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THE (DIS)ORGANIZATION OF THE GRAMMAR: 25 YEARS

There is no doubt that the 25 years since the launching of *Linguistics and Philosophy* have witnessed an explosion in our understanding of linguistic semantics. There is, however, one area in which we have arguably made little progress – indeed I wish to suggest here that we have perhaps gone backwards. And this concerns the fundamental question of the overall organization and architecture of the grammar – in particular, how the systems of syntax and semantics work (or don't work) together. My purpose in this piece is not to provide detailed empirical arguments for or against any particular conception of this (although I will not try to hide what I believe – or at least hope – is correct). Rather, my purpose is to make the point that acceptance of a complex view *does* need to be argued for if a simpler view is available.

Over the last twenty five years, the field has moved from a state where the majority of researchers in semantics worked in a paradigm which embraced a relatively simple overall organization of the grammar, to a state where many practitioners now adopt a far more complex view. Of course there is nothing wrong with such a shift if it is motivated by some new discovery. But it seems to me that this shift was not precipitated by any kind of discovery: the change in fashion seems to have happened largely without discussion. Connected with this shift has been a trend away from writing explicit 'fragments'. Thankfully, the standards in semantics still require explicit formalization of the semantic side of things, but exactly how one arrives at the structures which are assigned an interpretation is often left inexplicit. This practice provides a ready way to obscure complexities which arise from the increasingly popular 'modern' conception of the organization of the grammar.

What do I mean by the 'modern' conception of the grammar, and is it really fair to say that it embraces new complexities? I will spell this out more explicitly below, but here I will make a few points informally. My first point has to do with the notion of Logical Form; it has almost become axiomatic in much recent work that there is **a distinct level of logical form**

