15 Verbs of Bitching

Fillmore's "Verbs of Judging" is subtitled 'an exercise in semantic description'. It is only to avoid compounding the chutzpah that I have not added the same subtitle to this paper. I will be concerned here with the semantic structure of the verbs that Fillmore investigated, roughly those that relate to guilt and virtue, and will operate within a descriptive framework not much different from Fillmore's. Fillmore presents his analyses in the form of a list of atomic formulas, segregated into a 'meaning' part and a 'presupposition' part, for example,

1. ACCUSE [Judge, Defendant, Situation (*of*)]
   Meaning: SAY [Judge, '*X*', Addressee]
   X = RESPONSIBLE [Defendant, Situation][1]
   Presupposition: BAD [Situation]

Each atomic formula consists of a predicate followed by a sequence of arguments, each of which is either the name of a 'role' (Judge, Defendant, Affected, . . .) or the name of a lower formula. Since each named formula is referred to in exactly one higher formula, Fillmore's analyses are mechanically convertible into diagrams such as 2, in which the meaning (in the narrow sense) and the presuppositions are represented as trees and presupposed material is connected by dotted lines to the constituent it is presupposed by, as in the diagram at the top of the following page. I will henceforth use the latter format for the presentation of Fillmore's analyses and alternate analyses. I will also assume that the analyses are to function as the logical structures of corresponding sentences (i.e., they are what can appear in the input and output of rules of inference) and that they constitute the deepest level of a syntactic derivation.[2]

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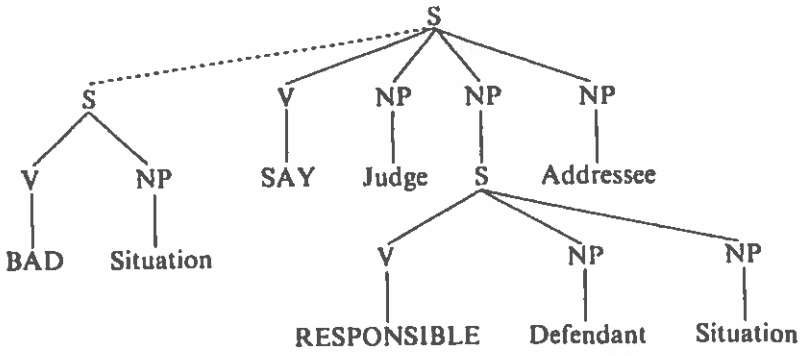
2.



This paper is concerned particularly with (i) whether the items that Fillmore treats as presuppositions really are presuppositions, (ii) whether the various roles in his analyses can be filled by the same kinds of things for the various verbs under consideration, and especially whether the role Fillmore calls 'Situation' is always filled by the same kind of things, and (iii) the extent to which syntactic characteristics of these verbs are idiosyncratic, as opposed to being related in a systematic way to their meanings.

Let me begin by playing around a little with the first verb that Fillmore discussed, namely *accuse*. It is not clear whether Fillmore would take the 'Situation' in 3 to be the proposition that Agnew wants to end the war or the propositional function '*x* wants to end the war', to mention the two most obvious possibilities.

3. Nixon accused Agnew of wanting to end the war.

Neither of those possibilities works if 'presuppose' is understood in the usual way, since to say sentence 3 felicitously it is not necessary that the speaker believe that it would be bad for Agnew to want to end the war nor that he believe that it is bad to want to end the war. For example, Fulbright could perfectly well use 3 in the middle of an anti-war speech. One possible correction in Fillmore's analysis to bring it into conformity with this observation would be to change the presupposition from BAD [Situation] to THINK [Judge, BAD [Situation]], that is, the presupposition of 3 would not be that it is bad to want to end the war but that Nixon thinks it is bad to want to end the war. However, that doesn't work either, in view of the fact that saying 4 does not commit the speaker to the proposition that it is bad to offer Officer O'Reilly a bribe and bad not to offer him one, nor to the proposition that Officer O'Reilly thinks both that it is bad to offer him a bribe and bad not to offer him one.

4. Officer O'Reilly accused me of not offering him a bribe and threatened to take me to the police station and accuse me of offering him a bribe.

Indeed, one could utter 4 in good faith even under the belief that Officer O'Reilly considers the offering of bribes morally neutral. His belief that offering him a bribe is bad is certainly a condition for his being sincere in accusing you of offering him a bribe, but an insincere accusation is still an accusation.

Example 4 brings into prominence an important characteristic of accusations which is not mentioned in Fillmore's analysis, namely, that an accusation creates some kind of 'jeopardy' (using that word fairly loosely). When someone is accused of something, he must successfully defend himself against the accusation or suffer the consequences. The consequences may be quite trivial, for example, the accuser being annoyed at the accused; but unless there are some such undesirable consequences, a statement cannot constitute an accusation. This is illustrated by the difference in normalness between[3]

5. Officer O'Reilly$_i$ took Susan $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{before the judge}\\ \text{?to Tiny Tim}\end{matrix}\right\}$ and accused her of offering him$_i$ a bribe.

