

Direct Reference, Empty Names and Implicature

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I Introduction

Angle Grinder Man removes wheel locks from cars in London.¹ He is something of a folk hero, saving drivers from enormous parking and towing fines, and has succeeded thus far in eluding the authorities. In spite of his cape and lamé tights, he is no fiction; he's a real person. By contrast, Pegasus, Zeus and the like are fictions. None of them is real. In fact, not only is each of them different from the others, all differ from Angle Grinder Man. After all, Zeus throws thunderbolts but doesn't remove boots from cars; unlike Superman, Angle Grinder Man couldn't leap over a parked Mini, and all sightings suggest that he is a human being, not a horse.

According to the charmingly austere theory of Direct Reference, a proper name's meaning is simply its referent.² Two proper names with

1 As reported by the *BBC World Service*, 16 September, 2003:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/3112670.stm

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2 Pelczar and Rainsbury (1998) and Pelczar (2001) defend a view of names as ana-

the same referent are synonymous. Assuming compositionality³, and that, for instance, the proper names 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' are coreferential, S believes that Hesperus is shining iff S believes that Phosphorus is shining; likewise for any agent S and attitude or speech act expression other than 'believes'. Further, a proper name lacking a referent is without meaning.⁴ Whereas 'Angle Grinder Man' is meaningful, 'Superman' and 'Zeus' lack meaning, whence the sentences 'Superman flies' and 'Zeus flies' do not differ in meaning. Some proponents of Di-

logous to indexicals, arguing that a proper name has a (non-constant) character over and above its content. Such a view enables one to preserve a conception of names as rigid designators. However, if it is also taken as enabling us to distinguish the meaning of two coreferential proper names (on the ground of their differing character, for instance), and as enabling one to ascribe a meaning to a bearerless name (on the ground of its having a character in the absence of a content, relative to a context of utterance), then it does not face the sort of difficulties besetting versions of Direct Reference discussed below. For this reason I will not discuss this position in what follows.

- 3 Compositionality is normally construed as requiring that the semantic value, relative to a context of utterance C, of a complex expression E is a function of the semantic values of the components of E together with their mode of composition. This is a stronger version of compositionality than is actually mandated by the empirical evidence. Another version of compositionality holds that the semantic value, relative to a context of utterance C, of a complex expression E depends upon the semantic values of the components of E together with their mode of composition, but is not necessarily a function thereof. The proponents of Direct Reference under discussion here assume the stronger version of compositionality, and so we will not assess the relative merits of the two versions of the thesis.
- 4 Sainsbury espouses an account of the meaning of names in terms of *reference conditions*, on analogy with the notion of truth conditions as it applies to sentences. On this view, rather than univocally ascribing a referent to each name that has one, we ascribe to each name a reference condition having the following form:

for all x ('N' refers to x iff x = N)

This formula confers semantic content on bearerless names and names with bearers alike (2005, p. 93). With the aid of the apparatus of Negative Free Logic (2005: 64-74), It also enables Sainsbury to capture the rigidity of names, and it eschews a descriptive content for names as well. However, while I have no objection to one's calling this view a version of Direct Reference, I will not consider it in what follows for the reason that it is too unlike the better known versions of that theory. (Indeed, Sainsbury himself refers to it as 'minimal Fregeanism.') What is more, because empty names do not raise a particular problem for Sainsbury, he is under no pressure to explain away apparent counterexamples of the sort we will discuss below. By contrast, the focus of the present paper is the examination of some of these attempts to handle apparent counterexamples against better-known versions of Direct Reference. If the success of my critical examination plays into Sainsbury's hands by ruling out competitors, I will have no objection.

Direct Reference position on empty names in the form of a trilemma: Either (i) it appeals to conversational implicature, or (ii) it appeals to conventional implicature, or (iii) it appeals to non-conventional, non-conversational implicature. In the first case it makes incorrect predictions about the behavior of the putative implicata under conditions that would normally cancel them. In the second case it either incorrectly predicts that attempts to cancel the putative implicata would generate a form of pragmatic absurdity, or it predicts that utterance of negative existentials such as 'Vulcan does not exist' commit the speaker to the existence of Vulcan.

Although the point is rarely acknowledged, Grice left open the possibility of forms of implicature that are neither conventional nor conversational. Grice said little about this third category, and it has been largely unexplored. We nevertheless also consider a third construal of the Implicature Defense of Direct Reference in these terms. It will emerge that this category, too, provides no succor for Direct Reference. From this trilemma we will conclude that prospects for a successful Implicature Defense of Direct Reference are dim indeed. This conclusion will not vindicate the Ways of Believing Defense, which faces its own challenges. However, considerations of space preclude my discussing that Defense; instead I will confine my remarks to the Implicature Defense and leave the discussion of the Ways of Believing Defense for another occasion.⁷

II Pragmatic Preliminaries

As we have suggested, speakers regularly take such sentences as 'Zeus throws thunderbolts' and 'Pegasus flies' to be meaningful. By the lights of the Implicature Defense of Direct Reference as it applies to empty names, then, speakers regularly hear utterances of such sentences as saying something different from what they literally say. (In what follows I shall just use 'Implicature Defense' to refer to the Implicature Defense of Direct Reference as it applies to empty names.) This by itself is no refutation of the Implicature Defense; the phenomenon, in particular, of speakers hearing certain pragmatic implicata as part of what is said is familiar. When Eva says

7 I discuss the Ways of Believing Defence in Green forthcoming.

1. *Katya got pregnant and got married,*

it is natural to take her as having said that first Katya got pregnant and later got married. This is why it would be natural for Piotr, who thinks Katya first got married and later got pregnant, to reply thus:

2. *No she didn't. She got married and got pregnant!*

It seems plausible that Piotr takes Eva to have said what Katya did. He then denies that what she said was true, and follows this denial by saying what he thinks she in fact did. Such behavior on Piotr's part only makes sense on the supposition that Eva's assertion of 'Katya got pregnant and got married,' and his of 'Katya got married and got pregnant,' say different things. Likewise, Stefan could only sensibly make the following claim:

3. *It's better to fall in love and get married than it is to get married and fall in love,*

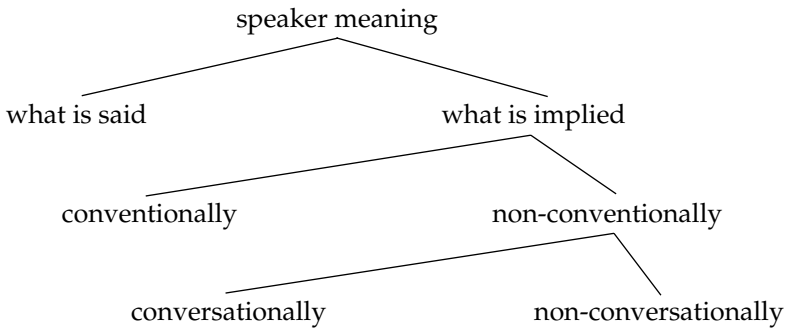
if he expected his audience not to hear him as saying that it is better to A than to A. Again, if Casimir remarks,

4. *Tadeusz is Italian, but honest,*

Lech might demur from this with such words as 'That's wrong — there's no tension between being Italian and honesty.'

