

# Blended spaces and performativity

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## 1. Introduction: linguistic and non-linguistic performativity.

*Performativity* is a term which has recently made its way from its philosophical and linguistic domains of origin to other fields such as anthropology and critical theory. The central sense of the word, and the one in which I shall be using it, refers to the phenomenon whereby an apparent description of a speech act “counts as” a performance of the relevant speech act: *I promise you that I’ll be there* sounds like a description of promising<sup>1</sup>, but can in fact constitute an act of promising to be there. In interdisciplinary usage, performativity has a fascinating pattern of related senses (some of them barely recognizable to users of the “traditional” meanings)<sup>2</sup>, the concepts it refers to are all aspects of the human ability to use symbolic representations to influence the world outside the representational system. It is my contention that setting linguistic performatives in this broader context can help us to understand them, and to decide what is and is not special about the performative uses of linguistic descriptions.

My basic argument will be that there are depictive and performative uses of many kinds of symbolic representations, linguistic and otherwise. The contrast between descriptive or depictive and performative is best understood as a contrast between two kinds of causal relationships between the representation and the represented space. In the depictive use of *I promise you that I’ll be there* (presumably a depiction of a habitual activity of promising), it seems evident that the description is judged by its conformity to the represented space: for example, one can ask whether it is true, or accurate as a description. In the performative use, however, as many scholars have noted<sup>3</sup>, no such questions arise: instead, the described “real” world is shaped by the speech act, and the speaker has now made a promise. Let us compare these with examples from another domain, which will be analyzed more thoroughly later in the paper. A Christian Western bride who wears a white wedding gown is considered by many to be making a (metaphorical) statement about her virginity or sexual purity; this statement is depictive, in

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<sup>1</sup> And indeed, could also be a description of a habitual or iterative pattern of promising. The oddity is that - contrary to the usual interpretation of simple presents of perfective verbs in English - it is not restricted to this iterative/habitual reading. See Langacker (1991, chap. 3) for an insightful discussion of the aspectual issue here.

<sup>2</sup> I will touch only very lightly on other senses of the word.

<sup>3</sup> Most notably Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1979, 1983, 1989).

that many wedding guests are apparently upset or offended if a divorced woman wears white at her second wedding. They consider that she is making a false or inaccurate representation of herself by wearing white. But a penitent, in Christian and Jewish traditions, puts on white to (metaphorically) represent spiritual purity, not as a description of his or her *actual* spiritual state, but as a causal aid to bringing about a state of purity. A viewer would not appropriately say, How can so-and-so put on white for Yom Kippur (or for an adult Christian baptism), when s/he is so sinful? Rather, an unusually sinful person may have more need to put on white and repent than a less sinful person. This is more like a performative use of the convention of wearing white to represent purity, as opposed to the depictive use in wedding gowns.

In examining these two kinds of causal relationships between representations and what they represent, I shall make use of the theory of Mental Spaces (Fauconnier 1985 [1994], 1997), a general framework capable of describing the full range of performative phenomena, and will also be relying on recent work on Blended Spaces (Fauconnier and Turner 1995, 1998, Turner and Fauconnier 1996). I shall also be making use of metaphor theory, since it is a fascinating fact that metaphorical representations (such as the use of white for purity) share in this dual possibility for relationship with the spaces they represent.

## **2. A short history of the theory of performative linguistic usage.**

Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* brought the word *performative* to the vocabularies of linguists and philosophers. The central nugget of Austin's perception was that there is something different or special about utterances which perform a speech act by saying explicitly *I order you, I tell you, or I request*, which sets them apart from the ones which just order, or tell, or ask by other means - as well as from other statements about non-first-person or non-present ordering, telling, or asking. I don't engage in the speech act of ordering by saying *Lucinda ordered Dennis to leave*, but *I order you all to leave* constitutes an order. Furthermore, an addressee of the former utterance can reply, *No, she didn't, you're wrong*; but the latter utterance doesn't seem susceptible to this kind of contradiction.

Austin's perception was developed most prominently by Searle (1969, 1979, 1983, 1989), who gave us a much fuller and finer-grained theory of speech acts in general, and of performativity in particular. Searle's subtler definition of performativity is more intriguing than Austin's: it centers on the issue of a special possibility, namely the possibility of doing certain particular kinds of action specifically by (or *in*) describing doing them. Obviously this only works in certain kinds of cases. Searle develops a complex theory of the background of social facts against which it becomes possible to say *I christen you Adolphus* or *I declare you husband and wife*, and have such first-person descriptive statements constitute effective actions which change the state of the world around the speaker. But the most

important thing is that it is possible: under the right circumstances, a speaker can engage in a successful act of christening, by describing herself as doing so.