If Susan is a normal person, she would care about the possibility of the judge fining or jailing her, but she shouldn't care a hoot whether Tiny Tim shakes his finger at her and says 'Naughty, naughty'.

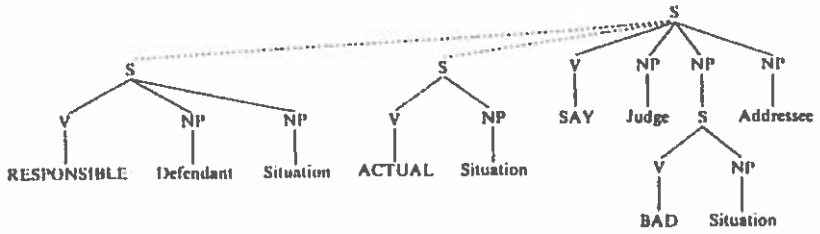
As Fillmore's formulas would predict, saying that a person did some foul act may constitute an accusation, that is, it is possible for an occurrence of the sentence *Last night while you were drunk, you stabbed your mother to death* to be correctly reported by saying *Mary accused Bill of stabbing his mother to death while he was drunk the previous night*. However, such a report is not always correct. An occurrence of the sentence *Last night while you were drunk you stabbed your mother to death* is an accusation if uttered by a policeman who is going to cart you off to jail unless you come up with a good alibi quick, or if uttered by your mother's lover, who wants vengeance, but is not an accusation if uttered by a friend who is informing you of the danger of your being arrested and wants to help you escape. Note also that in a trial the prosecutor accuses the defendant of the crime, but the foreman of the jury, in reporting a guilty verdict, is saying that the defendant committed the crime but is not accusing him. The prosecutor's action creates the situation of jeopardy, whereas the foreman's action brings an existing situation of jeopardy to culmination. I thus conclude that the meaning of *accuse* includes the information that the linguistic act which it reports creates a situation of jeopardy, that is, that the logical structure of 6a is along the lines of 6b:

6a. John accused Sam of breaking the window.
b. John said that Sam broke the window and thereby put Sam in jeopardy.

This actually is inadequate, since an accusation has to be made with the intention of creating jeopardy. Thus, if someone in a group which includes an FBI undercover agent discusses the group's plans to bomb the Treasury Building, he hasn't accused his friends of planning to bomb the Treasury Building, even though he has (inadvertently) put them into some kind of jeopardy. The logical structure of 6a must indicate not merely that jeopardy results from the act, but that the creation of jeopardy is indeed part of the act. It is evidently this characteristic of the meaning of *accuse* which is responsible for the possibility of using it as a performative verb: its logical structure is in this respect like the large subset of Austin's 'exercitives' (Austin, 1962) which Vendler (1972) calls 'operatives': verbs such as *appoint*, *decree*, and *excommunicate* which refer to an act of making something the case by saying that it is to be the case (under appropriate circumstances).

Let me now take up *criticize*, which Fillmore has claimed contrasts almost minimally with *accuse* with respect to the assignment of various parts of its content to 'presupposition' and 'meaning' in the narrow sense:

7.



Since in this structure and the one for *accuse* the same predicates are predicated of 'Situation' (save for the additional occurrence of ACTUAL [Situation] in 7), and likewise the same predicate is predicated of 'Defendant', there is nothing in the two structures which would imply any difference between what can fill these two roles in sentences with *accuse* and what can fill them in sentences with *criticize*, other than what can be attributed to the presence of ACTUAL [Situation] in 7. It turns out, however, that there are differences which cannot be ascribed to 'ACTUAL [Situation]'. *Accuse* but not *criticize* requires the 'Defendant' to be a person:

8a. Mencken criticized act 2 of *Lohengrin* for being too long.
b. *Mencken accused act 2 of *Lohengrin* of being too long.

9a. The principal criticized Rocky's hair for being untidy.
b. *The principal accused Rocky's hair of being untidy.

Here 'person' must be taken in the extended sense which includes corporate persons:

10. Nader accused General Motors of dumping mercury in the Detroit River.
Nixon accused Tanzania of endangering American interests in Antarctica.

Not quite anything is possible as the 'Defendant' with *criticize*:[4]

11a. *John criticized wisdom for being hard to achieve.
b. *Arthur criticized 17 for being an unlucky number.
c. *Sam criticized the Mississippi River for being too wide.

