterance and interpretation belong. In some interactions intentions can count heavily even if these are the exception rather than the rule. The anthropologist can grant that Frede's intention was decisive in determining what he uttered, and hope to explain its decisiveness by appeal to the conventions etc. of the context of utterance.

A friend of intentions could reject the example of the fono, claiming that if the orators and chiefs didn't care what Loa intended to say, then whatever they were doing, they weren't greatly concerned with what his utterance really meant. One way of expressing this objection is to distinguish between the negotiation and acceptance of an interpretation on the one hand, and the correctness of an interpretation, on the other. Suppose the fono had interpreted Loa's utterance as a guarantee.\(^2\) The friends of intentions will argue that the negotiations which led to the acceptance of the fono's interpretation do not establish its correctness. This leaves open to argue that the meaning of an utterance is what is given by a correct interpretation and to object that Duranti's account doesn't tell us what determines correctness in the case of the fono. Anthropologists who think there is no such thing as a correct interpretation unless correctness amounts to about the same thing as acceptance won't be greatly impressed by this line of argument. At this point anything I said about the intentionalist's objection would beg questions on both sides. Before

\(^{1}\)Goodwin, Charles, 'Audience Diversity, Participation, and Interpretation' in *Text*, op cit, p. 306. Goodwin's example is a story telling activity.

\(^{2}\)In fact, no interpretation was accepted at the fono. For a variety of reasons Loa's case was suspended. Duranti *op cit* p. 6.
returning to this (in S8.) I want to raise another question about the anthropologist's approach by confronting it with a case which is more complicated than the *Fano* example.

4. The Basle unit performance of 'Don’t be that Way': an example of heterogeneity

In December, 1938, a small unit of the Count Basie band (Lester Young, ts., Buck Clayton, tpt., Count Basie, p., Freddy Green, g., Walter Page, b., Jo Jones, d.) played 'Don’t Be That Way', a Benny Goodman signature tune, in John Hammond's first *Spirituals to Swing* Concert at Carnegie Hall in New York. I want to consider the interpretation of musical utterances belonging to this performance. As I interpret them, the following information is crucial to their meaning (i.e., to what the performers uttered, and what they accomplished in uttering what they did).

'Don’t be That Way' is a 32 bar tune in 4/4 time. It has three 8 measure sections which I’ll label 'A', 'A*', and 'B'. Each full chorus consists of A followed by A*, B, and A*. Using Roman numerals for chords ('I' for the tonic, 'V' for the dominant, 'IV' for the subdominant, and so on), and Arabics to label the measures, the harmonic structure of the three sections can be set out as follows: (in measures with 2 chords, each chord takes 2 beats.)

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1 From *Spirituals to Swing* Vanguard, VSO 47/48.
2 I’m indebted to Diana Raffman for giving me the chords, and for helpful discussion of this performance.
For most of us dominants and subdominants (circled above) in a harmonic setting like this one normally function as "closing signals." Cadences (like measures 6--8 of A and A*) consisting of a closing signal followed by a well established tonic (marked in grey) are heard as completing a line, a phrase, or a section of a piece. A phrase ending with a closing signal is normally heard as incomplete; the listener feels there's another shoe to be dropped. These effects help explain our hearing of measures 1 and 2 of A and A* as requiring an answer in the following 2 measures, our hearing the last measures of A and A* as ends of complete melody lines, and A* after B as completing a chorus. The last measure of B prepares us for the re-establishment of the key in the first measure of A* (indicated by the arrow). To see how strong closing signals are, try singing the National Anthem, stopping on the phrase 'and the land of the free' without singing 'and the home of the brave.' You'll want to go on. The strong closing signals, their placement in harmonic patterns which are quite familiar in American popular music, the equally familiar metrical structure (32 bars of common time in an A-A*-B-A* pattern) make it easy for the listener to get a clear gestalt of the piece, and for musicians who know the

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2Of course this doesn't mean that most people know the theory involved in this illustration, or that they consciously think of dominants, subdominants, and the rest as they sing, play, or listen. The jargon of harmony theories is a way of representing features of auditory processing involving unconscious conventions most Americans internalize somehow early in childhood. I don't think these descriptive gadgets figure in the processing which actually occurs, even though they do describe how music sounds to us. The conventions are cultural, and there's no reason I know of to think that listeners in all cultures hear dominants or subdominants as closing signals. Furthermore, the conventions can be modified or suspended. If you are able to hear punk tunes like 'Wild in the Streets' (Circle Jerks) or 'Motel Room in my Bed' (X) as sounding natural enough to sing along with, you will have abandoned a number of conventions of familiar, tonal music. Furthermore, a great deal more is at work in the examples just given. For instance, what I've said isn't enough to explain why 7 and 8 of A* sound more like the end of a section than measures 7 and 8 of A, why the first 6 beats of A and A* don't sound like complete melodic units, etc. But the foregoing will be enough for our purposes.
style to improvise together. At the same time, they make it extremely difficult for most musicians to play natural sounding melody lines and phrases which don't begin or end at the boundaries controlled by the closing signal conventions.

A customary style of performance had been well established before our concert by Benny Goodman.1 'Don't be that Way' was usually played at a moderately brisk tempo by a big band (eg. 6 brass and 4 reeds with a rhythm section). The whole band would play the first few choruses, followed by horn solos accompanied by simple, repeated phrases (riffs) from the reeds or brass. Piano solo, were usually be accompanied only by the rhythm section.