How the above sentences are typically or naturally heard is only a fallible clue to what is said in one of their literal utterances. According to a familiar Gricean picture, some of what we speaker-mean goes beyond what we literally say; implicature comprises some of these cases. Some implicata are conventional, so that for instance it is due to the meaning of 'but' that we convey a conflict or tension between the two conjuncts (or the propositions they express) conjoined by the operator in (4). Nevertheless, according to Grice what we say in asserting 'A but B' has the same truth conditions as 'A and B'. By contrast, other implicata are non-conventional, and an important sub-class of these depends upon general norms governing conversation. For instance, a sentence of the form 'A and B' has truth conditions given simply by the truth table for '&.' However, our conversational practices are governed by a Cooperative Principle ('Make your contribution such as is required by the current purpose or purposes of the conversation in which you are engaged.') as well as a number of maxims falling under that Principle, such as 'Be orderly.' This latter principle enjoins us among other things

to report events in the order in which they occurred. For this reason, where A and B are events, one who asserts, 'A and B' typically conveys that A happened before B did, even though this temporal claim is not logically implied by the conjunction. More precisely, she typically *speaker-means* that A happened before B. However, like conventional implicata, conversational implicata are part of what is speaker-meant, but not part of what is said (1989, 30-1). The diagram below shows the relations among the central notions of the Gricean framework:



Grice seems to have had doubts late in his career about an across-the-board denial that implicata can be part of what is said.⁸⁸ Fortunately, for present purposes it will not be necessary to decide whether Grice was correct to extrude all implicature from the realm of what is said. If he was, then it will follow that speakers sometimes mistakenly take implicata as part of what is said. If he was in error, then it will follow that speakers sometimes rightly hear implicata as part of what is said. (In this latter case, it will still be consistent for a proponent of the Implicature Defense to claim that these implicata are not part of the sentence's literal meaning. Rather, they may hold that literal meaning typically underdetermines what is said in uttering a sentence. That will not in itself force a choice between two well known accounts of how this 'pragmatic determination of what is said' occurs—namely between that of Recanati (1989; 2001) and that of Bach (1994; 1999; 2001).)

8 Thus in his Retrospective Epilogue, Grice writes, 'It certainly does not seem reasonable to subscribe to an absolute ban on the possibility that an embedding locution may govern the standard nonconventional implicatum rather than the conventional import of the embedded sentence' (1989, 375).

Some conversational implicata (correctly or incorrectly—hereafter the qualification will be dropped) are heard as part of what is said, others not. When Casimir remarks to me as I enter the room,

5. *You're on time!*

he might well conversationally implicate that my being on time is somewhat surprising. However, if Lech is of the opinion that I am generally quite punctual, he might say, 'Of course,' or 'What's so remarkable about that?' but he would not reply,

6. *That's not so.*

In general, so-called 'particularized conversational implicata' are not heard as part of what is said. By contrast, so-called 'generalized conversational implicata,' such as the 'and'-implicata discussed above, are sometimes heard as part of what is said. That is evidently why Piotr takes issue with Eva in his utterance of (1), and why Stefan appears not to be contradicting himself in (3). Indeed, some generalized conversational implicata are heard as contributing to what is said with such regularity that they may be heard as embedding within the antecedent of a conditional. For instance, Mikhael's assertion of

7. *I lost a contact lens,*

will normally be taken as reporting that he lost a contact lens of his own. Moreover, his advice,

8. *If you lose a contact lens, you'd better have some spectacles handy,*

only sounds reasonable because the content of the antecedent is heard as being, 'you lose a contact lens of your own,' rather than 'you lose some contact lens or other.' Yet it is not plausible that the literal meaning of (7) is that I lost one of my own contact lenses. If I worked in a contact lens factory, I would not be deemed a liar if I asserted (7) simply because one of the lenses I was working on fell through a floorboard.

III Subsentential Implicature

We shall be considering among other versions an Implicature Defense that appeals to conversational implicature. It might, though, be suggested that we can quickly block such an appeal. As it is canonically defined, conversational implicatures are triggered only by a speaker's expressing an entire (truth-evaluable) proposition, either in a speech act or in making as if to perform a speech act, and thereby apparently violating a conversational norm.⁹ Yet on the construal under discussion here, the Direct Reference theorist holds that sentences containing empty names express no (truth-evaluable) proposition but instead conversationally implicate one. Does it follow that the Direct Reference theorist is out of bounds in appealing to conversational rather than some other form of implicature?

Strictly speaking, Direct Reference will require a modification of the scope of conversational implicature if it is to appeal to this mechanism to explain away the counterexamples that challenge it. Yet perhaps it would be captious to reject such a defense of the position on this ground. The reason is that it's not difficult to see how to modify the standard Gricean characterization of conversational implicature to accommodate such cases. I see the stamp on the newly arrived letter and exclaim, 'Madagascar!' My remark is both relevant and plausible on the assumption that I am attempting to suggest that *the letter is from Madagascar* — as opposed to remarking that *There are lemurs in Madagascar* or that *Madagascar formed after Pangea*. Pragmatics, then, can be used to 'fill in' a missing VP to produce a complete proposition. It can also fill in a missing NP: As we observe a truck crash into the roof of a tunnel I might remark, 'Not tall enough,' and my addressee will readily infer that I mean that the tunnel, rather than the truck or your cousin, was not tall enough.¹¹

In its standard formulation, Grice's definition of conversational implicature begins with the premises (a) that the speaker is to be presumed to be following the Cooperative Principle and the maxims falling under it, and (b) the speaker has said or made as if to say that P,

9 Taylor 2000, 35

10 Grice, *ibid.* Adams and Dietrich are thus mistaken in claiming, by way of response to Taylor, '...Grice nowhere said implicature could not take place via something less than a complete proposition.' In fact it's right there in his definition of conversational implicature, which is defined in terms of an agent who says or makes as if to say that p (1989, 30).

11 Stainton 2006 provides a detailed analysis of such 'subsentential' utterances.

for some proposition P. Conversational implicata are then generated by a speaker's apparent failure to respect all conversational maxims (Quality, Quantity, Relation, Manner) in addition to the Cooperative Principle. Such an apparent failure forces the addressee to look for a component of speaker meaning either going beyond, or alternative to, what has been said. When a speaker utters an incomplete proposition and nothing else, she has failed to express a complete proposition, and so, assuming that the conversation in which she is engaging mandates an *answer* to the question on the table, a *claim*, a *suggestion* as to what to do, etc., she will have violated Quantity. This puts pressure on her interlocutors to fill in what she has said with further information that would make her utterance sufficiently informative, while respecting the other norms of Relation, Quality and Manner. A natural candidate for such filling in would be some or all of the descriptive information associated with a name when that name is empty.