To get a better idea of what 'Defendant' *criticize* allows, consider the following sentences, which differ only slightly from 11c but are much more normal:

12. Sam criticized the Cuyahoga River for being too filthy.
Sam criticized the Erie Canal for being too narrow.

What appears to make these sentences better than 11c is that the filthiness of the Cuyahoga River and the narrowness of the Erie Canal are the result of the decisions and actions of people, whereas the width of the Mississippi is not. Where the object of *criticize* is not a person, it is something for which a person or persons are responsible, and the criticism of the object is at least by implication a criticism of the person(s) responsible. Actually, 11c is perfectly good if taken as a criticism of God for a lousy job of creation.

Let us now take a look at some differences in what *accuse* and *criticize* allow in the role of 'Situation'.

13a. McGovern criticized Nixon for { *irresponsibility. / his irresponsibility. / ?Mitchell's irresponsibility. }
b. McGovern criticized Nixon for the fact that he puts ketchup on his cottage cheese.
c. McGovern criticized Nixon for { what he said to the Knights of Columbus / the basis on which he fills court vacancies. / the way in which his economic policy has failed. }

14a. McGovern accused Nixon of { irresponsibility. / *his irresponsibility. / *Mitchell's irresponsibility. }

b. *McGovern accused Nixon of the fact that he puts ketchup on his cottage cheese.

c. McGovern accused Nixon of { *what he said to the Knights of Columbus. / *the basis on which he fills court vacancies. / *the way in which his economic policy has failed. }

Certain of the above facts are accounted for by the presence of ACTUAL [Situation] in Fillmore's analysis of *criticize*. For example, *his irresponsibility* involves a presupposition that he is irresponsible (e.g., neither *McGovern discussed Nixon's irresponsibility* nor *McGovern didn't discuss Nixon's irresponsibility* is appropriate unless the speaker believes that Nixon is/was irresponsible). It may be used with *criticize*, which for Fillmore has a presupposition that the 'Situation' is 'actual'. Similarly with the expression *the fact that he puts ketchup on his cottage cheese*, which involves the presupposition that he puts ketchup on his cottage cheese. It is not completely clear to me why *accuse* not only allows NP's which do not carry a presupposition that the situation is actual, but indeed excludes NP's which do carry such a presupposition. One possible answer would bring in the idea that 'jeopardy' is a situation which one can get out of by defending himself successfully against the accusation, and that if you presuppose the truth of the charge, as opposed to asserting it, you are ruling out the possibility of defense.

The items in 13c have peculiar properties that will have to be discussed before the significance of those examples can be determined. Note that the inferences in 15 are valid and those in 16 invalid:

15a. The length of the Bible exceeds the length of *Tropic of Cancer*.
The length of the *Tropic of Cancer* is 287 pages.
Therefore, the length of the Bible exceeds 287 pages.

b. Many people believe what Nixon said to the Knights of Columbus.
What Nixon said to the Knights of Columbus is that Mao is a yellow aryan.
Therefore, many people believe that Mao is a yellow aryan.

16a. Schwartz criticized *Tropic of Cancer* for its length.
The length of *Tropic of Cancer* is 287 pages.
*Therefore, Schwartz criticized *Tropic of Cancer* for 287 pages. (grammatical only in an irrelevant sense)

b. McGovern criticized Nixon for what he said to the Knights of Columbus.
What Nixon said to the Knights of Columbus is that Mao is a yellow aryan.
Therefore, McGovern criticized Nixon { *for that Mao is a yellow aryan. / *that Mao is a yellow aryan. / *for the proposition that Mao is a yellow aryan. }

The only appropriate inferences from the premises of 16 involve an expansion of the first premise:

17a. Schwartz criticized *Tropic of Cancer* for { having a length of 287 pages. / being 287 pages long. }

b. McGovern criticized Nixon for saying to the Knights of Columbus that Mao is a yellow aryan.

I suggest that the difference between 15 and 16 is the result of the first premises of the inferences in 16 being abbreviated forms, that is, that the extra material which appears in 17 is present in the logical structure of the first premises of the inferences of 16. Rules of inference, of course, apply to the logical structures of sentences and not to their surface forms. I thus maintain that the sentences in 13c have the same logical structure as the following sentences and have undergone an optional deletion:[5]

18. McGovern criticized Nixon for saying to the Knights of Columbus what he said to them.
McGovern criticized Nixon for filling court vacancies on the basis on which he fills them.
McGovern criticized Nixon for his economic policies failing in the way in which they have failed.