The Basie performance is unusual in several respects. It begins with the piano playing the melody accompanied by the horns. Lester Young plays strongly enough to produce a sort of figure-ground ambiguity. He can be heard as a lead accompanied by the piano and the trumpet almost as easily as Basie can be heard as a lead accompanied by the horns.2 The tempo is markedly slower than Goodman's. Lester Young's tone is closer to the timbre of an alto, than to that of the tenor sax as it was usually played during the '30s.3 The attack is soft and laconic, the notes placed so far behind the beat that one could hear them as threatening to make the tempo drag. This contrasts dramatically with the rhythm section which plays right on the beat, on every beat. Clayton often syncopates, but the syncopations fall into much more familiar positions within the measure than Lester Young's notes. Although it is notoriously difficult to transcribe jazz in standard musical

1 eg., in Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall concert which preceded the Hammond concert, and at which the musicians in the Basie unit were present as guest artists. Columbia Records, CL814.

2It's conceivable that this is an artifact. The recording we have could have been edited out of a performance which began with the horns playing lead. The relative volumes of the instruments could have been due to poor microphone placement. But I doubt it. The tune begins with a piano pickup I wouldn't expect after the first chorus, and although there are technical flaws in the recording, there are no other cuts with a similar balance between horns and piano.

3According to an often told story, when Lester Young was hired by Fletcher Henderson, Henderson's wife suggested he listen to Coleman Hawkins to learn to play with a harder and fuller tone.
notation, it would be far more difficult to transcribe him into anything like
standard rhythmic notation than to transcribe the others. Finally, although
Young's solo follows the chord changes with relatively few passing notes,
the phrases defy the closing signal conventions, extending over the
boundaries of even the most strongly marked cadences. To my ear, he plays
two and seven bar phrases, one of which extends past the last measures of A
into the second measure of A*. Others describe the solo as hovering
ambiguously over the bar lines and say it is not well represented by
analysis (appropriate to what the other musicians play) into distinct melody
lines or phrases.¹

To interpret is to answer one or more specific questions about the
meaning of an utterance. There is no such thing as the interpretation of an
utterance because different questions take different answers. Furthermore,
with regard to meaning in the sense of (1) and (2) from §(1) of this paper,
massive failures in performance are possible and when this happens certain
questions may have no correct answer.² But in our present case, it is
reasonable to expect interpretations in answer to certain questions:

Concerning the balance between piano and horns in the first chorus,
was Young playing an accompaniment that was inappropriate in structure
and volume, or did the first chorus feature two lead parts, one for piano and
trumpet, and one for the tenor sax? Was Lester Young simply dragging or
was there a metrical structure which required his playing behind the beat?
If the latter, how does his placement of notes fit that of the guitar, bass,
and drums who played almost metronomically on every beat?³ What about

¹I owe this suggestion to Diana Raffman.
²For example, if a musician is incompetent enough, there may be no answer
to the question what part of a tune, or what chord changes he actually
played in a given instance, so that the most we could hope for would be an
answer to the question of what he was trying and failing to do. The same
sort of thing can happen in a discussion requiring background information
and special skills lacked by one of the speakers. There may not even be a
correct answer to the question what the uninformed speaker was trying to
say.
³Some graphic examples of what this involves can be found in the conflict of
styles between Charley Parker and pianist, Dodo Marmarosa. The style
Parker needed was the one developed by John Lewis, Thelonius Monk, Bud
Powell, and other pianists who replaced Marmarosa. The Genius of Charley
Lester Young's tone? Was he unable to marshal a more robust timbre and stronger attack, or did his light tone have a significant musical function? Finally, how was his solo structured? Is it appropriately analyzed as consisting of unusually shaped phrases of definite length, as metrically ambiguous, or in some other way? These are the sorts of questions to consider in looking further at the example.

A cursory reading of John Hammond's reminiscences, of reviews and articles about the concert, and of lists of the other musicians who participated reveals what I take to be a crucial difference between this and examples (like Duranti's fono) which support the anthropological view. The fono seems to have been marked by a high degree of homogeneity. By this I mean that (excluding observers like Duranti) the participants shared roughly the same knowledge of the proceedings, and agreed that a main purpose of the fono was the resolution of the problem which arose when the MP failed to appear. The orators and chiefs seem to have had roughly the same understanding of the rules, practices, customs, etc. according to which the fono was conducted. Their social positions in the village seem to have been clearly established and mutually acknowledged. Different villagers may have wanted different outcomes, and probably disagreed over specific details of the case. Like the members of any group they also had different personalities and abilities. But there still seems to have been a great deal of commonality.

As compared to the fono, the gathering at the concert was marked by a high degree of heterogeneity. By this I mean, first, that the performance played a part in many social interactions involving different conventions and directed toward different goals. Secondly, the participants in these

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Parker, Savoy Records, MG 12014, includes examples of Parker playing with Marmorosa and other, more compatible pianists. One of the remarkable features of the Basie performance is that Lester Young and the rhythm section appear to fit together, even though their placements of notes seem nearly as different as those of Parker and Marmorosa whose playing clearly did not fit together.

interactions differed with regard to local culture and knowledge of the concert. The following sketch of some of those who were present illustrates their diversity. The concert’s population included:

(a) the members of the Basie unit, and of the full band.
(b) Carl Van Vechten, along with a number of socially and economically well placed white Bohemians who were interested in jazz at least to the point of slumming at the Cotton Club in Harlem.
(c) Writers for The New Masses (which sponsored and benefitted from the concert), and The Nation. These, (and others) were engaged in a dispute about whether, how, and to what extent jazz should be treated as serious music. Among other issues the dispute involved the promotion of "negro culture" by the Communist party and other political groups represented by The New Masses. Some of these issues surface in a review by B H Haggin, who complains about people who called some of the performers 'masters'. This term, says Haggin, should be reserved for the likes of Beethoven—great artists whose sensibilities, talent, training, and sophistication enable them to express a wide range of what is finest in human experience. In contrast to genuine masters the uneducated, untrained performers in Hammond's concert can offer only crude expressions of a narrow range of coarse and common experience. Their music is suitable for

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1The Cotton Club was one of several nightclubs in Harlem which were owned by whites, allowed only white customers, but featured black entertainers. The floor shows featured musicians as talented as Duke Ellington, along with equally good singers, dancers, and comedians in productions which embodied a number of racial stereotypes. The most remarkable of these involved an elaborate, exotic, and utterly mythical "jungle" culture which seems to have been built up from the owners', entertainers', and producers' ideas of how their white clientele might fantasize about the way blacks might have lived in Africa. Anyone who took this at all seriously would have a very different idea of the cultures of the musicians than would the performers themselves. It is arguable that this would color the Bohemians' understanding of the music to a significant degree. For an unsympathetic, but informative contemporary view of Duke Ellington's position, see Hammond, op cit, pp. 136-137.
the uneducated workingman-- not, we are given to understand, the sort of person for whom Haggin is writing.1

(d) Writers who treated the concert mainly as a human interest story.2

(e) Harold Taubman, whose *New York Times* review talks about what he saw as the purity, sincerity, and unspoiled nature of the music of Sonny Terry, Mitchell's Christian Singers, and Boogie Woogie pianists Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons. Commenting on the jazz bands, Taubman says 'their music ranged from Bechet's early New Orleans Jazz with its respect for harmony through swing that is swing'. This last refers to Basie. I suppose the remark about respect for harmony as opposed to 'swing that is swing', means Taubman thought Basie's music was dissonant.3

(f) Taubman says there were '...hundreds in the capacity audience who seemed to know the music as well as its lingo'. This indicates the presence of people who knew more about the music than he. But because the audience was estimated at around 30004 it also suggests the music was quite new to many who attended.

(g) There were other musicians on the program ranging from the gospel signers who had had little contact with the kind of music Basie played, to members of the full Basie band who played regularly with those of the small group.

(h) John Hammond was actively promoting jazz at this time. Because this was one of the purposes of the concert, some representatives from

1 *Nation, op cit.* Haggin's only comment about Basie is directed toward the full band. He says he had been told these performers were musically sophisticated, but he found them as noisy and musically uninteresting as any other swing band. It is of interest that he lumps all swing bands together, noticing no stylistic differences eg., between Basie and Goodman.

2 'Boogie Woogie', a piece in the *New Yorker* 'Talk of the Town' column is a chatty account of an expedition to Harlem where the reporter spent some time interviewing Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons, two of the performers who attracted the most attention in the press. The piece is biographical, and deals mainly with life in the South which the writer seems to find exotic and charming. It says next to nothing about the music.

3 *New Yorker, op cit.*

4 Sebastian, *op cit*
night clubs, record companies, radio stations, etc. attended, partly to audition the performers.

(i) The concert occurred at the height of the holiday season (Dec. 23rd) in a place which functioned as a cultural symbol. Carnegie Hall was a mecca for "high culture," with a lavish, wealthy looking interior. It attracted sophisticated (and mostly white) New Yorkers, as well as tourists. For tourists it was a highbrow Statue of Liberty. Jazz in classy places had become a fashionable part of Manhattan night life. Thus the audience included the sorts of people a successful Broadway play would attract during the holiday season.

This argues for heterogeneity with regard to the social transactions in which our performance figured, and with regard to the knowledge and interests of the participants in the transactions. It's obvious, for example, that college students who were there on a date, writers, promoters, and even some of the other musicians were not pursuing all of the same goals Lester Young was pursuing. For some of the audience, the concert was something which had to be reviewed for a morning paper. For some, attendance was part of the business of running record companies, radio stations, night clubs, and other businesses which auditioned and hired musicians. For others, it was part of an evening of socializing. The performers were there to play, to earn money, to take a step on the way to gaining better jobs and more recognition in the musical world, etc. Some people came to further political causes. And so on. This of course is only a short list of activities in which our performance played a part.

Commonality is far harder to find in here than in the *fona*

Differences between the relatively homogeneous *fona* and the relatively heterogeneous concert setting which bear on the anthropological account of meaning and interpretation are illustrated in the following diagrams.

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1The *New York Times* for 12/24 advertises Paul Whiteman, Louis Armstrong, Artie Shaw and Raymond Scott with a commentary by Deans Taylor at Carnegie Hall (admission from $.50 to $3.50), and Benny Goodman at the Waldorf Astoria ($1.50 for a table, $2.00 at ringside, and $25.00 for a box seat with refreshments).
In Fig. 1, Loa's utterance (u) figures in three different interactions: 
\(i_1\) -- telling chiefs and orators that the MP would come (before the *fono* occurred), \(i_2\) -- interactions between Loa and the chiefs and orators in the *fono* and \(i_3\) -- an interaction (occurring at the same time and place as \(i_2\)) arising from the observation of the *fono* by an anthropologist. Roughly the same group (the chiefs and orators, indicated by dot shading) takes part in \(i_1\) and \(i_2\). Line shading indicates the observer who belongs to a very different group.