As Searle points out, speech acts like christening (which requires very special social authority and circumstances) are different in this respect from ones like asking, telling, or ordering, which seem to be basic communicative actions and have such general conditions that they are likely to be performed frequently by all speakers. Normally, given this understanding of speech interaction, all it takes for a speaker to perform one of these basic kinds of speech actions is to describe herself as so doing. The circumstances may not make her action felicitous, but it will still have been performed: for example, an order may not be addressed to someone who agrees that the speaker has the authority to give an order, but it will still be an order (unlike a christening by a person with no authority to christen, which will simply not be a christening, according to Austin and Searle).

So, to sum up, we can always shape one specific aspect of reality by describing it, and that aspect of reality is our own speech acts. Other aspects of reality vary considerably in their receptivity to being influenced by description, as social conventions may decree. But Searle recognizes that such performative actions are not limited to first-person utterances. An umpire, with the right social authority, says *That's an out* and makes it an out by saying that it is; a court official can say *This court is now in session* and thus bring the court into session; and so on. The fact of an out in baseball, or of a court being in session, are *institutional facts* (Searle 1969, ch. 2) rather than *brute facts*, and hence can be brought into being by the right socially-authorized and authoritative speech act. Searle also recognizes that magical or supernatural beings are thought of as having different performative abilities from humans: they can affect not only social facts, but also things which would come under Searle's "brute fact" label. God's *Let there be light* in *Genesis 1,3* is perhaps not Searle's best example, since its subjunctive mood removes the possibility for a purely depictive reading. However, a very clear example of performative use of description can be found in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Two Towers* (189), where the good wizard Gandalf breaks the traitor wizard Saruman's staff (the symbol of his power) by saying *Saruman, your staff is broken*, an utterance couched in a purely descriptive form.

A crucial part of the difference between descriptive and performative, then, lies in what Searle (1979, ch. 1) calls the *direction of fit* between Word and World. In descriptions, the word fits a real or imagined world. A description - or we might better say, a descriptive statement or assertion - may be true or false, depending on its fit to the world in question. On the other hand, a directive (e.g., an imperative such as *drop that!* used to convey an order) can be successful or unsuccessful, felicitous or non-felicitous; but it cannot be true or false, because it does not involve a fit of word to world, but rather an attempt to make the world fit the words. Imperative and subjunctive forms mark linguistic utterances as having world to word fit - as being (unlike depictive statements) intended to bring about a state of affairs rather than describe one.

In many respects, performative statements are more like directives than they are like descriptive statements, in that they also are attempts to make the world fit the words. But they are a rather different kind of attempt. A command or a request assumes that the world does not automatically fit itself to the speaker's words: the addressee's mediating action is needed, and is not guaranteed by the speech act itself, however much it may be guaranteed by other contextual factors. But a performative statement necessarily presupposes that the speaker's statement is all that is needed to make the world fit its contents; how else can a statement be construed performatively? So it is only reasonably used where that assumption makes sense: for example, in performing a speech act (*I order you to drop that*, or *I request your explanation*), or shaping some other aspect of the situation which I have the special social authority to shape by speaking (*I christen you* spoken by the appointed ceremonial participant; *That's an out* spoken by the umpire; and so on). This explains the "first-person" nature attributed to performatives by Austin: only first-person actions - and only speech actions, of course - can generally be performed by and in describing the performance in question, without special power to affect the world beyond the speaker.

Searle and Vanderveken (1985) labelled *declaratives* the class of statements whose truth is ensured simply by the act of uttering them under appropriate circumstances (e.g., *This meeting is now adjourned*.) Crucially, such statements have both directions of fit: the words automatically fit the world, because the world has to fit the words. Searle (1989) therefore says that performatives are declaratives, and a performative such as *I order you to leave* is therefore both a statement and an order, but that the statement depends on the order, rather than the other way around. By this he means that the truth value of the statement is ensured by the automatic success of the speech act of ordering which the statement performs in describing it.<sup>4</sup> There would be neither truth nor practical value to an attempted performative such as *I hereby end all wars*, at least for any ordinary speaker, since this is not something whose truth can be brought about by describing it.