I am not in a position to state exactly what this deletion rules does. The rule, which I will refer to as TELESCOPING, applies to certain structures in which a clause contains, roughly speaking, a nominalization of itself, and deletes all of that clause but the nominalization. Telescoping has also been noted by Elliott (1971) who observes that it is involved in exclamatory sentences such as

19a. It's amazing the books that John has read. (= . . . that John has read the books that he has read)

b. It's absurd the kind of things that I'm forced to put up with. (= . . . that I'm forced to put up with the kind of things that I'm forced to put up with).[6]

It is important to note that the possibility of Telescoping depends on the linguistic context in which the clause in question is embedded:

20. I'm angry at Nixon because he said what he said.
I'm angry at Nixon despite his saying what he said.
I'm angry at Nixon as a result of his saying what he said.
I got angry at Nixon before/after he said what he said.
I was angry at Nixon until he said what he said.
I will be angry at Nixon as long as he makes appointments on the basis on which he makes them.

21. I'm angry at Nixon because of what he said.
I'm angry at Nixon despite what he said.
I'm angry at Nixon as a result of what he said.
*I got angry at Nixon before/after what he said.
*I was angry at Nixon until what he said.
*I will be angry at Nixon as long as the basis on which he makes appointments.

Both *criticize* and *accuse* allow complements such as *Nixon said what he said*:

22a. McGovern accused Nixon$_i$ of saying what he$_i$ said.
b. McGovern criticized Nixon$_i$ for saying what he$_i$ said.

Therefore, the problem which sentences 13c and 14c present is that of why only one of the two verbs allows Telescoping. Examples 20 and 21 suggest a conjecture: that Telescoping is permissible in a reason clause and that the complement of *criticize* (but not that of *accuse*) is a reason clause in logical structure, that is, that the logical structure of 22b is along the lines of 'McGovern said that Nixon is bad because Nixon said what Nixon said'.[7] I have at the moment no really strong support for this conjecture, but I note that Telescoping is possible in other complements which require an analysis as reason clauses,[8] for example,

23. I'm happy about what Nixon did. (= . . . about Nixon's doing what he did)
I'm annoyed at the attention you pay her. (= . . . at your paying her the attention that you pay her)
I'm distressed at the amount of time Harry spends in the pool hall. (= . . . at Harry's spending the amount of time in the pool hall that he does).

I thus have arrived at conjectures about the logical structures of clauses with *criticize* and *accuse* which appear to explain certain differences between those verbs which are not explained by Fillmore's analyses:

24a. x criticize y for S = x say (y is bad because S)
b. x accuse$_z$ y of S = (x say$_z$ S) and (become$_z$ (y in jeopardy))

(the subscript denotes the event in question; the double occurrence of z on the right side of 24b means that the event of x's saying S is the same as [or includes] the event of y's coming to be in jeopardy). I do not mean to suggest that these formulas constitute a decomposition of the meanings of *accuse* and *criticize* into semantic primes; 'jeopardy', at least, is surely further decomposable. The fact that 'in jeopardy' is predicated of y in the decomposition of *accuse* but not that of *criticize* accounts for the restriction that the 'Defendant' of *accuse* but not of *criticize* must be a person: only a person (in the extended sense noted above) can be in jeopardy. One respect in which the above formulas may be inadequate is that they do not in themselves impose any restriction on the S. For example, there is nothing in 24b which would rule out such nonsentences as

25. *McGovern accused the Republican Party that Nixon is irresponsible.
*McGovern accused the Republican Party of Nixon's being irresponsible.

However, I am not sure that the ungrammaticality of 25 is due to characteristics of the meaning of *accuse* rather than to purely grammatical restrictions on what *accuse* may appear in combination with in surface structure. Note that *accusation* does not combine with the same material as does *accuse*, the verb that it apparently is a nominalization of:

26a. McGovern's accusation that Nixon is irresponsible (is well founded).
a′ *McGovern accused that Nixon is irresponsible.
b. McGovern accused Nixon of being irresponsible.
b′. *McGovern's accusation of Nixon of being irresponsible (is well founded).

Note also that the accusation reported in 26a need not be directed at Nixon but can perfectly well be directed at the Republican Party (which McGovern is accusing of nominating someone irresponsible). The discrepancy between what can appear in combination with *accuse* and what can appear in combination with its action nominalization, *accusation*, evidently involves an idiosyncratic restriction on one or the other or both of *accuse* and *accusation*, and the ground covered by the two of them appears to correspond to 24b without any restriction such as that y be the subject of S.

I turn now to some of the other verbs that Fillmore discussed. Fillmore states that *credit* and *praise* are positive counterparts of *accuse* and *criticize*, respectively, that is, that they have the same semantic structure as *accuse* and *criticize* except for having 'GOOD' where *accuse* and *criticize* have 'BAD'.[9] If that is the case, then to the extent that syntactic properties of words are predictable from their semantic structure plus general rules of grammar, *credit* and *praise* should behave syntactically like *accuse* and *criticize*. It in fact is the case that much of what I said above about *accuse* and *criticize* is also true of *credit* and *praise*, respectively. For example,

27. Nixon praised Agnew$_i$ for
- *wisdom
- his$_i$ wisdom
- ?Laird's wisdom
- the fact that he$_i$ has threatened reporters
- what he$_i$ said to Queen Elizabeth
- the basis on which he$_i$ picks his speech writers.

