

Modal complement anaphora and the distribution of parenthetical gaps

1 Introduction

- *As*-parentheticals are a class of parenthetical expression introduced by the morpheme *as* that generally contain a syntactic gap (shown as a ___ below) where either an element denoting a proposition or a predicate is missing.
 - (1) Ames, as the FBI eventually discovered ____{CP}, was a spy. PROPOSITIONAL
 - (2) Ames stole important documents, as the FBI said he had ____{vP}. PREDICATE – AP, DP, and PP gaps may also occur.
- A central question for the syntax of *as*-parentheticals is how the gaps are derived.
- Both kinds of *as*-parentheticals appear to involve some sort of movement. For instance, the gaps cannot appear in an island internal to the parenthetical. Potts 2002b
 - (3) *Eddie fills his truck with leaded gas, just as they believed the report that he must ____{vP}.
- Potts (2002a,b) proposes that gaps are actually the traces of a null operator that undergoes movement to the left periphery of the *as*-clause.
 - The gaps in propositional *as*-parentheticals might be amenable to such an analysis. There's no strong evidence that I am aware of that settles the issue for propositional *as*-parentheticals.
 - But predicate gaps appear to display evidence that a full verb phrase occupies that position at some point in the derivation. Feria 2010, LaCara 2015, 2016b, McCloskey 2011, Vicente 2016
- There are two different ways to handle this: Either there is movement of a (silent) verb phrase in the parenthetical, or the verb phrase is elided *in situ*.
- In an unpublished manuscript, Vicente (2014) notes that *as*-parentheticals in Dutch appear to allow gaps just in the position of MODAL COMPLEMENT ANAPHORA, or MCA. This is an earlier version of the work found in Vicente 2016.
 - MCA is a phenomenon where the complements of base modals go unpronounced.
 - Predicate gaps follow modals in *as*-parentheticals.
 - Provided MCA is an elliptical operation akin to VPE, this supports the view that ellipsis derives predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals. Aelbrecht 2010, Dagnac 2010
- In today's talk, I explore this claim more deeply, looking at the distribution of predicate gaps in at French, Spanish, and Italian *as*-parentheticals. The facts are more puzzling than initially expected.
 - The generalization is that if speakers of an MCA language allow predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals, then they allow them only where MCA can occur.
 - However, the distribution of MCA in *as*-parentheticals is apparently more restricted than than one might expect.

- * In French it appears to happen with the semi-modal *devoir* ‘must, should’, but not with *pouvoir* ‘can, could’; speakers require a clitic pronoun with the latter.
 - * Some Spanish speakers reject MCA in *as*-parentheticals outright, though it occurs elsewhere in the language.
- All together, this suggests that, to the extent it is possible, predicate gaps are derived by MCA in *as*-parentheticals, but the variation suggests that MCA differs in some way from VPE.
 - As best as I can tell, languages that use VPE do not show this variation (though more research is needed here).
 - MCA in *as*-parentheticals behaves differently in different languages, and differently with different modals.
 - This highlights the need for more work on *as*-parentheticals and on MCA.

Roadmap

- §2 **Syntactic properties and analyses of *as*-parentheticals**
A brief overview of the movement and ellipsis analyses of *as*-parentheticals
- §3 **Modal complement anaphora and the distribution of gaps**
MCA in French, Spanish, and Italian, and its distribution in *as*-parentheticals.
- §4 **Conclusions**
Outlook, as well as some worries about clitics and movement

2 Syntactic properties of *as*-parentheticals

- The main syntactic properties of *as*-parentheticals are laid out by Potts (2002b)
 - (i) *As*-parentheticals have a syntactic gap where one finds a CP or predicate.
 - (ii) That gap may be in an embedded clause, but it may not be in an island.

- Potts takes Point (ii) to indicate that the gap is actually a movement trace.

- He assumes a null VP operator moves from the position of the gap.
- This introduces an abstraction that he uses in his semantics to compose the *as*-parenthetical with the VP it is adjoined to.
- This ultimately resolves the meaning of the *as*-parenthetical.

$as [_{CP} Op_i C^0 [_{TP} SUB] T^0 \dots t_i]]$

But see Vicente 2016 for some complications for the adjunction analysis.