Modifying the letter but not the spirit of Grice's notion of conversational implicature, then, I suggest that we weaken its second premise to read, 'the speaker has said or made as if to say E' for some (possibly subsentential) expression E. We shall then be able to see how conversational implicata are generated by utterances expressing such contents as <___, flies>. The proposition implicated is the proposition whose assertion (or whose querying, or whose being commanded to be made true, and so on for other illocutionary forces) *would* best conduce to the accepted aim or aims of the conversation under way, *modulo* contextual factors such as common knowledge and salient items of experience.¹² In spite of its having no bearer, the choice of referring expression might, given the pragmatic associations connected with that expression, signal to the audience which such proposition would best conduce to moving the conversation forward. That there may be no unique such proposition is compatible with a familiar ambient indeterminacy in what is implicated.¹³

Such filling in of semantic content that goes beyond what is literally expressed does not depend on interlocutors' awareness that what has been said expresses an incomplete proposition. One speaker might utter an atomic predication, [α is φ], in a situation in which not all parties to the conversation know whether [α] refers to anything. Can all interlocutors still arrive at a complete proposition? They can do so as long as [α] is associated with a body of descriptions whose content

12 This counterfactual account may then be embedded with a wider account of the role of implicature in conversation such as that given in Green 1999b.

13 Grice, *ibid.*, 40

can plausibly be used to produce a relevant and adequately informative proposition for the conversation(s) at hand. That may be the case whether or not $[\alpha]$ is empty, and whether or not all interlocutors know whether it is.

IV Two Benchmarks

Speakers' treating pragmatic features of an utterance as part of what is said in that utterance is a familiar phenomenon, and the proponent of the Implicature Defense is within her rights to point this out to rebut the charge that her theory is *ad hoc*. Further, pragmatic implicata need not be generated only from the expression of a complete proposition; expressions of sub-propositional contents might also generate implicata. The Direct Reference theorist cannot be barred from appealing to conversational implicata as being generated from the utterance of a sentence expressing something short of a complete proposition.

None of this is, however, enough to show that Direct Reference can explain away the counterexamples adduced above as apparent only. In the cases relevant to the theory, the explanation must proceed from plausible pragmatic principles to the conclusion that speakers often treat expressions with bearerless names as having a literal meaning that they lack. I say these principles must be plausible because we would not accept an 'explanation' of the apparent counterexamples to the theory merely on account of its starting from principles that together imply the explanandum. One doesn't explain psychosis in terms of demonic possession. What is wanted is an explanation that starts with true, or at least plausible, premises that jointly imply all the relevant data. How might an explanation go for the behavior of utterances comprising bearerless names?¹⁴

14 In contrast to the idea that such an explanation can be ruled out by appeal to the standard definition of conversational implicature, it might be thought that a quick "existence proof" of such an explanation is available. Were that so, we could conclude that a detailed pragmatic account of the phenomena as predicted by the Implicature Defense must also be available, and leave its full characterization to psycholinguistics. In particular, it has been remarked that the alleged pragmatic dimension of utterances containing names can be canceled, and from this it has been inferred that that dimension is a case of conversational implicature. With respect to attitude ascriptions, Barwise and Perry reasoned this way two decades ago:

Some arguments for referential opacity seem based on a confusion between conversational implicatures and semantic entailments. "Smith believes that Cicero was an orator" does not imply, but at most suggests, that Smith would

In addition to requiring that explanations of the relevant phenomena start with plausible premises that imply all the relevant data, we may also demand that they be sufficiently precise to predict *only* the relevant phenomena. That is why it won't do for the Implicature Defense to appeal to a generic notion of 'pragmatic implication' to account for why we hear empty-name containing utterances the way we do. We now know that pragmatic implication can take any of many forms—conversational implicature, conventional implicature, presupposition, etc. (Green and Williams 2007). Speakers do not in general confuse conversational implicature, for instance, with content, and a theory predicting that they do is mistaken. Accordingly the Implicature Defense needs to provide a determinate, rather than a merely determinable, account of the phenomena that vex Direct Reference if we are to be convinced of Direct Reference's adequacy. I turn now to the task of seeking one.

check "Cicero was an orator" true. The suggestion is clearly cancelable: Smith believes that Cicero was an orator, but only knows to call him, "Tully". (1981, 394)

Similarly, Berg 1988 offers the following example:

Look, there's Superman in his Clark Kent outfit; he's incredibly convincing! *Everyone* thinks he's a reporter — Jimmy Olson, Mr. White — why, even that clever *Lois Lane* believes *Superman is a reporter*. (355; italics in original)

One holding that attitude ascriptions of the form 'S Ψ s that α is φ ' only pragmatically imply that S would express her attitude with the use of φ rather than some other coreferential singular term, might harp on examples such as these as showing that such implications *must* be pragmatic. An analogous point carries over to a putative implicatum of sentences containing empty names.

Yet while necessary, cancelability is not a sufficient condition for content's being a conversational implicatum (Grice 1989, 39). Recall our remark above that conversational implicature is a species of speaker meaning. As a result of this, much pragmatic information conveyed by my utterance is not part of conversational implicature. The fact that I say 'Good morning,' in a hurried manner as I pass you in a parking lot might show that I am late for work. In saying what I do in the way that I do, we may not yet infer that I mean I am in a rush; whether I mean this depends upon what communicative intentions I harbor over and above my intention to bid you good morning. However, the pragmatic information that I am in a hurry conveyed by my speaking as I do might be canceled. For instance that same utterance, at the same velocity, made on the next day might show my desire to avoid conversation with you, not that I am late to the office. The cancelability, then, of a bit of information associated with an utterance does not show that information to be a conversational implication. The proponent of the Implicature Defense, then, needs a firmer basis than this for the invocation of implicature.