Now Searle points out that other linguistic entities besides statements can be interpreted variously as to the direction of fit between word and world. In the first chapter of *Expression and Meaning* (1979, 3-4), he discusses the contrast between a shopping list, and the list made up by the detective who follows the shopper around the store and notes all the items bought. The two physical texts could be identical, but the detective's list is a description, true or false, of what was bought, while the shopping list is a self-addressed directive, telling the shopper what to buy. The shopper's actions are judged by their fit to his list (or failure to fit it), while the detective's list is intended to fit the shopper's actions; the former can thus only correct an error by returning to the store and changing his purchases, while the latter can make a correction

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<sup>4</sup> Note that of course Searle does not mean that the order will automatically succeed in inducing the perlocutionary effect of compliance, but only that it will automatically succeed in communicating the illocutionary force of an order.

by altering the list. The distinction between these two cases is not that of performative vs. descriptive use, but more like the contrast between a directive (the shopper's list is equivalent to a series of instructions to buy the things listed) and a statement (the detective's list is equivalent to a series of statements that the shopper bought the things listed). But the example clearly shows that, in context, an isolated word like *flour* or *butter* - without any surrounding sentence - can participate in both directions of fit.

### 3. Mental spaces, depiction, and performativity.

My very general definition of performativity is that it involves a particular relation of fit between a mental space which is a representation, and the corresponding represented space. If the representation is taken as fitting the represented space, then the relation between the spaces is *depictive* or *representational*. It is the success or failure of depictive fit (of representation to world) which is described as *true* or *false*, *accurate* or *inaccurate*. If on the other hand the represented space is taken as fitting (being causally influenced or changed by) the representation, then the relation is performative. The act of representation, by its performance, constitutes (or performs as a causal agent in) the structure of the represented space.

This definition does not distinguish between linguistic and non-linguistic representations: my point will be that they can be used in remarkably similar ways. However, I inherit from Searle the crucial distinctions (1) between using a representation descriptively, and using it performatively, and (2) between performing an action by describing it (by performative use of description) and performing it by other means. I may order you to leave by pointing to the door, or by using a linguistic form which is appropriate to the speech act of ordering (an imperative such as *Leave this room!*); both of these perform the relevant act directly, whether linguistically or not. On the other hand, I can convey the order by saying *I order you to leave the room*, which is a performative use of a descriptive form.

A non-linguistic example to start our discussion might be that of a painting of a buffalo hunt on a cave wall, discovered by archaeologists who know from associated artifacts that the social group which produced the paintings were also buffalo-hunters. In the painting, buffalo fall prey to successful hunters. A possible debate about its proper interpretation might run as follows. Was the painter chronicling a successful past hunt - is it a depictive record, following and modeling itself on events in the represented world? Or was it made with the intention of bringing about success in a future hunt - is it magically intended to bring about in reality the situation it represents? That is, is it performative, rather than depictive? As cultural descriptions everywhere attest, we all use a wide variety of representations both depictively and performatively. Linguistic representations are only one strand (though an important and complex one) in the web of mental spaces which show such relationships.

Non-linguistic performative examples abound in ritual and magic. Frequently the link between the depiction and the world it is intended to affect is asserted by metonymic means, as well as by purely depictive means. For example, suppose that you want to magically bring it about that I pass my exams and graduate from college. In attempting to bring this about by the performative use of purely representational means, you might paint a picture of me in graduation robes, with diploma in hand, or paste a photograph of my face into a graduation picture of this kind, to make sure that the representation resembles me. A metonymic means of achieving the same end might be to dress a wax doll in graduation robes, and put a lock of the actual student's hair on its head (hair, nail filings, blood, and close personal possessions are similarly used in voodoo). One might try to bring about a successful hunt by painting such a scene, or by enacting one ritually; in the latter case, one might well use metonymic links such as dressing the human actor of the hunted animal's role in the hide and/or horns of an animal of the same species.