- In English, this movement strands auxiliaries next to predicate gaps :

- (4) Mary washed a pig, as Bill also will ___.
- (5) Mary has washed a pig, as Bill might also have ___.
- (6) Mary was washing that pig, as Bill should also have been ___.

- These gaps look as though they could have been produced by VPE, and the fact that their meaning is resolved by reference to other predicates is consistent with them being VPE sites.

- But Potts argues that they are not.
 - VPE is not island-sensitive.
 - Antecedents are subject to more stringent locality conditions than VPE.
 - The gap is obligatory, but ellipsis is not.
- Nonetheless, this is not evidence against ellipsis, *per se*.
 - The restrictions can be introduced independently of ellipsis (LaCara 2016b).
 - The phenomenon, in fact, bears a great resemblance to comparative deletion, which has been argued to be derived by ellipsis (Lechner 2004).
 - We cannot rule out an ellipsis analysis based on this evidence alone.

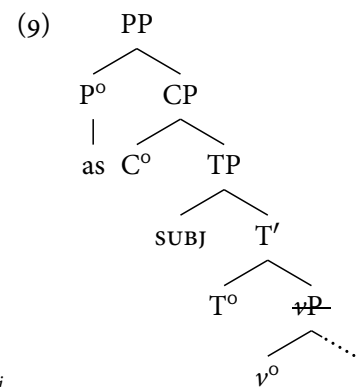
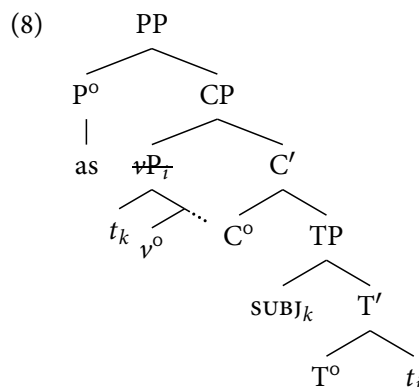
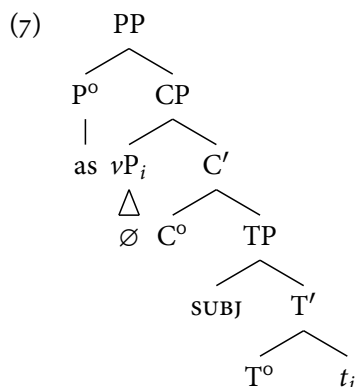
There is also an argument about parasitic gaps, but the relevant gaps cannot be distinguished from VPE sites.

2.1 Three views

- Potts (2002a,b) proposes that *as*-parentheticals are derived by the movement of a null VP operator within the parenthetical (7).
- In LaCara 2015, 2016b, I argue, following Feria (2010), that *as*-parentheticals are derived by movement of full ν P that undergoes some form of PF deletion (8).
- Vicente (2016) assumes, following my work, that verb phrases are simply elided *in situ* by VPE (9), a view I take up in LaCara 2016a.

See also McCloskey 2011.

I set aside the puzzle of island sensitivity for now.



- Each of these analyses makes slightly different predictions about the behavior of *as*-parentheticals, which I turn to now.

2.2 Ruling out the Potts analysis

- The rest of this talk focuses on the ellipsis analysis, but I want to briefly point out why I reject the Potts 2002b analysis.
- The main arguments come from the fact that *as*-parentheticals display evidence of ellipsis that the VP operator analysis cannot account for.

See LaCara 2016b.

- It is possible to move material out of the deleted verb phrase (Goldberg 2005, Schuyler 2001), they cannot be pragmatically controlled (Hankamer and Sag 1976), they display vehicle change (Fiengo and May 1994)...