V An Implicature Defense, and an Objection Defused

Adams and Dietrich 2004 hold that all proper names are associated with a body of lore that may be expressed in descriptive terms. Familiar modal and epistemological arguments militate against taking the descriptions we associate with names such as 'Richard Nixon' and 'Rasputin' as being part of their meaning. However, there can be little doubt that many names do trigger such associations. The same goes for bearerless names such as 'Zeus,' 'Pegasus' and 'Superman.' Adams and Dietrich write,

...every U.S. schoolchild learns that George Washington chopped down a cherry tree and confessed and later became the first president of the U.S. So we are pretty much conditioned (stimulus-response style) to connect 'confessed to chopping down a cherry tree' and 'first president of the U.S.' with 'George Washington'. Indeed, associated with all names there will be sets of descriptions that we will call the *lore* associated with the name. (2004, 126)

After observing that proper names are associated with descriptions, Adams and Dietrich suggest that we hear sentences containing them as if their content incorporated that associated descriptive information. For instance, while on reflection we can see that Aristotle might not have pursued a life of the mind, 'Aristotle was a philosopher' may nevertheless be heard as analytic or nearly so. Adams and Dietrich may claim that this nearly analytic sound is due to our hearing descriptive information associated with a name as part of what is expressed in a speech act in which that name occurs. Likewise, 'Pegasus is a winged horse' has an air of analyticity. Indeed, we not only hear this sentence as analytic or nearly so; in so doing we also implicitly take it as expressing a (truth evaluable) proposition. Nevertheless, all this sentence literally expresses is the 'gappy' proposition, <___ , being a winged horse>. In the case of sentences containing bearerless names, then, we err, albeit in the twinkle of an eye, doubly: once about their truth value, and a second time about their having truth conditions at all. (As noted above, the proponent of the Implicature Defense could hold that we err only if we take the literal meaning of the sentence to be one expressing a truth-evaluable proposition; if the judgment is merely as to what utterance of that sentence says, there need be no error in taking it to say something having a meaning on the order of a truth-evaluable proposition.)¹⁵

15 Soames (2002, 89-95) also addresses the problems raised by empty names for Direct Reference. His position seems to be that while fictional names ('Zeus,' 'Pegasus') refer to abstract objects constituted by the stories in which they occur, names that are part of no fiction but rather seem as a matter of fact to be empty ('Vulcan')

Such errors may not be easily rectified by philosophical reflection. The reasoning that produces our judgment of what a sentence says is for the most part automatic, and for the most part not conscious. Accordingly, learning Gricean pragmatics as well as the theory of Direct Reference need not change one's intuitions about what is said in utterances comprising empty singular terms. Reimer 2001 assumes that it would, challenging the Implicature Defense along the following lines. She maintains that even after we are apprised of the distinction between what is said and what is implicated in an utterance, we still wish assertively to utter sentences that by the lights of the Implicature Defense would come out bereft of (propositional) meaning (2001, 502). Thus for instance, even after reading Paul Grice, Nathan Salmon, and others, and becoming convinced not just of the Gricean apparatus but also of Direct Reference, we will still insist that Vulcan does not exist, thereby taking that sentence to express a truth-evaluable proposition rather than to express only a gappy proposition.

Reimer takes it for granted here that our intuitions about what speakers say in uttering the sentences they do would be sensitive to our being convinced by various theories, for instance those in the philosophy of language. This assumption is certainly unobvious. I harp at great length on Gricean implicature and the *what is literally meant/what is said/what is speaker-meant* distinction in my graduate philosophy of language seminars. Nevertheless, at the end of a recent term I informally surveyed the dozen people in my seminar on their intuitions concerning the truth value of sentences such as (3) and (8). Without exception, students heard these sentences' truth conditions as comprising their implicata. This might be due to pedagogical incompetence or to student viscosity. On the other hand it might be part of a larger pattern of 'automaticity' in our everyday lives that is largely closed to conscious introspection. Most language processing, at the syntactic, semantic, and even

refer to objects that did exist, will exist, or exist in some possible world. This solution is incomplete because it does not explain how to ascribe meaning to names referring to objects that are metaphysically impossible. In addition, it is ontologically profligate because it presupposes that there is an actual future even in an indeterministic world. (For a challenge to this assumption, as well as an alternative framework for understanding tensed discourse in an indeterministic framework see Belnap, et al 2004.) Finally, for the cases to which his approach does not apply, Soames appears to endorse a defense of Direct Reference invoking pragmatic principles other than those involving implicature. His view seems to be that one who asserts, '*α* flies,' for some non-referring '*α*,' asserts, *inter alia*, a descriptive proposition embodying the information associated with '*α*,' but not part of '*α*'s literal meaning. Because Soames does not appeal to implicature, his position falls outside the scope of the present discussion.

pragmatic levels is unconscious (more specifically, 'pre-conscious') and proceeds outside conscious awareness. This perspective, representing a coalescence of opinion in experimental psychology (see for instance Bargh and Chartrand 1999; Wilson 2003), predicts that learning philosophical theories of language leaves pretty much intact our judgments about the truth conditions of sentences such as those under consideration here. Accordingly, proponents of the Implicature Defense would be within their rights to demur from Reimer's assumption that a speaker's intuitions about the truth conditions of a sentence will be sensitive to her learning a philosophical theory of language. They may point out that this assumption is an empirical thesis in need of experimental validation. In our own challenge to the Implicature Defense, we do not rely upon this assumption.

VI The Implicature Defense via Conversational Implicature

The association alleged by the Implicature Defense between names and descriptions must be strong enough to account not only for the *content* of our judgments (namely that certain sentences are meaningful and true), but also for their *robustness*. Not only do I think that Santa Claus does not exist, I'd be willing to bet large sums of cash on it. Likewise for the Fountain of Youth and El Dorado. How could sheer association, of the 'stimulus-response' type appealed to by Adams and Dietrich, cause me to think I am betting on a truth-evaluable proposition if I am not independently convinced that there is such a proposition to bet upon? Suppose that I have only ever seen 'Flimp' written in yellow letters. I do not know whether that string of letters means anything, but I do associate that word (stimulus-response style) with the color yellow. Yet if I then am confronted with the sentence 'Flimp is a primary color,' I will not be inclined to judge it meaningful, to say nothing of true, merely on this account. Or I might participate in an experiment in which every time 'Flimp' appears on a screen, so does the expression 'the color yellow.' That, too, surely, would not make me judge meaningful, to say nothing of true, 'Flimp is a primary color.' After all, I also associate 'Bandersnatch' with such descriptions as 'being frumious,' and, 'a poem written by Lewis Carroll,' and 'a work of an alleged pedophile.' Yet I don't attach any meaning to 'Bandersnatch,' any more than I know what it is for something to be mimsy. Instead, the fun of Jabberwocky is to read it while pretending to mean something. Sheer association with descriptions is inadequate to create judgments of meaningfulness, not to say truth.

The proponent of the Implicature Defense might suggest in reply that rather than being merely associated with descriptive information,

names are strongly associated with such information. The strength of that association might be due to a significantly higher conditional probability than just probabilistic relevance. On the other hand the strength of that association might be due to its being vouchsafed in some normative way. I shall not pursue the first of these lines of thought, but rather invite advocates of the Implicature Defense to show how high a conditional probability of the relevant sort would be required to create illusions both of meaning and truth value for sentences containing empty names. After doing so they would then be obliged to gather psycholinguistic evidence supporting the required conditional probabilities for the case of empty names. Instead of this first line of thought, I shall pursue the second according to which the wanted association is underwritten normatively.