Names seem to be like other representations in being susceptible to referential use for either depictive or performative purposes. In using a name to refer to a present entity or add to a depictive mental space involving a non-present entity, the kind of reference involved is like depictive reference in that it reflects already established naming practices and makes use of them to depict some entity in some space. But two kinds of performative naming practices seem possible. One is involved in the use of names as invocations or evocations of the named entity. The Indo-European name for 'bear' (the ancestor of Latin *ursus*) appears to have been lost in many Indo-European sub-families, being replaced in Germanic by words meaning 'brown one' such as *bear*, and in Slavic by words which mean 'honey-eater' (e.g., Russ. *m'edv'et'*). This seems to have been due to a taboo on naming certain animals, lest that bring them into the place where the namer is. Names of evil spirits are generally taboo, lest their use invoke the spirit's presence.<sup>5</sup> Names of gods are powerful because they may invoke the presence of the deity. The second kind of performative use of names is the metalinguistic one which establishes a naming *convention* by using a name: "baptism", so to speak, by use of a new name. A normal depictive referential use of a name brings neither the named entity nor the naming convention into being or presence, but represents the being which is presumed to exist, and follows the presumed naming convention to do so.

#### 4. Metaphor, ritual and performativity.

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<sup>5</sup> Modern fiction writers also make use of this convention; Diana Wynne Jones has a series of novels involving a wizard whose name (or title) is Chrestomanci, and who is generally obliged to appear whenever and wherever he is mentioned. (He has an impressively elegant collection of dressing gowns so as not to be caught at too much of a disadvantage when summoned at less opportune moments.)

A particularly interesting fact about the dual nature of representations discussed above is that it holds of metaphorical representations as well as of literal ones. For example, George Lakoff tells me that in some Italian village communities, it used to be the custom to carry a newly-born infant up a flight of stairs as soon as possible after birth, so that the child might socially “rise in the world” in later life. The metaphorical mapping seems clear: STATUS IS UP (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and hence GAINING STATUS IS RISING. But unlike most metaphors, it is not metaphorically describing an extant situation, but attempting to influence a future state of affairs. By changing relations in the source domain (height), the relations in the target domain (status) are to be changed.

Metaphorical representations, then, can be used either depictively or performatively, just like literal representations. A metaphorical mapping automatically brings two mental spaces into play, the source and target domains. Further, one of these (the source domain) is the space of the representation, and the other (the target) is the space of the represented world. For instance, in saying *clear-sighted* or *sharp-eyed* to refer to a person’s social or intellectual perceptions rather than to their physical vision, the thing being represented is the social or intellectual perceptiveness, and the representation of it is the description of physical vision. (This description is itself a representation, of course: so the metaphorical use is a secondary representational use of it.) The possibility then exists of “fit” in either direction between these two spaces. In Ursula Le Guin’s *A Wizard of Earthsea*, the central character is named Sparrowhawk originally by metonymic association (as a young magic-worker, he loves to magically summon animals, and is especially often seen with hawks); other characters, such as his first teacher, clearly think the name is a good metaphorical description of his intellectual speed and power, and his fiercely independent character. Both of these are depictive uses, since the name is supposed to metonymically describe him as he independently is, or metaphorically depict his independently determined nature. He names his boat *Lookfar*, and paints eyes on its prow: this can only be metaphorical, since the boat cannot literally see, but it is also performative rather than depictive, since it is intended to *give* the boat some of the protection that comes from careful (*far-sighted*) physical observance and mental consideration of the environment.<sup>6</sup>

Much religious ritual seems to be both metaphorical and performative in this sense. The circular shape of a ring metaphorically represents the unending permanence of marriage; but its use in a wedding ceremony is to bring that permanence into social being, not just to describe it. As mentioned earlier, the white dress worn by many Christian brides is often said to symbolize the sexual purity of virginity, and could therefore be taken as

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<sup>6</sup> Sparrowhawk magically cures the cataracts of the old man who sells him the boat, enabling him to see again; it is the old man who suggests that he name the boat *Lookfar* and thus give it metaphorical “vision” in compensation for the old man’s literal vision. And indeed, in later interactions, the boat sometimes seems to be magically aware of the hero’s intentions, as well as of weather. (See *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. LeGuin [1968])

simply metaphorically depicting (truly or not) the bride's virgin status. And in support of this depictive reading, we can cite the convention barring the wearing of a white dress at a divorced or widowed woman's second marriage ceremony. But white ritual garments worn for purification (worn by penitents in both Jewish and Christian traditions) metaphorically refer to the desired spiritual end-state of the rituals in which they participate, not the factual beginning state; they are intended to help *bring about* purity.