2.3 Predictions

- The ellipsis and VP movement analyses make different predictions about the distribution of gaps in *as*-parentheticals: See LaCara 2016a, chapter 2.
 - (10) *Predictions of the vP movement analysis:*
Gaps should only occur in places from which a predicate can move.
 - a. Languages that lack VP movement should lack predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals.
 - b. Material stranded next to the gap should match material stranded by VP movement.
 - (11) *Predictions of the ellipsis analysis:*
Gaps should only occur in places where a predicate can be elided.
 - a. Languages that lack VPE or MCA should lack corresponding predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals.
 - b. Material stranded next to the gap should match material stranded by VPE or MCA, depending on what the language has.
- English is a poor choice for examining this distinction.
 - VPE and VP-movement in English share a great number of outward similarities in the relevant domains (Johnson 2001). But see also Aelbrecht and Haegeman 2012.
 - There are also a number of complications having to do with what material can be deleted by ellipsis, what material must be stranded, and what material can undergo fronting (Harwood 2013).
- Other languages should be able give us a much clearer picture. For reasons of time, I don't discuss predictions (10b) and (11b) today. But ask me about them: As far as I can tell, (11b) is correct.
 - We want to look at languages that target different constituents for movement and deletion.
 - In particular, since MCA languages don't strand auxiliaries next to gaps, we can distinguish VP movement from ellipsis.
 - In particular, I am going to focus on showing whether (11b) holds and not

3 Modal complement anaphora and the distribution of gaps

- A lot of recent work argues that MCA is an elliptical phenomenon akin to VPE. Aelbrecht 2010, Busquets and Denis 2001, Dagnac 2010, Nicolae 2016
- Vicente observes in a 2014 manuscript that predicate gaps in Dutch *as*-parentheticals seem to appear only where MCA is allowed. This observation does not appear in his 2016 paper.
 - This forms part of the argument that predicate gaps are formed by ellipsis.
 - If they were not formed by ellipsis, then we wouldn't expect them to have the distribution of MCA.
- Below, I examine whether this holds true of French, Spanish, and Italian. The results are complicated.
- If a speaker allows predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals, that gap appears only after a modal.
- But the extent to which predicate gaps are possible appears to be fairly restricted.

3.1 Luis's observation: MCA in Dutch *as*-parentheticals

- Aelbrecht (2010) argues extensively that MCA in Dutch is derived by ellipsis.
- As noted above, Dutch allows predicate ellipsis after base modals:

(12) Ik wou hem dat boek helemaal niet geven, maar ik moest Δ .
 I wanted him that book at.all not give, but I must.PST
 'I didn't want to give him that book at all, but I must.'

Aelbrecht 2010: 51

- However, there is no ellipsis operation that permits auxiliaries to be stranded:

(13) Willem had gezegd dat hij zou komen, maar hij is niet *(gekomen).
 Willem had said that he would come but he is not come
 'Willem had said that he would come, but he didn't.'

This is true of both aspectual auxiliary and the passive auxiliary.

Aelbrecht 2010: 50

- Vicente (2014) notes that Dutch *as*-parentheticals may contain predicate gaps. These gaps occur only after modals with base interpretations.

(14) Jessica gaat werken morgen, [zoals ze zei dat ze moest ____].
 Jessica goes work tomorrow, as she said that she must

[✓ root / * epistemic]

Vicente 2014

- Furthermore, gaps do not occur after aspectual auxiliaries:

(15) *Jessica is vandaag inderdaad gaan werken [zoals ze zei dat ze was ____].
 Jessica is today indeed gone work as she said that she was

- This means that Dutch is consistent with Prediction (11a): The gaps only appear in positions where MCA can delete a predicate.

- This leads Vicente to conclude that the process that creates gaps in *as*-parentheticals in Dutch is the process that derives MCA.

- Following Aelbrecht's arguments that MCA is an elliptical operation, he concludes that predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals are derived by ellipsis.

- These are the only two examples he gives, however. So it's hard to make a strong generalization.

- Work by Busquets and Denis (2001), Dagnac (2010) and Nicolae (2016) has shown that MCA in Romance, is apparently elliptical.

- Below I investigate whether this generalization holds in French, Spanish, and Italian, languages which have MCA but lack general VPE (Lobeck 1995)

Depiante (2000) argued that the phenomenon was actually a form of null complement anaphora.

3.2 French

3.2.1 MCA in French

- French allows modal complement anaphora at least with the (semi)-modals *devoir* 'should, must' and *pouvoir* 'can, could'.

Busquets and Denis (2001) note other apparent cases, although they do not investigate them.

(16) Il a mangé tous les gâteaux mais il n'aurait pas dû ____.

He has eaten all the cakes but he hasn't.COND NEG should

'He has eaten all the cakes, but he shouldn't have.'

Busquets and Denis 2001: 67

(17) Julie ne peut pas s'acheter une nouvelle voiture, mais Paul (le) peut.