That normative basis might go via conversational or conventional implicature.¹⁶ For the former case, we might postulate a further conversational maxim, beyond those we have already considered, underlying the use of referring terms. Generalizing upon a suggestion of Urmson 1968, that maxim might be

Relevant Reference: Use singular terms associated with lore that is relevant to the current purpose or purposes of the conversation(s) in which you are participating.

Were Relevant Reference in fact a maxim governing conversational practice, that would account for why it sounds natural to say

9. *Superman can bend steel with his bare hands*

while it sounds, if not unnatural, then at least less natural to say

10. *Clark Kent can bend steel with his bare hands,*

even to those apprised of the identity of Superman and Clark Kent. (I assume that the relation of *being associated with* is not transitive.) Again,

16 Adams and Dietrich strongly suggest that they mean to appeal to conversational implicature in their version of the Implicature Defense, when they write in footnote 7 amid the elucidation of their position, 'Here we follow the ideas of Paul Grice who may have been the first to reveal the mechanisms of conversational (pragmatic) implicature' (145). Nevertheless, because we shall see that their position cannot viably appeal to conversational implicature, charity will bid us consider a version of their position in terms of conventional implicature instead.

supposing that Angle Grinder Man is John Smithson, it will not be at all surprising to be told that

11. *John Smithson filled up on Wheatabix before going off to work.*

On the other hand we can hear the bit of irony in the remark,

12. *There goes Angle Grinder Man running in terror from the neighborhood shi tzu.*

We may suggest an account of this ironic dimension by holding that the speaker may be presumed to be using a proper name associated with descriptive information ('the man who bravely removes wheel locks from cars while eluding the authorities,' etc.) that is relevant to what she is trying to convey. Since that descriptive information is in tension with such properties as being terrified of small dogs, we may understand how the speaker creates an ironic effect. It would not be achieved by his use of 'John Smithson' unless that name were also associated with descriptive information suggesting the bravery of its bearer.

Return now to the contact lens factory. There, context cancels the generalized conversational implicature that conveys possession in such utterances as, 'I lost a contact lens.' Indeed, a necessary but, as we have seen, insufficient condition for a content's being a conversational implicature is that it be cancelable. More precisely, when utterance of sentence S conversationally implicates content C, Grice's definition of cancelability implies that there is some context of utterance in which S is uttered such that (i) C is not conversationally implicated, (ii) S's literal meaning is speaker-meant, and (iii) ordinary speakers can readily discern that S's literal meaning is speaker-meant and C is not. Accordingly, if the Implicature Defense appeals to conversational implicature, it will be committed to the following: Where sentence S, which contains an empty proper name, is uttered in such a way that its utterance conversationally implicates a propositional content C, there is some context of utterance in which S is uttered such that (i) C is not speaker-meant, (ii) a gappy proposition of the form $\langle __, \varphi \rangle$ is speaker-meant, for some property φ , and (iii) ordinary speakers can readily discern that $\langle __, \varphi \rangle$ is speaker-meant and C is not. More generally, insofar as it appeals to conversational implicature, the Implicature Defense predicts that when a sentence containing an empty proper name is uttered in a context that cancels any conversational implicature, ordinary speakers can hear that sentence as failing to express a proposition. Speakers would then hear such a sentence as failing to express a proposition in a way analogous

to how we hear, 'This is a fine red one,' said by a person gazing into an obviously empty pair of cupped hands.

It's the end of a long and grueling week, and Leverrier has just concluded that the planet he postulated, Vulcan, to account for the perturbations in the orbit of Mercury, does indeed exist. He is in the privacy of his own study, winding up a series of calculations taking reams of paper, and says to himself, 'Vulcan exists.' However, he has also become convinced that it has left its original orbit and is heading toward the Asteroid Belt. Stranger things have happened. He concludes the day's deliberations with the words,

13. *Vulcan exists, but there is no planet between Mercury and the Sun.*

It is doubtful that Leverrier is having a conversation, even with himself, and so doubtful that his utterance would be beholden to conversational norms, Relevant Reference or otherwise.¹⁷ Nevertheless in his utterance of 'Vulcan' he may still be conversationally implicating something associated with the lore surrounding that word but distinct from the semantic content of 'the planet between Mercury and the Sun.' Davis 1998 observes that so-called conversational implicata can be generated without the benefit of any conversation. Two lovers are lying on their backs in a park, neither having spoken for some time. Presently one observes, 'Some of those clouds look like cotton candy.' Nothing is said again for an hour, and the topic is not resumed when they do speak again. Here it seems clear that the speaker of the quoted sentence has conveyed not only that some of the clouds look like cotton candy, but also that not all of them do. What she conveys is, then, a conversational implicatum; yet it does not occur as part of any conversation. It follows that the above example involving Leverrier is not decisive: That he is having no conversation in the privacy of his study does not imply that he cannot be generating conversational implicata (in spite of the jargon).

Even when generated outside of a conversation, conversational implicata may always be canceled explicitly. Thus I might merely think to myself, 'Eva got pregnant and got married, though not necessarily in that order,' and 'I lost a contact lens, though not one of my own.' So too, according to the Implicature Defense, one who contemplates the thought that Aristotle did none of the things commonly attributed to him — which thought we know to be coherent — explicitly cancels the pragmatic implicata that would otherwise be triggered by utterance of

17 The obvious exception is Quality (Don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence), but that is not by itself enough to generate implicata here.

'Aristotle.' So too, imagine now that Leverrier wakes up the next Monday morning realizing that he has made a crucial error in his calculations of the previous week. In fact, now he sees that those calculations show that there is no Vulcan, and further that there is some other celestial body between Mercury and the Sun—some prodigal member of the Kuiper Belt that has recently strayed dangerously close to this star. Leverrier runs to his office and spends the day in calculations, emerging into the evening with the bittersweet conclusion he expresses with the words,

14. *Vulcan does not exist, but there is a planet between Mercury and the Sun.*

In so speaking Leverrier explicitly cancels the implicatum alleged by the present version of the Implicature Defense ('The so and so planet does not exist') to be being confused with the literal content of 'Vulcan does not exist.' In spite of doing so, Leverrier is speaking meaningfully in the utterance of each conjunct. Here Leverrier disavows some of the lore associated with 'Vulcan' while using that term to say something he takes to be true. Furthermore, we have seen (Section II) that conversational implicature is species of speaker meaning. Since speaker meaning is itself dependent upon speaker intentions, Leverrier would not *inadvertently* be conversationally implicating some other bit of lore than that invoked in (14). That is enough, therefore, to prevent him from conversationally implicating anything at all in his utterance of (14). Further, when that happens he will also not confuse what he speaker means with anything that might have been implicated in utterances of 'Vulcan'—just as one could, with no lapse in intelligibility, point out that Katya got pregnant and got married but not necessarily in that order. In this case, then, the Implicature Defense will be impotent to explain Leverrier's alleged illusion of the meaningfulness of 'Vulcan does not exist.'