28. Nixon credited Agnew$_i$ with
- wisdom
- *his$_i$ wisdom
- *Laird's wisdom[10]
- *the fact that he$_i$ has threatened reporters
- *what he$_i$ said to Queen Elizabeth
- *the basis on which he$_i$ picks his speech writers.

Also, *praise* is like *criticize* and *credit* like *accuse* with respect to the interpretation of a sentence lacking an overtly expressed 'Situation'. Fillmore has noted that 29a is normal even in a context which does not specify any grounds for the criticism, but 29b is normal only when it refers to a specific offense already under discussion:

29a. Max criticized Arthur. (= Max criticized Arthur for something.
≠ Max criticized Arthur for it.)
b. Max accused Arthur. (= Max accused Arthur of it.
≠ Max accused Arthur of something.)

The same is true, mutatis mutandis, of 30a and 30b:

30a. Max praised Arthur. (= Max praised Arthur for something.
≠ Max praised Arthur for it.)
b. Max credited Arthur. (= Max credited Arthur with it.
≠ Max credited Arthur with something.)

If the conjectures I made above about the semantic structure of *criticize* and *accuse* are to be consistent with the claim that they are the negative counterparts of *praise* and *credit*, then 'BAD' must appear in the semantic structure of 'jeopardy' and the logical structure of clauses with *praise* and *credit* must be roughly

31a. x praise y for S = x say (y is good because of S).
b. x credit$_a$ y with S = (x say$_a$ S) and (become$_a$ (y in schmeopardy)).

In 31b 'schmeopardy' is what results from replacing 'BAD' by 'GOOD' in the logical structure of 'jeopardy'. I find this highly implausible. The closest thing to a positive counterpart to 'being in jeopardy' that I can think of is a situation where you are assured of receiving some blessing if you don't screw up, for example, you will get tenure if you don't offend any administrators. However, crediting you with something does not normally put you in that sort of situation.

I am accordingly led to inquire whether *credit* behaves like a positive counterpart to *accuse* with respect to the examples which were supposed to show that the notion of 'jeopardy' had to be part of the analysis of *accuse*. Here the two verbs turn out to differ. *Credit*, unlike *accuse*, does not require that the 'Defendant' be a person:

32a. *Mencken accused *Lohengrin* of being too long.
Shaw credited *Lohengrin* with having beautiful choruses.
b. *Tom accused the number 17 of having brought him bad luck.
Tom credited the number 28 with having brought him good luck.
c. *Max accused his belief in Taoism of breaking up his marriage.
Max credited his belief in Jainism with improving his golf score.

This means that *credit* isn't quite a positive counterpart to my analysis of *accuse*.[11] However, it isn't quite a positive counterpart to Fillmore's analysis of *accuse* either, since it can be shown not to have a presupposition that the 'Situation' is good, in just the same way that *accuse* was shown not to have a presupposition that the 'Situation' is bad:

33. Mayor Daley$_i$ credited me with saving his$_i$ life and promised to reward me by taking me to Mike Royko and crediting me with refusing to save his$_i$ life.

I have not as yet isolated the respect in which the meaning of *credit* fails to be a positive counterpart to the meaning of *accuse*. I have a gut feeling that the answer is intimately connected with the analysis of the notion of 'jeopardy', but I have not yet got any concrete results out of that gut feeling.

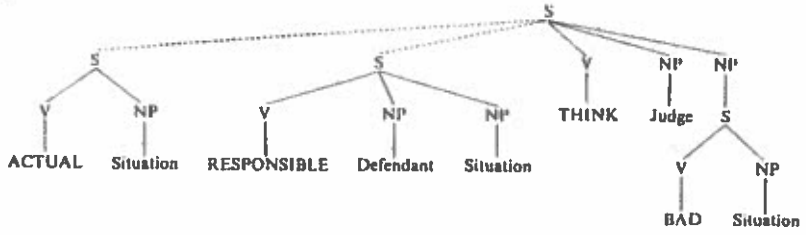
I now turn to the three senses of *blame* which Fillmore discusses,

namely *blame*$_1$ 'shift the blame onto', *blame*$_2$ 'hold culpable', and *blame*$_3$ 'think guilty', as illustrated by

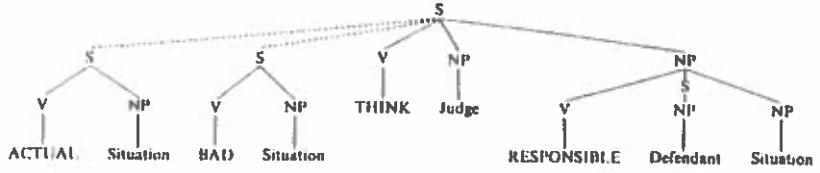
34a. Phil put a bomb in the governor's office and then blamed$_1$ it on mé.
b. Jack blámed$_2$ me for writing that letter.
I don't bláme$_2$ you.
c. Bert blamed$_3$ mé for what had happened.