Julie not can NEG REFL.buy a new car, but Paul CL can

'Julie cannot buy a new car, but Paul can.'

Busquets and Denis 2001: 62

- In both cases, the object clitic *le* may appear in the clause.
- Both modals license ellipsis gaps out of which it is possible to topicalize material, suggesting strongly that these are ellipsis gaps (Schuyler 2001).
- When the clitic *le* appears in these cases, topicalization becomes impossible, suggesting that cases with *le* are not truly elliptical.

My informants noted a preference for the clitic.

This, however, could be similar to how *det* 'it' is used in mainland Scandinavian pronominal anaphora (Bentzen et al. 2013). I have not investigated this possibility.

(18) Marie ne devrait pas s'acheter de jouets, mais des livres elle (*le)

Marie not should NEG REFL.buy of toys, but of books she CL

devrait.

should

'Mary shouldn't buy toys, but books_i she should buy ~~it~~.'

Busquets and Denis 2001: 67.

This is already different from

Dutch. A'-extraction from

Dutch MCA sites is not possible.

- There is no ellipsis after aspectual auxiliaries:

(19) *Jerry n'a pas mangé les pralines, mais George a ____.

Jerry hasn't NEG eaten the cookies, but George has

Intended: 'Jerry hasn't eaten the cookies, but George has.'

Busquets and Denis 2001: 58

3.2.2 *As-parentheticals in French*

- French allows *as-parentheticals* with propositional gaps, so *as-parentheticals* are a part of the grammar of French.

(20) Pierre, comme tu le sais, a embrassé un cochon.

Pierre as you CL know has kissed a pig

'Pierre, as you know, has kissed a pig.'

- As expected, speakers clearly reject propositions gaps after auxiliaries:

(21) *Jerry n'a pas mangé les pralines, comme George a ____.

Jerry hasn't NEG eaten the cookies, as George has

Intended: 'Jerry hasn't eaten the cookies, as George has.'

- However, there is a notable split here between *devoir* and *pouvoir* and whether they license predicate gaps in *as-parentheticals*.
- Predicate gaps may follow *devoir* in *as-parentheticals*, though the clitic is optional.

There is some speaker variation here; one respondent to a survey rejected most, but not all, predicate gaps *as-parentheticals*. All speakers prefer the presence of the clitic, and in several cases informants state a preference for the modal to be followed by *le faire* 'do it'.

(22) Jerry n'a pas mangé le pralines, comme tu [?](le) devrais.

Jerry hasn't NEG eaten the cookies, as you CL should

'Jerry hasn't eaten the cookies, as you should.'

(23) Jacques a fait tous ses devoirs, tout comme tu devrais ____.
 Jacques has done all his homeworks, all as you should
 ‘Jacques has done all his homework, just as you should.’

- However, *pouvoir* must appear with a clitic.

(24) Jerry pourrait manger les pralines, comme tu *(le) pourrais aussi.
 Jerry could eat the cookies, as you CL could too
 ‘Jerry could eat the cookies, as you also could.’

(25) Marie peut sauter par-dessus un cheval, tout comme Pierre *(le) peut.
 Marie can jump over a horse, all as Pierre CL can
 ‘Marie can jump over a horse, just as Pierre can.’

- This distinction is unexpected based on the MCA data in (16) and (17).
 - Something about *as*-parentheticals makes the use of MCA harder.
 - The preference for using the clitic with *devoir* becomes stronger.
 - And MCA becomes impossible with *pouvoir*.
- So *as*-parentheticals appear to be detecting some difference between how MCA works with these modals that isn’t immediately detectable in canonical contexts.
 - But the place you can still do it after *devoir*. It’s not popping up in some weird domain.

3.3 Spanish

3.3.1 MCA in Spanish

- Like French, Spanish allows MCA after the modal verbs *deber* ‘must, should’ and *poder* ‘can, could’ (Dagnac 2010).

(26) Juan debería ir a la fiesta, pero tú no deberías ____.
 Juan should go to the party, but you NEG should
 ‘Juan should go to the party, but you shouldn’t.’

(27) Juan no pudo ver a María, pero Pablo sí pudo ____.
 Juan NEG could see María, but Pablo EMPH could
 ‘Juan couldn’t see María, but Pablo could.’

- It is possible to extract material out of MCA sites in Spanish.