Indeed, the same representation in ritual may apparently be simultaneously depictive and performative. Does kneeling to a divinity metaphorically represent the already extant differential in power and status between worshipper and god (a depictive use), or help to bring the worshipper into the right state of humility (a performative use)? Perhaps both. A Christian communion service may likewise be seen as metaphorically depicting an already extant spiritual union between human and divine, in the physical uniting of the blessed bread and wine (metaphorically representing Christ's body and blood) with the bodies of the worshippers; but it certainly must also be seen as intending to causally bring about this spiritual union via the consumption of the bread and wine.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps ontological religious ritual, such as the communion service, is particularly certain to be simultaneously depictive and performative, since it both acknowledges (or affirms) a particular ontology as prevailing, and also is intended to assist in maintaining it, or keeping it in being. The apparently traditional Celtic ritual marriage of the King to the land, thought to have been manifested metaphorically in a ritual act of sexual union with his spouse, has been interpreted as both acknowledging and perpetuating the special link of that king and his people to that territory.<sup>8</sup> Jewish and Christian (following Jewish texts) ritual words which claim to bless, glorify (i.e., 'make glorious'), or magnify (i.e., 'make great') God by saying *You are blessed, you are glorious, or you are great*, are now analyzed as depictives where worshippers acknowledge God's blessedness, glory and greatness. But there is evidence in older Mediterranean traditions, including Indo-European ones, of a more performative interpretation, where gods depended on worshippers for greatness (and were thus literally made glorious or great by worshippers' depictions in hymns such those of the Vedas, the Avestas, or the Homeric hymns), even while worshippers depended on gods for powerful supernatural protection and support enabled by that same greatness.

The crucial points here are simply that metaphorical description as well as literal description can be used either depictively or performatively (as claimed in the introduction); and that ritual often involves both

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<sup>7</sup> The Episcopalian communion service, for example, contains such central phrases as the quasi-directives, said to communicants as the bread and wine are presented to them, *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life* and *The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life* (*The Book of Common Prayer* [1977, The Seabury Press, NY], p. 365) which clearly indicate that the bread and wine are intended to causally bring about a particular spiritual situation, and not merely attest to its existence.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Mac Cana (1970), 94ff, 120ff.

metaphorical and literal representation, which may be used depictively, performatively, or both depictively and performatively. An added point of interest is that the relevant representation in ritual can be linguistic or non-linguistic: it takes place via visual symbols like color of garments, physical objects such as bread and wine, and actions such as eating or kneeling, as well as via linguistic representations in the spoken text of the liturgy.

We should note that not only “ritual,” but everyday interaction, has the characteristics we have just been mentioning. Bickel (1997, 1999), analyzing Belhare culture, chronicles its pervasive metaphorical mappings of the source domain of UP/DOWN onto target domains such as STATUS (UP is positive status, DOWN is relative lack of such status), LIFE/DEATH (UP is ALIVE, DOWN is DEAD), and GODS/HUMANS. In Belhara, a grandchild would have to pass a grandparent on the downhill side of the path, leaving the uphill side to the respected elder; a loom is placed facing uphill to weave garments for living wearers but downhill to weave a shroud, temples are built on local heights, and leaves of food sacrifices to the gods should face uphill. What Bickel brings out is the complex unity between what Westerners would regard as “everyday” activities, such as the fact of loom placement in a house, or the right way to pass your grandmother on a hillside path, and “ritual” activities such as worship at a temple. Western customs of bowing and kneeling (to monarchs, e.g.) likewise are not limited to religious ritual, and sometimes seem in broader contexts to have the same ambiguity as to their performative or depictive status: does kneeling to a monarch acknowledge or help to maintain his or her rule as monarch?<sup>9</sup>

## 5. The mental space structures involved in performative and depictive usages.

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<sup>9</sup>Saturday, April 6, 2002 It is unclear to me whether critical theory would answer this question with *Neither* or *Both*. All social roles are considered as performance, in a mutually interdependent context; but they are also not considered as agentive or voluntary performance by individual agents. Rather, as I understand it, the State performs via us the roles which it coercively bequeaths to us. So, despite the use of the term *performativity* to describe this situation, there is no real distinction between performativity and depiction in this understanding of social structure. (REFS to Butler, Sedgewick)

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### 1. Introduction: linguistic and non-linguistic performativity