In Fig. 2, \((i_1)\) is the musical interaction of the Basie unit in which a musical utterance (u) (e.g., a passage played by Lester Young) is produced. The ovals inside the triangle represent interactions which occurred inside of Carnegie Hall during the concert, and in which (u) played some role. The shadings indicate differences in the contexts of these interactions. The contexts differ with regard to what sort of interaction is going on, the kinds of people involved, the conventions followed, and so on. Ovals in the box to the left represent interactions involving (u) which occurred at
different times or places (e.g., my own discussions of (u) years later in a Southern California classroom.) The main arguments of this paper will turn upon the differences in the knowledge, interests, competences, etc. of those who participated in these various interactions.

5. The anthropological account and the problem of heterogeneity

The leading ideas of the anthropological approach to meaning sketched in (§2) were these:

[A] 1. The production and negotiation of an interpretation (i.e., the transactions in which interpretations are proposed, modified, accepted or rejected) should be viewed as belonging to a social interaction engaged in to accomplish some main purpose (or purposes) whose pursuit requires the participants to decide e.g., what was uttered (1, §2), and what the utterer did in making the utterance. (2,§2).

2. Whether intention or any other factor has a bearing on the negotiation of an interpretation (and if so, how heavily they are weighted) is determined by the nature of the relevant interaction (as shaped by the knowledge(s) and interests of the participants, the local rules, customs, practices and other conventions, and the role of interpretation in the pursuits for the purpose of which it is undertaken).

3. The meaning of an utterance is determined by its interpretation

What purports to be a corollary to this is often stated in terms of the role of the audience in the construction of meaning. For example, Duranti speaks of the audience as 'co-author', and argues that in the construction of meaning,
Speaker and audience are equals not simply because their roles are interchangeable...[but also] because every act of speaking is directed to and must be ratified by an audience.1

Taken literally this suggests that

[B]: Interpretation belongs primarily to, and hence, meaning arises primarily from an interaction between speaker and audience.

But if 'audience' refers (as it normally does) to relatively passive witnesses to an utterance or performance, this is not the right conclusion to draw from [A]. We saw that Fa'aonu'u (one of the orators who negotiated the interpretation of Loa's utterance) was not a witness. And it is clear that parties to interpretations in the *fano* did not have to be at all passive.2

Thus we should reject [B], and expect that if [A] is correct, all sorts of groups (which may but need not be audiences) may take part in the negotiation of interpretations and hence in the determination of meanings.3

I believe a consideration of as heterogeneous a gathering as the Hammond Concert uncovers difficulties for [A] which might go un-noticed if we concentrated only on more homogeneous cases.4

Imagine what would happen if we asked people involved in the

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2 Duranti, 'Intentions, Self, and Local Theories of Meaning', pp. 6ff.

3 On this point, I think I am objecting to the anthropologists' terminology rather than to their position. Duranti's description of the *fano* makes it clear that parties to an interpretation need not be audiences in the ordinary sense. The same point is tacitly acknowledged by other contributors to *Text*, 1986. In a later paper, Brenneis speaks of 'active' audiences, and 'primary' audiences which are not present at a performance. Brenneis, D, 'The Fiji Indian *pancayat* as therapeutic discourse, in this journal, July 1987, pp. 55, 67.

4I don't think these problems are absent in the homogeneous cases, but rather, that a high degree of homogeneity makes them less likely to be noticed. For example if Duranti had disagreed with the chiefs' and orators' interpretation of Loa's utterance, we could construct arguments similar to the ones I will develop from a consideration of the concert.
interactions indicated in the triangular area of fig. 2 one of the interpretive questions from Siv of this paper. Of course one and the same person could participate in all of them. As a producer, publicist, agent, artist and repertoire consultant for record companies, knowledgeable critic, friend of the musicians, socialite, etc., John Hammond took an active and effective part in a number of different sorts of transactions involving different sorts of people with different interests. But Hammond was exceptional. Many people who could participate effectively in one interaction lacked the knowledge, etc. to be accepted as a participant in one or more of the others. In most cases, a reviewer who tried to play with the Basie unit, or a musician who tried to join in on a discussion of the political significance of the performance would have found himself in something like the position of a fry cook trying to take part in the analysis of the technicalities of a difficult case before the Supreme Court.

On the assumption that different interactions indicated in Fig. 2 tended to involve people with relevantly different interests, competences, and so on, consider the hypothetical (but presumably realistic) case illustrated in the following diagram. In fig. 3, 'u' represents Lester Young's solo. The boxes represent interactions in which interpretations of u are negotiated by relatively homogeneous subgroups (g1, g2, etc.). g1, the musicians playing with Young, make musical utterances in response to his solo. Assuming that while playing they listened to each other carefully enough for close musical cooperation, their utterances should be seen as embodying implicit interpretations. For example what Basie played depended partly on his understanding of what Lester Young was playing. Suppose g2, was a group of agents from a nightclub who attend the concert to audition the performers, that they had no more musical expertise than their present day counterparts, and that they interpreted u as dragging and lacking drive. For some, this could be an argument for, and for others, an argument against hiring the Basie unit.1