(28) Yo sé qué idioma puedes aprender, y también sé
 I know what language can.2SG learn, and also know.1SG
 cuál no puedes ____.
 which NEG can.2SG
 ‘I know which language you can learn, and I know which you can’t.’

- Additionally, it does not allow ellipsis after auxiliary verbs.

(29) *Juan no ha visto a María, pero Pablo ha ____.
 Juan NEG has seen María, but Pablo has
 Intended: ‘Juan hasn’t seen María, but Pablo has.’

See also Depiante 2000.
 Unlike in French, no clitic pronoun can appear in these cases.

Depiante (2000) argues that it is impossible to extract out of MCA sites in Spanish, but she does not control for MaxElide (Merchant 2008), which had not been discovered yet. The addition of negation in the second conjunct allows for predicate ellipsis.

3.4.2 *As-parentheticals in Italian*

- Italian is the most well-behaved of the Romance languages I've looked at.
- I save it for last since I have only had the opportunity to interview one informant.
- Like French and Spanish, Italian has *as*-parentheticals with propositional gaps.

(36) Piero, come sai, ha baciato un maiale.
 Piero, as know.2SG, has kissed a pig
 'Piero, as you know, has kissed a pig.'

- Italian allows predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals, but there are some differences between modals.
- My informant felt that gaps following *dovere* 'should, must' were odd, but not ungrammatical the way it is after an auxiliary:

(37) ?Gianni non ha mangiato i biscotti, come tu dovresti.
 Gianni NEG has eaten the cookies, as you should
 'Giannia hasn't eaten the cookies, as you should'

(38) ?Gianni ha fatto i compiti, proprio come dovesti tu.
 Gianni has done the homeworks, just as should you
 'Gianni has done his homework, just as you should.'

- Gaps following *potere* 'can, could' are acceptable.

(39) Maria può saltare sul cavallo, proprio come può Paolo.
 Maria can jump over.the horse, just as can Paolo
 'Maria can jump over the horse, just as Paolo can.'

(40) Gianni potera vedere Maria, proprio come potera Carla.
 Gianni could see Maria, just as could Carla
 'Gianni could see Maria, just as Carla could.'

This pattern is like Spanish, but the examples were judged more acceptable.

3.5 Summary

		French	Spanish	Italian
Ellipsis	VPE after Aux	*	*	*
	MCA after D-modal	✓	✓	✓
	MCA after P-modal	✓	✓	✓
As-par.	VPE after Aux	*	*	*
	MCA after D-modal	✓	*	?
	MCA after P-modal	*	%	✓

- The only place predicate gaps can occur in an *as*-parenthetical is in a position where ellipsis can independently occur.
 - This points to MCA being the thing that derives gaps in *as*-parentheticals.
 - We cannot have a gap in a position that MCA does not target.

- However, the distribution of MCA within *as*-parentheticals is more limited than it is outside of them.
 - Just because MCA could target a predicate for deletion does not mean a gap will be permitted in an *as*-parenthetical.

4 Conclusions and outlook

- Assuming that MCA is truly elliptical, then the fact that gaps in *as*-parentheticals only occur in places where MCA is in principle possible supports the view that ellipsis derives predicate gaps in *as*-parentheticals.
- Nonetheless, one of the things emerging in these data is that there is a distinction between the distribution of VPE and MCA.
- VPE languages, including English, Irish, and Portuguese, seem to allow gaps in *as*-parentheticals generally.

(41) Chuidh se 'un an aonaigh mar a dubhairt sé a rachadh.
 go.PST he to the fair as COMP said he COMP go.COND
 'He went to the fair, as he said he would.'

Irish and Portuguese are verb-stranding VPE languages, and accordingly they strand verbs alongside gaps in *as*-parentheticals.

Irish (McCloskey 2011)

(42) Obrigado por entrar em minha vida, como disse que entraria.
 thank.you for entering in my life, as said that enter.COND
 'Thank you for entering into my life, as you said you would.'