Let us first look at the blended spaces involved in the earlier hypothetical example of a ritual dance which enacts a successful buffalo hunting scenario in order to bring about success in an intended future real hunt. Figure 1 shows the complex blend involved in the performative example. We have a blend between (Input 1) the ritual setting and participants and (Input 2) a hunting scene and its participants. In the ritual setting, we have people chasing other people, with weapons; but this is not interpreted as personal hostility, under the circumstances, so not all of the accessible knowledge of these people and weapons is brought into the ritual interaction input space, although some things (such as who is known to be a good hunter in real life) may be brought in. Likewise, in the input to the hunting scenario, there must be knowledge of the speed at which a buffalo runs, and how strong and heavy a buffalo is. Some of this is going to be left out of the structure of the hunting scenario which constitutes Input 2: ritual hunters will probably not assume that they need to run fast enough to chase a real buffalo, for example, or that they will need to remove and cure the (perhaps already cured) buffalo hides worn by the buffalo-enactors. The blend is the effective understanding of what the ritual *is*, for the participants: that is, for them the person enacting the part of the buffalo is a buffalo, and the people enacting the roles of hunters are the human participants in the relevant future hunting expedition. This blend may be strengthened in various ways: for example, the ritual hunters may be the same people who intend to participate in the planned expedition, and may wear their actual hunting gear, giving identity links between the two input spaces. The buffalo-enactors may wear buffalo skins, giving metonymic links of a different kind between the two spaces, even though these are not the hides of the hunter's actual future quarry.

As Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner have pointed out to me, however, there is an added complexity in this hunting ritual blend, which we have not discussed. In a performative speech act, the description and the performance are not only blended, they are simultaneously enacted, in a single action over a single time period. If I say *I promise to be there*, I have described my act of promising and thereby performed a promise, via the physical act of pronouncing one phrase. But many rituals are not as temporally simple as that. In this case, the entire time span of Input 2 is yet to happen, still in the ritual participants' anticipatory imaginations, while the physical pursuit of humans by other humans in Input 1 is happening in the time frame of the ritual performance. Further, presumably the actual hunt will *not* in fact be a blend of this kind: that is, when the hunters on the intended expedition actually kill a buffalo, they will not be cognitively blending this space with that of the human-hunting-human ritual activity. Here, in the blended space set up by the ritual, the perhaps much shorter time-span of the ritual is mapped onto the longer time-span of an imagined actual hunt; and, assuming that many buffalo might be killed in an important hunting expedition, the catching and "killing" of the fewer human ritual

enactors of the buffalo role stands for the intended hunting and killing of many more real buffalo. *Compression* (cf. Fauconnier and Turner ms.) on multiple dimensions makes it possible to conduct this ritual without taking all the time needed for a real hunt, and even without knowing how long the projected hunt will last or how many buffalo will be killed.

Via this compressed mapping onto the Input 1 space, Input 2 is causally influenced. The ritual hunters' success in chasing down the enactor of the ritual buffalo role causally brings about success in the future hunting expedition, because in the blend it *constitutes* success in the future expedition.

This is of course a simplified analysis: in a full treatment, one would also, for example, treat the input from *past* experience of hunting expeditions, which shapes the ritual participants' concept of the future hunting expedition, before it can come into existence and set up Input 2. The blends involved become more and more complex.

Let us now compare the hunting example, which is mostly literal and metonymic in its means of depiction, with a metaphorical ritual blended space example, that of the baby being carried upstairs to ensure her future success in the world. In order to believe in this ritual, one needs to believe that in depicting a source-domain entity (MOVING UPWARDS), one can bring about a result in the target domain which is metaphorically being conveyed via this depiction (IMPROVEMENT IN SOCIAL STATUS).

One way of looking at metaphor is to think of it as a special "one-sided" blend of mental spaces, specifically a blend wherein the structure of the source-domain input space is used to restructure or add structure to that of the target-domain input space, but the basic internal structure of the blended space is primarily determined by the target domain. By this analysis, a literal use minimally involves two spaces, that of the representation and that of the represented situation. But metaphorical usage minimally involves two input spaces in the representation, as well as the spaces represented by each of those representations. Thus, *she's rising* used metaphorically to mean that she is gaining status involves (1) a source-domain depiction of physical rising, which represents some space wherein physical rising occurs and (2) a target-domain depiction of gain in status, which represents some space wherein status is gained. Via metaphorical one-sided mapping from source depiction to target depiction, a blend is created, and we understand the utterance to refer to a gain in status understood in terms of physical rising.