1So interpreted the music might appeal to someone who hoped to attract a refined crowd, and who didn't want dancing. Others might hope for customers who would want to hear more raucous and "primitive" music.
g3 is a hypothetical group of musicians or critics who see Young as having developed a way of making non-traditional metrical structures fit the playing of a very traditional sounding rhythm section. g4 is a group of people (like Taubman) who expect jazz to conform to certain conventions of so-called "classic jazz". For them the paradigm of ensemble jazz is located in early Louis Armstrong records, along with the playing of Eddie Condon's and similar Chicago dixieland bands. By these standards neither the solo nor the rest of the performance represents competent ensemble playing. g5 interprets u as crude and impoverished (in the spirit of the Nation reviewer mentioned earlier. ¹

These interpretations conflict in several ways. g3 contradicts g2's claim that the solo drags, and g4's claim that the utterances of the tenor and the rhythm section don't constitute proper ensemble playing. Another sort of conflict is illustrated by g5 (along with Harold Taubman and the New Yorker writer) for whom the issues addressed by g3 do not arise. I am supposing g5's interaction provides a context in which questions about closing signals and other features of u addressed by g3 are culturally unavailable because they presuppose knowledge g5 does not possess.

¹See note to item (c), §4 above.
Finally, a question about meter is answered by both g2 and g3, but it is not plausible that these groups would understand the question in exactly the same way. I am supposing g2 can be concerned with the tempo without having g3's ideas about playing behind the beat, playing over bar lines, etc. The moral of this is that interpretations of one and the same utterance negotiated and accepted through different interactions involving different groups can conflict (a) as contradictory answers to the same question about what was uttered or what the utterance accomplished, (b) as different answers to somewhat different versions of the same question, and (c) because the interpretation of one group answers a question which another group cannot ask.

6. A theory of meaning should tell us something about how we choose between conflicting interpretations of the same utterance

The foregoing illustrates the problem of heterogeneity. By A3 (S5 above) the meaning of u is determined by interpretation. But here we have different and apparently incompatible interpretations of a single utterance. By A1 and A2, the adequacy of a proposed interpretation should depend upon the factors made significant by the conventions, etc. of the interaction in which it is negotiated. But our example features interactions involving different factors and different weightings of factors. If each of the five interpretations of u is adequate relative to the interaction which produces it, then all of the conflicting interpretations have equally good credentials, unless one of the five groups or interactions is privileged over the others. If no single group or interaction is privileged, the anthropological account (A1--A3, S5) cannot tell us how--in cases like this--choices are made between conflicting responses to questions about the meaning of a single utterance.

I noted that seriously defective utterances need not mean anything in particular, and that when this happens, no interpretation need be preferred to any other. But Lester Young's solo certainly isn't defective in this way, and there should be answers to the questions we asked about it. We can't say it has no meaning, i.e., that there is no answer to questions about which notes were produced, where they fell with regard to the beat, whether the solo flouted closing signal conventions, whether the phrases were metrically ambiguous, etc. And we can't accept all of the above
interpretations and say the solo both does and does not drag, while doing neither.

A democratic alternative would be to say there is no uniquely correct interpretation and therefore, that for the group who interprets the solo as dragging, it drags, while for the group whose interaction produces a conflicting interpretation, it does not drag. The idea is that each interpretation is correct for the group which accepts it, while none is intrinsically any better or any worse than any other. This democratic attitude toward conflicting interpretations seems counterintuitive to me, but intuitions differ, and you may consider it to be as plausible as I consider it implausible. However, I don't think interpretive democracy provides a happy position for the anthropologist to take in response to the problem of heterogeneity. This is because it prevents the anthropological approach from trying to explain a familiar fact which a theory of meaning ought to explain. The fact is that (for practical as well as theoretical reasons) we often have to decide, and we often reach agreement on how to decide which among a number of conflicting interpretations to accept. At least some of these decisions are non-arbitrary, and it seems perfectly reasonable to ask a theory of meaning what it knows about the factors upon which the non-arbitrary choices depend.

An example of what needs to be explained is the way in which Gottlob Frege's lectures and writings were misunderstood by almost all of his contemporaries except for a handful of people (including Bertrand Russell) who corresponded with him from other countries. Peter Geach says

Frege's work was almost wholly unappreciated during his lifetime; he rightly considered his colleagues at Jena incompetent to understand him, and said so in print, which cannot have made his relations with them happy.²

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¹Frege, lived from 1848 to 1925, and spent most of his career in obscurity teaching at Jena. He is responsible (along with Russell and Whitehead) for a great deal of what is now standard formal logic, and for laying the foundations for what is still one of the most influential philosophical approaches to formal semantics.

Some of Frege’s contemporaries found his utterances unintelligible. Others interpreted them as making demonstratively false or silly claims. Mathematicians and logicians who tend to say what is meaningless, false, or silly are subject to harsh treatment ranging from non-benign neglect to ostracism. Geach’s remark suggests (quite rightly, I think) that even though Frege’s utterances meant little to most of his contemporaries, theirs are not the interpretations upon which evaluations of his work should be based. While the pronouncements of his unsympathetic contemporaries establish what meaning his utterances had for them, the interpretations of experts like Russell (and later, of commentators like Geach and Dummett) reflect what Frege’s utterances meant (not just what they meant to Russell, Geach, and Dummett).¹ The unsympathetic interpretations should be taken seriously as arguing that Frege’s writings and lectures were unsuitable for certain groups, that he should not have been hired to lecture to them, that he couldn’t explain his work to many of his contemporaries, and so on. But they don’t show what the utterances in the difficult logical notation he invented actually were, or what claims, arguments, etc. they made. We need a story about how Geach can be right when he says that Frege’s contemporaries were incompetent, and we need an explanation for what follows from this—the fact that their interpretation were inferior to those of Russell and others.