Might the defender of Direct Reference fall back upon the one bit of lore that is associated with a name even in the most exiguous of contexts, namely *being called 'N'* for each name N? Given our current linguistic conventions, Vulcan is called 'Vulcan' no matter what else is true of it. By contrast, Bandersnatch is not called 'Bandersnatch.' 'Bandersnatch' is after all a nonsense name, and we only make as if to use this word referringly. Similarly, on this construal of the Implicature Defense we have an account of why the sentences 'Pegasus flies' and 'Athena flies' seem to differ in meaning: By virtue of containing different proper names, they contain proper names associated with different lore. So far so good. On the other hand, whereas conversational implicata are cancelable, it is hard to see what sense it makes to say

15. *Zeus is not called 'Zeus.'*

This sentence is not a self-contradiction. It might, for instance, be used to say something true if the unquoted occurrence of the name is used as a one-off referring device while the property of being called 'N' only applies to those objects around which conventional referring practices have grown. On the other hand, if it is common knowledge that the name 'Zeus' does have an established usage, then the above sentence is false, and self-evidently so.¹⁸ Conversational implicata, by contrast, can be canceled without the speaker saying something false—not to mention self-evidently false.¹⁹ Thus a speaker should be able to say, 'Zeus throws thunderbolts, though Zeus is not called "Zeus",' without being in error by virtue of the falsity of her second conjunct. Yet when 'Zeus' is not being used as a one-off referring device, this is not something he can do. It follows that being called 'N' also cannot be what is conversationally implicated by an occurrence of N.²⁰

It might be replied that our examples fail to take the measure of the resources available to the Implicature Defense. Conversational implicata, it might be remarked, can vary across contexts in which one and the same locution is uttered—precisely in contrast to conventional implicata. Might such a pattern of varying implicata create an illusion of meaningfulness even if no particular implicatum does? Perhaps an

18 This remark begs no question against Direct Reference. The claim that 'Aristotle was a philosopher' is true only if 'Aristotle' refers to Aristotle, is compatible with Direct Reference's claim that the former sentence expresses a singular proposition (whose first element is Aristotle and whose second element is the property of being a philosopher) and nothing else. So too, the claim that 'Zeus throws thunderbolts' is true only if 'Zeus' refers to Zeus, is compatible with Direct Reference's claim that the former sentence expresses a gappy proposition (whose first element is empty and whose second element is the property of throwing thunderbolts) and nothing else.

19 Bach (2006) rightly points out that the content of an implicatum can contribute to the truth conditions of an utterance. However, he also correctly observes that that content makes no difference to what is said in that utterance, and our example in the text assumes only that the content of an implicatum makes no contribution to the truth conditions of what is said.

20 Similar considerations rule out another suggestion for an implicatum, namely, 'the planet that I thought was between Mercury and the Sun.' Here too it is hard to see how this description can be canceled, either explicitly or by context: 'Vulcan is not, it turns out, the planet I thought was between Mercury and the Sun' seems unintelligible if uttered by Leverrier, given his biography. If that is right, however, then the association between 'Vulcan' and 'the planet I thought was between Mercury and the Sun' cannot be a case of conversational implicature; as we have seen, conversational implicata are by definition cancelable.

illusion of meaningfulness for a name N could be created not by association with a particular subset of the lore surrounding N , but rather by the fact that the preponderance of utterances of N in a speech act conversationally implicate *some subset or other* of that lore. On behalf of that suggestion, consider the following 'cluster theoretic' version of the Implicature Defense: For each name N , there will be a body L of associated lore. Further, for the preponderance of uses of N in a speech act, speakers will speaker-mean some subset, L_i , of L . Precisely which $L_i \in L$ is speaker-meant in a speech act can vary from case to case, depending on the interaction of Relevant Reference and the speaker's intentions. These implicata, whatever they may be, can be canceled either explicitly or by aspects of the context of utterance. Nevertheless, it might be suggested, the association between N and the power set of L , $\mathcal{P}(L)$, may be enough to create an illusion of meaningfulness in an utterance of N when N is empty and some $L_i \in L$ is conversationally implicated: A speech act in which an atomic predication $[N \text{ is } \varphi]$ is uttered might be heard as saying $[\text{the } L_i \text{ is } \varphi]$. Unlike the suggestions examined above, what creates the illusion of meaningfulness in utterances of N is not any particular L_i 's being implicated with great regularity in utterances of N . Rather, what creates this illusion is that a preponderance of utterances of N conversationally implicate some L_i or other.

This version of the Implicature Defense is resilient against the challenges we have raised for other versions. A proponent of this version of the Defense must, however, still agree that in some cases we can discern an expression's literal meaning prised apart from its associations. An utterance of 'Some clouds look like cotton candy' can be heard without the implicatum that not all do in situations in which it is clear that the only issue on the table is whether some do: 'Do some of those clouds look like cotton candy?' — 'Sure.' Here there is no tendency, I trust, to interpret the reply 'Sure' as committing the speaker to the view that some but not all of the clouds look like cotton candy. So too, context or content can cancel the lore associated with a name, and when that occurs we will still construe that name as meaningful. In case we didn't already know, we could find out that George Washington never wielded an ax on a cherry tree; in fact we could also learn that he carried out an elaborate hoax so that he never commanded a Revolutionary army, never became U.S. president, etc. We could still perform a felicitous speech act in which 'George Washington' is used while also denying all or most of the lore associated with that name. This consideration is of course one of many that are invoked in support of a Direct Reference over a Fregean theory of proper names.

The same, however, goes for Vulcan. Regardless of the word's associations, Leverrier could, imagine, have lived long enough to learn the General Theory of Relativity, and on that basis might have concluded

that nothing even remotely like Vulcan could have accounted for the behavior of Mercury. Leverrier might sum up his realization thus:

16. Vulcan does not exist: In fact, no planet accounts for the precession of Mercury's perihelion; I now realize that phenomenon is accounted for in entirely different terms. In fact, even if Vulcan had existed it would not have accounted for Mercury's behavior.

Here Leverrier disavows some of the lore associated with 'Vulcan' while using that term, in all sincerity, to say something he takes to be true. Furthermore, Leverrier could well mean what he says and no more. That is enough to prevent him from conversationally implicating anything in his utterance of (16).²¹ Further, when that happens he will also not confuse what he speaker means with anything that might have been implicated in utterances of 'Vulcan' — just as one could, with no lapse in intelligibility, point out that Katya got pregnant and got married while intending to be taken at, but only at, one's word. I conclude that the 'cluster theoretic' version of the Implicature Defense is, like the other versions of that Defense we have considered thus far, untenable.