I will henceforth ignore *blame*$_1$ and concentrate on *blame*$_2$ and *blame*$_3$. Fillmore's analyses of *blame*$_2$ and *blame*$_3$ are as follows:[12]

35a.



b.



For Fillmore *blame*$_2$ and *blame*$_3$ thus differ only with respect to which clauses are assigned to 'presupposition' and which to 'meaning' in the narrow sense. There is thus nothing in these analyses which would imply any difference between *blame*$_2$ and *blame*$_3$ as to what can function as the 'Situation'. It turns out, however, that there is considerable difference as to what they allow as 'Situation':

36. Do you {bláme$_2$ me / *blame$_3$ mé} for {killing/murdering Sally? / drinking all the beer? / saying something nasty to Kissinger? / getting angry at Spiro? / being angry/disappointed? / wanting to kill Nixon?}

37. Do you {blame$_3$ mé / *bláme$_2$ me} for {the/Sally's murder? / Sally's death? / the predicament that we're in? / Cuba's going communist? / the fact that Cuba went communist? / John's killing Sally?}

Blame$_3$ is indeed the only verb I have discussed so far whose 'Situation' really has to be a situation (as opposed to, e.g., an action), and indeed allows a NP whose head is the word *situation*:

38. {I don't blame$_3$ yóu for / *I don't bláme$_2$ you for / *I accused him of / ?*I criticized him for / ?*I praised him for / *I credited him with} the situation that we're in.

Also, *blame*$_2$ but not *blame*$_3$ requires that 'Defendant' be a person:

39a. I blăme$_3$ the high cost of living for Max's suicide.
*I bláme$_2$ the high cost of living for {causing Max to commit suicide. / driving many shops out of business.}
b. Nixon blămes$_3$ the lack of support from the Démocrats for the failure of his fiscal policy.
*Nixon blámes$_2$ the lack of support from the Democrats for causing his fiscal policy to fail.

The facts given so far are perfectly consistent with Fillmore's analysis of *blame*$_3$, provided 'RESPONSIBLE' is taken in the sense of *responsible for* which is the converse of *attributable to*. Note that sentences with *blame*$_3$ appear to have exact paraphrases with *responsible for*:

40a. Janet blames$_3$ the high cost of living for Phil's suicide.
Janet thinks that the high cost of living is responsible for Phil's suicide.
b. Sam blames$_3$ the steel plant for the dirt on his windows.
Sam thinks that the steel plant is responsible for the dirt on his windows.

With *blame*$_2$, there is a restriction which does not follow from Fillmore's analysis, namely, that the 'Situation' must be an act or a controllable state on the part of the 'Defendant'. One revision in Fillmore's analysis which would account for that restriction is to replace BAD [Situation] with the semantic material that corresponds to a sentence like *It was bad of you to drink all the beer* or *You were bad to drink all the beer*. Note that the *bad* of *bad of* or *bad* + infinitive allows the kinds of items that appear with *blame*$_2$ in 36 and excludes items corresponding to those which *blame*$_2$ excludes in 37:

41a. It was bad of Tom
- to drink all the beer.
- to get angry at Spiro.
- to want to kill Nixon.
- *for Sally to die.
- *for us to be in this predicament.
- *for Cuba to go communist.

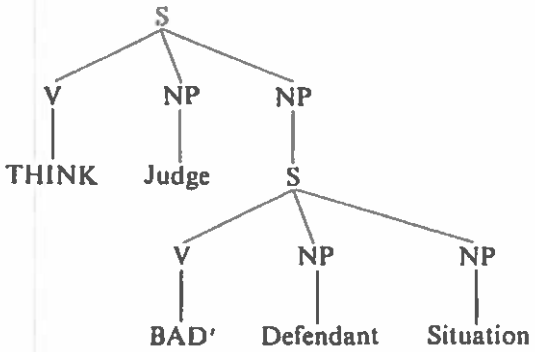
b. Tom was bad
- to drink all the beer.
- to get angry at Spiro.
- to want to kill Nixon.
- *for Sally to die.
- *for us to be in this predicament.
- *for Cuba to go communist.