However, this doesn't mean that metaphorical performative uses pose any particular problems. In a metaphorical depictive use, it is understood that the blend is a new way of construing the representation of the *target* space, not the source space; and likewise in a metaphorical performative use, it is understood that the target space is the one to be affected by the performative. The more relevant space for the *representation* part of the performative, then, is the source domain; and the target domain is taken as crucially connected to the represented and affected space.

Figure 2 shows a partial mental spaces analysis of the ritual of carrying the baby upstairs to ensure her improvement in status during her life.

Input 1 = understanding of this particular act of carrying the baby up stairs (brings in stuff from everyday stair-climbing, including being carried and causal role of carrier)

Input 2 = child's life (brings in anything we know about life-directions, including parental influence)

Blend = child's life direction AS going up stairs

Generic space = some very abstract scalar structure, with a positive and negative pole to the scale (since both verticality and status seem to have scalar inference structures and +/- poles).

There is compression of structure, again: the baby's whole life corresponds to the much shorter whole trip upstairs. Pressure from the blend, including pressure from compression, influences how the two input spaces actually structure the resources from the cognitive domains which ultimately provide their material. For example, in an ordinary trip upstairs carrying a baby, one might stumble or fall, and that would be unimportant as long as neither the carrier nor the baby were physically injured. But it might well be an extremely bad omen to stumble or fall in this ritual stair-climbing activity: this is because the baby's entire metaphorical "life journey" is represented by these few moments of stair-climbing. A single tumble on a short flight of stairs takes up a large portion of time - and of the watchers' attention - relative to the time and attention spent on the stair-climb as a whole. The importance of the tumble relative to the stair-climbing (*not* relative to the participants' whole lives) is mapped onto the importance of some misfortune relative to the baby's entire life. Similarly, one could not decide in the middle of the ritual that one had forgotten the baby's bottle downstairs, and go down again to fetch it (an activity presumably not mapped by the ritual). Once the ritual "clock" is started, the stair-climbing activity must be continuous from beginning to end, just as the baby's life will be continuous from start to finish.

As in the hunting ritual, in the blended space of the ritual the movement upwards causes the future improvement in social status, because it constitutes it. In order to believe in the efficacy of either of these rituals, one has to believe that one can causally bring about a good hunt by (or in) enacting it, and that one can causally bring about improvement in social status by enacting something which is metaphorically mapped onto it.

## 6. Conclusions.

A complex web of mappings shape our uses of the cognitive relationship between represented and representing spaces. Central to this web of mappings is the issue of the causal relationship between a representation and what it represents. As all past research agrees, all speakers can causally bring about their own speech acts by describing them. Cultural differences in socially granted causal authority may differ and cause corresponding

differences in performative uses, as in the special authority granted to umpires to make a ball an out by stating that it is so, or to priests or judges to make two people legally married by stating that it is so. Cultural and personal differences in beliefs about causation will likewise influence the performative use of mental spaces: why would one take communion, for example, unless one believed in its efficacy?

In looking at the special status of language in this web of mappings, linguists and philosophers of language have paid less attention to the web as a whole, and to the similarities between the ways in which linguistic and non-linguistic forms of representation can be used both depictively and performatively. I would like to take a moment here to consider the special status of *non*-linguistic representation, and why it is so important in ritual. There is a general understanding that words may represent falsely as well as truly. The sentence *Joe may go to Cairo* is specifically marked as not representing reality, but even *Joe went to Cairo* could turn out to be inaccurate. Pictures, of course, need not represent real "originals," but it seems to me that we are inclined to think that they do. In reading a sentence about a boat in a novel, do we wonder about the writer's "original," as we might do in looking at an illustration of the same sentence? And as for enactment, well, *actions speak louder than words*, as they say: that is, actions show the reality of someone's intentions and behavior, while words may not. Ritual blends are cognitively strengthened, not only by multimodal involvement of the participants, but by the added realism gained from that involvement.