The philosophers to whose theories the anthropological approach is supposed to provide an alternative have a story:

Russell’s interpretations are better because they come closer to capturing Frege’s intentions.

If all the anthropologist can tell us about this is that each interpretation is perfectly acceptable for the group which produced it (this was the democratic view) then the anthropological program offers no alternative to the philosophical account of what makes one interpretation more acceptable than another. But failure to explain what the competing theory explains is a poor defense.

¹It is worth noting that Geach and Dummett (whose major work on Frege was first published in 1973) began writing about Frege after he died, and thus were far removed from the contexts in which Frege’s contemporaries interpreted him.
7. Some proposals for dealing with the problem of heterogeneity

The problem of heterogeneity boils down to this: If the acceptability of an interpretation, and therefore, the meaning of an utterance is determined by a social interaction, what makes one interpretation more authoritative than another in cases where the same utterance is interpreted in the course of different interactions carried out by different groups with different interests, competences, or local cultures?

So stated, the problem asks for an account of factors on the basis of which one interpretive social transaction or one group of interpreters should be considered more authoritative than another. I'll conclude by looking at some approaches to this, all of which raise questions I don't know how to answer. Here is one such proposal:

(1) Frege intended his work for people with certain interests and technical abilities his contemporaries in Jena lacked. Russell, Geach, Dummett, and others who had the relevant interests and abilities are more authoritative than those of the Jena group because they belong to the kind of audience Frege intended.

But there are performers who don't acknowledge as competent people whose interpretations of their utterances differ significantly from their own. For them, proposal (1) automatically rules out as incompetent interpretations which disagree with those of the utterer. There are dismal novelists and poets who reply to unfavorable criticisms by saying that their poetry and fiction is meant for unspoiled readers—not for overly sophisticated, establishment intellectuals. Their intended audiences turn out to be just about anyone who likes their work. By (1) readers with no particular literary skill or sensibility can thus turn out to be authoritative. Therefore we need another proposal.

In discussing the Bhatgaon pancayat, an institution through which disputes are negotiated in Fiji Indian villages, Brenneis speaks of a 'primary audience'. The pancayat itself is attended by the parties to the dispute to be negotiated, witnesses, and committee members. The primary audience for the event, says Brenneis, is not present.
This audience includes coreligionists and the village as a whole; it is from this audience that the _pancayat_ derives its effectiveness.

A function of the _pancayat_ is to produce

an official and definitive account of events crucial to the development of the dispute...[which] becomes the basis for later discussion and a new baseline against which the behavior of the disputants can be measured.

The term 'primary audience' is misleading for something like the reasons I mentioned earlier in connection with the term 'audience'. I think what Brenneis means is a privileged (though large) group whose support and acceptance for the institution of the _pancayat_ (or for a particular _pancayat_ mediating session) accounts for the authoritativeness of the _pancayat's_ interpretation of the events and utterances it considers. This group need not function as an audience; its members need not be passive witnesses to the events and utterances interpreted by the _pancayat_, or to its mediating session. Even if members of the privileged group did function as an audience, this would not explain their role in the construction of meaning. As I understand it, the disputants' connections with privileged group (constituted in this case by such factors as their membership and place in the society of the village) and the privileged group's support of the _pancayat_ commits the disputants (along with others in the village) to accept the findings of the _pancayat_ as authoritative. This suggests:

(2) One of a number of conflicting interpretations of an utterance can be accepted as authoritative only if it results from an interaction which is privileged in something like the same way as the _pancayat_. This requires the utterance to have occurred in a in a context in which a privileged group which (together with the behavior and social position of the utterer) confers authority upon the interpretation negotiated by the participants in a particular social interaction.

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2 _ibid_
To apply this proposal to our example we would have to look for a privileged group to establish the authority of one of the interpretations of \( u \). This assumes that Lester Young's standing social position (or a position he comes to occupy temporarily by participating in the concert) establishes connections between him and the privileged group in virtue of which he is committed--at least to some extent--to acknowledge the authority of one of the interpretations. The privileged group might consist of the band members--the same people who participate in the interaction whose interpretation is to be considered authoritative. Or it might be a different group, as was the case in Brenneis’ example.

Does this help with problem of heterogeneity? The proposal acknowledges that one group’s or or one interaction’s interpretation can non-arbitrarily be preferred to others’. It tells us where to look for factors which account for this, and what gives these factors their significance. It avoids the difficulties of the first proposal we looked at. According to (2) the utterer’s intentions can play a role in conveying authority in cases where the context allows it. For example, the institutions supported and maintained by whatever empowers a criminal court in this country may allow a defendant to decide whether certain of his utterances will be interpreted by a jury instead of a judge. An author can sometimes commit himself to the verdict of a special group by writing on the right subject in the right style in the right journal. Proposal (2) promises that an understanding of the workings of what Brenneis called a “primary audience” can explain not only this, but also how and why the utterer’s intentions may be ignored because of the stance taken by the privileged group.