Our line of criticism of the Implicature Defense differs from that of Reimer. We have made no appeal to what judgments speakers would make were they apprised of such theories as Direct Reference, Grice's mechanism for elucidating implicature, and so forth. In fact recent evidence from experimental psychology suggests that such an appeal would be dubious. Rather, we are showing what predictions about ordinary speakers' judgments the proponent of the Implicature Defense is committed to in invoking conversational implicature, and arguing that those predictions are not borne out by those judgments. No hypotheses about what judgments we would make if we knew more or were more circumspect are needed for this purpose.

21 Meaning what one says and no more cannot be relied on to cancel implicata that are generated with great regularity. I might intend to mean what I say and no more when I remark that John almost swam across the river, but still justifiably be taken to implicate that he did not make it across. However, the intention to mean what one says and no more does cancel implicata that are generated with something short of great regularity. You ask me where Mary is and I reply, 'Somewhere in the Cotswolds.' If I am feeling sufficiently mulish, I can make this reply without implicating that I am not in an epistemic position to be more informative. Further, it is the latter case that is germane here, since the 'cluster-theoretic' view now under consideration does not propose any one $L_i \in L$ as being conversationally implicated with great regularity.

VII The Implicature Defense via Conventional Implicature

Might a normative underpinning for the putative association between names and descriptions be given in terms of conventional rather than conversational implicature? Taking a position of this sort will certainly require the proponent of the Implicature Defense to draw a deep breath. Direct Reference holds that a proper name *N* contributes nothing but its referent (if such there be) to what is literally expressed by a sentence in which *N* occurs. Nevertheless, on the current proposal, by dint of the conventional meaning of *N*, utterance of a sentence in which it occurs will conventionally implicate some body of lore associated with *N*. Such lore is not, however, part of what is literally expressed by utterance of a sentence in which *N* occurs. Strictly, then, we still have a Direct Reference theory.

Unlike conversational implicata, conventional implicata cannot be canceled without creating a bizarre effect. 'She was Italian but intelligent, which is not for a moment to suggest a conflict or tension between being Italian and being intelligent,' is bizarre. One feels its utterer is either incoherent, or simply fails to understand the meaning of 'but.' Call a sentence like this *bizarre-in-virtue-of-meaning*; this will distinguish it from sentences true or false in virtue of meaning, and from sentence-tokens that are bizarre in virtue of facts about the world. By contrast, 'Nixon was not, in fact, a crooked politician,' seems clearly mistaken, but at most bizarre in virtue of facts about the world. No one making this claim could be accused either of incoherence or failure to grasp the meaning of her own words; hagiography is not a purely semantic enterprise. Likewise for 'Clark Kent can bend steel and leap tall buildings in a single bound': true, indeed, and not bizarre. In fact, Lois might realize it one day, and that realization will be an eye-opener. More generally, just as familiar Kripkean considerations show that the lore associated with a name having a bearer can be incorrect, so too those considerations apply to bearerless names: it might emerge in the Superman story that Clark Kent is not only no wimp, but not even a reporter — having hired someone who looks like him to put Lois off his trail. And of course Superman might be an expert with holograms, while actually possessing no greater athletic ability than Angle Grinder Man. Notice, however, that in describing such cases I have said nothing bizarre in virtue of meaning. That is to say that if the proponent of the Implicature Defense is to appeal to conventional implicature, she had better not invoke the kind of lore invoked by Adams and Dietrich in her elucidation of the characteristic implicata.

What, then, if the Implicature Defense appeals to such minimal conventional implicata as *being called 'N'*? Since implicata are propositional in form, a natural elucidation of this proposal would be

utterance of ' α is Φ ' in a speech act expresses a singular proposition if ' α ' has a referent, a 'gappy' proposition otherwise; it also conventionally implicates that there is exactly one object named ' α .'²²

This formulation captures what is distinctive of conventional implicature by specifying what happens when an atomic predication is uttered in a speech act, and it does so regardless of how deeply embedded within other logical operators that predication may be. Thus for instance if 'Superman flies' occurs as the antecedent of a conditional, our formulation predicts that the speaker will still implicate that there is a unique object named 'Superman.' Likewise, if 'Superman flies' is uttered with interrogative or imperatival force, our formulation predicts that the speaker will still implicate that there is a unique object named 'Superman.'²³

We have independent evidence that ordinary speakers confuse conventional implicata with literal meaning. Hence this hypothesis, if true, would also account for the fact that ordinary speakers treat 'Vulcan is spherical' as expressing a complete proposition even when they know that Vulcan does not exist. In addition, this hypothesis, if true, would enable us to explain how speakers seem convinced that 'Zeus exists' and 'Athena exists' say different things even when they know that neither name has a referent. The names are different, hence the implicata are, and since speakers often treat pragmatic implicata as part of what is said, they may well think that the sentences say different things. What is more, 'Vulcan is not called 'Vulcan'' is bizarre-in-virtue-of-meaning, just as would be predicted by our hypothesis that the implicatum is conventional in nature.

22 We won't need here to address problems raised by so-called incomplete definite descriptions. A fuller formulation of the suggestions currently under discussion might make some restriction of the range of the quantifier phrase 'there is exactly one object named " α ";' alternatively it might build into the content of that phrase a fuller specification, giving it the form, 'there is exactly one ψ object named ' α ,' where ' ψ ' refers to a property such as salience or relevance. For the discussion below it will not matter how these issues are resolved, and so I will leave the formulation undecided as between different resolutions.

23 The conventional implicature in question is thus analogous to a *weak illocutionary force indicator* sensu Green 2000. Also, I have expressed the implicatum as 'there is at least one object named "N" in order to make the present proposal the weakest possible; a more accurate proposal would have the speaker conventionally implicating 'there is exactly one object named "N",' or at least 'there is exactly one object named "N" with property F,' where F is used to address issues raised by incomplete definite descriptions. Nevertheless, in rebutting the weaker proposal (but not on the grounds that it is too weak!) I intend to rebut any stronger proposal built atop it.

It might be objected that ‘Vulcan is not called ‘Vulcan’’ is not just bizarre-in-virtue-of-meaning, it is false. By contrast, conventional implicata do not contribute to the truth conditions of what is said. On most accounts, ‘She was poor but honest’ is true even if there is no tension between poverty and honesty. That suggests, contrary to the present hypothesis, that ‘Vulcan is spherical’ cannot have ‘There is a unique object called ‘Vulcan’’ as its conventional implicatum.