Critical theory uses of the word *performative* seem to have generalized the term to refer to almost any kind of action which influences social construal of a situation or a person. Part of the reason for this seems to be their questioning of the boundaries between depictive and performative in social construction. For example, we might say that many of us have a folk theory that when I wear certain clothes, that fits my independently extant gender identity, while if I wore other clothes, that would be an attempt to create some alternative gender identity. The difference between stage costume and "cross dressing", by this analysis, is that the one sets up the alternate gender identity only in the world of the play, while cross dressing may attempt to establish it in the real world. A critical theorist might reply to all of this that in fact my gender identity is anything but "independently extant" - it is precisely in doing all the things which I do (such as wearing gender-appropriate clothing) that I continuously enact my gender identity. Of course, this is not done in isolation, but as part of a complex and inescapable web of social conventions, which can be quite coercive. But nonetheless, in this understanding, all of the uses of gender markers are "performative" - they all construct gender identity, constantly.

The same might be said, in this view, of much other "depictive" use: little of the social world, or even of our understanding of the physical world, can be taken for granted as independent of our ongoing construal. Whenever I speak, dress, or otherwise behave in a way appropriate to my society's ideas

of feminine gender, I not only acknowledge my membership in that category, but participate in the creation and maintenance of that membership. And when I describe myself or other people according to socially accepted gender categories, I am likewise participating in the creation and maintenance of those categorizations. This presumably goes beyond the usual discussions of gender and social-group identity, although where it stops is unclear. If I sustain book-hood, or cat-hood, as a category by recognizing it and using it (thinking I am using it depictively), what am I creating or maintaining? Presumably my human cognitive categories, but to what extent is that an imposition, as opposed to a recognition of agreed-on categories? Any linguist would agree that uncontested human categorization is maintained and strengthened by use of those categories; but that still seems different from causal action to bring such structure into being. In the case of one's own social identity, it seems obvious that one can causally affect that identity by one's own actions; in the case of my categorization of a book as a (non-)book or a cat as a (non-)cat, it seems less evident that I can do much that matters by such activity. At any rate, I will be likely to affect *only* my own categorization system.

It seems unhelpful, then, to break down the original performative/depictive distinction entirely. I may be engaging in an act of construal, or even social construction, when I describe someone else's speech act (*she asked me when I had come home*) but I cannot be trying to perform the described speech act, as I could via *I ask you when you came home*. Describing real or imagined states of affairs (past successful hunts), although it surely involves conceptual construal and social presentation of those descriptions, is not the same as using descriptions to try to causally influence the future hunt's success.

Gender theorists in particular have used *performativity* also to refer to the power to perform speech acts; *gay performativity* apparently refers to the gay community's empowerment to speak of and for itself, rather than remaining silent or silenced (Butler, Segwick REFS). Again, this would not have been Searle's or Austin's usage of the word. But Austin and Searle are assuming that speech acts such as statements, questions, and even orders, need no special conditions beyond very general ones to be performed. There is certainly nothing in their understanding of performativity which would be special or inaccessible to the gay and lesbian communities: we know that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual English speakers are as linguistically competent to make statements, ask questions, and give commands as straight speakers are - and also as competent to represent such speech acts, both for performative and depictive purposes. The real issue which gender theory exposes, for Austin and Searle's understanding of speech acts, is the problematic nature of institutional or social facts, which most speech act theorists appear to take as somehow "given" by a shared social framework. Chen (1999) suggests that Austin was wrong: a christening carried out by an unauthorized person need not automatically be a simple failure - it could instead be a disputed case, understood by some people as having carried out a

christening and by others as having failed. Same-sex marriage ceremonies offer the same possibility of disputed construal.

Social categories are often labelled, and labels are often used to confer and negotiate membership in social categories (e.g., *marriage, husband, wife*). Particular formal institutional authority may be built up to confirm such membership, with attendant ceremonies, which are likely to make declarative use of statements using the labels in question (*You are now husband and wife*). Inasmuch as some groups' chosen categories are not institutionally canonized in this way, they are prevented from engaging in certain kinds of important performative activities: U.S. law does not recognize the possibility of marriage for same-sex couples.

Gay performativity, therefore, is not a special kind of performativity, but a claiming of social authority to participate in shaping institutional facts, and thus to make performative uses of descriptions "take" in ways which would not have been authorized without social recognition of the categories involved. Austin and Searle would doubtless say that this is beyond their immediate purview, and indeed that it has nothing to say to their work: they always said that declaratives were dependent on institutional facts. The gender theorists' insight seems to be that - like speech acts - institutional facts themselves exist only by our representation of them: act as if they are altered (or *enact* them differently), and in some sense they really are. Mental space analysis of some of these social phenomena seems like a fruitful field of endeavor.

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