But the proposal can still run afoul of heterogeneity. Lester Young uttered \( u \) as part of a musical conversation with the rest of his band, and also as part of another interaction involving club owners and others from whom he hoped to get jobs. Suppose the social setting of the performance, together with Lester Young's participation in it, committed him to acknowledge that the club owners were entitled to decide whether his utterance accomplished or failed to accomplish, (was, or failed to be) whatever was relevant to their use of \( u \) in deciding whether to hire the band. Suppose it also required him to acknowledge that the members of the Basie unit were entitled to decide whether \( u \) was or accomplished what was
appropriate to their performance. What can the anthropological program tell us if the interpretations of the club owners disagree with those of the musicians Lester Young was playing with, e.g., because the attack is indecisive for the purposes of a club owner who must satisfy customers who want jazz to sound (what they think of as) brutal and primitive, and crisp and decisive for the purposes of the musicians who play with him?

I'm not asking what happens if the club owners interpret it as too limp for their customers while the musicians interpret it as firm and crisp enough to fit what they play. Those interpretations are consistent, and could both be correct. I'm asking what happens if the musicians interpret the note placements as crisp and precise, while the club owners think Lester Young can't find his way among the beats. Their goals and their understanding of their respective interactions are factors upon which the appropriateness of the interpretations depend. But that does not make them parts of their interpretations. Just as Brenneis does not replace a pancayat interpretation of the form 'so and so said such and such' with 'so and so said such and such for the purposes of the village' nothing in proposal (2) warrants replacing the conflicting interpretations 'his playing is limp' and 'he's playing crisply' with 'he's playing limply for the purposes of the club owners' and 'he's playing crisply as far as the musicians are concerned'.

If I'm right about this, the original problem of heterogeneity arises

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1 Of course there are special cases in which such acknowledgements are not required. Because of special circumstances (and also--if (2) is correct-- because of factors having to do with the nature and practices of the privileged group) a musician may be perfectly justified in considering his fellow musicians or the members of another group with which he interacts to be incompetent. But just because there are such cases, we don't have to suppose our example had to be one of them.

We needn't suppose that any of the musicians actually discussed, or that they would have acknowledged questions couched in terms like 'playing behind the beat', 'closing signals', etc. But I do assume they listened carefully, adjusting their playing to what they understood Lester Young to be playing. This means that even if the musicians provided no explicit, verbal interpretation, we can understand the performance as embodying an implicit interpretation of u. For example, I'd argue that the rhythm section did not play what would have been played to accompany what was heard as a metrically or harmonically defective solo.
again. One and the same utterance is given conflicting interpretations. We can't say either that both are right or that both are wrong.

Brenneis' analysis depended on a privileged group (a "primary audience") from which the authority of interpretations negotiated in the _pancayat_ derived. But there seems to be no such privileged group in the case just described. There are factors in the local culture and the social setting which make it appropriate for the club owners to interpret u: they are there to audition a band, they need to please their customers, and they know what their customers like. There are other factors which make it appropriate for the musicians to interpret u. By participating in the concert (to play music and also with an eye to getting jobs) Lester Young made himself subject to all of these contextual factors. But there is no factor to do what the village did for the _pancayat_. The club owners' interpretation is privileged for some purposes, and the musicians' is privileged for others. Because there is no village to decide which purposes get priority, Brenneis' model doesn't apply.

A final proposal would be

(3) to consider the context in which a third party chooses which interpretation to accept.

Suppose the third party is you. You have to decide whether to accept the interpretation according to which the solo drags. Proposal (3) assumes such decisions aren't made in a vacuum, and hence that your decision will be part of some ongoing social transaction in which the choice of an interpretation will play a role. Where this assumption holds, the appropriateness of your choice would be determined by features of the context in which you find yourself. If you are a scholar involved in certain activities engaged in by a certain community, the nature of that community and its activities might require you to take the musicians' interpretation to be authoritative, even though the interpretation of another group would take priority if your choice were made in another context. The idea of this Rortian proposal is to look for what Brenneis calls a "primary audience" in

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1In Rorty, R, _Consequences of Pragmatism_, Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1982, Richard Rorty develops the view that constraints on interpretation (along with criteria for truth, virtue, and more) are grounded in something he calls 'conversation' (eg., p. 165), and sometimes by intellectual or cultural
the social setting in which you (a third party examining other people's interpretations) operate. I leave it as an exercise to the reader to find cases in which the person who chooses among competing interpretations finds himself in a situation in which heterogeneity prevails so that different groups involved in different interactions will assess the choice without benefit of a single privileged group or "primary audience" to referee. I don't believe the exercise is difficult. I don't think (3) offers any remedies for counterexamples it should generate.

8. **Heterogeneity is a problem for utterer's-intention based theories of meaning as well as for the anthropological view**

I wish I could conclude this paper by recommending a solution to the problem of heterogeneity, but I don't have one. All I have to offer is the conclusion that the problem deserves more study, together with the observation that if heterogeneity is a problem for the anthropologists, the anthropologists are not alone.

Recall the intentionalist objection to Duranti's analysis of the *fono* in §3: if the *fono* participants didn't consider Loa's intentions, then the *fono* didn't correctly interpret his utterance. If the chiefs and orators were merely negotiating a political resolution which didn't have much to do with figuring out what Loa meant Duranti's observations do not provide reliable evidence for a theory of meaning or of what determines the correctness of interpretation.