Portuguese (LaCara 2015)

- This is not too surprising, since VPE has long been known to occur in embedded contexts.
- Since *as*-parentheticals are just a funny sort of embedded clause, VPE should be available in them.
- However, MCA languages behave differently from one another with regard to what modals are used in *as*-parentheticals, and they display speaker variation with regard to whether predicate gaps are allowable.
- I don't yet know why that should be. But it does hint that the two phenomena may be more different than recent work (especially Aelbrecht 2010) have claimed.
 - If MCA is just a form of ellipsis licensed by a particular head, why shouldn't it occur in the same kinds of clauses VPE does?
 - And what on earth could possibly block it in such a context?
- That said, reverting to the view that MCA is the result of some sort of null complement (as proposed by, e.g., Depiante 2000) does not immediately offer an explanation either.
 - If MCA were pronominal/deep-anaphoric, that would not immediately explain why it cannot occur in *as*-parentheticals.

My hunch is that it has to do with different interpretations of modals. We already know that epistemic modals do not permit MCA, but there may be further differences between base modals. I am a bit of a novice when it comes to that, though, and why these differences should be brought into such sharp contrast in *as*-parentheticals still eludes me.

4.1 Clitics in *as*-parentheticals

- One of the interesting things that we see in Romance *as*-parentheticals is the appearance of a clitic in some cases instead of MCA.
- In the case of *pouvoir*, the clitic *had* to be used rather than MCA in an *as*-parenthetical.

(25) Marie peut sauter par-dessus un cheval, tout comme Pierre *(le) peut.
 Marie can jump over a horse, all as Pierre CL can
 ‘Marie can jump over a horse, just as Pierre can.’

- I don’t yet understand what mediates the choice between MCA and clitics here.
- It’s certainly the case that, *e.g.*, in Spanish, you get a clitic in *as*-parentheticals lacking modals. So if you don’t have MCA, you have to use some other strategy.

(43) Pero él sabía que podía volver a levantar el campo,
 But he knew.IMP that could.IMP return to raise the countryside,
 tal como lo había hecho una vez.
 such as CL had.IMP done one time.
 ‘But he knew he could raise the farm up again, just as he once had.’
 —Isabel Allende, *La casa de los espíritus*

- Clitics do not occur with modals in Spanish or Italian, however.
- I have a hunch that these sorts of constructions are related to cases in English where an extra verb *do* occurs in a parenthetical; this *do* is not allowed with plain VPE in American English:

(44) Mary hasn’t jumped over the horse, as she should have done.

(45) Mary hasn’t jumped over the horse, but she should have (*done).

- Additionally, given their syntactic similarity to comparatives, this may in fact be related to VP proforms appearing in comparative constructions in some languages.

(46) Marie kann mehr Lieder singen als ihr Grossvater (es) konnte.
 Marie can more songs sing than her grandfather it can
 ‘Marie can sing more songs than her grandfather can.’

Bentzen et al. 2013

- Assuming that there is null operator movement out of a (deleted?) *vP* in the comparative clause, Bentzen et al. (2013: 120–121) note that the appearance of *es* ‘it’ in German comparatives is very surprising.

4.2 What about that movement you set aside?

- Vicente (2016: 22–24) claims that it is possible to build movement of the elided constituent into his analysis of *as*-parentheticals. It’s not clear to me that this is right, though.

Perhaps, though, the *vP* must undergo some LF movement. I dismissed this possibility in LaCara 2016a: 41, n. 15, but it may be worth further exploration.

- The standard conception of ellipsis is that some head deletes its complement at PF. Movement of a ν P from the complement of a modal should allow it to escape deletion on most formulations of ellipsis.
- Indeed, MCA relies on the idea that only the complements of certain modals can be elided. Moving material out of this domain should allow it to escape deletion.
- Movement of the ν P away from the modal (or any other licensing head) should result in the ν P being pronounced since ellipsis happens after movement on most analyses.
- So I suspect that, to the extent that MCA is telling ellipsis happens in *as*-parentheticals, it's it cannot be the case that ν Ps are moving.

Acknowledgments

Understanding the data above has been a real challenge, and I regret having never had the chance to discuss these problems with Luis, whose work has always been a great inspiration to me. Thanks to Fiona Riewer for help with the French data, to Virgilio Partida-Peñalva and Jon Ander Mendia for helping me shore up the Spanish judgments, and to Michela Ippolito for some last-minute Italian judgments. Some of the ideas here were first proposed in my dissertation (LaCara 2016a). As such, many thanks are due to Kyle Johnson, Jeremy Hartman, Luiz Amaral, and Ellen Woolford for helping me clarify my thinking about these issues early on.

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