To this the proponent of the Implicature Defense may reply that the objector has confused a condition of a sentence expressing a content with that sentence’s very content. In particular, on her account a proposition containing a proper name expresses a singular proposition and nothing else. That proposition is true no matter what holds of any names; it would be true even if there were no names. Hence ‘There is a unique object called ‘Vulcan’’ is no part of the truth condition of what is expressed by ‘Vulcan is spherical.’

A formulation of the Implicature Defense in terms of conventional implicature seems more resilient than that through conversational implicature. It is not, however, adequate. Conventional implicata are in the very least a species of commitment. When I assert ‘She was poor but honest,’ then while I do not assert that there is a contrast or tension between poverty and honesty, I do commit myself to there being such a tension. (That is the gravamen of the natural reply, ‘Whaddya mean, *but?*’) Further, if I know the meaning of my words, then I am in a position to know that I am thus committing myself. Likewise, the Implicature Defense might hold, when I assert, ‘Vulcan is spherical,’ I commit myself to the proposition that there is at least one object named ‘Vulcan.’ Further, if I am a competent speaker of English I may be expected to know this, or at least to infer it with a minimum of reflection. However, the Implicature Defense now must predict that by dint of certain of my utterances I will commit myself to something incompatible with what I am trying to assert, and will be in a position to know, with no further empirical investigation, that I am so committing myself. For instance, and pursuing our fantasy of the last section, suppose that Leverrier made incorrect calculations and persisted in believing in Vulcan. Suppose further that I happen to believe, for some reason, not only that Vulcan does not exist, but that nothing by that name does exist. I might then correct Leverrier with the words,

17. Vulcan does not exist. In fact, nothing by the name of ‘Vulcan’ exists!

Given my background beliefs, that would be a perfectly reasonable thing to say under the circumstances. However, the present version of the Implicature Defense predicts that in asserting this I am committing

myself to the proposition that there is at least one object by the name of 'Vulcan.' Even if, as averred by the present version of the Implicature Defense, I tend to conflate conventional implicature with literal meaning, I am still in a position to know what those implicata are. I should therefore be able to infer, with no further empirical investigation, that I am in error. This contradicts our intuition that if the utterer of (17) is in error, it can only be because of how the world happens to be.

VIII The Implicature Defense via Non-conversational, Non-conventional Implicature

Neither conversational nor conventional implicature has provided a normative basis for the alleged association between names and the lore with which they are associated. A basis in the former would require that when context, explicit content, or intentions cancel the alleged implicata, speakers hear sentences containing empty names as failing to express any truth-evaluable proposition. This is not what occurs. On the other hand, a basis in conventional implicature would require that attempts to cancel the alleged implicatum result in a form of incoherence—not necessary falsehood but what we have called bizarreness-in-virtue-of-meaning. That is not what we find with the lore invoked by authors such as Adams and Dietrich. On the other hand, if we pare down the lore to such descriptive information as 'being called "N",' the position implies that one cannot assert a negative existential containing a name without committing oneself to the negation of that existential claim.

The connection between a name and the pragmatic material with which it is associated seems, then, too loose when construed in terms of conversational implicature, and too tight when construed in terms of conventional implicature. Is there a pragmatic middle ground? Recalling the diagram above, it is clear that conversational and conventional implicature do not exhaust the forms of implicature. Grice left open the possibility of implicature that is neither conventional nor generated in or from conversations (Green 2002). Accordingly I have not exhausted the possible forms that an Implicature Defense can take.

Implicature falls in the category of what is speaker-meant but not said. That is to say that it is a species of speaker meaning. Non-conventional, non-conversational implicature would have to be a form of speaker meaning as well. What would be an example of speaker meaning that is not part of what is said while being neither conventional nor conversational implicature? Suppose you nonchalantly saunter in late to an important meeting at which I had asked you, from a position of

authority, to be present and punctual. I overtly scowl as you do so. My scowl is overt in that I not only scowl intentionally, I do so with the intention of making that intention manifest. This is plausibly a case of speaker-meaning that I am angry. I am not asserting that I am angry. At the same time my action does not depend on adherence to any conversational maxims. Nor need there be any convention linking that facial expression to a feeling of anger: It is well established that such 'basic emotions' as anger have universal facial signatures more plausibly accounted for in terms of biological endowment than conventions governing facial expressions (Griffiths 1997). Rather, I speaker-mean that I am angry by overtly showing that anger. Such expressive behavior, at least when overt in a way required for speaker meaning, appears to be a case of non-conventional, non-conversational implicature.²⁴

Could anything in this be relevant to a Implicature Defense? *Pace* Cratylus, a name does not display its bearer in anything like the way in which a picture displays its subject or a scowl displays the anger it expresses. However, a system of measurement may display what it measures: A seismographic readout displays the relative size of tremors in the Earth's crust without enabling us to see those tremors. An analog barometer displays the magnitude of nearby relative humidity. Likewise, naming is a minimal form of measurement in which all one-one transformations are permissible. (Suppes and Zinnes 1963; Green 1999a) A system of names does not measure characteristics of objects other than their existence and uniqueness. Nevertheless, the proponent of the Implicature Defense might point out that the very utterance of a sentence containing a name expresses commitment to the claim that the name is part of such a system. That commitment can be neutralized by features of context, just as my overt scowl might be made in jest or on stage. However, when it is not so neutralized, an expression of belief or commitment cannot be explicitly disavowed without creating an absurdity of the form we know well from the work of Moore. Moore pointed out that when I assert, 'It's snowing but I don't believe it,' what I say is not a necessary falsehood (it could well be the case that it is snowing without my believing it), but is nevertheless absurd. What generates the absurdity is my expressing a belief that it is snowing (by asserting that it is) while asserting that I do not possess that belief.

An 'expressivist' reading of the Implicature Defense would likewise suggest that when I use a proper name in a speech act, I express commitment to the claim that the name is part of a system of names tracking

24 I defend this point in more detail in Green 2003, and Green 2007.

the existence and uniqueness of objects.²⁵ However, that reading would also predict that when I explicitly disavow that commitment with such words as the predication, 'does not exist,' I should generate a form of Moorean absurdity. As we saw when imagining Leverrier correcting himself with the remark, 'Vulcan does not exist,' that is certainly not what happens: Whereas an ostensibly serious utterance of 'It's snowing but I don't believe it,' is absurd, an ostensibly serious utterance of 'Vulcan does not exist' is not.

Perhaps another Implicature Defense can be mounted that employs some other form of non-conventional, non-conversational implicature. We know now, however, that any such version will need to be invoke a pragmatic relation strikingly different from those most frequently discussed, either by pragmaticists or by proponents of Direct Reference. Until we are given reason to believe that such a defense is viable, the prospects for a Implicature Defense will remain dim indeed.

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25 This is not meant to suggest that Adams or any other proponent of the Implicature Defense propounds this mode of explanation. Our inquiry at this point is aimed only at determining whether this avenue of defense is viable given that others appear to lead to dead ends.

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