Furthermore, sentences with *blame*$_2$ appear to be paraphrasable by sentences with *bad of* but not by sentences in which *bad* is predicated of a 'Situation': for example, 42a is paraphrased by 42b, but is not even implied by, let alone paraphrased by, 42c:

42a. Sheila blámes$_2$ Tom for drinking all the beer.
b. Sheila thinks it was bad of Tom to drink all the beer.
Sheila thinks Tom was bad to drink all the beer.
c. Sheila thinks it is/was bad that Tom drank all the beer.

She can think *it* was bad without thinking that *he* was bad. I thus maintain that 43 is a closer approximation than 35a to the meaning of a clause with *blame*$_2$, where BAD' is the binary relation between a person and an act or controllable state of his which is expressed by *bad of* or by *bad* + infinitive:

43.



BAD' is of course surely decomposable into more basic elements, but I do not yet have a decomposition that I am happy with. Since it is BAD' that is responsible for the presuppositions that the 'Situation' is actual and that the 'Defendant' is responsible for the 'Situation', the omission of those presuppositions from 43 is justified, though they may well have to appear explicitly in the decomposition of BAD': until I have a viable analysis of BAD', I cannot tell whether those presuppositions are predictable from the 'meaning' in the narrow sense or are idiosyncratic additions to the latter.

Since I have little in the way of conclusions, let me conclude this paper with a pep talk instead. The most widely quoted point in Fillmore's paper is the claim that verbs can differ as to whether semantic material that they contain is a presupposition or part of the 'meaning' in the narrow sense. I have shown above that the supposed examples of such differences given in Fillmore's paper really differ in some respect(s) other than that of which part of their content are assigned to presupposition. They thus do not show presuppositions to be as idiosyncratic a part of meaning as they had initially appeared to, but they still leave quite open the important question of the extent to which presuppositions can constitute differences among words of a language. Certain presuppositions are predictable from other parts of the meanings of sentences in which they are involved; this, for example, is the case with those presuppositions whose violation constitutes a 'category mistake', for example,

44a. *I poured sesame oil over August 13. [presupposition that locus of pouring is a physical object]
b. *Gödel has proved the universal quantifier. [presupposition that what is proved is a proposition]

On the other hand, it is clear that some presuppositions are distinctive

parts of the meaning. For example, the difference between *blame*$_3$, the mental-state sense of *credit* mentioned in note 9, and *attribute* seems to be the presence of a presupposition that the thing in question is bad, a presupposition that it is good, or neither of those presuppositions. Similarly German *schwanger* and *trächtig* appear to have the same meaning, ('pregnant') and to differ in that *schwanger* carries a presupposition that the subject is human and *trächtig* a presupposition that the subject is not human. However, I am willing to wager that a huge range of conceivable presuppositions cannot function distinctively in lexical items, for example, that no language can have word meaning 'pregnant' which carries a presupposition that the subject is dark-haired or a word meaning 'praise' which carries a presupposition that the subject is of the same sex as the speaker. I thus am fairly convinced that the possibility of words in a language having distinctive presuppositions exists but is fairly heavily restricted. I have looked in sufficient depth at so few words that I have no hint to offer as to what those restrictions are. Finding out something about them will be an important step toward understanding the role which presuppositions can play in the lexicon of a language and in logical structure in general.

16 Remarks on the Lexicography of Performative Verbs

At several places in *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin (1962) speaks of the importance of compiling a comprehensive list of performative verbs, or alternatively, of illocutionary forces,[1] and in his twelfth lecture he sets up a five-way categorization of performative verbs and gives long lists of representatives of each category. Austin evidently regarded the tabulation and classification of performative verbs and illocutionary forces as important principally because of the inherent interest of the question, what can people do with words? I regard such tabulations as important because of their relation to a somewhat different question: what determines which verbs are or can be performative, and what determines what illocutionary forces are possible? My concern is not for tests to determine whether, for example, the verb *criticize* can be used performatively (Austin provided an excellent treatment of that problem) but rather with determining, for example, what it is about *accuse* that makes it possible to use it performatively and what it is about *know* that makes it impossible to use it performatively. Why is it that verbs such as *shout* and *whisper*, which can be used to report speech acts, cannot be used performatively?[2] Is it possible for two verbs to have the same meaning but for only one of them to be used performatively? Or can one predict from the meaning of a verb whether it can be used performatively? As one learns one's native language, does one have to learn separately for each verb whether it can be used performatively, or does one automatically know whether he can use a verb performatively once he has learned what it means? I am fairly convinced that the meaning of a verb does in fact completely determine whether it can be used performatively; however, I am much less sure of

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Chapter 15

1. I have put 'Defendant' before 'Situation' in accordance with the other occurrences of RESPONSIBLE in Fillmore's formulas. I take it that the reverse order of 'Defendant' and 'Situation' in the formula that he gave for *accuse* is a mistake.

2. See McCawley (1972*a*) and G. Lakoff (1972) for elaboration of the conception of grammar and logic to which this sentence refers.