When I mentioned this objection I was thinking of Grice, who tried to explain what a speaker means, what an utterance made by a speaker on a particular occasion means, and eventually, what a sentence or a word means by appeal to the intentions of speakers. Here, and in his work on traditions (eg, 'the Enlightenment', p. 170) which Rorty tends to think we'd be better off without. I characterized proposal (3) as Rortian because it pictures the chooser as doing so within something like the context of a Rortian "conversation" and looks to the activities of the conversers for the factors which determine which of the competing interpretations it would be appropriate to choose.

implicatures\(^1\), Grice's idea was to identify the meaning of an utterance by appeal to the effect the utterer intended to produce in his audience, and the means by which he intended this effect to be produced. Suppose I utter the sentence, 'Donald is coming'. Brutally simplified, Grice's theory says that if my intention is to get you to believe Donald Davidson is about to arrive, and if I also intend for you to realize my purpose in uttering the sentence, and if I further intend your realization of this to be your reason for coming to believe that Davidson is coming, then my utterance should be interpreted as stating that Donald Davidson is about to arrive.\(^2\)

Grice developed this theory (and his philosophical opponents developed objections to it) by arguing from cases in which a speaker addresses a single person, or a small and ideally homogeneous group. When Searle (who proposed a number of counterexamples to Grice's early accounts of meaning) said that 'a typical speech situation' involves 'a speaker, a hearer, and an utterance made by the speaker', he was illustrating an important assumption accepted tacitly at least by him and by Grice, along with most so-called "analytic" philosophers until fairly recently.\(^3\) In the jargon of this paper, the assumption is that language is always, or is typically used in homogeneous contexts.


\(^2\)This is an over simplified version of the account in Grice's first paper. As Grice revised his theory to deal with counterexamples proposed by Searle, Urmson, Schiffer, and a host of other critics, the conditions on the intentions of the speaker became more and more elaborate.

\(^3\)Searle, JR, 'What is a Speech Act?' in Searle, *op cit*, p. 39. The italics are mine.
The observation I want to conclude with is that heterogeneity raises for these philosophers a problem which is analogous to the problem it raises for the anthropologists. Suppose we confront Grice's idea with cases in which the speaker must contend with a heterogeneous group of readers or listeners involved in a variety of social interactions. Such cases are not uncommon. Speakers who find themselves in such situations may intend not only to produce different effects in different listeners and readers, but also, to produce the same effect in different people through different mechanisms.

A rich example of this is the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence. As a friend and teacher of Princess Caroline of Wales, and an opponent of Newton and his followers, Leibniz wrote the Princess a letter suggesting that the Newtonians held questionable religious beliefs.\(^1\) Caroline initiated a long and harsh exchange of papers and replies by forwarding Leibniz' letter to Clarke, a supporter of Newton. Since Clarke appears to have consulted with Newton in writing some of his replies to Leibniz, Newton probably read most of the exchange. In most cases, Leibniz' and Clarke's letters were read and then relayed to their addressees by Caroline, who later encouraged Clarke to publish the correspondence. Leibniz thus found himself in the position of writing for Caroline (a friend, student, and patron), for Clarke (a philosophical opponent, a rival for Caroline's political and intellectual support and friendship), and for Newton himself. He could expect there would be other readers too, some of whom he knew little about. Clarke's situation was no less complicated.

Grice's approach emphasizes the speaker's need to consider his audience in order to pick effective strategies for inducing the beliefs and achieving whatever other effects he wants to produce. Because of the importance of patronage, the positions of Leibniz and Newton in the scientific community, and the intense rivalry between them, the conduct of the correspondence was a delicate matter. Leibniz and Clarke needed to be sensitive to the ways in which their readers would be affected by their utterances. They obviously needed to pay careful attention to differences in competence, local culture, knowledge, understanding, motivation, and

\(^1\)Alexander, HG, ed., *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*, Manchester, Manchester, 1965, p.11. For further information about this example, see Alexander's general introduction, p. /ff., and his introduction to the extracts in Appendix B, S11, p. 89.
personality among their readers. Anyone who accepts anything like Grice's theory must acknowledge the strong possibility that Leibniz didn't intend all of his utterances to be taken in the same way by the Princess, by Clarke, and by Newton. There is also the strong possibility that Leibniz didn't think he could use the same rhetorical means to produce a given effect in all of his readers. If Leibniz intended to produce one effect in Newton through Newton's recognition of his intentions in uttering a given sentence, there is no reason to think he intended to produce the same effect in Princess Caroline, let alone to produce it in the same way. For example, utterances intended to insult Newton need not have been intended to be recognized by Caroline as insults.¹

When the anthropologist says meaning is determined by the negotiation of an interpretation by people involved in an interaction with the utterer, heterogeneity raises the questions, which interaction, and which group of people? If the anthropologist says we can understand why certain factors figure in and are given a certain weight in the establishment of an interpretation by considering the purposes of the relevant interaction and its participants (or it's "primary audience"), heterogeneity raises the question, whose purposes? The Leibniz-Clarke correspondence illustrates that if someone says the meaning of an utterance depends upon the utterer's intentions toward the people he addresses, heterogeneity makes us ask: which intentions, and which people? Unless there is some reason why theories of meaning based on intentions should find heterogeneity easier to deal with than the anthropological theories, heterogeneity is a plague on both houses.

¹Indeed, Princess Caroline's letters to Leibniz of 1/10 and 4/24, 1716 suggest that it would have been to his distinct advantage to reply to Clarke and comment on Newton as courteously as possible. Alexander, op cit, pp. 193-4.