3. When necessary I will use paired subscripts to indicate the intended antecedent of a pronoun.

4. There actually is a case in which 11a–c could be used in normal discourse, though one which is irrelevant to the question under discussion, namely that they could be used to report criticisms of the choice of wisdom, 17, etc., for some purpose, e.g., criticizing the choice of 17 hexagons as part of the design of a flag on the grounds that 17 is an unlucky number. In this case it is in the act of choosing 17 rather than the number 17 itself which is the 'Defendant'.

5. The examples under 18 are ambiguous as to the scope of the definite description. The interpretation of 18 which is relevant here is that in which the definite description has the whole sentence as its scope, i.e., roughly 'the x for which Nixon said x to the Knights of Columbus is such that McGovern criticized Nixon for saying x to the Knights of Columbus'.

6. Telescoping is also relevant to a current controversy about the syntax of nominalizations. Chomsky (1970*a*:217) finds implausible any derivation of *Einstein's intelligence* from a source containing the sentence *Einstein is/was intelligent*. He does not state his objections explicitly, but what he says suggests the objection that the most obvious sources, namely *the fact that S* and *the extent to which S*, are not synonymous with the nominalization under discussion, i.e., i and ii are not paraphrases of iii:

i. The fact that Einstein was intelligent was his most remarkable property.
ii. The extent to which Einstein was intelligent was his most remarkable property.
iii. Einstein's intelligence was his most remarkable property.

The following, however, appear to be exact paraphases of (iii):

iv. The fact that Einstein was as intelligent as he was was his most remarkable property.
The fact that Einstein was intelligent to the extent that he was was his most remarkable property.

Actually, ii can be used with this sense. Chomsky's discussion assumes a really literal reading of ii, in which it is the extent or degree of intelligence possessed by Einstein (e.g., 210 IQ points, if you accept that as an extent of intelligence) of which *his most remarkable property* is being predicated, and he accordingly marks it as ungrammatical. I can see no objection to deriving iii from a structure which combines factive nominalization and extent nominalization, as in iv, by steps one of which is Telescoping.

[I hang my head in shame for having completely forgotten that what I have here dubbed Telescoping had already been proposed in Kuroda 1970. See McCawley 1975b for further discussion of Telescoping.]

7. This proposal obliterates the distinction between *criticize* and *denounce* Since *denounce* and *criticize* are syntactically identical as far as I can determine, I conjecture that the difference between their meanings is simply the kind or degree of 'badness' that is attributed to the 'Defendant'.

8. See Akatsuka 1972 for reasons why the complement of *happy*, etc., must be analyzed as an underlying reason clause.

9. *Credit* is ambiguous between a sense referring to a linguistic act and a sense referring to a mental state:

Every time Nixon makes a speech, he credits Agnew with being a great statesman.

I have always credited Agnew with being a great statesman, but this is the first time I have admitted that I feel that way about him.

That these are two distinct senses (as opposed to two situations in which a single sense of *credit* is applicable) is shown by the fact that syntactic phenomena such as pronominalization with *so* or deletion of repeated verb phrases respect this difference:

*Secretly I have always credited Agnew with being a great statesman, and I am delighted that Nixon did so in his speech last night.

In what follows, I have restricted my attention to the 'linguistic act' sense of *credit*.

10. The asterisk refers only to the intended interpretation, in which the NP can be paraphrased '(the fact) that Laird is wise'. It is grammatical with another interpretation, namely 'Nixon credited Agnew with having the (degree/kind of) wisdom that Laird has'. This last fact brings out a difference between *credit* and *accuse* for which I have no explanation, namely that *credit* much more easily allows the deletion of *have* before objects like *Laird's wisdom* than *accuse* does, i.e., only marginally can I admit a sentence like **Chomsky accused Nixon of Hitler's inhumanity* with the interpretation 'Chomsky accused Nixon of having the (kind/degree of) inhumanity that Hitler had'.

11. In addition, there is no nominalization of *credit* which works anything like *accusation*: **Nixon's credit that Agnew is a great statesman is well founded.*

12. [Important points about *blame* are made in Jackendoff 1974.]

Chapter 16

1. These two tasks do not differ greatly, since to every performative verb there corresponds an illocutionary force which utterances in which the verb is used performatively have. The two tasks differ principally in that (i) distinct performative verbs may be synonymous and thus correspond to the same illocutionary force, and (ii) there can be illocutionary forces to which no performative verb corresponds, as in the case of 'echo-questions' (*You tried to burn down what*?) and exclamations (*Boy, am I hungry*!; see N. McCawley 1973), which are speech act types to which no performative verb corresponds.

2. I owe this observation to Zwicky (1971).

3. See Fraser 1974 for a more detailed treatment of syntactic differences among performative verbs.